

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 36-2602

12 JANUARY 2017



Personnel

**APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUAL
DISCHARGE OF MEMBER OF A
CIVILIAN OR CONTRACTUAL GROUP
DETERMINED TO QUALIFY FOR
ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE**

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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(Mr. Daniel Sitterly)

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This instruction establishes procedures for a person to apply and for the Air Force to process applications for discharge of civilians or contractors who claim they are part of a recognized group that has been determined by the Secretary of the Air Force to have been active duty for the purpose of all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. This instruction implements Public Law 95-202, Section 401 (codified as Title 38, United States Code (USC), Section 106) and Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1000.20, *Active Duty Service Determinations for Civilian and Contractual Groups* and Air Force Policy Directive 36-32 *Military Retirements and Separations*. This instruction requires the collection and or maintenance of information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974. The authority to collect and maintain the prescribed records in this Instruction are Title 10, USC, Section 8013, and the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF). The applicable System of Records Notice (SORN) F036 AFPC P, *Separation Case Files (officer and airman)*, is available at <http://dpcl.defense.gov/Privacy/Sorns.aspx>. Forms adopted by this instruction have the required Privacy Act Statement. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this instruction are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) maintained in the Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS). This publication may not be supplemented or further implemented/extended. The authorities to waive wing/unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier ("T-0, T-1, T-2, T-3") number following the compliance statement. See AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms*

Management, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to the Publication OPR for non-tiered compliance items.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This instruction has been substantially revised and requires a complete review. Major changes include adding roles and responsibilities, clarifying the purpose and the audience.

Chapter 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1. The Secretary of the Air Force . Acts as the Executive Agent of the Secretary of Defense and in accordance with DoDD 1000.20, to determine whether the service rendered by a civilian or contractual group is considered active duty service to the United States.

1.2. Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC)/Commander (CC). Appoints personnel to serve as Individual Service Review Board members. The board consists of military members in the grade of lieutenant colonel or higher, and civilian members, grade GS-12 or higher.

1.3. Individual Service Review Board. Three members constitute a quorum. Evaluates the evidence presented by the applicant. Decides whether the applicant was a member of a recognized group during dates of its qualification. Decides whether to approve the application for discharge. Determines the period and character of the applicant's service.

1.4. AFPC Transitions Operations Branch, Retirements and Separations Section(DP2STM). Corresponds with individuals interested in submitting an application. Returns incomplete applications to the applicant stating the reason for its return. Processes completed applications for the Individual Service Review Board to review and make a determination. Serves as recorder for the Individual Service Review Board. Sends approved applicants, or next of kin in the case of DD Form 1300s, the DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, DD Form 256AF, *Honorable Discharge* certificate, DD Form 1300, *Report of Casualty* (if applicable) and any applicable awards and decorations garnered for the timeframe.

1.5. AFPC Casualty Matters and Mortuary Affairs Division (AFPC/DPFC). Issues DD Form 1300, including military pay grade, to the next of kin or a designated representative, according to Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1300.18, *Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies and Procedures*, and AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*.

1.6. AFPC Records Management Branch (AFPC/DP1OR). Files a copy of the application, supporting evidence, and DD Form 214 of approved cases in the Master Personnel Records Groups maintained at the National Personnel Records Center, St Louis, MO 63132.

Chapter 2

APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1. Applying for Discharge.

2.1.1. Who May Apply. A member of a recognized group. A spouse, next of kin, or legal representative may apply on behalf of a deceased or mentally incompetent person. Proof of death or mental incompetency accompanies such an application.

2.1.2. Where to Apply. Send application for discharge to the Transitions Operations Branch, (AFPC/DP2STM), 550 C Street West, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph TX 78150.

2.1.3. How to Apply. The member fills out DD Form 2168, *Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group Certified To Have Performed Active Duty With the Armed Forces of the US*, or, write a letter.

2.1.3.1. The member obtains DD Form 2168 from <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/index.htm>, AFPC/DP2STM, 550 C Street West, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph TX 78150, or the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), 9700 Page Boulevard, St Louis, MO 63132.

