



T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 838-8113

March 17, 2010

The Honorable Clifford L. Stanley
The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness)
4000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-4000

Dear Dr. Stanley:

The Military Coalition, a consortium of nationally prominent military and veterans organizations, representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, would like to express our concern with the apparent lack of awareness of the Department's Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR).

The PDBR is a result of legislation passed in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act and is charged to reevaluate the accuracy and fairness of the combined disability rating service members received who were separated due to unfitting medical conditions rather than medically retired.

According to a March 3, 2010 American Forces Press Service Release, DoD has identified about 77,000 veterans eligible to apply for a review. Of those who have applied, over 60% have been upgraded to a disability retirement status. However, it appears less than 1,000 veterans have actually applied.

The Coalition is concerned that many of the remaining 76,000-plus veterans are unaware of the board's existence and this important opportunity to have their medical condition more appropriately recognized.

We worked closely with DoD to initially "get the word out" through our various media venues; yet, we believe that the small number of applicants suggests a much broader lack of awareness issue exists.

We believe that DoD could do much more, through dedicated resources and manpower, to ensure these veterans, who have been disabled in the service to our nation, are personally notified of the opportunity to have their unfitting conditions re-evaluated. Therefore, we ask that you work with the Department of Veterans Affairs

and the Internal Revenue Service to get current addresses in order to reach out by letter to the identified veterans.

We recommend that the letter provide, as a minimum, board information, eligibility and application instructions, an explanation of the potential benefits to include TRICARE eligibility, and a link to the appropriate website with more detailed information, such as the Military Health System webpage: http://www.health.mil/About_MHS/Organizations/MHS_Offices_and_Programs/PDBR.aspx.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue for these disadvantaged separatees.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
American Logistics Association
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States
Association of the United States Army
Association of the United States Navy
Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association, U.S. Coast Guard
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps League
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Association for Uniformed Services
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
National Order of Battlefield Commissions
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Enlisted Association of the United States
Reserve Officers Association
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces
The Retired Enlisted Association
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States