

§ 70.5 Procedures.

(a) Discharge review procedures are prescribed in § 70.8.

(b) Discharge Review Standards are prescribed in § 70.9 and constitute the basic guidelines for the determination whether to grant or deny relief in a discharge review.

(c) Complaint Procedures about decisional documents are prescribed in § 70.10.

§ 70.6 Information requirements.

(a) *Reporting requirements.* (1) The reporting requirement prescribed in § 70.8(n) is assigned Report Control Symbol DD-M(SA)1489.

(2) All reports must be consistent with DoD Directive 5000.11, "Data Elements and Data Codes Standardization Program," December 7, 1964.

(b) *Use of standard data elements.* The data requirements prescribed by this part shall be consistent with DoD 5000.12-M, "DoD Manual for Standard Data Elements," December 1981. Any reference to a date should appear as (YYMMDD), while any name entry should appear as (Last name, first name, middle initial).

§ 70.7 Effective date and implementation.

This part is effective immediately for the purpose of preparing implementing documents. DoD Directive 1332.28, March 29, 1978, is officially canceled, effective November 27, 1982. This part applies to all discharge review proceedings conducted on or after November 27, 1982. § 70.10 applies to all complaint proceedings conducted on or after September 28, 1982. Final action on complaints shall not be taken until September 28, 1982, unless earlier corrective action is requested expressly by the applicant (or the applicant's counsel) whose case is the subject of the decisional document. If earlier corrective action is requested, it shall be taken in accordance with § 70.10.

§ 70.8 Discharge review procedures.

(a) *Application for review*—(1) *General.* Applications shall be submitted to the appropriate DRB on DD Form 293, "Application for Review of Discharge or Separation from the Armed Forces of the United States," with such other

statements, affidavits, or documentation as desired. It is to the applicant's advantage to submit such documents with the application or within 60 days thereafter in order to permit a thorough screening of the case. The DD Form 293 is available at most DoD installations and regional offices of the Veterans Administration, or by writing to: DA Military Review Boards Agency, Attention: SFBA (Reading Room), Room 1E520, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310.

(2) *Timing.* A motion or request for review must be made within 15 years after the date of discharge or dismissal.

(3) *Applicant's responsibilities.* An applicant may request a change in the character of or reason for discharge (or both).

(i) *Character of discharge.* Block 7 of DD Form 293 provides an applicant an opportunity to request a specific change in character of discharge (for example, General Discharge to Honorable Discharge; Other than Honorable Discharge to General or Honorable Discharge). Only a person separated on or after 1 October 1982 while in an entry level status may request a change from Other than Honorable Discharge to Entry Level Separation. A request for review from an applicant who does not have an Honorable Discharge shall be treated as a request for a change to an Honorable Discharge unless the applicant requests a specific change to another character of discharge.

(ii) *Reason for discharge.* Block 7 of DD Form 293 provides an applicant an opportunity to request a specific change in the reason for discharge. If an applicant does not request a specific change in the reason for discharge, the DRB shall presume that the request for review does not involve a request for change in the reason for discharge. Under its responsibility to examine the propriety and equity of an applicant's discharge, the DRB shall change the reason for discharge if such a change is warranted.

(iii) The applicant must ensure that issues submitted to the DRB are consistent with the request for change in discharge set forth in block 7 of the DD Form 293. If an ambiguity is created by a difference between an applicant's issue and the request in block 7, the

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DRB shall respond to the issue in the context of the action requested in block 7. In the case of a hearing, the DRB shall attempt to resolve the ambiguity under paragraph (a)(5) of this section.

(4) *Request for consideration of specific issues.* An applicant may request the DRB to consider specific issues which, in the opinion of the applicant, form a basis for changing the character of or reason for discharge, or both. In addition to the guidance set forth in this section, applicants should consult the other sections in this part (particularly paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of this section and §§70.9 and 70.10 before submitting issues for consideration by the DRB.

(i) *Submission of issues on DD Form 293.* Issues must be provided to the DRB on DD Form 293 before the DRB closes the review process for deliberation.

(A) *Issues must be clear and specific.* An issue must be stated clearly and specifically in order to enable the DRB to understand the nature of the issue and its relationship to the applicant's discharge.

(B) *Separate listing of issues.* Each issue submitted by an applicant should be listed separately. Submission of a separate statement for each issue provides the best means of ensuring that the full import of the issue is conveyed to the DRB.

(C) *Use of DD Form 293.* DD Form 293 provides applicants with a standard format for submitting issues to the DRB, and its use:

(1) Provides a means for an applicant to set forth clearly and specifically those matters that, in the opinion of the applicant, provide a basis for changing the discharge;

(2) Assists the DRB in focusing on those matters considered to be important by an applicant;

(3) Assists the DRB in distinguishing between a matter submitted by an applicant in the expectation that it will be treated as a decisional issue under paragraph (e) of this section, and those matters submitted simply as background or supporting materials;

(4) Provides the applicant with greater rights in the event that the applicant later submits a complaint under

§70.10(d)(1)(iii) concerning the decisional document;

(5) Reduces the potential for disagreement as to the content of an applicant's issue.

(D) *Incorporation by reference.* If the applicant makes an additional written submission, such as a brief, in support of the application, the applicant may incorporate by reference specific issues set forth in the written submission in accordance with the guidance on DD Form 293. The reference shall be specific enough for the DRB to identify clearly the matter being submitted as an issue. At a minimum, it shall identify the page, paragraph, and sentence incorporated. Because it is to the applicant's benefit to bring such issues to the DRB's attention as early as possible in the review, applicants who submit a brief are strongly urged to set forth all such issues as a separate item at the beginning of the brief. If it reasonably appears that the applicant inadvertently has failed expressly to incorporate an issue which the applicant clearly identifies as an issue to be addressed by the DRB, the DRB shall respond to such an issue under paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section.

(E) *Effective date of the new Form DD 293.* With respect to applications received before November 27, 1982, the DRB shall consider issues clearly and specifically stated in accordance with the rules in effect at the time of submission. With respect to applications received on or after November 27, 1982, if the applicant submits an obsolete DD Form 293, the DRB shall accept the application, but shall provide the applicant with a copy of the new form and advise the applicant that it will only respond to issues submitted on the new form in accordance with this part.

(ii) *Relationship of issues to character of or reason for discharge.* If the application applies to both character of and reason for discharge, the applicant is encouraged, but not required, to identify the issue as applying to the character of or reason for discharge (or both). Unless the issue is directed at the reason for discharge expressly or by necessary implication, the DRB will presume that it applies solely to the character of discharge.

