

ARMY BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CASE OF: [REDACTED]

BOARD DATE: 1 November 2024

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20230008651

APPLICANT REQUESTS:

- award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for his service in Honduras in 1984
- correction of his DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) to show –
 - Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
 - combat service in Central America
- issuance of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
- other entitlements earned by his service
- the U.S. Congress and or the President to conduct an in-depth investigation into U.S. covert, overt military and paramilitary operations in Central America from 1980-1992
- a video/telephonic appearance before the Board

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

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record)
- Two-self authored letters
- Department of Defense, JCS Message Center, undated
- The Washington Times, 17 January 1984
- House Resolution Number 484, 10 April 1984
- U.S. House of Representatives, 13 April 1984
- Resolution Number 557, 26 April 1984
- United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 17 July 1985
- DD Form 214, period ending 3 August 1988
- Article, "Honduras, Not So Much Training in the 1980's", 29 August 2015
- Unclassified Helicopter Incident, 18 April –
- 8-letters in reference to the request of information or records concerning 227th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX for deployment to Honduras in 1984

- Three-Witness Statements
- Department of Veterans Affairs letter, 3 October 2018
- Resolution Number 419, Honduras, undated

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. In November 1983, he served in Germany with 1st Armored Division. He received orders for a reassignment to Fort Hood, TX. In March 1984 he was reassigned to 227th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. The company was preparing to deploy to Honduras. The Soldiers were told not to discuss their deployment with anyone. Upon arrival to Honduras, the Soldiers were told to lock and load and debark in a combat formation. They camped at the end of the airfield for about three days and were attacked once. They then loaded up on military trucks and were headed to their jungle encampment when the convoy stopped and came under attack at the rear of the convoy. They returned fire for about 30 minutes until the attackers stopped firing. No one was injured or dead.

b. The next day they started flying missions. Most of their missions were transporting foreign troops and special forces group 7 into a hot landing zone. When they arrived after their first mission, they were told by command to state that they hit vultures due to the cracked windshield; that was not true. His worst mission was when he volunteered to be a gunner. They took rounds from all sides. He noticed that one of his rounds hit a young boy. The helicopter had damage and as soon as they were airborne, they took a hard landing; they were airlifted out of the jungle. It took three days to make the repairs in El Salvador. While there the airfield came under heavy fire, and they had to fight along with the El Salvadoran troops to repel the guerillas.

c. He submitted several Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request but none of the agencies wanted to recognize that they were in Central America; this is because they were under the National Security Council (NSC) who only answered at the time to President R____. He was ordered to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for the term of 30 years, which was from 1984 to 2014. The penalty of breaking the NDA was prison time. That took a toll on his military career. For 34 years he had issues coping with what he endured during his tour in Central America. He was not able to get care from the Veteran Affairs. His DD Form 214 did not have any information except for one year in the Reserves. It had no active-duty time or overseas duty stations or awards

until he had it corrected. His DD Form 215 (Correction to DD Form 214) shows his years of service but no overseas duty stations or combat in Central America.

d. His case is related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) .

3. The applicant's request pertaining to the issuance of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal will not be addressed further in this Record of Proceedings. The ABCMR corrects records; the Board does not issue medals or badges. Any questions or concerns regarding replacement medals and badges should be referred to the appropriate agency. Written requests with appropriate supporting evidence may be addressed to the National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138 or online at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records.

4. The applicant's request pertaining to an in-depth investigation into U.S. covert, overt military and paramilitary operations in Central America from 1980-1992 will not be addressed further in this Record of Proceedings. This request is outside the purview of the ABCMR. The ABCMR corrects records, it is not an investigate body.

5. The applicant provides:

a. A Department of Defense JCS Message Center, undated that shows since November 1983, various sources of information have become available which indicate an increasing possibility of an attack against U.S. Military personnel in Honduras during the latter half of the month of December.

b. A newspaper article, titled, "The Washington Times, National," 17 January 1984 reading, in part, of a Nicaraguan firing on an unarmed helicopter on the ground in Honduras territory, resulting in the death of an American citizen.

c. 98th Congress, 2nd Session, House Resolution 484, 10 April 1984, Mr. M_____ proposed that the President shall furnish to the House of Representatives in effect all documents in his possession discussing the possible involvement o the U.S. Armed Forces in combat in Central America.

d. Document unknown, titled, "H.J. Resolution 557, Shown Here, Introduced in House 26 April 1984", states that during 1984 the U.S. Armed Forces in Central America were introduced into hostilities for purpose of the War Powers Resolution. Directs the President to remove such forces from Honduras and El Salvador.

e. On 10 May 1984, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, disapproved House Resolution 484 and ordered it unfavorably reported by voice vote.

