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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2025-01048

Work-Product

COUNSEL: Work-Product

HEARING REQUESTED: NO

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

His "Uncharacterized," entry level separation (ELS) be changed to honorable.

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

His time in officer training school (OTS) currently shows uncharacterized in block 24 of the DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, dated 13 Aug 98. For the purposes of the military deposit/buyback program, he needs the characterization to indicate honorable. This error affects the retirement process. He executed a buyback over 15 years ago but was recently told the period he was in OTS needed to be corrected or the buyback would be invalidated.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is an Air Force Reserve colonel (O-6).

On 13 Aug 98, a DD Form 214 indicates the applicant received an ELS with a character of service as "Uncharacterized," after serving 3 months and 10 days on active duty. His narrative reason for separation is "Commissioned or Warrant in Same Branch of Service."

On 4 Jul 07, a DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was honorably discharged and was credited with 8 years, 10 months, and 21 days of active service for this period.

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*

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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, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, dated 14 Oct 94, 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, OTS operated under their own internal policy with regard 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 and 1990s listed as uncharacterized. Individuals attending OTS are there in an active-duty status and therefore fall under active-duty personnel policy. AFPC has reviewed the current DAFI 36-3211, Military Separations, and former enlisted separation AFIs, and 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 8 May 25 for comment (Exhibit D) but has received no response.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. The application was not timely filed, but it is in the interest of justice to excuse the delay.
2. The applicant exhausted all other available administrative remedies 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. Specifically, 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.

RECOMMENDATION

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to APPLICANT be corrected to show on 13 Aug 98, he was discharged with service characterized as honorable.

CERTIFICATION

The following quorum of the Board, as defined in Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*, paragraph 2.1, considered Docket Number BC-2025-01048 in Executive Session on 26 Jan 26:

- 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 5 Apr 25.

- Exhibit B: Documentary evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.
- Exhibit C: Advisory opinion, AFPC/DPMSSR, dated 7 May 25.
- Exhibit D: Notification of advisory, SAF/MRBC to applicant, dated 8 May 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.

2/24/2026

X *Work-Product*

Board Operations Manager, AFBCMR

Signed by: *Work-Product*