(iii) *Relationship of issues to the standards for discharge review.* The DRB reviews discharges on the basis of issues of propriety and equity. The standards used by the DRB are set forth in § 70.9. The applicant is encouraged to review those standards before submitting any issue upon which the applicant believes a change in discharge should be based.

(A) *Issues concerning the equity of the discharge.* An issue of equity is a matter that involves a determination whether a discharge should be changed under the equity standards of § 70.9. This includes any issue, submitted by the applicant in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(i) of this section, that is addressed to the discretionary authority of the DRB.

(B) *Issues concerning the propriety of a discharge.* An issue of propriety is a matter that involves a determination whether a discharge should be changed under the propriety standards of § 70.9. This includes an applicant's issue, submitted in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(i) of this section, in which the applicant's position is that the discharge must be changed because of an error in the discharge pertaining to a regulation, statute, constitutional provision, or other source of law (including a matter that requires a determination whether, under the circumstances of the case, action by military authorities was arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion). Although a numerical reference to the regulation or other sources of law alleged to have been violated is not necessarily required, the context of the regulation or a description of the procedures alleged to have been violated normally must be set forth in order to inform the DRB adequately of the basis for the applicant's position.

(C) *The applicant's identification of an issue.* The applicant is encouraged, but not required, to identify an issue as pertaining to the propriety or the equity to the discharge. This will assist the DRB in assessing the relationship of the issue to propriety or equity under paragraph (e)(1)(iii) of this section.

(iv) *Citation of matter from decisions.* The primary function of the DRB involves the exercise of discretion on a case-by-case basis. See § 70.9(b)(3). Ap-

plicants are not required to cite prior decisions as the basis for a change in discharge. If the applicant wishes to bring the DRB's attention to a prior decision as background or illustrative material, the citation should be placed in a brief or other supporting documents. If, however, it is the applicant's intention to submit an issue that sets forth specific principles and facts from a specific cited decision, the following requirements apply with respect to applications received on or after November 27, 1982.

(A) The issue must be set forth or expressly incorporated in the "Applicant's Issue" portion of DD Form 293.

(B) If an applicant's issue cites a prior decision (of the DRB, another Board, an agency, or a court), the applicant shall describe the specific principles and facts that are contained in the prior decision and explain the relevance of cited matter to the applicant's case.

(C) To ensure timely consideration of principles cited from unpublished opinions (including decisions maintained by the Armed Forces Discharge Review Board/Corrective Board Reading Room), applicants must provide the DRB with copies of such decisions or of the relevant portion of the treatise, manual, or similar source in which the principles were discussed. At the applicant's request, such materials will be returned.

(D) If the applicant fails to comply with the requirements in paragraphs (a)(4)(iv) (A), (B), and (C), the decisional document shall note the defect, and shall respond to the issue without regard to the citation.

(5) *Identification by the DRB of issues submitted by an applicant.* The applicant's issues shall be identified in accordance with this section after a review of the materials noted under paragraph (c)(4), is made.

(i) *Issues on DD Form 293.* The DRB shall consider all items submitted as issues by an applicant on DD Form 293 (or incorporated therein) in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(i). With respect to applications submitted before November 27, 1982, the DRB shall consider all issues clearly and specifically stated in accordance with the rules in effect at the time of the submission.

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(ii) *Amendment of issues.* The DRB shall not request or instruct an applicant to amend or withdraw any matter submitted by the applicant. Any amendment or withdrawal of an issue by an applicant shall be confirmed in writing by the applicant. Nothing in this provision:

(A) Limits the DRB's authority to question an applicant as to the meaning of such matter;

(B) Precludes the DRB from developing decisional issues based upon such questions;

(C) Prevents the applicant from amending or withdrawing such matter any time before the DRB closes the review process for deliberation; or

(D) Prevents the DRB from presenting an applicant with a list of proposed decisional issues and written information concerning the right of the applicant to add to, amend, or withdraw the applicant's submission. The written information will state that the applicant's decision to take such action (or decline to do so) will not be used against the applicant in the consideration of the case.

(iii) *Additional issues identified during a hearing.* The following additional procedure shall be used during a hearing in order to promote the DRB's understanding of an applicant's presentation. If, before closing the case for deliberation, the DRB believes that an applicant has presented an issue not listed on DD Form 293, the DRB may so inform the applicant, and the applicant may submit the issue in writing or add additional written issues at that time. This does not preclude the DRB from developing its own decisional issues.

(6) *Notification of possible bar to benefits.* Written notification shall be made to each applicant whose record indicates a reason for discharge that bars receipt of benefits under 38 U.S.C. 3103(a). This notification will advise the applicant that separate action by the Board for Correction of Military or Naval Records or the Veterans Administration may confer eligibility for VA benefits. Regarding the bar to benefits based upon the 180 days consecutive unauthorized absence, the following applies:

(i) Such absence must have been included as part of the basis for the ap-

plicant's discharge under other than honorable conditions.

(ii) Such absence is computed without regard to the applicant's normal or adjusted expiration of term of service.

(b) *Conduct of reviews*—(1) *Members.* As designated by the Secretary concerned, the DRB and its panels, if any, shall consist of five members. One member of the DRB shall be designated as the president and may serve as a presiding officer. Other officers may be designated to serve as presiding officers for DRB panels under regulations prescribed by the Secretary concerned.

(2) *Locations.* Reviews by a DRB will be conducted in the NCR and such other locations as designated by the Secretary concerned.

(3) *Types of review.* An applicant, upon request, is entitled to:

(i) *Record review.* A review of the application, available service records, and additional documents (if any) submitted by the applicant.

(ii) *Hearing.* A review involving an appearance before the DRB by the applicant or counsel or representative (or both).

(4) *Applicant's expenses.* Unless otherwise specified by law or regulation, expenses incurred by the applicant, witnesses, counsel or representative will not be paid by the Department of Defense.

(5) *Withdrawal of application.* An applicant shall be permitted to withdraw an application without prejudice at any time before the scheduled review.

(6) *Failure to appear at a hearing or respond to a scheduling notice.* (i) Except as otherwise authorized by the Secretary concerned, further opportunity for a hearing shall not be made available in the following circumstances to an applicant who has requested a hearing:

(A) When the applicant has been sent a letter containing the month and location of a proposed hearing and fails to make a timely response; or

(B) When the applicant, after being notified by letter of the time and place of the hearing, fails to appear at the appointed time, either in person or by representative, without having made a prior, timely request for a continuation, postponement, or withdrawal.

(ii) In such cases, the applicant shall be deemed to have waived the right to a hearing, and the DRB shall complete its review of the discharge. Further request for a hearing shall not be granted unless the applicant can demonstrate that the failure to appear or respond was due to circumstances beyond the applicant's control.

