

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 19, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE COMMANDANT OF THE COAST GUARD

THROUGH

THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

Under Proclamation 4313 of September 16, 1974, which established a Vietnam era clemency program for draft evaders and military deserters, approximately 13,589 former military service members who had been discharged for desertion and approximately 5,555 undischarged deserters applied for clemency. As President, I have a continuing concern over the welfare of these people, particularly those who were wounded in combat or who received decorations for valor in combat in Vietnam and subsequently received other than honorable discharges.

As Commander-in-Chief and consistent with the spirit of reconciliation of my clemency program, I am hereby directing that you take all necessary action to insure that the discharges of the former Coast Guard service members who were wounded in combat or who received decorations for valor in combat in Vietnam and who applied to the clemency program be reviewed on an individual basis.

I am further directing that these discharges be recharacterized as under honorable conditions, unless you find a compelling reason to the contrary in any case.

By a separate memorandum, I have requested the Attorney General to assist you in the identification process by providing the names and service numbers of all former Coast Guard service members who applied to the Presidential Clemency Board program and whose records indicate that they were wounded in combat or received decorations for valor in combat.

Gerald R. Ford