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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Legion welcomes overdue change to PTSD discharge guidelines**

### ***The new guidelines will help veterans who left the military with undiagnosed PTSD***

WASHINGTON (Sept. 4, 2014) -- The Department of Defense issued supplemental guidelines on Sept. 3, that will help its review boards when considering petitions for discharge upgrades from veterans claiming they had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at the time of separation.

The guidelines, issued in a memo from Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, will be used by DoD's Military Department Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records. They will help in considering whether servicemembers suffered from PTSD while on active duty, and if that condition may have contributed to their discharges under other-than-honorable conditions.

American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm welcomed DoD's announcement. "As the only veterans service organization that automatically helps veterans with discharge petitions, The American Legion knows that many veterans are going to get the break they have deserved for several decades."

Helm said the Legion's office in Washington handles many petitions from veterans to have their discharges upgraded to the "honorable" or "general" categories. "Many of those veterans getting our help served in Vietnam, and many of them came home with undiagnosed PTSD and a bad conduct or dishonorable discharge they never should have received."

The Legion's Washington office participated in conference call on Sept. 4 with DoD experts, who clarified the meaning and effect of the new guideline and answered questions.

In 2013, The American Legion handled 211 discharge petitions and appeared at 85 military board hearings; of 193 petitions decided on, 60 of them received upgrades.

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