2.1.3.2. The application should be as complete as possible; the burden of proof is on the applicant. The member should provide all available evidence to document membership in the group and what services were performed.

2.1.3.3. Documentation may include:

- 2.1.3.3.1. Flight logbooks.
- 2.1.3.3.2. Separation or discharge certificates.
- 2.1.3.3.3. Mission orders.
- 2.1.3.3.4. Identification cards.
- 2.1.3.3.5. Contracts.
- 2.1.3.3.6. Personnel action forms.
- 2.1.3.3.7. Employment records.
- 2.1.3.3.8. Education certificates and diplomas.
- 2.1.3.3.9. Pay vouchers.
- 2.1.3.3.10. Certificates of awards.
- 2.1.3.3.11. Casualty information.

2.1.3.4. The Air Force can not under any circumstances provide or pay for legal representation for the applicant.

2.2. Screening the Applications. AFPC/DP2STM reviews the application and does one of the following:

2.2.1. Refers the application to another military department and sends a written notice or a copy of the referral letter to the applicant.

2.2.2. Returns the application without prejudice if the Secretary of the Air Force has not determined the applicant's group qualifies for active duty service equivalency. The individual may resubmit the application after the Secretary determines that his or her group qualifies for active duty service equivalency.

2.2.3. If the application is a group application submitting for active duty service equivalency determination, refers application to the DoD C/MSRB, Personnel Security Directorate, 1500 West Perimeter Road, Suite 3700, Joint Base Andrews, NAF, MD 20762-7002. Refer to DODI 1000.20 for guidance on such applications.

2.2.4. Returns the application if it is incomplete.

2.2.5. Refers all complete applications to the Individual Service Review Board for further consideration.

2.3. Individual Service Review Board.

2.3.1. The AFPC/CC establishes the Individual Service Review Board as necessary.

2.3.2. The Board consists of military members in grade lieutenant colonel or higher, and civilian members, grade GS-12 or higher, appointed by the AFPC/CC. Three members constitute a quorum. The senior member acts as Board chairperson. A nonvoting member keeps a record of the Board's actions on an application.

2.3.3. AFPC/DP2STM provides administrative support to the Board.

2.4. Processing the Application.

2.4.1. Individual Service Review Board meets in closed session to consider the application, the evidence submitted, and other relevant information. Applicants or their representatives do not have the right to appear before the Board.

2.4.2. The Board:

2.4.2.1. Evaluates the evidence.

2.4.2.2. Decides whether the applicant was a member of a recognized group during dates of its qualification based on a preponderance of evidence.

2.4.2.3. Decides whether to approve the application for discharge.

2.4.2.4. Determines the period and character of the applicant's service.

2.5. If an Application Is Approved.

2.5.1. If the Board approves an application for discharge and determines that it should be honorable, AFPC/DP2STM will issue the applicant a DD Form 256AF and a DD Form 214, as appropriate and in accordance with governing DoD guidance and AFI 36-3202, *Separation Documents*. In accordance with DoDD 1000.20, AFPC/DP2STM will: **(T-0)**.

2.5.1.1. Determine and enter a military grade on the DD Form 214 only if the administrator of Veterans' Affairs requests it. **(T-1)**.

2.5.1.2. Enter a pay grade on the DD Form 214 only for individuals who were killed or received service-related injuries or disease during the approved period of service. **(T-1)**.

2.5.1.3. Ensure each DD Form 214 contains the statement in the “Remarks” section: “This document, issued under section 401 of Public Law 95-202 (38 U.S.C. Section 106), administratively establishes active duty service for the purposes of the Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.” **(T-0)**.

2.5.2. If the Board approves an application for discharge but determines that it should be "under honorable conditions (general) discharge, it forwards the case to the Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council (SAFPC) for final decision by the AF Personnel Board. AFPC/DP2STM then issues the appropriate discharge certificate and a DD Form 214 to the applicant.

