

ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL, REGIONAL BENCH, LUCKNOW
Court No.1 (E Court)

Original Application No. 356 of 2019

Thursday this the 07th day of January, 2021

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava, Member (J)
Hon'ble Vice Admiral Abhay Raghunath Karve, Member (A)

Ex. Nk. No. 1552234-X Hukam Singh, son of Late Ram Singh, resident of House No. 146/39 Sainik Nagar, Village Sakimpur, Post Office Mall Road, Tehsil Meerut, District Meerut, Bazar (U.P.).

..... **Applicant**

By Legal Practitioner – **Shri Manoj Kumar Awasthi**, Advocate

Versus

1. Union of India, through its Secretary, Ministry of Defence, 101, South Block, New Delhi- 110011.
2. Chief of the Army Staff, Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Army), South Block, New Delhi- 110011.
3. ADGPS, AG Branch, Army Headquarters, DHQ PO, New Delhi-110010.
4. Defence Security Corps Records, PIN-901227, C/o 56 APO.
5. The Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pension), Allahabad (U.P.).

..... **Respondents**

By Legal Practitioner – **Shri Ashish Kumar Singh**, Advocate
Counsel for the Central Govt.

ORDER

“Hon’ble Mr. Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava, Member (J)”

1. Heard Shri Manoj Kumar Awasthi, learned counsel for the applicant and Shri Ashish Kumar Singh, learned counsel for the respondents.
2. The instant Original Application has been filed under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007 for setting aside the letter dated 08.04.2019 passed by the respondents and issuing directions to them to condone the short fall service of 54 days and grant second service pension to the applicant from the date of discharge from DSC i.e. 31.01.2019.
3. Briefly stated facts are that applicant was enrolled in Indian Army on 02.08.1979 and after completing 24 years and 29 days of service he was discharged from service on 31.08.2003. He was re-employed in Defence Security Corps (DSC) on 25.03.2004, and after completing 14 years 10 months and 06 days of service discharged from service on 31.01.2019 at the age of superannuation of 57 years under Rule 13 (3) III (i) of the Army Rules, 1954. As per rules, 15 years of minimum service is required for second service pension, but as there was deficiency of 54 days in the case of applicant, respondents denied to grant second service pension to him and his representation regarding condonation of deficiency in qualifying service for the grant of second service pension was turned

down on 08.04.2019 referring it had no merit. Applicant has challenged the very order of the respondents dated 08.04.2019 by which the respondents have denied second service pension to him.

4. It is submitted by learned counsel for the applicant that as per Pension Regulations for the Army, 2008, Part I, Para 18, Ministry of Defence, Department of Defence letter dated 14.08.2001 and ADGPS letter dated 26.09.2003, condonation of shortfall in qualifying service for grant of pension in respect of personnel below officers rank from six months upto 12 months is allowed. However, there being a shortfall of 54 days in case of applicant shortfall was not condoned in view of Government of India, Ministry of Defence, letter No. 14(02)/2011-D (Pen/Pol) dated 20.06.2017 and Principal Controller of Defence Account (Pension) Circular No. 589. In Para 'c' of the above letter it is stated that 'the intention behind grant of condonation of deficiency in service for grant of service pension is that the individual must not be left high and dry but should be eligible for at least one service pension and in view of this, it is clarified for grant of second service pension. Submission of learned counsel for the applicant is that above Government of India, Ministry of Defence, letter dated 20.06.2017 being against Rule 125 of Pension Regulations Part -I, Rules 2008 and Ministry of Defence letter dated 14.01.2001 and Additional Director General Personnel Services (ADGPS) letter dated 26.09.2003 is ultra virus.

5. Learned counsel for the applicant further submits that Para 173 of Defence Service Regulations Part - I, 2008, clearly says that grant of pensionary award to personnel of DSC shall be governed by the same Regulations as are applicable to personnel below officers' rank in the army except where they are inconsistent with the provisions of Regulations. Thus, he submits that Government of India, Ministry of Defence, letter dated 14.08.2001 and letter dated 26.02.2003 being equally applicable in case of applicant also, deficiency of 54 days in minimum qualifying service is liable to be condoned and applicant is entitled to second service pension.

6. Per contra, learned counsel for the respondents submits that intention behind condonation of service for grant of service pension being based on the policy that individual must not be left high and dry but should be eligible for at least one service pension and the same being not applicable for the second service pension in respect of DSC, Government of India has issued letter dated 20.06.2017, and keeping in view this letter and also that there is deficiency of 54 days in qualifying service, as such, applicant is not entitled to second service pension, his representation has been rightly rejected and the same needs no interference.

7. Having heard the submissions of learned counsel both sides and having gone through Rule 125 of Pension Regulations Part I,

Rules 2008 as well as Government of India, Ministry of Defence letter No. 14 (02)/2011-D(Pen/Pol) dated 20.06.2017, we find that issue regarding condonation of deficiency in minimum qualifying service regarding second service pension of DSC being cropped up in so many cases has not only been dealt with by the different Benches of the Armed Forces Tribunal but also by the Hon'ble Apex Court in the case of ***Shiv Das vs Union of India and Others*** in Civil Appeal No.274 of 2007, decided on 18.01.2007, and it has been held therein that deficiency in qualifying service upto 1 year is condonable. Taking note of the above and also that there is deficiency of less than 1 year in qualifying service of the applicant and the said deficiency is condonable under Rule 125 of the Army Rules 2008, we find that applicant's claim regarding condonation of deficiency in qualifying service for the grant of second service pension has wrongly been rejected by the respondents, and, as such, the letter dated 08.04.2019 is not liable to sustain.

8. Accordingly, impugned letter dated 08.04.2019, enclosed as Annexure No. 1 of Original Application, is set aside and Original Application is **allowed**. The shortfall of 54 days in minimum qualifying service of the applicant in getting second service pension is condoned. Applicant is held entitled to get second service pension

in DSC as well in addition to pension which he is already getting from the Army.

9. The respondents are directed to grant second service pension to the applicant from the date of discharge. The respondents are directed to pay arrears of second service pension from the date of discharge. They are further directed to implement this order within a period of four months from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order. Delay shall carry interest @ 8% per annum till actual payment.

10. No order as to costs.

(Vice Admiral Abhay Raghunath Karve)
Member (A)

(Justice Umesh Chandra Srivastava)
Member (J)

Dated: 07 January, 2021

AKD/-