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▶▶▶ February 2013 ◀◀◀

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How Can I Upgrade My Military Discharge?

I have received some requests on how to upgrade a military discharge. Here is some information that I received.

Each of the military services maintains a discharge review board with authority to change, correct, or modify discharges or dismissals that are not issued by a sentence of a general court martial. The discharge review board has no authority to address medical discharges. The veteran or - if deceased or incompetent - the surviving spouse, next of kin, or legal representative may apply for a review of discharge by writing to the military department concerned, using Department of Defense Form 293 (DD-293). For the convenience of veterans, local VA regional offices can normally supply these forms. You can contact your nearest VA regional office by telephone at 1-800-827-1000. If more than 15 years have passed since discharge, DD Form 149 should be used for applications to the Board for the Correction of Military Records or, for Navy and Marine Corps, to the Board for the Correction of Naval Records.

Service discharge review boards conduct hearings in Washington, D.C. Traveling review boards also visit selected cities to hear cases. In addition, the Army sends teams to locations to videotape the testimony of applicants for later review by a board in Washington, D.C.

Discharges awarded as a result of unauthorized absence in excess of 180 days make persons ineligible for VA benefits regardless of action taken by discharge review boards, unless VA determines there were compelling circumstances for the absences. In addition, boards for the correction of military (or naval) records may consider such cases. Applications to these boards are made with DD Form 149. You should also be able to obtain this form from your local VA regional office.

Veterans with disabilities incurred or aggravated during active military service may qualify for medical or related benefits regardless of separation and characterization of service. Veterans separated administratively under other than honorable conditions may require that their discharge be reviewed for possible recharacterization, provided they file their appeal within 15 years of the date of separation.

Questions regarding the review of a discharge may be addressed to the appropriate discharge review board at the following addresses:

Army:

Army Discharge Review Board
Attention: SFMR-RBB, Room 200A
1941 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202-4504

Navy and USMC:

Navy Discharge Review Board
801 N. Randolph St., Suite 905
Arlington, VA 22203

Air Force:

Air Force Military Personnel Center
Attention: DPMDOA1
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-6001

Coast Guard:

Coast Guard
Attention: GPE1
Washington, DC 20593

Forms needed, can be downloaded from the internet by using this web site:

<http://www.va.gov/forms/default.asp>