(7) *Continuance and postponements.* (i) A continuance of a discharge review hearing may be authorized by the president of the DRB or presiding officer of the panel concerned, provided that such continuance is of reasonable duration and is essential to achieving a full and fair hearing. When a proposal for continuance is indefinite, the pending application shall be returned to the applicant with the option to resubmit when the case is fully ready for review.

(ii) Postponements of scheduled reviews normally shall not be permitted other than for demonstrated good and sufficient reason set forth by the applicant in a timely manner, or for the convenience of the government.

(8) *Reconsideration.* A discharge review shall not be subject to reconsideration except:

(i) When the only previous consideration of the case was on the motion of the DRB;

(ii) When the original discharge review did not involve a hearing and a hearing is now desired, and the provisions of paragraph (b)(6) of this section do not apply;

(iii) When changes in discharge policy are announced after an earlier review of an applicant's discharge, and the new policy is made expressly retroactive;

(iv) When the DRB determines that policies and procedures under which the applicant was discharged differ in material respects from policies and procedures currently applicable on a Service-wide basis to discharges of the type under consideration, provided that such changes in policies or procedures represent a substantial enhancement of the rights afforded a respondent in such proceedings;

(v) When an individual is to be represented by a counsel or representative, and was not so represented in any previous consideration of the case by the DRB;

(vi) When the case was not previously considered under uniform standards published pursuant to Pub. L. 95-126 and such application is made within 15 years after the date of discharge; or

(vii) On the basis of presentation of new, substantial, relevant evidence not available to the applicant at the time of the original review. The decision whether evidence offered by an applicant in support of a request for reconsideration is in fact new, substantial, relevant, and was not available to the applicant at the time of the original review will be based on a comparison of such evidence with the evidence considered in the previous discharge review. If this comparison shows that the evidence submitted would have had a probable effect on matters concerning the propriety or equity of the discharge, the request for reconsideration shall be granted.

(9) *Availability of records and documents.* (i) Before applying for discharge review, potential applicants or their designated representatives may obtain copies of their military personnel records by submitting a General Services Administration Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining to Military Records," to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 62132. Once the application for discharge review (DD Form 293) is submitted, an applicant's military records are forwarded to the DRBs where they cannot be reproduced. Submission of a request for an applicant's military records, including a request under the Freedom of Information Act (32 CFR part 286) or Privacy Act (32 CFR part 286a) after the DD Form 293 has been submitted, shall result automatically in the temporary suspension of processing of the application for discharge review until the requested records are sent to an appropriate location for copying, are copied, and are returned to the headquarters of the DRB. Processing of the application shall then be resumed at whatever stage of the discharge review process is practicable. Applicants are encouraged to submit any request for their military records before applying for discharge review rather than after submitting DD Form 293, to avoid delays

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in processing of applications and scheduling of reviews. Applicants and their counsel also may examine their military personnel records at the site of their scheduled review before the hearing. DRBs shall notify applicants of the dates the records are available for examination in their standard scheduling information.

(ii) If the DRB is not authorized to provide copies of documents that are under the cognizance of another government department, office, or activity, applications for such information must be made by the applicant to the cognizant authority. The DRB shall advise the applicant of the mailing address of the government department, office, or activity to which the request should be submitted.

(iii) If the official records relevant to the discharge review are not available at the agency having custody of the records, the applicant shall be so notified and requested to provide such information and documents as may be desired in support of the request for discharge review. A period of not less than 30 days shall be allowed for such documents to be submitted. At the expiration of this period, the review may be conducted with information available to the DRB.

(iv) A DRB may take steps to obtain additional evidence that is relevant to the discharge under consideration beyond that found in the official military records or submitted by the applicant, if a review of available evidence suggests that it would be incomplete without the additional information, or when the applicant presents testimony or documents that require additional information to evaluate properly. Such information shall be made available to the applicant, upon request, with appropriate modifications regarding classified material.

(A) In any case heard on request of an applicant, the DRB shall provide the applicant and counsel or representative, if any, at a reasonable time before initiating the decision process, a notice of the availability of all regulations and documents to be considered in the discharge review, except for documents in the official personnel or medical records and any documents submitted by the applicant. The DRB shall also

notify the applicant or counsel or representative:

(1) Of the right to examine such documents or to be provided with copies of the documents upon request;

(2) Of the date by which such requests must be received; and

(3) Of the opportunity to respond within a reasonable period of time to be set by the DRB.

(B) When necessary to acquaint the applicant with the substance of a classified document, the classifying authority, on the request of the DRB, shall prepare a summary of or an extract from the document, deleting all references to sources of information and other matters, the disclosure of which, in the opinion of the classifying authority, would be detrimental to the national security interests of the United States. Should preparation of such summary be deemed impracticable by the classifying authority, information from the classified sources shall not be considered by the DRB in its review of the case.

(v) Regulations of a Military Department may be obtained at many installations under the jurisdiction of the Military Department concerned or by writing to the following address: DA Military Review Boards Agency, Attention: SFBA (Reading Room), room 1E520, Washington, DC 20310.

(10) *Recorder/Secretary or Assistant.* Such a person shall be designated to assist in the functioning of each DRB in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned.

(11) *Hearings.* Hearings (including hearing examinations) that are conducted shall recognize the rights of the individual to privacy. Accordingly, presence at hearings of individuals other than those required shall be limited to persons authorized by the Secretary concerned or expressly requested by the applicant, subject to reasonable limitations based upon available space. If, in the opinion of the presiding officer, the presence of other individuals could be prejudicial to the interests of the applicant or the government, hearings may be held in closed session.

(12) *Evidence and testimony.* (i) The DRB may consider any evidence obtained in accordance with this part.

(ii) Formal rules of evidence shall not be applied in DRB proceedings. The presiding officer shall rule on matters of procedure and shall ensure that reasonable bounds of relevancy and materiality are maintained in the taking of evidence and presentation of witnesses.

(iii) Applicants undergoing hearings shall be permitted to make sworn or unsworn statements, if they so desire, or to introduce witnesses, documents, or other information on their behalf, at no expense to the Department of Defense.

(iv) Applicants may also make oral or written arguments personally or through counsel or representatives.

(v) Applicants who present sworn or unsworn statements and witnesses may be questioned by the DRB. All testimony shall be taken under oath or affirmation unless the applicant specifically requests to make an unsworn statement.

(vi) There is a presumption of regularity in the conduct of governmental affairs. This presumption can be applied in any review unless there is substantial credible evidence to rebut the presumption.

