

ARMY BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CASE OF: [REDACTED]

BOARD DATE: 8 January 2025

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20240003579

APPLICANT REQUESTS: correction of records of her late family member, a deceased servicemember (SM), to show award of the Purple Heart.

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

- Request for Correction of Record Letter, 12 Feb 24
- Family Members Registers of Birth and Baptismal Records (6 pages)
- Certificate of Birth – [REDACTED] - Nephew of [REDACTED]
- Certificate of Birth – [REDACTED]
- Certificate of Marriage – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
- Family Tree (6 pages)
- Case Management Division Letter to Applicant, 24 August 2023
- Two DD Forms 149 (Application for Correction of Military Records)

FACTS:

1. The applicant did not file within the 3-year time frame provided in Title 10, U.S. Code (USC), 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 she would like to request correction to the records for her family member. Private (PVT) G.H. (the SM) entered service on 18 September 1917 and departed Hoboken, NJ on 19 April 1918, aboard the Mount Vernon ship headed to Europe. The SM was wounded on 20 July 1918 and died on 23 July 1918 from the wounds he sustained during the Battle of Marne in France. He was buried in the American cemetery in France and returned home to Beckemeyer, IL in July 1921, for final interment. Since he was wounded and later died from his wounds during battle, she is asking for the SM to be awarded the Purple Heart posthumously. A record's request and medal search has been conducted through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) with the World War I Victory Medal and World War I Victory Button the only awards authorized. His records were destroyed during the 1973 fire, she has attached a few documents that she discovered in her search and request these documents to be added to his official file and correction to his records be made. She believes the records

search that was conducted by NPRC is incomplete due to the lack of files found due to the fire in 1973 and believes the SM should be recognized for his service and his unfortunate death during battle. Her family is requesting the proper recognition for PVT G.H.'s service to their country and honored for his service which resulted in his death during World War I.

3. A review of the SM's available official record shows the following:

a. A passenger list of organizations and casualties on a United States Army Transport Service manifest, with instructions that the names of the enlisted men must be identical with those on service records. The manifest was issued by Headquarters, Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NJ on 19 April 1918, show the following:

- Number (line) / Name – 184/G.C.H. (service Number 2098170)
- Rank – PVT
- Regiment, Corps, or Department – Infantry
- Notify in Case of Emergency/Relationship – B.H./Father
- Address – Beckemeyer, IL

b. State of Illinois certification of death for PVT G.C.H, shows in item 16 and 17, the SM cause of death was, "Died in Battle in France" on 23 July 1918. His father's name (B.H.) is also listed on the certificate of death in item 9.

c. The SM's military records are not available to the Board for review. A fire destroyed approximately 18 million servicemembers' records at the National Personnel Records Center in 1973. It is believed his records were lost or destroyed in that fire. However, there were sufficient documents remaining in a reconstructed record to conduct a fair and impartial review of this case.

c. The available record is void of enlisted qualification records, records show that the SM was wounded during his service in WWI and any further documentation awarding the SM the Purple Heart.

4. The SM's family member provides

a. Six pages of family members registers of birth and baptismal records to establish familial relationship to the SM.

b. A certificate of birth of the applicant's father, which shows he is the nephew of the SM and a birth certificate of the applicant from [REDACTED] vital records. Also, included is a certification of marriage of the applicant, indicating her name change.

c. Six pages of the Family Tree showing the SM is PVT G.H. and the applicant is the daughter of the SM's nephew.

d. Case Management Division Letter to Applicant, 24 Aug 2023, indicating that the Army Review Board Agency were not able to process her application because no documentation had been provided to prove her relationship to the SM and the proof consists of birth, death, or marriage certificate showing relationship to SM or a power of attorney from the SM to the individual signing the application on behalf of the SM.

e. Two previous submitted DD Forms 149 and supporting documents dated 11 April 2023 and 13 May 2024; requesting the SM be awarded the Purple Heart. The DD Forms 149 also include the following:

