

IN THE CASE OF: ██████████

BOARD DATE: 9 September 2024

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20230006141

APPLICANT REQUESTS: award of the Air Medal for service (or achievement) from 19 April through 24 April 1968 in Vietnam.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING DOCUMENT(S) CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD:

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record)
- Letter addressed to the Board
- DD Form 214 (Armed Forces of the United States Report of Transfer or Discharge)
- DD Form 215 (Correction to DD Form 214)
- Five (5) 101st Airborne Division orders, dated between 5 July 1968 and 7 January 1969
- Photograph
- Four (4) written testimonials

FACTS:

1. The applicant did not file within the 3-year time frame provided in Title 10, U.S. Code, section 1552(b); however, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) conducted a substantive review of this case and determined it is in the interest of justice to excuse the applicant's failure to timely file.

2. The applicant states, in effect:

a. Medics who were assigned to Infantry companies were ignored or passed over by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Battalion, or the Medical Staff [sic]. They were side by side with the Infantry companies the entire time. He is submitting a request for the award of the Air Medal for activities in which he took part in from 19 thru 24 April 1968. As a result of this action, he became senior aidman in C Company and later moved from the Platoon CP (Command Post) to the Company CP with captain (CPT) ██████████

b. In addition, he provided medical care to Staff Sergeant (SSG) ██████████ Sergeant First Class (SFC) ██████████ (killed in action), Lieutenants ██████████ and ██████████ both in C Company and later in

Tiger Force, the Recon team for the Battalion. He was with the company or recon every step of the way from Phu Bai (Camp Eagle) to A Shau Valley. It was determined, following an intensive search, that General Orders 11102 is missing from the National Archives. Therefore, he has included testimonials from men he served with, which includes Major General (MG) [REDACTED] and a former service member, who was injured during a huge firefight, that he administered care to.

c. The Air Medal was for activities involving flight in which C Company as pioneering the concept of helicopter-borne insertions of large and small units to meet and close with the enemy. The action of 19-24 April 1968 (and on) was a huge event, involving several battalions, including the Army of the Republic of Vietnam Rangers, utilizing a huge number of helicopters lifting and landing scores of men at the same time. For some reason, while C Company issued General Orders, there were none found for HHC medics who went to the field with the Infantry Companies.

d. Due to the oversight, he requests the Board's assistance in obtaining a General Order for the Air Medal and a correction to his military records. He became aware that he may, along with medics [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were omitted from the award.

3. The applicant provides five sets of General or Special Orders, issued by Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division as follows:

- Special Orders Number 190, 5 July 1968, awarded him the Combat Medical Badge (first award)
- General Orders Number 3115, 2 July 1968, awarded him the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 27 March 1968.
- General Orders Number 11101, 25 December 1968, reflect other individuals assigned to Company C 1st Battalion (Airborne) 327th Infantry were awarded the Air Medal. [The applicant's name is not included in the list of service members].
- General Orders Number 11103, 25 December 1968, reflect individuals assigned to Company C 1st Battalion (Airborne) 327th Infantry were awarded the Air Medal. [The applicant's name is not included in the list of service members].
- General Orders Number 111, 7 January 1969, awarded him the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service from 1 April 1968 to 30 November 1968.

4. The applicant also provides:

a. Photograph of the applicant and private first class (PFC) [REDACTED] a radio operator for the 320th Artillery forward observer, northwest of Fire Base Veghel, a few days after the action cited in the Air Medal.

b. Four written testimonials as follows:

(1) Authored by MG [REDACTED] who served as the applicant's platoon leader in C Company, 1/327 Infantry Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, and most importantly on 16 April 1968 when the battalion conducted a combat air land assault into Landing Zone Veghel. During this time, the applicant was a medic assigned to the battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) and attached to C Company. He states, "The reason that the applicant was not awarded an Air Medal by a C Company unit order was because he was assigned to HHC. Only personnel assigned to C Company were included in the unit order. The only explanation he would offer is that administrative actions within the battalion, like in this case HHC completing a unit order for the Air Medal, were often overcome by on-going combat operations." Further stating, "in June 1968, he became the platoon leader of the battalion's reconnaissance platoon, known as the Tiger Force. Soon thereafter the applicant became a member of this platoon. As the eyes & ears of the battalion, the Tiger Force was tasked with conducting numerous combat air land assaults into hostile territory. He can attest that the applicant was a full participant in these operations and that the applicant clearly deserves to be awarded an Air Medal even at this late date."