(c) *Decision process.* (1) The DRB or the DRB panel, as appropriate, shall meet in plenary session to review discharges and exercise its discretion on a case-by-case basis in applying the standards set forth in §70.9.

(2) The presiding officer is responsible for the conduct of the discharge review. The presiding officer shall convene, recess, and adjourn the DRB panel as appropriate and shall maintain an atmosphere of dignity and decorum at all times.

(3) Each DRB member shall act under oath or affirmation requiring careful, objective consideration of the application. DRB members are responsible for eliciting all facts necessary for a full and fair hearing. They shall consider all information presented to them by the applicant. In addition, they shall consider available Military Service and health records, together with other records that may be in the files of the Military Department concerned and relevant to the issues before the DRB,

and any other evidence obtained in accordance with this part.

(4) The DRB shall identify and address issues after a review of the following material obtained and presented in accordance with this part and the implementing instructions of the DRB: Available official records, documentary evidence submitted by or on behalf of an applicant, presentation of a hearing examination, testimony by or on behalf of an applicant, oral or written arguments presented by or on behalf of an applicant, and any other relevant evidence.

(5) If an applicant who has requested a hearing does not respond to a notification letter or does not appear for a scheduled hearing, the DRB may complete the review on the basis of material previously submitted.

(6) *Application of standards.* (i) When a DRB determines that an applicant's discharge was improper (§70.9(b)), the DRB will determine which reason for discharge should have been assigned based upon the facts and circumstances before the discharge authority, including the Service regulations governing reasons for discharge at the time the applicant was discharged. Unless it is also determined that the discharge was inequitable (§70.9(c)), the provisions as to characterization in the regulation under which the applicant should have been discharged will be considered in determining whether further relief is warranted.

(ii) When the DRB determines that an applicant's discharge was inequitable (see §70.9(c)), any change will be based on the evaluation of the applicant's overall record of service and relevant regulations of the Military Service of which the applicant was a member.

(7) Voting shall be conducted in closed session, a majority of the five members' votes constituting the DRB decision. Voting procedures shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned.

(8) Details of closed session deliberations of a DRB are privileged information and shall not be divulged.

(9) There is no requirement for a statement of minority views in the event of a split vote. The minority, however, may submit a brief statement

of its views under procedures established by the Secretary concerned.

(10) DRBs may request advisory opinions from staff officers of their Military Departments. These opinions are advisory in nature and are not binding on the DRB in its decision-making process.

(11) The preliminary determinations required by 38 U.S.C. 3103(e) shall be made upon majority vote of the DRB concerned on an expedited basis. Such determination shall be based upon the standards set forth in § 70.9 of this part.

(12) *The DRB shall:* (i) Address items submitted as issues by the applicant under paragraph (d) of this section;

(ii) Address decisional issues under paragraph (e) of this section; and

(iii) Prepare a decisional document in accordance with paragraph (h) of this section.

(d) *Response to items submitted as issues by the applicant—(1) General guidance.* (i) If an issue submitted by an applicant contains two or more clearly separate issues, the DRB should respond to each issue under the guidance of this paragraph as if it had been set forth separately by the applicant.

(ii) If an applicant uses a “building block” approach (that is, setting forth a series of conclusions on issues that lead to a single conclusion purportedly warranting a change in the applicant’s discharge), normally there should be a separate response to each issue.

(iii) Nothing in this paragraph precludes the DRB from making a single response to multiple issues when such action would enhance the clarity of the decisional document, but such response must reflect an adequate response to each separate issue.

(2) *Decisional issues.* An item submitted as an issue by an applicant in accordance with this part shall be addressed as a decisional issue under paragraph (e), in the following circumstances:

(i) When the DRB decides that a change in discharge should be granted, and the DRB bases its decision in whole or in part on the applicant’s issue; or

(ii) When the DRB does not provide the applicant with the full change in discharge requested, and the decision is based in whole or in part on the DRB’s

disagreement on the merits with an issue submitted by the applicant.

(3) *Response to items not addressed as decisional issues.* (i) If the applicant receives the full change in discharge requested (or a more favorable change), that fact shall be noted and the basis shall be addressed as a decisional issue. No further response is required to other issues submitted by the applicant.

(ii) If the applicant does not receive the full change in discharge requested with respect to either the character of or reason for discharge (or both), the DRB shall address the items submitted by the applicant under paragraph (e) of this section (decisional issues) unless one of the following responses is applicable:

(A) *Duplicate issues.* The DRB may state that there is a full response to the issue submitted by the applicant under a specified decisional issue. This response may be used only when one issue clearly duplicates another or the issue clearly requires discussion in conjunction with another issue.

(B) *Citations without principles and facts.* The DRB may state that the applicant’s issue, which consists of a citation to a decision without setting forth any principles and facts from the decision that the applicant states are relevant to the applicant’s case, does not comply with the requirements of paragraph (a)(4)(iv)(A).

(C) *Unclear issues.* The DRB may state that it cannot respond to an item submitted by the applicant as an issue because the meaning of the item is unclear. An issue is unclear if it cannot be understood by a reasonable person familiar with the discharge review process after a review of the materials considered under paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(D) *Nonspecific issues.* The DRB may state that it cannot respond to an item submitted by the applicant as an issue because it is not specific. A submission is considered not specific if a reasonable person familiar with the discharge review process after a review of the materials considered under paragraph (c)(4) of this section, cannot determine the relationship between the applicant’s submission and the particular

circumstances of the case. This response may be used only if the submission is expressed in such general terms that no other response is applicable. For example, if the DRB disagrees with the applicant as to the relevance of matters set forth in the submission, the DRB normally will set forth the nature of the disagreement under the guidance in paragraph (e) of this section, with respect to decisional issues, or it will reject the applicant's position on the basis of paragraphs (d)(3)(ii)(A) or (d)(3)(ii)(B) of this section. If the applicant's submission is so general that none of those provisions is applicable, then the DRB may state that it cannot respond because the item is not specific.

(e) *Decisional issues*—(1) *General*. Under the guidance in this section, the decisional document shall discuss the issues that provide a basis for the decision whether there should be a change in the character of or reason for discharge. In order to enhance clarity, the DRB should not address matters other than issues relied upon in the decision or raised by the applicant.

(i) *Partial change*. When the decision changes a discharge, but does not provide the applicant with the full change in discharge requested, the decisional document shall address both the issues upon which change is granted and the issues upon which the DRB denies the full change requested.

(ii) *Relationship of issue to character of or reason for discharge*. Generally, the decisional document should specify whether a decisional issue applies to the character of or reason for discharge (or both), but it is not required to do so.