2.5.3. If the member dies or is declared missing during the period of equivalent active military duty, the Casualty Matters and Mortuary Affairs Division (AFPC/DPFC) will issue DD Form 1300, including military pay grade, to the next of kin or a designated representative, according to DoDI 1300.18, and AFI 36-3002. **(T-0)**.

2.6. If an Application Is Denied.

2.6.1. Once the Board has decided the case, AFPC/DP2STM will make notification: **(T-1)**.

2.6.1.1. If the Board denied the application for discharge because there is insufficient evidence to show that the applicant belonged to a qualifying group.

2.6.1.2. If the Board determined that the service cannot be characterized as “under honorable conditions (general)” discharge.

2.6.2. Individuals have 60 days from the date of this notice to submit additional evidence or information to AFPC/DP2STM, 550 C Street West, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph TX 78150.

2.6.3. If additional evidence is received within 60 days the Board reviews the case again. If the Board determines that the application now merits approval, it proceeds according to paragraph 2.5.

2.6.4. If additional evidence is not submitted or if, after review, the Board determines that the application should be denied, it forwards the case to the SAFPC for final decision.

2.6.5. AFPC/DP2STM will notify applicant of the final decision. **(T-1)**.

2.6.6. If the application is denied, the Board returns it without prejudicing any later consideration.

2.7. Discharge Upgrades and Appeals.

2.7.1. If applicant is approved for a General Discharge, he/she may apply to the Air Force Discharge Review Board for discharge upgrade under DoDI 1332.28, *Discharge Review Board (DRB) Procedures and Standards*. If the applicant’s application is disapproved by the DRB, he/she may appeal to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records under AFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records*.

2.7.2. To appeal the characterization of a discharge, submit DD Form 149, *Application for Correction of Military Record Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S.C., Section 1552*, to the Secretary of the Air Force through the Air Force Review Boards Office (SAF/MRBC).

2.8. Disposition of Documents. AFPC/DP2STM will send a copy of the application, supporting evidence, and DD Form 214 to the Records Management Branch (AFPC/DP1OR) to file in the Master Personnel Records Groups maintained at the National Personnel Records Center, St Louis, MO 63132, for approved cases. AFPC/DP2STM sends copies of DD Form 214 to: **(T-1)**.

2.8.1. The applicant.

2.8.2. The Veterans' Administration.

GABRIEL O. CAMARILLO
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and
Reserve Affairs)

Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

References

Public Law 95-202, Section 401 (codified as Title 38, USC, Section 106)

DoDI 1300.18, *Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies and Procedures*, 14 August 2009

DoDI 1332.28, *Discharge Review Board (DRB) Procedures and Standards*, 4 April 2004

DoDD 1000.20, *Active Duty Service Determinations for Civilian and Contractual Groups*, 21 November 2003

AFPD 36-26, *Total Force Development*, 22 December 2015

AFPD 36-32 *Military Retirements and Separations*.

AFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records*, 5 March 2012

AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*, 8 February 2012

AFI 36-3202, *Separation Documents*, 30 September 2009

Prescribed forms

None

Adopted Form

DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*

DD Form 256AF, *Honorable Discharge certificate*

DD Form 1300, *Report of Casualty*

DD Form 2168, *Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of a Group Certified to Have Performed Active Duty with the US Armed Forces of the US*

Terms

Active Military Service—See Title 38, U. S. C. Section 101.

Civilian or Contractual Group—An organization whose members rendered service to the US Air Force or a predecessor organization during a period of armed conflict. In that capacity the members were considered civilian employees with the Armed Forces or contractors with the US Government, providing direct support to the Armed Forces. An example of such a group is the Women's Air Force Service Pilots, who were Federal civilian employees attached to the US Army Air Force during World War II.

Discharge—Complete severance from the active military service. The discharge includes a reason and characterization of service.

Recognized Group—A group whose service the Secretary of the Air Force has determined was "active duty for the purposes of all laws administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs," for benefits to such individuals as defined under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 101.