(2) Authored by [REDACTED] who served with C Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division from December 1967 to June 1968. His military occupational specialty was 11B (infantryman) and he was the radio transmission operator (RTO) for the 1st Platoon, while the applicant served as the combat medic. During the 6-7 months he served with the unit, they saw the rear area once for a 36-hour stand-down. The rest of that time they lived in the jungle often moving to a new location every night. He was recently informed that the applicant was never awarded the Air Medal, something he does not understand how this was withheld from the applicant. Their unit went on at least five air assaults into enemy held territory and the applicant was there for all but the first. He is of the belief that the applicant should be awarded the medal that everyone else received that day, 19 April 1968, and it should be a part of his permanent record.

(3) Authored by [REDACTED] who served as squad leader, platoon sergeant, and acting platoon leader during the applicant's time with C Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. The applicant served as a combat medic for many months before he transferred to serve as medic for the battalion's elite Tiger Force. He further states, "on 19 April 1968, their company executed a hot insertion by helicopter into a heavily NVA occupied area adjacent to the A'Shau Valley. He and the applicant were on the same helicopter. They lost the helicopter directly in front of them going in. They were engaged with the enemy from the time they approached the Landing Zone until several days later when they had semi-secured the hill adjacent to the valley where they landed. This hill came to be known as Veghal. Their company and battalion took a tremendous number of casualties in the four-day battle that ensued. As a combat

medic, the applicant was in the middle of the worst of it. Two other medics attached to their company lost their lives during this battle. Everyone participating in the assault received the Air Medal, or everyone should have. The applicant did not receive his rightly deserved Air Medal, either the orders were never posted to his official records, or his name was inadvertently not submitted as intended.”

(4) Authored by ██████ who served as an infantryman with C Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division and who took part in the helicopter air assault activities during 23-26 April 1968. He was awarded the Air Medal and Silver Star for actions during this initial air assault. General Orders 11101 and 11103 list members of C Company, 1/327 Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, who were awarded the Air Medal for the huge air assault operation undertaken by the 1st Brigade, dated 25 December 1968, for actions between 19 April and 24 April 1968. He is listed on 1103; however, missing from the National Archive is GO 11102. Further stating, “the applicant was not only present during the entire time cited by the award orders, he was doing extensive work in providing care to wounded, managing the many dead, and seeing to orderly evacuation of the wounded, and the remains of our fallen. After the period cited, the applicant continued to serve with C Company until he left for service with Tiger Force, the Recon Platoon.”

4. The applicant's complete military records are not available to the Board for review. A complete and thorough search for his military records was conducted; however, they could not be located. This case is being considered based on the documents provided by the applicant. In addition, the applicant did not provide documentary evidence (i.e. recommendations for award or award certificates) in support of his claim.

5. The applicant's DD Form 214 shows he enlisted in the Regular Army on 24 May 1966, and he held military occupational specialty 91B, Medical Corpsman/Specialist.

a. He served in Vietnam with 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. He was advanced to specialist five/E-5 on 7 December 1968.

c. He was honorably released from active duty on 17 October 1969 after completing 3 years of active service (with lost time). His DD Form 214 shows he was awarded or authorized:

- National Defense Service Medal
- Parachute Badge
- Bronze Star Medal
- Silver Star
- Vietnam Service Medal
- Vietnam Campaign Medal w/60 device.

6. On 16 December 2011, the applicant was issued a DD Form 215, Correction to DD Form 214, that added award of the Combat Medical Badge.
7. The applicant's DA Form 759-1 Individual Flight Record and Flight Certificate-Army is not available for review. This form shows how many combat missions completed and combat hours accrued. Under USARV Regulation 672-1, aircrew members were required to have a minimum of 25 category I missions and 25 flight hours to qualify for each award of the Air Medal.