(iii) *Relationship of an issue to propriety or equity*. (A) If an applicant identifies an issue as pertaining to both propriety and equity, the DRB will consider it under both standards.

(B) If an applicant identifies an issue as pertaining to the propriety of the discharge (for example, by citing a propriety standard or otherwise claiming that a change in discharge is required as a matter of law), the DRB shall consider the issue solely as a matter of propriety. Except as provided in paragraph (e)(1)(iii)(D) of this section, the

DRB is not required to consider such an issue under the equity standards.

(C) If the applicant's issue contends that the DRB is required as a matter of law to follow a prior decision by setting forth an issue of propriety from the prior decision and describing its relationship to the applicant's case, the issue shall be considered under the propriety standards and addressed under paragraph (e)(2) or (e)(3) of this section.

(D) If the applicant's issue sets forth principles of equity contained in a prior DRB decision, describes the relationship to the applicant's case, and contends that the DRB is required as a matter of law to follow the prior case, the decisional document shall note that the DRB is not bound by its discretionary decisions in prior cases under the standards in § 70.9. However, the principles cited by the applicant, and the description of the relationship of the principles to the applicant's case, shall be considered under the equity standards and addressed under paragraph (e)(5) or (e)(6) of this section.

(E) If the applicant's issue cannot be identified as a matter of propriety or equity, the DRB shall address it as an issue of equity.

(2) *Change of discharge: issues of propriety*. If a change in the discharge is warranted under the propriety standards in § 70.9 the decisional document shall state that conclusion and list the errors of expressly retroactive changes in policy that provide a basis for the conclusion. The decisional document shall cite the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the error or change in policy to the applicant's case. If the change in discharge does not constitute the full change requested by the applicant, the reasons for not granting the full change shall be addressed under the guidance in paragraph (e)(3) or (e)(6) of this section.

(3) *Denial of the full change requested: issues of propriety*. (i) If the decision rejects the applicant's position on an issue of propriety, or if it is otherwise decided on the basis of an issue of propriety that the full change in discharge requested by the applicant is not warranted, the decisional document shall note that conclusion.

(ii) The decisional document shall list reasons for its conclusion on each issue of propriety under the following guidance:

(A) If a reason is based in whole or in part upon a regulation, statute, constitutional provision, judicial determination, or other source of law, the DRB shall cite the pertinent source of law and the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the source of law to the particular circumstances in the case.

(B) If a reason is based in whole or in part on a determination as to the occurrence or nonoccurrence of an event or circumstance, including a factor required by applicable Service regulations to be considered for determination of the character of and reason for the applicant's discharge, the DRB shall make a finding of fact for each such event or circumstance.

(1) For each such finding, the decisional document shall list the specific source of the information relied upon. This may include the presumption of regularity in appropriate cases. If the information is listed in the service record section of the decisional document, a citation is not required.

(2) If a finding of fact is made after consideration of contradictory evidence in the record (including information cited by the applicant or otherwise identified by members of the DRB), the decisional document shall set forth the conflicting evidence and explain why the information relied upon was more persuasive than the information that was rejected. If the presumption of regularity is cited as the basis for rejecting such information, the decisional document shall set forth the basis for relying on the presumption of regularity and explain why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption. In an appropriate case, the explanation as to why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption of regularity may consist of a statement that the applicant failed to provide sufficient corroborating evidence, or that the DRB did not find the applicant's testimony to be sufficiently credible to overcome the presumption.

(C) If the DRB disagrees with the position of the applicant on an issue of

propriety, the following guidance applies in addition to the guidance in paragraphs (e)(3)(ii) (A) and (B) of this section:

(1) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why it disagrees with the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant in accordance with paragraph (e)(4)(iv) of this section).

(2) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(iv) of this section) are not relevant to the applicant's case.

(3) The DRB may reject an applicant's position by stating that the applicant's issue of propriety is not a matter upon which the DRB grants a change in discharge, and by providing an explanation for this position. When the applicant indicates that the issue is to be considered in conjunction with one or more other specified issues, the explanation will address all such specified issues.

(4) The DRB may reject the applicant's position on the grounds that other specified factors in the case preclude granting relief, regardless of whether the DRB agreed with the applicant's position.

(5) If the applicant takes the position that the discharge must be changed because of an alleged error in a record associated with the discharge, and the record has not been corrected by the organization with primary responsibility for corrective action, the DRB may respond that it will presume the validity of the record in the absence of such corrective action. If the organization empowered to correct the record is within the Department of Defense, the DRB should provide the applicant with a brief description of the procedures for requesting correction of the record. If the DRB on its own motion cites this issue as a decisional issue on the basis of equity, it shall address the issue under paragraph (d)(5) or (d)(6) of this section.

(6) When an applicant's issue contains a general allegation that a certain course of action violated his or her

constitutional rights, the DRB may respond in appropriate cases by noting that the action was consistent with statutory or regulatory authority, and by citing the presumption of constitutionality that attaches to statutes and regulations. If, on the other hand, the applicant makes a specific challenge to the constitutionality of the action by challenging the application of a statute or regulation in a particular set of circumstances, it is not sufficient to respond solely by citing the presumption of constitutionality of the statute or regulation when the applicant is not challenging the constitutionality of the statute or regulation. Instead, the response must address the specific circumstances of the case.

(4) *Denial of the full change in discharge requested when propriety is not at issue.* If the applicant has not submitted an issue of propriety and the DRB has not otherwise relied upon an issue of propriety to change the discharge, the decisional document shall contain a statement to that effect. The DRB is not required to provide any further discussion as to the propriety of the discharge.

(5) *Change of discharge: issues of equity.* If the DRB concludes that a change in the discharge is warranted under the equity standards in § 70.9 the decisional document shall list each issue of equity upon which this conclusion is based. The DRB shall cite the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the issue to the applicant's case. If the change in discharge does not constitute the full change requested by the applicant, the reasons for not giving the full change requested shall be discussed under the guidance in paragraph (e)(6) of this section.

(6) *Denial of the full change in discharge requested: issues of equity.* (i) If the DRB rejects the applicant's position on an issue of equity, or if the decision otherwise provides less than the full change in discharge requested by the applicant, the decisional document shall note that conclusion.

(ii) The DRB shall list reasons for its conclusion on each issue of equity under the following guidance:

(A) If a reason is based in whole or in part upon a regulation, statute, constitutional provision, judicial deter-

mination, or other source of law, the DRB shall cite the pertinent source of law and the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the source of law to the exercise of discretion on the issue of equity in the applicant's case.

