

## Review and Upgrade of Military Discharges

The following information is from the Department of Veteran's Affairs [Guide to Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents](#) and is provided as a courtesy. We encourage you to check directly with the VA for updates or changes:

- **Military Service Record**  
Submit **DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Records** to the relevant service branch. (You can either view and download the form, or right-click the form and select "Save link as" or otherwise save the file and then open it.)
- **Discharge Status**  
Submit **DD Form 293, Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States** to the relevant service branch.

### Correction of Military Records

The secretary of a military department, acting through a board for correction of military records, has authority to change any military record when necessary to correct an error or remove an injustice. A correction board may consider applications for correction of a military record, including a review of a discharge issued by courts martial.

The veteran, survivor or legal representative generally must file a request for correction within three years after discovery of an alleged error or injustice. The board may excuse failure to file within the prescribed time, however, if it finds it would be in the interest of justice to do so. It is an applicant's responsibility to show why the filing of the application was delayed and why it would be in the interest of justice for the board to consider it despite the delay.

To justify any correction, it is necessary to show to the satisfaction of the board that the alleged entry or omission in the records was in error or unjust. Applications should include all available evidence, such as signed statements of witnesses or a brief of arguments supporting the requested correction. Application is made with DD Form 149, available at VA offices, from veterans organizations or from the Internet (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/index.htm>).

### Review of Discharges

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 courts-martial. The board has no authority to address medical discharges. The veteran or, if the veteran is 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 DoD Form 293. This form may be obtained at a VA regional office, from

veterans organizations or from the

Internet: <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/index.htm> . However, if the discharge was more than 15 years ago, a veteran must petition the appropriate service Board for Correction of Military Records using DoD Form 149, which is discussed in the “Correction of Military Records” section of this booklet. A discharge review is conducted by a review of an applicant’s record and, if requested, by a hearing before the board.

Discharges awarded as a result of a continuous period 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 absence. Boards for the correction of military records also may consider such cases.

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 request 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 should be addressed to the appropriate discharge review board at the address listed on DoD Form 293.