

IN THE CASE OF: [REDACTED]

BOARD DATE: 28 April 2025

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20240008538

APPLICANT REQUESTS: correction of his DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) for the period ending 13 May 1998 to show he was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal

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

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record)
- Self-Authored Letter
- DA Forms 2166-7 (Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER))
- Department of Defense High Risk Survival Certificate of Training
- DA Form 2-1 (Personnel Qualification Record)
- Squadron Operator Qualification Course Certificate
- DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal Certificate and Citation
- Email to U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) Letter
- USSOCOM FOIA response

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 pertinent part:

- Upon leaving the Army, his former unit called him back to attend an awards ceremony
- He was presented with the certificate and citation for a Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- He did not receive orders and did not completely understand the importance of this level of medal for veterans

- He has exhausted all means of requesting a copy of orders
- USSOCOM does not maintain records older than 2010
- The only evidence he has is the certificate and citation

3. The applicant provides and his service record shows:

- He enlisted in the Regular Army and entered active duty on 14 May 1986
- Personnel Qualification Record, 19 March 1998, is void of award of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; on 7 July 1995 he was assigned to United States Army Ordnance Mission Support there is not an entry for assignment to USSOCOM
- On 13 May 1998, he was honorably discharged from the Army; his DD Form 214 is void of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal Certificate shows he was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal for exceptionally meritorious service from 7 July 1995 to 13 May 1998; the command is USSOCOM, and the certificate is signed by a U.S. Navy Rear Admiral; the certificate is void of an order number; the citation accompanies the award
- Email from the applicant to USSOCOM FOIA, 22 January 2024, wherein he requests a digital copy of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the accompanying orders
- Letter from NRPC, 6 March 2024, shows the awards he was awarded; it is void of award of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Response to his FOIA request, 26 April 2024, states he may submit his request to NRPC

BOARD DISCUSSION:

1. After reviewing the application, all supporting documents, and the evidence found within the military record, the Board found that relief was warranted. The applicant's contentions, the military record, and regulatory guidance were carefully considered.
2. The applicant presented a Certificate for Award of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the citation. The Board determined this evidence was sufficient to justify correcting the applicant's DD Form 214 to add this award.

BOARD VOTE:

Mbr 1 Mbr 2 Mbr 3

██████████	██████████	██████████	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 correcting his DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) ending 13 May 1998 to show he was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

5/6/2025

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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 states the Defense Meritorious Service Medal was established by Executive Order 12019, 3 November 1977. It is awarded in the name of the Secretary of Defense to servicemembers of the Armed Forces of the United States who, after 3 November 1977, distinguished himself or herself by noncombat meritorious achievement or service. The Defense Meritorious Service Medal will not be used to recognize meritorious service or achievement under combat conditions. The Bronze Star Medal is the appropriate award to recognize meritorious service or achievement at the Defense Meritorious Service Medal level. The prescribing directive, including processing instructions and approval authorities, for the Defense Meritorious Service Medal is Department of Defense Manual 1348.33, Volume 4. As with all personal decorations, formal recommendations, approval through the chain of command, and announcement in orders are required.

//NOTHING FOLLOWS//