(B) If a reason is based in whole or in part on a determination as to the occurrence or nonoccurrence of an event or circumstance, including a factor required by applicable Service regulations to be considered for determination of the character of and reason for the applicant's discharge, the DRB shall make a finding of fact for each such event or circumstance.

(1) For each such finding, the decisional document shall list the specific source of the information relied upon. This may include the presumption of regularity in appropriate cases. If the information is listed in the service record section of the decisional document, a citation is not required.

(2) If a finding of fact is made after consideration of contradictory evidence in the record (including information cited by the applicant or otherwise identified by members of the DRB), the decisional document shall set forth the conflicting evidence and explain why the information relied upon was more persuasive than the information that was rejected. If the presumption of regularity is cited as the basis for rejecting such information, the decisional document shall set forth the basis for relying on the presumption of regularity and explain why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption. In an appropriate case, the explanation as to why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption of regularity may consist of a statement that the applicant failed to provide sufficient corroborating evidence, or that the DRB did not find the applicant's testimony to be sufficiently credible to overcome the presumption.

(C) If the DRB disagrees with the position of the applicant on an issue of equity, the following guidance applies in addition to the guidance in paragraphs (e)(6)(ii) (A) and (B) of this section:

(1) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why it

disagrees with the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(iv) of this section).

(2) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant) are not relevant to the applicant's case.

(3) The DRB may reject an applicant's position by explaining why the applicant's issue is not a matter upon which the DRB grants a change in discharge as a matter of equity. When the applicant indicates that the issue is to be considered in conjunction with other specified issues, the explanation will address all such specified issues.

(4) The DRB may reject the applicant's position on the grounds that other specified factors in the case preclude granting relief, regardless of whether the DRB agreed with the applicant's position.

(5) If the applicant takes the position that the discharge should be changed as a matter of equity because of an alleged error in a record associated with the discharge, and the record has not been corrected by the organization with primary responsibility for corrective action, the DRB may respond that it will presume the validity of the record in the absence of such corrective action. However, the DRB will consider whether it should exercise its equitable powers to change the discharge on the basis of the alleged error. If it declines to do so, it shall explain why the applicant's position did not provide a sufficient basis for the change in the discharge requested by the applicant.

(D) When the DRB concludes that aggravating factors outweigh mitigating factors, the DRB must set forth reasons such as the seriousness of the offense, specific circumstances surrounding the offense, number of offenses, lack of mitigating circumstances, or similar factors. The DRB is not required, however, to explain why it relied on any such factors unless the applicability or weight of such a factor is expressly raised as an issue by the applicant.

(E) If the applicant has not submitted any issues and the DRB has not

otherwise relied upon an issue of equity for a change in discharge, the decisional document shall contain a statement to that effect, and shall note that the major factors upon which the discharge was based are set forth in the service record portion of the decisional document.

(f) *The recommendation of the DRB President*—(1) *General*. The president of the DRB may forward cases for consideration by the Secretarial Reviewing Authority (SRA) under rules established by the Secretary concerned. There is no requirement that the President submit a recommendation when a case is forwarded to the SRA. If the president makes a recommendation with respect to the character of or reason for discharge, however, the recommendation shall be prepared under the guidance in paragraph (f)(2) of this section.

(2) *Format for recommendation*. If a recommendation is provided, it shall contain the president's views whether there should be a change in the character of or reason for discharge (or both). If the president recommends such a change, the particular change to be made shall be specified. The recommendation shall set forth the president's position on decisional issues and issues submitted by the applicant under the following guidance:

(i) *Adoption of the DRB's decisional document*. The recommendation may state that the president has adopted the decisional document prepared by the majority. The president shall ensure that the decisional document meets the requirements of this section.

(ii) *Adoption of the specific statements from the majority*. If the President adopts the views of the majority only in part, the recommendation shall cite the specific matter adopted from the majority. If the president modifies a statement submitted by the majority, the recommendation shall set forth the modification.

(iii) *Response to issues not included in matter adopted from the majority*. The recommendation shall set forth the following if not adopted in whole or in part from the majority:

(A) The issues on which the president's recommendation is based. Each such decisional issue shall be addressed

by the president under paragraph (e) of this section.

(B) The president's response to items submitted as issues by the applicant under paragraph (d) of this section.

(C) Reasons for rejecting the conclusions of the majority with respect to decisional issues which, if resolved in the applicant's favor, would have resulted in greater relief for the applicant than that afforded by the president's recommendation. Such issues shall be addressed under the principles in paragraph (e) of this section.

(g) *Secretarial reviewing authority (SRA)*—(1) *Review by the SRA.* The Secretarial Reviewing Authority (SRA) is the Secretary concerned or the official to whom Secretary's discharge review authority has been delegated.

(i) The SRA may review the following types of cases before issuance of the final notification of a decision:

(A) Any specific case in which the SRA has an interest.

(B) Any specific case that the president of the DRB believes is of significant interest to the SRA.

(ii) Cases reviewed by the SRA shall be considered under the standards set forth in § 70.9.

(2) *Processing the decisional document.*

(i) The decisional document shall be transmitted by the DRB president under paragraph (e) of this section.

(ii) The following guidance applies to cases that have been forwarded to the SRA except for cases reviewed on the DRB's own motion without the participation of the applicant or the applicant's counsel:

(A) The applicant and counsel or representative, if any, shall be provided with a copy of the proposed decisional document, including the DRB president's recommendation to the SRA, if any. Classified information shall be summarized.

(B) The applicant shall be provided with a reasonable period of time, but not less than 25 days, to submit to the SRA a rebuttal. An issue in rebuttal consists of a clear and specific statement by the applicant in support of or in opposition to the statements of the DRB or DRB president on decisional issues and other clear and specific issues that were submitted by the applicant in accordance with paragraph

(a)(4)(i) of this section. The rebuttal shall be based solely on matters in the record before when the DRB closed the case for deliberation or in the president's recommendation.

(3) *Review of the decisional document.* If corrections in the decisional document are required, the decisional document shall be returned to the DRB for corrective action. The corrected decisional document shall be sent to the applicant (and counsel, if any), but a further opportunity for rebuttal is not required unless the correction produces a different result or includes a substantial change in the discussion by the DRB (or DRB president) of the issues raised by the majority or the applicant.

(4) *The Addendum of the SRA.* The decision of the SRA shall be in writing and shall be appended as an addendum to the decisional document under the guidance in this subsection.

(i) *The SRA's decision.* The addendum shall set forth the SRA's decision whether there will be a change in the character of or reason for discharge (or both); if the SRA concludes that a change is warranted, the particular change to be made shall be specified. If the SRA adopts the decision recommended by the DRB or the DRB president, the decisional document shall contain a reference to the matter adopted.