f. United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 17 July 1985, shows in part communications delivered to the Government of Nicaragua, that preparations were under way to introduce a program of terrorist's attacks against U.S. personnel in Honduras.

g. A DD Form 214 for the period ending 3 August 1988, that shows in item 18 (Remarks) – service in Honduras April 1994 // DD Form 214 administratively reissue per ABCMR Proceeding AR20190006419 on 14 April 2020.

h. A newspaper article, titled, " Honduras, Not So Much Training in the 1980's, 29 August 2015, reading in part, The Pentagon Turned its Back on Them was the CBS 60 Minutes special that aired in May of 1995 detailing how one of numerous secret wars in Central America was precisely covered-up by the Pentagon where more than 5,000 American troops bravely served and defended Democracy during the El Salvadoran civil war from 1981 to 1996, but never received recognition for their involvement in this soiled arid highly suspicious conflict. However, in 1996, President C_____ remedy that by recognizing the veteran's sacrifices by officially conceding their involvement and service by awarding them the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal authorizing the deceased's families, wounded and injured, to receive combat recognition and appropriate veteran entitlements. But what ever happened to the tens of thousands of American troops who served a few miles away, just across the border in Honduras as who found themselves smack dab in between the Contra War and t e El Salvadoran Civil War? Many would say that Honduras itself was on the verge of civil war placing these U.S. troops in harm's way, where on a regular basis, hundreds of terrorist attacks occurred. Hearing gunshots and witnessing firefights in the valleys, up on the mountaintop, or their aftermath, was a weekly occurrence in this third world hot spot in the 1980's.

i. An unclassified report of a helicopter incident, 18 April – shows in part a helicopter containing two U.S. senators made a precautionary landing as the result of ground fire. The helicopter was struck as it was approaching the refugee camp near the El Salvador border.

j. Several letters issued by the applicant to various agencies, under the FOIA requesting information or records concerning the 227th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX, during their deployment to Honduras in 1984.

k. In response to the applicant's request under FOIA he was either directed to other government agencies or the agencies were unable to locate the documents for the time period or specific topic requested.

l. J_____ S_____, witness statement that shows in effect,

(1) [Applicant] was in the first rotation of the 227th Aviation 1st Cavalry Division, which flew about twenty-two U.S. Army Huey helicopters, which that in turn supported the U.S. interests in Central America.

(2) [Applicant] personally crewed Huey's in El Salvador supporting the U.S. embassy, flying El Salvadoran Soldiers and American Special Forces, and others. [Applicant] was exposed to enemy fire and death if captured by the enemies on ground.

(3) The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was awarded in 1996 to all Soldiers that meet the criteria. [Applicant] met the criteria, but it is very difficult to prove, because, of the secret classification of this conflict that lasted almost a decade.

(4) [Applicant] was shot down and had many close calls to death. He was forced to sign an NDA which was in effect until 2014. The missions were dangerous and classified. His Army personnel records were not completed correctly. His flight records are missing. His DD Form 214 shows no overseas service or helicopter related awards.

m. T____ K____, witness statement that shows in effect,

(1) In May of 1984 through July or August 1984 they served in Honduras, Central America attached to Task Force 227th Combat Aviation Battalion in what was supposed to be training in said Granadero 1 exercise. They never received any temporary duty orders or deployment orders. [Applicant] made sure their aircrafts were ready to run missions into El Salvador, Nicaragua and around Honduras at any given moment.

(2) One day the alarm went off and they were told that the hospital was being attacked. Every night they had problems with the guerillas forces; throwing rocks and trying to climb over the fence.

(3) The air crew had just flown in from a mission. All the guys were upset, physically shaking and had a weird look on their faces. They had taken several groups of foreign troops across the border and dropped them off and they came under fire from the ground. Our helicopters were all shot up.

n. K____ C____, emailed a witness statement that shows in effect, during their deployment to Honduras they had live ammo, provided site security, convoy escorts and airfield security.

o. A VA letter issued by Staff Psychologist, D____ T____, 3 October 2018, shows in effect, the [applicant] has been his patient since 21 March 2018. The [applicant] was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a chronic and sever anxiety disorder that is related to a person's exposure to a life-threatening event either directly

or by observing someone else who is confronted with such an incident. He also suffers from severe insomnia which is likely a result of his PTSD condition.

