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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2025-00005

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COUNSEL: Work-Product

HEARING REQUESTED: YES

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

His "uncharacterized" entry-level separation (ELS) be changed to honorable.

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

He graduated officer training school (OTS) on 26 Sep 02 and the next day, he entered active duty until 2014 as shown in the attached DD Form 214s, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*. After 2014, he went to the Air Force Reserve (AFR) and is still serving. He is now trying to buy back his active-duty time for his civilian position, but his DD Form 214 characterization is "uncharacterized" from OTS. As shown from his attached documents, he went straight into active duty after graduating OTS. The civilian team at Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) cannot use any of his active-duty time because the OTS characterization is labeled as uncharacterized, and the time is back-to-back. The uncharacterized character of service is a mistake, he did not separate, he graduated OTS. He entered OTS as a staff sergeant (E-5) and graduated to become a second lieutenant (O-1). This effects his entire active-duty career. He tried working this at a lower level and everyone who looks at the facts can see it was a mistake, through no fault of his own, they are just unable to fix it at their level.

In support of his request for a discharge upgrade, the applicant provides his DD Form 214s from service.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is currently serving AFR colonel (O-6).

On 26 Sep 02, the applicant received an ELS. His narrative reason for separation is "Commissioned or Warrant in Same Branch of Service" and he was credited with 2 months and 24 days of total active service.

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For more information, see the excerpt of the applicant's record at Exhibit B and the advisory at Exhibit C.

APPLICABLE AUTHORITY/GUIDANCE

DoDI 1332.14, Enlisted Administrative Separations, incorporating changes through 23 Jun 22 reads as follows:

Enclosure 3, section 2 – Selected Changes in Service Obligation

Paragraph a(3) states an enlisted Service member may be separated due to an acceptance of an active duty commission or appointment, or acceptance into a program leading to such commission or appointment in any branch of Military Service.

Paragraph b(1) states the characterization or description is honorable, unless the separation is an entry-level separation and is required in accordance with section 3 of Enclosure 4.

Enclosure 4, section 3 – Characterization of Service or Description of Separation

Paragraph c(1)(a)2 states an uncharacterized separation will be described as an entry-level if separation is initiated while an enlisted Service member is in entry-level status, except when the Secretary concerned, on a case-by-case basis, determined that characterization of service as honorable is clearly warranted by the presence of unusual military duty. The characterization is authorized when the Service member is separated under Enclosure 3 by reason of selected changes in service obligation.

AFI 36-3208, *Separating Administrative Separation of Airmen*, dated 10 Mar 00, describes the authorized service characterizations that were applicable at the time of the applicant's separation.

Entry Level Separation. Airmen are in entry level status during the first 180 days of continuous active military service or the first 180 days of continuous active military service after a break of more than 92 days of active service. Determine the member's status by the date of notification; thus, if the member is in entry level status when initiating the separation action, describe it as an entry level separation unless:

A service characterization of under other than honorable conditions is authorized under the reason for discharge and is warranted by the circumstances of the case; or

The Secretary of the Air Force determines, on a case-by-case basis, that characterization as honorable is clearly warranted by unusual circumstances of personal conduct and performance of military duty. This characterization is authorized if reason for separation is a change in military status according to chapter 2 which states the service of airmen separated for completion of officer training will be characterized as honorable.

Honorable. The quality of the airman's service generally has met Air Force standards of acceptable conduct and performance of duty or when a member's service is otherwise so meritorious that any other characterization would be inappropriate.

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

AFPC/DPMSSR recommends granting the application. For many years, officer training school (OTS) operated under their own internal policy with regards to characterizing the service of their graduates. Discussions with them have indicated their policy has shifted from time to time through the years, with some periods in the 1970s being characterized and some periods in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s listed as uncharacterized. OTS has been allowed to make the determination since they prepare DD Form 214s on all of their OTS students. Individuals attending OTS are in an active-duty status and therefore, fall under active-duty personnel policy. AFPC has reviewed the current Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 36-3211, *Military Separations*, and former enlisted separations Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-3208, and they both offer flexibility to give OTS graduates an honorable service characterization even though they are in entry level status.

The complete advisory opinion is at Exhibit C.

APPLICANT'S REVIEW OF AIR FORCE EVALUATION

The Board sent a copy of the advisory opinion to the applicant on 14 Mar 25 for comment (Exhibit D) but has received no response.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. The application was timely filed.
2. The applicant exhausted all available non-judicial relief before applying to the Board.
3. After reviewing all Exhibits, the Board concludes the applicant is the victim of an error or injustice. The Board concurs with the rationale and recommendation of AFPC/DPMSSR and finds a preponderance of the evidence substantiates the applicant's contentions. The Board notes service members attending OTS have no break in service between their enlisted time at OTS and their commission date on active duty; therefore, their time spent at OTS qualifies as a change in service obligation and is characterized as honorable service. Therefore, the Board recommends correcting the applicant's records as indicated below.
4. The applicant has not shown a personal appearance, with or without counsel, would materially add to the Board's understanding of the issues involved.

RECOMMENDATION

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to APPLICANT be corrected to show on 26 Sep 02, he was discharged with service characterized as honorable.

CERTIFICATION

The following quorum of the Board, as defined in DAFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*, paragraph 2.1, considered Docket Number BC-2025-00005 in Executive Session on 10 Apr 25:

Work-Product	Panel Chair
Work-Product	Panel Member
Work-Product	Panel Member

All members voted to correct the record. The panel considered the following:

- Exhibit A: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, dated 15 Nov 24.
- Exhibit B: Documentary Evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.
- Exhibit C: Advisory Opinion, AFPC/DPMSSR, dated 13 Mar 25.
- Exhibit D: Notification of Advisory, SAF/MRBC to Applicant, dated 14 Mar 25.

Taken together with all Exhibits, this document constitutes the true and complete Record of Proceedings, as required by DAFI 36-2603, paragraph 4.12.9.

4/29/2025

X

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Board Operations Manager, AFBCMR

Signed by: USAF