(ii) *Discussion of issues.* In support of the SRA's decision, the addendum shall set forth the SRA's position on decisional issues, items submitted as issues by an applicant in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(i) of this section, and issues raised by the DRB and the DRB president in accordance with the following guidance:

(A) *Adoption of the DRB president's recommendation.* The addendum may state that the SRA has adopted the DRB president's recommendation.

(B) *Adoption of the DRB's proposed decisional document.* The addendum may state that the SRA has adopted the proposed decisional document prepared by the DRB.

(C) *Adoption of specific statements from the majority or the DRB president.* If the SRA adopts the views of the DRB or

the DRB president only in part, the addendum shall cite the specific statements adopted. If the SRA modifies a statement submitted by the DRB or the DRB president, the addendum shall set forth the modification.

(D) *Response to issues not included in matter adopted from the DRB or the DRB president.* The addendum shall set forth the following if not adopted in whole or in part from the DRB or the DRB president:

(1) A list of the issues on which the SRA's decision is based. Each such decisional issue shall be addressed by the SRA under paragraph (e) of this section. This includes reasons for rejecting the conclusion of the DRB or the DRB president with respect to decisional issues which, if resolved in the applicant's favor, would have resulted in change to the discharge more favorable to the applicant than that afforded by the SRA's decision. Such issues shall be addressed under the principles in paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) The SRA's response to items submitted as issues by the applicant under paragraph (d) of this section.

(iii) *Response to the rebuttal.* (A) If the SRA grants the full change in discharge requested by the applicant (or a more favorable change), that fact shall be noted, the decisional issues shall be addressed under paragraph (e) of this section, and no further response to the rebuttal is required.

(B) If the SRA does not grant the full change in discharge requested by the applicant (or a more favorable change), the addendum shall list each issue in rebuttal submitted by an applicant in accordance with this section, and shall set forth the response of the SRA under the following guidance:

(1) If the SRA rejects an issue in rebuttal, the SRA may respond in accordance with the principles in paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) If the matter adopted by the SRA provides a basis for the SRA's rejection of the rebuttal material, the SRA may note that fact and cite the specific matter adopted that responds to the issue in rebuttal.

(3) If the matter submitted by the applicant does not meet the requirements

for rebuttal material in paragraph (b)(2)(ii)(B) of this section.

(iv) *Index entries.* Appropriate index entries shall be prepared for the SRA's actions for matters that are not adopted from the DRB's proposed decisional document.

(h) *The decisional document.* A decisional document shall be prepared for each review. At a minimum, this document shall contain:

(1) The circumstances and character of the applicant's service as extracted from available service records, including health records, and information provided by other Government authorities or the applicant, such as, but not limited to:

(i) Information concerning the discharge at issue in the review, including:

(A) Date (YYMMDD) of discharge.

(B) Character of discharge.

(C) Reason for discharge.

(D) The specific regulatory authority under which the discharge was issued.

(ii) Date (YYMMDD) of enlistment.

(iii) Period of enlistment.

(iv) Age at enlistment.

(v) Length of service.

(vi) Periods of unauthorized absence.

(vii) Conduct and efficiency ratings (numerical or narrative).

(viii) Highest rank received.

(ix) Awards and decorations.

(x) Educational level.

(xi) Aptitude test scores.

(xii) Incidents of punishment pursuant to Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice (including nature and date (YYMMDD) of offense or punishment).

(xiii) Convictions by court-martial.

(xiv) Prior military service and type of discharge received.

(2) A list of the type of documents submitted by or on behalf of the applicant (including a written brief, letters of recommendation, affidavits concerning the circumstances of the discharge, or other documentary evidence), if any.

(3) A statement whether the applicant testified, and a list of the type of witnesses, if any, who testified on behalf of the applicant.

(4) A notation whether the application pertained to the character of discharge, the reason for discharge, or both.

(5) The DRB's conclusions on the following:

(i) Whether the character of or reason for discharge should be changed.

(ii) The specific changes to be made, if any.

(6) A list of the items submitted as issues on DD Form 293 or expressly incorporated therein and such other items submitted as issues by the applicant that are identified as inadvertently omitted under paragraph (a)(4)(i)(D) of this section. If the issues are listed verbatim on DD Form 293, a copy of the relevant portion of the Form may be attached. Issues that have been withdrawn or modified with the consent of the applicant need not be listed.

(7) The response to the items submitted as issues by the applicant under the guidance in paragraph (d) of this section.

(8) A list of decisional issues and a discussion of such issues under the guidance in paragraph (e) of this section.

(9) Minority views, if any, when authorized under rules of the Military Department concerned.

(10) The recommendation of the DRB president when required by paragraph (f) of this section.

(11) The addendum of the SRA when required by paragraph (g) of this section.

(12) Advisory opinions, including those containing factual information, when such opinions have been relied upon for final decision or have been accepted as a basis for rejecting any of the applicant's issues. Such advisory opinions or relevant portions thereof that are not fully set forth in the discussion of decisional issues or otherwise in response to items submitted as issues by the application shall be incorporated by reference. A copy of opinions incorporated by reference shall be appended to the decision and included in the record of proceedings.

(13) A record of the voting, including:

(i) The number of votes for the DRB's decision and the number of votes in the minority, if any.

(ii) The DRB member's names (last name, first name, M.I.) and votes. The copy provided to the applicant may substitute a statement that the names

and votes will be made available to the applicant at the applicant's request.

(14) Index entries for each decisional issue under appropriate categories listed in the index of decisions.

(15) An authentication of the document by an appropriate official.

(i) *Issuance of decisions following discharge review.* The applicant and counsel or representative, if any, shall be provided with a copy of the decisional document and of any further action in review. The applicant (and counsel, if any) shall be notified of the availability of the complaint process under § 70.10. Final notification of decisions shall be issued to the applicant with a copy to the counsel or representative, if any, and to the Military Service concerned.

(1) Notification to applicants, with copies to counsel or representatives, shall normally be made through the U.S. Postal Service. Such notification shall consist of a notification of decision, together with a copy of the decisional document.

(2) Notification to the Military Services shall be for the purpose of appropriate action and inclusion of review matter in personnel records. Such notification shall bear appropriate certification of completeness and accuracy.

(3) Actions on review by superior authority, when occurring, shall be provided to the applicant and counsel or representative in the same manner as the notification of the review decision.

(j) *Record of DRB proceedings.* (1) When the proceedings in any review have been concluded, a record thereof will be prepared. Records may include written records, electromagnetic records, videotape recordings, or a combination thereof.

