RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

IN THE MATTER OF: DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2010-03662

XXXXXXX COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING DESIRED: NO

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APPLICANT REQUESTS THAT:

He be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

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APPLICANT CONTENDS THAT:

He was promised the DFC after completing 35 missions as a tail gunner during World War II, but it was never issued to him.

In support of his request, the applicant provides copies of his honorable discharge certificate and his WG AGO 53-55, *Enlisted Record and Report of Separation*.

The applicant’s complete submission, with attachments, is at Exhibit A.

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STATEMENT OF FACTS:

The applicant’s military personnel records were apparently located in the area most heavily damaged in the fire at the National Personnel Records Center in 1973. Documents provided by the applicant indicate he served on active duty with the Army Air Corps as an Aerial Gunner from 17 Sep 43 through 20 Oct 45.

The DFC may be awarded to any persons who, after 16 Apr 17, while serving in any capacity with the United States Armed Forces, distinguish themselves by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

During World War II, the Eighth Air Force had an established policy whereby a DFC was awarded upon the completion of tour of combat duty, and an Air Medal (AM) was awarded upon the completion of every five heavy bomber missions. In 1942, the length of a tour was 25 combat missions. In 1944, the tour length was increased to 35 combat missions, and the number of combat missions required for award of an additional AM was increased to six. In 1943, the policy for automatically awarding the DFC and AM based solely on the number of missions completed was discontinued, and submissions were subsequently required to include a narrative recommendation justifying the award.

According to the applicant’s WD AGO Form 53-55, *Enlisted Record and Report of Separation*, he arrived in the European theater of operations on 5 Sep 1944 and participated in the air offensive over Europe. He departed the European theater of operations on 31 Mar 45 and arrived in the United States on 12 Apr 1945. On 25 Oct 45, he was honorably discharged and credited with 2 years, 1 month, and 28 days of total active service. Item 33, *Decorations and Citations*, of his WD AGO Form 53-55 indicates he was awarded the AM with five oak leaf clusters (AM w/5 OLC).

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THE BOARD CONCLUDES THAT:

1.  The applicant has exhausted all remedies provided by existing law or regulations.

2.  The application was not timely filed; however, it is in the interest of justice to excuse the failure to timely file.

3.  Sufficient relevant evidence has been presented to demonstrate the existence of an error or injustice. After a thorough review of the available evidence and the applicant’s complete submission, we believe a preponderance of the evidence indicates the applicant is entitled to the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). In this respect, we note the applicant earned the Air Medal (AM) a total of six times (AM with five oak leaf clusters (OLC)) during his combat tour as an aerial gunner during World War II. Because the Eighth Air Force policy in effect during his service required the completion of six combat missions for award of the AM, and the applicant earned six AMs, we believe it is highly likely he performed the requisite 35 missions for award of the DFC. Therefore, to preclude any further injustice to the applicant, we chose to resolve any doubt in his favor and recommend his records be corrected as indicated below.

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THE BOARD RECOMMENDS THAT:

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to the APPLICANT be corrected to show that on 31 March 1945, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while serving as an Aerial Gunner on many bombardment missions over enemy occupied Continental Europe.

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The following members of the Board considered AFBCMR Docket Number BC-2010-03662 in Executive Session on 23 Jun 11, under the provisions of AFI 36-2603:

Mr. XXXXXXXXXX, Panel Chair

Dr. XXXXXXXXX, Member

Ms. XXXXXXXXX, Member

All members voted to correct the records as recommended. The following documentary evidence was considered:

Exhibit A.  DD Form 149, dated 29 Sep 10, w/atchs.

XXXXXXXXXX

Panel Chair