

VETERANS CORNER

Review of Discharge from Military Service

Each of the military services maintains a discharge review board with authority to change, correct or modify discharges or dismissals not issued by a sentence of a general court-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 DD Form 293, "Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States." This form may be obtained from the Internet or from our office.

However, if the discharge was more than 15 years ago, a veteran must petition the appropriate Service's Board for Correction of Military Records using DD Form 149, "Application for Correction of Military Records Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552." 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 duty 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.

Our office can provide forms and directions on how request a review. Questions regarding the review of a discharge should be addressed to the appropriate discharge review board at the address listed on DD Form 293.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license. We can also issue Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.