



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER  
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, TEXAS**

## **Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **1. What is the purpose of the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records?**

**Answer:** The Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records is the highest level of administrative review within the Department of the Air Force.

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### **2. What is the setup of the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records?**

**Answer:** The AFBCMR operates within the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. The board consists of civilians in the executive part of the Department of the Air Force who are appointed and serve at the pleasure of the Secretary of the Air Force.

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### 3. What are the responsibilities of the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records?

**Answer:** The board considers all individual applications properly brought before it. In appropriate cases, it directs correction of military records to remove an error or injustice, or recommends such correction.

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### 4. Who is eligible to request correction of a military record?

**Answer:** In most cases, the applicant is a member or former member of the Air Force, since the request is personal to the applicant and relates to his or her military records. An applicant with a proper interest may request correction of another person's military records when that person is incapable of acting on his or her own behalf, is missing, or is deceased. Depending on the circumstances, a child, spouse, parent or other close relative, an heir, or a legal representative (such as a guardian or executor) of the member or former member may be able to show a proper interest. Applicants will send proof of proper interest with the application when requesting correction of another person's military record.

Title 10, United States Code, Section 1552, is the law governing correction of military records. This statute authorizes the Secretary of the Air Force to correct any military record when "necessary to correct an error or injustice." The purpose of this statute was to relieve the Congress from consideration of private bills to correct errors or injustices in military records. The statute provides the SAF to act through a board of Air Force civilians in considering applications for corrections of military records. AFI 36-2603, Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records, implements the statute within the Air Force.

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### 5. What should applicants do before applying to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records?

**Answer:** The applicant should exhaust all other available administrative remedies. The AFBCMR will consider a case only after the applicant has exhausted other available avenues of appeal. The board will return the application if the applicant has not first sought relief through the appropriate administrative process.

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### 6. When should applicants apply to the AFBCMR?

**Answer:** Applicants should submit their request within 3 years after they discover, or reasonable could have discovered, the error or injustice. The AFBCMR reviews the merits of untimely applications. If the application is found to be meritorious, the timeliness can be waived in the interest of justice. The AFBCMR may waive the 3-year limitation and consider untimely applications in the interest of justice. Not all waivers will be granted.

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### 7. How do I apply to the AFBCMR?

**Answer:** Applicants should submit a DD Form 149, *Application for Correction of Military Record*. This form can be acquired online or from any Air Force Military Personnel Flight or publications distribution office. Applicants must mail the form to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (SAF/MRBC), 3351 Celmers Lane, Joint Base Andrews NAF Washington, MD 20762. Be sure to attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case and sign item 16 on the form.

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## 8. How do I best support my request for a discharge upgrade?

**Answer:** The Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records will correct military records only if can be proven that there is an error or injustice. The applicant has to provide sufficient evidence of probable material error or injustice. Normally, the best evidence is signed statements from persons who have direct knowledge or involvement, or copies of records that support the case.

It is not enough to provide the names of witnesses. The AFBCMR will not contact the applicant's witnesses to obtain statements. It is up to the applicant to get signed statements and attach them with their request. Normally, the best evidence includes statements from persons who have direct knowledge or involvement. Character references from community leaders and others who know the applicant are helpful if the applicant is requesting clemency based on post-service activities and accomplishments. This is a general rule, however.

The applicant must provide their own statement on the DD Form 149. Applicants can also put their statement on plain paper and attach it to the form. Limit the statement to no more than 25 pages. Explain what happened and why it is an error or injustice in simple, direct terms.

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## 9. Who can assist me with the application process?

**Answer:** Most applicants represent themselves. If the request is complex, they may want someone to represent them. Many veteran service organizations have staff members who will represent them in applying to the AFBCMR. Applicants may obtain a list of these organizations by writing to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (SAF/MRBC), 3351 Celmers Lane, Joint Base Andrews NAF Washington, MD 20762.

Applicants may also hire a lawyer to represent them at their own expense. The applicant should name their representative on the DD Form 149, in item 7. The executive director of the AFBCMR must approve any representative other than a veteran service organization staff member or a lawyer.

For applicants who name a representative, the AFBCMR will normally work with the representative rather than directly with the applicant. Advice and guidance is available from many sources. Personnel specialists can advise applicants on personnel issues. Veteran service organizations will advise applicants who choose to represent themselves. Applicants may discuss their case with an AFBCMR staff member, or they may write to the AFBCMR, and a staff member will respond to their questions.

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## 10. Do applicants have a right to have a hearing before the board?

**Answer:** The board in its sole discretion determines whether to grant a hearing. Applicants do not have a right to a hearing before the board.