6. A review of the applicant's service record shows:

a. On 3 August 1981, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve. On the same date he entered active duty for training (ADT) and was honorably released from ADT on 9 March 1982. His DD Form 214 shows he completed 6 months and 9 days of active service.

b. His DD Form 214 shows he enlisted in the Regular Army on 28 August 1982.

c. A Certificate of Achievement, issued to the applicant by the 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Division, U.S. Army Europe, on 30 April 1984 for his meritorious service during the period from 18 October 1982 to 12 April 1984.

d. He was issued a Certificate of Achievement for distinguishing himself by meritorious service while assigned to the 227th Combat Aviation Task Force, Cucuyagua, Honduras during the period 1 May to 30 June 1984. He participated in the multi-national training exercise Granadero I, which included Soldiers from Honduras and El Salvador.

e. A Unit Certificate that shows the applicant has distinguished himself through dedicated service to Headquarters Company, 227th Combat Aviation Battalion from 27 April 1984 to 9 September 1985.

f. His record is void of a DA Form 20 (Enlisted Qualification Record).

g. On 3 August 1988, he was discharged from the Regular Army, under other than honorable conditions, for the good of the service in lieu of court-martial. His DD Form 214 shows in part:

- Item 12f (Foreign Service) – no information
- Item 13 (Decorations, Medals, Badges, Citations and Campaign Ribbons Awarded or Authorized) – no information
- Item 18 (Remarks) - shows in part, a DD Form 215 (Correction to DD Form 214) will be issued to provide missing information

h. On 6 November 1990 the applicant was issued a DD Form 215 (Correction to DD Form 214), for the period ending 3 August 1988. His DD Form 215 shows in part:

- Item 13 - NA
- Item 18 - Delete: DD Form 215 will be issued to provide missing information

i. On 7 July 2015, in ABCMR Docket Number 20140019513, the Board determined that the evidence presented was sufficient to warrant a recommendation for partial relief. As a result, the Board recommended that all Department of the Army records of the individual concerned be corrected by amending his DD Form 215, 6 November 1990 to show:

- Item 12a (Date Entered AD this Period) – “82 08 28”
- Item 12c (Net Active Service this Period) - “05 09 13”
- Item 12e (Total Prior Inactive Service) - “00 05 19”

j. On 12 July 2019, in ABCMR Docket Number AR20190006419, the Board determined:

(1) That the applicant has participated in an exercise in Honduras, but could not determine the duration; the Board found the applicant serviced in Germany and determined the duration of his service by the certificate he provided. The Board concurred with the corrections stated in the Administrative Note(s) below.

(2) The evidence presented was sufficient to warrant a recommendation for relief. As a result, the Board recommended that all Department of the Army records of the individual concerned be corrected by amending his DD form 214 for the period ending 3 August 1988.

k. His DD Form 214 shows, he was discharged, under other than honorable conditions, in lieu of trial by court-martial. He completed 5 years, 9 months and 13 days of net active service this period. His DD Form 214 also shows in:

- Item 12f (Foreign Service) – 1 year, 5 months and 24 days
- item 13 – he was awarded the Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Driver and Mechanic Badge with Driver with Bar
- item 18 – shows in part:
 - service in Honduras April 1984
 - DD Form 214 Administratively Reissued per ABCMR proceeding AR20190006419 on 14 April 2020
 - does not list his continuous honorable service from 28 August 1982 to 25 August 1986

l. His records show no evidence of deployment to, or service completed in El Salvador.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

1. After reviewing the application, all supporting documents, and the evidence found within the military record, the Board found that relief was not warranted. The Board carefully considered the applicant's record of service, documents submitted in support of the petition, and executed a comprehensive review based on law, policy, and regulation. The Board found no evidence to support and the applicant did not provide evidence to support his foreign service contention. The Board noted the applicant's contention of his service; however, found his contention to be insufficient to award foreign service credit without verification. Therefore, the Board determined there was no error or injustice to support amending his record.
2. Additionally, based on the Board's determination to deny relief for foreign service, the Board concluded the applicant did not meet the criteria outlined in regulatory guidance for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for his service in Honduras.
3. Prior to closing the discussion, the Board reviewed and concurred with the analyst of record's administrative note below for continuous honorable active service to be added to the applicant's DD Form 214.
4. The applicant's request for a personal appearance hearing was carefully considered. In this case, the evidence of record was sufficient to render a fair and equitable decision. As a result, a personal appearance hearing is not necessary to serve the interest of equity and justice in this case.

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.



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.

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE(S):

A review of the applicant's records shows his DD Form 214 omitted administrative entries in the Remarks block. As a result, amend the DD Form 214 by adding in item 18 the entry "Continuous honorable service from 28 August 1982 to 25 August 1986."