- A copy of a Certificate of Memory for PVT G.H., Company I. 122d Infantry endorsed by the Commander in Chief
- A copy of a picture of the burial headstone for PVT G.H. in the American Cemetery in France and translation of inscription
- Registration card
- Photocopy of identification tag with PVT G.H. and unit name
- Letter from NPRC dated 26 January 2023, indicating that PVT G.H. is authorized the World War I Victory Button and World War I Victory Medal
- Photocopy of a newspaper article titled, "War Hero to be Buried at Beckemeyer", stating the remains of G.H. will arrive home to his parents and they will hold a service at St Anthony's church
- Certificate of Death of the SM

BOARD DISCUSSION:

1. After reviewing the application, all supporting documents, and the evidence found within the SM military record, the Board found that relief was warranted. The Board carefully considered the SM's record of service, documents submitted in support of the petition and executed a comprehensive and standard review based on law, policy and regulation. Upon review of the applicant's request and available SM's military records, the Board determined there is sufficient evidence to support the award of the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in combat during World War I. Evidence in the record show the SM entered military service on 18 September 1917 and deployed to Europe aboard the Mount Vernon on 19 April 1918. The SM was wounded in action on 20 July 1918 during the Battle of Marne and subsequently died of those wounds on 23 July 1918.

2. The Board noted the SM's death certificate, issued by the State of Illinois, clearly states the SM "Died in Battle in France," substantiating the applicant's claim. The Board acknowledged NPRC previously authorized only the World War I Victory Medal and Victory Button, the Board determined that the circumstances of the SM's death meet the

eligibility criteria for the Purple Heart under current standards. The Board commends the applicant's diligent efforts to reconstruct the SM's service history and recognizes the importance of honoring the SM's sacrifice. The Board agreed, based on the evidence presented and the absence of disqualifying information, relief is warranted. Therefore, the Board granted relief to correct the SM's military records to reflect award of the Purple Heart.

BOARD VOTE:

<u>Mbr 1</u>	<u>Mbr 2</u>	<u>Mbr 3</u>	
XXX	XXX	XXX	GRANT FULL RELIEF
:	:	:	GRANT PARTIAL RELIEF
:	:	:	GRANT FORMAL HEARING
:	:	:	DENY APPLICATION

BOARD DETERMINATION/RECOMMENDATION:

The Board determined the evidence presented is sufficient to warrant a recommendation for relief. As a result, the Board recommends that all Department of the Army records of the individual concerned be corrected by amending the Service Member's (SM) service record to show award of the Purple Heart.

X //SIGNED//

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 600-8-22 (Military Awards) prescribes Department of the Army policy, criteria, and administrative instructions concerning individual and unit military awards. The Purple Heart is awarded for a wound sustained while in action against an enemy or as a result of hostile action. Substantiating evidence must be provided to verify that the wound was the result of hostile action, the wound must have required treatment by medical personnel, and the medical treatment must have been made a matter of official.

a. Paragraph 2-8d of Army Regulation 600-8-22 governs award of the Purple Heart authorized for wounds sustained during WWI. In pertinent part, this paragraph authorizes award of the Purple Heart to any member of the Army, who during WWI, was awarded the Meritorious Service Citation Certificate signed by the Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces, or who was authorized to wear wound chevrons.

b. For award of the World War I Victory Medal for service between 6 April 1917 and 11 November 1918. This document also shows that battle clasps, service clasps, and service stars are authorized appurtenances to be worn on the World War I Victory Medal. Furthermore, paragraph 6-15a of Army Regulation 600-8-22 states, in pertinent part, that the Silver World War I Victory Button is issued to persons wounded in action during WWI and the Bronze World War I Victory Button is awarded to all others.

3. Army Regulation 635-5 (Separation Documents) in effect at the time prescribes the separation documents that will be furnished each individual who is separated from the Army. Source documents consist of all available records to include enlisted qualifications records and orders that show all decorations, service medals, campaign credits, and badges awarded or authorized.

//NOTHING FOLLOWS//