§ 1553. Review of discharge or dismissal

(a) The Secretary concerned shall, after consulting the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, establish a board of review, consisting of five members, to review the discharge or dismissal (other than a discharge or dismissal by sentence of a general court-martial) of any former member of an armed force under the jurisdiction of his department upon its own motion or upon the request of the former member or, if he is dead, his surviving spouse, next of kin, or legal representative. A motion or request for review must be made within 15 years after the date of the discharge or dismissal. With respect to a discharge or dismissal adjudged by a court-martial case tried or reviewed under chapter 47 of this title (or under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (Public Law 506 of the 81st Congress)), action under this subsection may extend only to a change in the discharge or dismissal or issuance of a new discharge for purposes of clemency.

(b) A board established under this section may, subject to review by the Secretary concerned, change a discharge or dismissal, or issue a new discharge, to reflect its findings.

(c) A review by a board established under this section shall be based on the records of the armed forces concerned and such other evidence as may be presented to the board. A witness may present evidence to the board in person or by affidavit. A person who requests a review under this section may appear before the board in person or by counsel or an accredited representative of an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under chapter 59 of title 38.

(d) (1) In the case of a former member of the armed forces who, while serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces, was deployed in support of a contingency operation and who, at any time after such deployment, was diagnosed by a physician, clinical psychologist, or psychiatrist as experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury as a consequence of that deployment, a board established under this section to review the former member’s discharge or dismissal shall include a member who is a physician, clinical psychologist, or psychiatrist.

(2) In the case of a former member described in paragraph (1) or a former member whose application for relief is based in whole or in part on matters relating to post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury as supporting rationale or as justification for priority consideration, the Secretary concerned shall expedite a final decision and shall accord such cases sufficient priority to achieve an expedited resolution. In determining the priority of cases, the Secretary concerned shall weigh the medical and humanitarian circumstances of all cases and accord higher priority to cases not involving post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury only when the individual cases are considered more compelling.

Defence, and was repealed and reenacted as chapter 47 (§ 801 et seq.) of this title by act Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, § 53, 70A Stat. 641, the first section of which enacted this title.

**Amendments**


1989—Subsecs. (a), (c). Pub. L. 101–189 substituted “Secretary of Veterans Affairs” for “Administrator of Veterans’ Affairs”.

1983—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 98–209 inserted provision that with respect to a discharge or dismissal adjudged by a court-martial case tried or reviewed under chapter 47 of this title (or under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (Public Law 506 of the 81st Congress)), action under this subsection may extend only to a change in the discharge or dismissal or issuance of a new discharge for purposes of clemency.

1962—Pub. L. 87–651 amended section generally without substantive change to conform to the style adopted for the revision of this title.

**Effective Date**

Section effective Jan. 1, 1959, see section 2 of Pub. L. 85–857, set out as a note preceding Part I of Title 38, Veterans’ Benefits.