#### BOARD DISCUSSION:

After reviewing the application, all supporting documents, and the evidence found within the military record, the Board found that relief was not warranted. The applicant's contentions, the military record, and regulatory guidance were carefully considered. The applicant served in Vietnam as a medic with an infantry unit. The applicant's DA Form 759-1, Individual Flight Record and Flight Certificate-Army is not available for review. This form shows how many combat missions completed and combat hours accrued. Under USARV Regulation 672-1, aircrew members were required to have a minimum of 25 category I missions and 25 flight hours to qualify for each award of the Air Medal. In the absence of this form, for each month of service in Vietnam, or other independent evidence reflecting the type of missions, the Board determined there is insufficient evidence to award him the Air Medal. Nevertheless, while the available evidence is insufficient for awarding him the Air Medal, this in no way affects the applicant's right to pursue his claim for the Air Medal by submitting a request through his Member of Congress under the provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, section 1130.

BOARD VOTE:

Mbr 1    Mbr 2    Mbr 3

:	:	:	GRANT FULL RELIEF
:	:	:	GRANT PARTIAL RELIEF
:	:	:	GRANT FORMAL HEARING
■	■	■	DENY APPLICATION

BOARD DETERMINATION/RECOMMENDATION:

The evidence presented does not demonstrate the existence of a probable error or injustice. Therefore, the Board determined the overall merits of this case are insufficient as a basis for correction of the records of the individual concerned.

9/9/2024

X

CHAIRPERSON

I certify that herein is recorded the true and complete record of the proceedings of the Army Board for Correction of Military Records in this case.

REFERENCES:

1. Title 10, U.S. Code, section 1552(b), provides that applications for correction of military records must be filed within 3 years after discovery of the alleged error or injustice. This provision of law also allows the ABCMR to excuse an applicant's failure to timely file within the 3-year statute of limitations if the ABCMR determines it would be in the interest of justice to do so.

2. Army Regulation 672-5-1 (Awards), in effect at the time, stated U.S. Army Vietnam Regulation 672-5-1 (Decorations and Awards) provided guidelines for award of the Air Medal and defined terms and provided guidelines for the award based upon the number and types of missions or hours.

a. Twenty-five category I missions (air assault and equally dangerous missions) and accrual of a minimum of 25 hours of flight time while engaged in category I missions was the standard established for which sustained operations were deemed worthy of recognition by an award of the AM. However, the regulation was clear that these guidelines were considered only a departure point. Combat missions were divided into three categories.

(1) A category I mission was defined as a mission performed in an assault role in which a hostile force was engaged and was characterized by delivery of ordnance against the hostile force or delivery of friendly troops or supplies into the immediate combat operations area.

(2) A category II mission was characterized by support rendered a friendly force immediately before, during, or immediately following a combat operation.

(3) A category III mission was characterized by support of friendly forces not connected with an immediate combat operation but which must have been accomplished at altitudes which made the aircraft at times vulnerable to small arms fire or under hazardous weather or terrain conditions.

b. To be recommended for award of the AM, an individual must have completed a minimum of 25 hours category I missions, 50 hours category II missions, or 100 hours category III missions. Since various types of missions would have been completed in accumulating flight time toward award of an Air Medal for sustained operations, different computations would have had to be made to combine category I, II, and III flight times and adjust it to a common denominator.

c. Numerals, starting with 2, will be used to denote second and subsequent awards of the Air Medal.

3. Army Regulation 95-1 (Flight Regulation) covers aircraft operations, crew requirements, and flight rules. The regulation specifies that each crew member must present his or her individual flight records to the unit of assignment. The flying experience and qualification data for each rated crew member and flight surgeon in aviation service and each non-rated crew member will be documented on several forms among which are the DA Form 759 (Individual Flight Record and Flight Certificate Army) and the DA Form 759-1 (Individual Flight Record and Flight Certificate—Army). The "Mission Data" column on the DA Form 759-1 lists a single character for the mission identification (ID). During the Vietnam War, the following Mission IDs were used:

Mission Symbol	Service Missions
A	Acceptance test Flight
F	Maintenance Flight
S	Service Mission
T	Training Flight
X	Experimental Test Flight
C	Combat Mission

//NOTHING FOLLOWS//