(2) At a minimum, the record will include the following:

(i) The application for review;

(ii) A record of the testimony in verbatim, summarized, or recorded form at the option of the DRB concerned;

(iii) Documentary evidence or copies thereof, considered by the DRB other than the Military Service record;

(iv) Briefs and arguments submitted by or on behalf of the applicant;

(v) Advisory opinions considered by the DRB, if any;

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(vi) The findings, conclusions, and reasons developed by the DRB;

(vii) Notification of the DRB's decision to the cognizant custodian of the applicant's records, or reference to the notification document;

(viii) Minority reports, if any;

(ix) A copy of the decisional document.

(k) *Final disposition of the Record of Proceedings.* The original record of proceedings and all appendices thereto shall in all cases be incorporated in the Military Service record of the applicant and the Military Service record shall be returned to the custody of the appropriate records holding facility. If a portion of the original record of the proceedings cannot be stored with the Military Service record, the Military Service record shall contain a notation as to the place where the record is stored. Other copies shall be filed and disposed of in accordance with appropriate Military Service regulations.

(1) *Availability of Discharge Review Board documents for inspection and copying.* (1) A copy of the decisional document prepared in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section shall be made available for public inspection and copying promptly after a notice of final decision is sent to the applicant.

(2) To prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, identifying details of the applicant and other persons will be deleted from documents made available for public inspection and copying.

(i) Names, addresses, social security numbers, and Military Service numbers must be deleted. Written justification shall be made for all other deletions and shall be available for public inspection.

(ii) Each DRB shall ensure that there is a means for relating a decisional document number to the name of the applicant to permit retrieval of the applicant's records when required in processing a complaint under § 70.10.

(3) Any other privileged or classified material contained in or appended to any documents required by this part to be furnished the applicant and counsel or representative or made available for public inspection and copying may be deleted therefrom only if a written statement of the basis for the deletions

is provided the applicant and counsel or representative and made available for public inspection. It is not intended that the statement be so detailed as to reveal the nature of the withheld material.

(4) DRB documents made available for public inspection and copying shall be located in the Armed Forces Discharge Review/Correction Board Reading Room. The documents shall be indexed in a usable and concise form so as to enable the public, and those who represent applicants before the DRBs, to isolate from all these decisions that are indexed, those cases that may be similar to an applicant's case and that indicate the circumstances under or reasons for (or both) which the DRB or the Secretary concerned granted or denied relief.

(i) The reading file index shall include, in addition to any other items determined by the DRB, the case number, the date, character of, reason and authority for the discharge. It shall also include the decisions of the DRB and reviewing authority, if any, and the issues addressed in the statement of findings, conclusions, and reasons.

(ii) The index shall be maintained at selected permanent locations throughout the United States. This ensures reasonable availability to applicants at least 30 days before a traveling panel review. A list of these locations shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER by the Department of the Army. The index shall also be made available at sites selected for traveling panels or hearing examinations for such periods as the DRB or a hearing examiner is present and in operation. An applicant who has requested a traveling panel review or a hearing examination shall be advised in the notice of such review of the permanent index locations.

(iii) The Armed Forces Discharge Review/Correction Board Reading Room shall publish indexes quarterly for all DRBs. All DRBs shall be responsible for timely submission to the Reading Room of individual case information required for update of the indexes. In addition, all DRBs shall be responsible for submission of new index categories based upon published changes in policy, procedures, or standards. These indexes shall be available for public inspection

or purchase (or both) at the Reading Room. When the DRB has accepted an application, information concerning the availability of the index shall be provided in the DRB's response to the application.

(iv) Copies of decisional documents will be provided to individuals or organizations outside the NCR in response to written requests for such documents. Although the Reading Room shall try to make timely responses to such requests, certain factors such as the length of a request, the volume of other pending requests, and the impact of other responsibilities of the staff assigned to such duties may cause some delays. A fee may be charged for such documents under appropriate DoD and Department of the Army directives and regulations. The manual that accompanies the index of decisions shall notify the public that if an applicant indicates that a review is scheduled for a specific date, an effort will be made to provide requested decisional documents before that date. The individual or organization will be advised if that cannot be accomplished.

(v) Correspondence relating to matters under the cognizance of the Reading Room (including requests for purchase of indexes) shall be addressed to: DA Military Review Boards Agency, Attention: SFBA (Reading Room), Room 1E520, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310.

(m) *Privacy Act information.* Information protected under the Privacy Act is involved in the discharge review functions. The provisions of part 286a of this title shall be observed throughout the processing of a request for review of discharge or dismissal.

(n) *Information requirement.* Each Military Department shall provide the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Personnel and Force Management) DASD (MP&FM), Office of the ASD (MRA&L), with a semiannual report of discharge review actions in accordance with § 70.11.

[47 FR 37785, Aug. 26, 1982, as amended at 48 FR 9855, Mar. 9, 1983; 48 FR 35644, Aug. 5, 1983]

§ 70.9 Discharge review standards.

(a) *Objective of review.* The objective of a discharge review is to examine the propriety and equity of the applicant's

discharge and to effect changes, if necessary. The standards of review and the underlying factors that aid in determining whether the standards are met shall be historically consistent with criteria for determining honorable service. No factors shall be established that require automatic change or denial of a change in discharge. Neither a DRB nor the Secretary of the Military Department concerned shall be bound by any methodology of weighting of the factors in reaching a determination. In each case, the DRB or the Secretary of the Military Department concerned shall give full, fair, and impartial considerations to all applicable factors before reaching a decision. An applicant may not receive a less favorable discharge than that issued at the time of separation. This does not preclude correction of clerical errors.

(b) *Propriety.* (1) A discharge shall be deemed proper unless, in the course of discharge review, it is determined that:

(i) There exists an error of fact, law, procedure, or discretion associated with the discharge at the time of issuance; and that the rights of the applicant were prejudiced thereby (such error shall constitute prejudicial error if there is substantial doubt that the discharge would have remained the same if the error had not been made); or

(ii) A change in policy by the Military Service of which the applicant was a member, made expressly retroactive to the type of discharge under consideration, requires a change in the discharge.

(2) When a record associated with the discharge at the time of issuance involves a matter in which the primary responsibility for corrective action rests with another organization (for example, another Board, agency, or court), the DRB will recognize an error only to the extent that the error has been corrected by the organization with primary responsibility for correcting the record.

(3) The primary function of the DRB is to exercise its discretion on issues of equity by reviewing the individual merits of each application on a case-by-case basis. Prior decisions in which the DRB exercised its discretion to change a discharge based on issues of