REFERENCES:

1. Army Regulation 15-185 (ABCMR) prescribes the policies and procedures for correction of military records by the Secretary of the Army, acting through the ABCMR. The ABCMR begins its consideration of each case with the presumption of administrative regularity, which is that what the Army did was correct.

a. The ABCMR is not an investigative body and decides cases based on the evidence that is presented in the military records provided and the independent evidence submitted with the application. The applicant has the burden of proving an error or injustice by a preponderance of the evidence.

b. The ABCMR may, in its discretion, hold a hearing or request additional evidence or opinions. Additionally, it states in paragraph 2-11 that applicants do not have a right to a hearing before the ABCMR. The Director or the ABCMR may grant a formal hearing whenever justice requires.

2. Army Regulation 600-8-22 prescribes Army policy, criteria, and administrative instructions concerning individual and unit military awards.

a. The AFEM is authorized for qualifying service after 1 July 1958 in military operations within specific geographic areas during specified time periods. An individual, who was not engaged in actual combat or equally hazardous activity, must have been a bona fide member of a unit participating in, or be engaged in the direct support of, the operation for 30 consecutive or 60 nonconsecutive days provided this support involved entering the area of operations. Table 2-3 (Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal) does not show authorization for the AFEM for military operations in Honduras.

b. Area of operation is defined as the foreign territory upon which troops have actually landed or are present and specifically deployed for the direct support of the designated military operation; adjacent water areas in which ships are operating, patrolling, or providing direct support of operations; and the airspace above and adjacent to the area in which operations are being conducted.

c. Direct support is defined as services being supplied to participating forces in the area of engagement (AOE) by ground units, ships, and aircraft provided it involves actually entering the designated AOE. This includes units, ships, and aircraft providing logistic, patrol, guard, reconnaissance, or other military support within the designated AOE. AOE is defined as the foreign territory on which troops have actually landed or are present and specifically deployed for the operation; adjacent water areas in which ships are operating, patrolling, or providing direct support of the operation; and the air space above and adjacent to the area in which operations are being conducted.

3. Army Regulation 635-5 (Separation Documents), in effect at the time, governed the preparation of the DD Form 214. It stated that the DD Form 214 is a synopsis of the Soldier's most recent period of continuous active duty. It provides a brief, clear-cut record of active Army service at the time of release from active duty, retirement, or discharge. The regulation directed:

a. Item 13 (Decorations, Medals, Badges, Citations and Campaign Ribbons Awarded or Authorized), "Self-explanatory," meaning, enter all Federally recognized awards, omitting order and citations therein.

b. Item 18 (Remarks), use the remarks section for entries required by Headquarters, DA for which a separate item is not available on the form and for completing entries that are too long for their blocks. When completing a long entry, place the item number before the rest of the comment. [This version of the regulation did not provide for adding deployments to the DD Form 214].

4. Army Regulation 635-8 (Separation Processing and Documents), currently in effect, explains separation document preparation and outlines the type of entries that must be entered into each block of the DD Form 214. This regulation directs:

a. In block 13, list all federally recognized awards and decorations for all periods of service.

b. In block 18, for active-duty Soldiers deployed with their unit during their continuous period of active service, enter the statement "SERVICE IN (NAME OF COUNTRY DEPLOYED) FROM (inclusive dates)."

5. Executive Order 10977, 4 December 1961, established the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

a. The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, with ribbons and appurtenances, for award to personnel of the Armed Forces of the United States who after July- 1, 1958:

(1) Participate, or have participated, as members of United States military units in a United States military operation in which personnel of any military department participate, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in significant numbers; and

(2) Encounter, incident to such participation, foreign armed opposition, or are otherwise placed, or have been placed, in such position that, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, hostile action by; foreign armed forces was imminent even though it did not materialize.

b. The medal, with ribbons and appurtenances, shall be of appropriate design approved by the Secretary of Defense and shall be awarded by the Secretary of the military department directly concerned, and by the Secretary of the Treasury with respect to the United States Coast Guard, under uniform regulations to be issued by the Secretary of Defense.

c. The medal shall be awarded only for operations for which no other United States campaign medal is approved. For operations in which personnel of only one military department participate, the medal shall be awarded only if there is no other suitable award available to that department. No more than one medal shall be awarded to any one person, but for each succeeding operation justifying such award a suitable device may be awarded to be worn on the medal or ribbon as prescribed by appropriate regulations.

6. Army Regulation 635-8 (Separations Processing and Documents), currently in effect, provides for the preparation and distribution of the DD Form 214. It states for item 18 (Remarks) to Soldiers who have previously reenlisted without being issued a DD Form 214 and are separated with any characterization of service except "Honorable", enter "Continuous Honorable Active Service from" (first day of service for which DD Form 214 was not issued) Until (date before commencement of current enlistment).

//NOTHING FOLLOWS//