

ARMY BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CASE OF: [REDACTED]

BOARD DATE: 5 March 2025

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20240008001

APPLICANT REQUESTS: correction of deceased Servicemember (SM) WD AGO Form 53-55 (Enlisted Record and Report of Separation - Honorable Discharge), item 3 (Grade) to show staff sergeant (SSG) vice private first class (PFC).

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

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record)
- Birth Certificate
- Death Certificate
- Special Orders Number 88 dated 13 April 1945 issued by Headquarters, 116th Station Hospital, Office of the Commanding General
- WD AGO 53-55 for the period ending 9 December 1945 and an Honorable Discharge Certificate dated 9 December 1945
- Typed Statement dated 15 August 2023
- Photocopy Periodical Promotion Announcement
- Photocopy pictures (2pgs)

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, the son of the deceased SM states that his father left for the states with rank of Staff Sergeant at the completion of his service in the Philippines and Okinawa. The SM was hospitalized and registered as PFC; upon return to the states, he was honorably discharged with the grade of PFC; his SSG insignia had been lost. He does not understand why the SM served tours of duty during World War II (WWII) in Leyte and Okinawa as a SSG with the engineering battalion but returned to the states having been reduced in rank to PFC. It appears the SM's rank, when hospitalized was listed as PFC rather than SSG. The applicant thinks the error occurred at Leyte Hospital

on 13 April 1945 and on the SM Army record of discharge on 9 December 1945. The family wishes to display the correct status of rank to SSG.

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

a. On 12 October 1942, the SM was inducted into the Army of the United States. The SM was honorably released on 9 December 1945, from active duty by reason of convenience of the government and his WD AGO Form 53-55, item 3 shows "PFC" and item 38 (Highest Grade Held) shows "SSGT."

b. An Honorable Discharge Certificate dated 9 December 1945 and issued by the Separation Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, shows the SM rank as Private First Class.

c. WD AGO Form 100 (Separation Qualification Record) with the separation date of 9 December 1945, shows in block 11 (Grade) the SM's grade as Private (PVT) for 4 months and PFC for 34 months.

4. The applicant provides:

a. A State of Iowa Department of Health Certificate of Birth for the applicant that shows in section 9 that the SM is listed as the father of the child. And a State of Iowa, County Records Certificate of Death of the SM.

b. Special Orders Number 88 dated 13 April 1945 issued by Headquarters, 116th Station Hospital, Office of the Commanding General, upon released from the hospital reassigned the SM to his origin of service and the SM's rank is shown as PFC.

c. Typed statement of the applicant dated 15 August 2023, summarizes the following:

- his father's induction into the Army and his unit of assignment during service overseas and within the continental United States. The applicant states the SM completed basic training at Fort Lewis, Washington and was assigned the duty of Quarter Master Supply Technician and was promoted to the rank of SSG while at Fort Lewis.
- On 26 December 1944, Leyte was declared secure, and the SM was sent to the base hospital in Leyte for treatment where he remained in the hospital from August to September 1945. The SM reported to the applicant that his platoon shipped out before he was released and some of his military belongings were lost. Records indicate that when he entered the hospital, he

was listed as PFC rather than SSG. The SM said that he believes that his records were destroyed in the fire in St. Louis.

- the documents the applicant possess indicate that the SM's service number and shows him listed as PFC. The applicant does not understand why his father was discharged with the rank of PFC rather than SSG and would like that to be corrected for the record.
- the applicant would also like the appropriate uniform insignia to affix to the jacket that the SM was given at discharge, the dress uniform jacket the SM was wearing at the time of discharge showed he was promoted to SSG, was lost prior to his return to the states, following the completion of his tours in the Philippines and Okinawa.

d. Photocopy of a periodical/article announcing the promotion of an individual to SSG, and names shown in the article indicates similar names listed as the parents of the SM on the certificate of death issued by the state of Iowa vital records. And also, two photocopied pictures of individuals in service uniforms.

e. The available service record is void of any documentation promoting the SM to SSG.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

1. After reviewing the application, all supporting documents, and the evidence found within the SM's military record, the Board found that relief was not 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 noted the applicant, the son of the deceased SM, assertions that his father served in the Philippines and Okinawa during World War II as a SSG and was erroneously listed as a PFC upon hospitalization and subsequent discharge. The Board further acknowledged the personal statements, family records, and photocopied materials in support of his claim, including a periodical referencing a promotion to SSG and photographs of individuals in uniform provided by the applicant.

2. The Board noted the SM was inducted into the Army of the United States on 12 October 1942 and was honorably discharged on 9 December 1945. His WD AGO Form 53-55 lists his grade at separation as PFC, while item 38 (Highest Grade Held) reflects "SSGT." The Honorable Discharge Certificate and WD AGO Form 100 both corroborate the grade of PFC at the time of separation, with no documented evidence of a promotion to SSG. Additionally, Special Orders Number 88, dated 13 April 1945, issued

upon the SM's release from the hospital, also list his rank as PFC. The Board found the SM's record void of any official documentation confirming a promotion to SSG.

3. While the Board acknowledged the applicant's sincere desire to honor his father's service and the family's belief that he held the rank of SSG, the evidence provided is insufficient to warrant a correction of the official record. In the absence of verifiable documentation confirming the SM's promotion to and service in the grade of SSG, the Board determined that the information recorded on the WD AGO Form 53-55 is consistent with the available official records and regulatory guidance. Therefore, the request for correction of item 3 (Grade) to reflect SSG is denied.

BOARD VOTE:

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

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. Special Regulation 615-360-1 (Enlisted Personnel Discharge Procedures and Preparation of Separation Forms) states a DD Form 214 is furnished each enlisted person separated from the Army for any reason. WD AGO Form 24A will be used as a basis for preparation. Item 3; enter the grade in which serving at the time of separation and date of grade.
3. The WD AGO 53-55 is a form used by the U.S. Army to record and report the separation of enlisted personnel with an honorable discharge. It was used before 1 January 1950, when the DD Form 214 became the standard report of separation form. A service member typically receives a report of separation after performing active duty or at least 90 days of active duty training. The report of separation contains information that can be used to verify military service for benefits, retirement, employment, and membership in veterans' organizations.

//NOTHING FOLLOWS//