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## 11. Can I request a personal appearance before the AFBCMR?

**Answer:** Applicants may request a personal appearance before the AFBCMR by checking the appropriate box on DD Form 149, item 6. The AFBCMR will decide whether a personal appearance is necessary to decide the applicant's case. All appearances before the AFBCMR are at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. The applicant must handle their own travel expenses. The AFBCMR grants very few personal appearances, so applicants should try to fully present their case in writing. If the applicants request for a personal appearance is granted, the AFBCMR will provide them with the necessary details.

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## 12. How is an advisory opinion formed on my application?

**Answer:** After the application is received, one or more offices may prepare an advisory opinion on the applicant's case. The advisory opinion will be sent to the AFBCMR with the applicant's case file. The AFBCMR will provide a copy of the advisory to the applicant for their comment.

Remember that the advisory opinion is only a recommendation. The AFBCMR will make the decision on the applicant's case. The AFBCMR will ask for the applicant's comments on the advisory opinion within 30 days. The applicant may request an additional 30 days if needed. Reasonable requests are normally granted.

It may be unnecessary for the applicant to comment on the advisory opinion. If the applicant has nothing further to say, they do not have to respond. Failure to comment on an advisory opinion does not mean the applicant has to agree. It will not prevent a full and fair consideration of the application.

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## 13. What happens after the vote on my case?

**Answer:** Following the vote on the case, the panel chair signs a record of proceeding. The record of proceeding includes the rationale for the decision in the applicant's case. Once finalized, the decision is mailed to the applicant. If relief is granted, the applicant's records will be corrected and finance personnel will review the case to see if the applicant is due any monetary benefits. The AFBCMR is the highest level of administrative appeal and provides the final Air Force decision. If the AFBCMR denies the case, the applicant may request reconsideration only if the applicant has new and relevant information to submit in support of their contention. Applicants may always file a suit in the court system.

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## 14. What is the purpose of the Air Force Discharge Review Board?

**Answer:** The Air Force Discharge Review Board, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, reviews applicant's administrative discharges based on standards of equity, propriety and/or to change the reason for discharge.

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## 15. Will the board reconsider my DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record, if it has disapproved my request before?

**Answer:** The board may reconsider an application if the applicant submits newly discovered relevant evidence that was not available when the application was previously considered.

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## 16. Is the applicant entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred during the correction process?

**Answer:** The Air Force has no authority to pay expenses of any kind incurred by or on behalf of an applicant in connection with a correction of military records.

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## 17. How long does it take to process an application?

**Answer:** Administrative applications take about 3 months to complete. Applications requiring formal consideration by the AFBCMR have averaged upwards of 8 to 10 months to process.

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**18. Is it necessary to submit a request for correction through an intermediate level review forum before submitting an application to the AFBCMR?**

**Answer:** No. However, all potential sources of solution should be exhausted before an application will be considered by the AFBCMR.

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**19. I have a mandatory date of separation approaching. Can the AFBCMR suspend this action while my application is under review?**

**Answer:** No. While every effort will be made to process an application involving a retirement/separation, the fact that an application has been submitted does not provide a basis to suspend the action. However, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the AFBCMR is aware of a pending retirement or separation date.

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**20. If my application must go to the AFBCMR for final decision, will I receive copies of the evaluations prepared by the evaluating office and will I have an opportunity to present any final matters directly to the board?**

**Answer:** Yes. If any advisory does not fully support the relief requested, a copy will be referred to the applicant or counsel. The applicant/counsel will have 30 days from the date of the referral correspondence to present any new statements or documents directly to the AFBCMR.

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**21. Why was my case file returned to Joint Base San Antonio - Randolph for further review?**

**Answer:** New issues may have been presented or new evidence was furnished by the applicant/counsel. The board requires full information and advice to make an informed decision.

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**22. Who will know about my case?**

**Answer:** Submission of an application is a private matter between the applicant and the board/board staff and Privacy Act constraints apply. The board is not an investigative body and will not contact witnesses.

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**23. Who receives copies of the decisional documents?**

**Answer:** Copies of the Record of Proceedings are furnished only to the applicant or the applicant's counsel. If a correction to the applicant's records were approved, the Memorandum from the board will be furnished to the appropriate OPR to make the necessary corrections involved.

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**24. How long will it take to get paid once the record is corrected?**

**Answer:** Normally 60 - 90 days.

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**25. Can I receive compensation (damages) from the AFBCMR based on the injustice I suffered?**

**Answer:** No. Monetary settlement occurs only as a result of correcting the military record.