

COURT NO. 1  
ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

OA 2045/2018

Ex Sgt Ajit Prasad Singh ..... Applicant  
Versus  
Union of India & Ors. .... Respondents  
For Applicant : Mr. B.P Vaishnav, Advocate  
For Respondents : Ms. Jyotsana Kaushik, Advocate

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HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAJENDRA MENON, CHAIRPERSON  
HON'BLE LT GEN C.P. MOHANTY, MEMBER (A)

ORDER

Invoking the jurisdiction of this Tribunal under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007, the applicant filed this OA praying to direct the respondents to accept the disabilities of the applicant as attributable to and aggravated by military service and grant disability element of pension @ 50% rounded off to 75% with effect from the date of retirement of the applicant; along with all consequential benefits.

2. The applicant was enrolled in the Indian Air Force on 10.02.1992 and retired on 31.03.2015. The Release Medical Board dated 27.03.2015 held that the applicant was fit to be

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discharged from service in composite low medical category A4G3 (P) for the disabilities - (i) DIABETES MELLITUS TYPE II @20% for life (ii) DYSLIPIDEMIA @ 15-19%, and (iii) PRIMARY HYPERTENSION @30% for life, with composite disability @40% while the qualifying element for disability pension was recorded as NIL for life on account of disabilities being treated as neither attributable to nor aggravated by military service (NANA).

3. The claim of the applicant for grant of disability pension was rejected vide letter dated 07.07.2015 stating that the aforesaid disabilities were considered as neither attributable to nor aggravated by military service. Against the aforesaid rejection on 19.09.2017, the applicant made a representation to the respondents for the grant of disability pension. However, the respondents have not replied to the applicant's representation till date. Thereafter, on 28.05.2018, the applicant filed OA No. 1059/2018 in this Hon'ble Tribunal, and in that OA, the respondents were directed to treat the said OA as an appeal vide order dated 01.06.2018. Vide letter dated 18.10.2018, the respondents treated OA No. 1059/2018

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as the first appeal, and the same was rejected by the respondents. Aggrieved by the aforesaid rejection, the applicant has again approached this Tribunal.

4. Placing reliance on the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Dharamvir Singh Vs. UOI & Ors [2013 (7) SCC 36], learned counsel for the applicant argues that no note of any disability was recorded in the service documents of the applicant at the time of the entry into the service, and that he served in the Air Force at various places in different environmental and service conditions in his prolonged service, thereby, any disability at the time of his service is deemed to be attributable to or aggravated by Air Force service.

5. Per Contra, learned counsel for the respondents submits that under the provisions of Rule 153 of the Pension Regulations for the Indian Air Force, 1961 (Part-I), the primary condition for the grant of disability pension is invalidation out of service on account of a disability which is attributable to or aggravated by Air Force service and is assessed @ 20% or more.

6. Relying on the aforesaid provision, learned counsel for respondents further submits that the aforesaid disabilities of the

applicant were assessed as “neither attributable to nor aggravated” by Air Force service and not connected with the Air Force service. Thus, the applicant is not entitled for grant of disability pension due to policy constraints.

7. On the careful perusal of the materials available on record and also the submissions made on behalf of the parties, we are of the opinion that it is not in dispute that the extent of disabilities was assessed to be above 20% which is the bare minimum for grant of disability pension in terms of Regulation 153 of the Pension Regulations for the Indian Air Force, 1961 (Part-I). Since, the second disability, i.e. DYSLIPIDEMIA @ 15-19% does not fulfill the requisite of 20%, it does not warrant any consideration. Now, the only question that arises in the above backdrop is whether the disabilities suffered by the applicant were attributable to or aggravated by Air Force service ?

8. The issue of attributability of disease is no longer res integra in view of the verdict of the Hon'ble Apex Court in *Dharamvir Singh Vs. Union of India* (supra), wherein it is clearly spelt out that any disease contracted during service is

presumed to be attributable to military service, if there is no record of any ailment at the time of enrollment into the military Service. As regards the contention of the respondents that the applicant was overweight, a scrutiny of weight chart reveals that at the time of onset of the disabilities, applicant was within the permissible weight limit.

9. Furthermore, the issue regarding the attributability of Diabetes Mellitus has been settled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Commander Rakesh Pande Vs. Union of India (Civil Appeal No. 5970 of 2019) wherein the Apex Court has not only held that the Diabetes Mellitus is a disease which is of permanent nature and will entitle the applicant to disability pension, but also observed that in case where the disability is of permanent nature, the disability assessed by the Medical Board shall be treated for life and cannot be restricted for specific period.

10. Regarding broadbanding benefits, we find that the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 10.12.2014 in Union of India Vs. Ram Avtar, (Civil Appeal No. 418 of 2012) and connected cases, has observed that individuals similarly placed as the applicant are entitled to

rounding off the disability element of pension. We also find that the Government of India vide its Letter No. F.No.3(11)2010-D (Pen/Legal) Pt V, Ministry of Defence dated 18th April 2016 has issued instructions for implementation of the Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 10.12.2014 (supra).

11. Applying the above parameters to the case at hand, we are of the view that the applicant has been discharged from service in low medical category on account of medical disease/disability, the disability must be presumed to have arisen in the course of service which must, in the absence of any reason recorded by the Medical Board, or the applicant being overweight, be presumed to have been attributable to or aggravated by air force service.

12. Therefore, in view of our analysis, the OA is partly allowed and Respondents are directed to grant benefit of disability element of pension compositely assessed @ 44% for life (for PRIMARY HYPERTENSION @ 30% and DIABETES MELLITUS Type II @ 20% for life), rounded off to 50% in view of judgement of Hon'ble Apex Court in Union of India Vs. Ram Avtar (supra). The arrears shall be disbursed to the applicant

within four months of receipt of this order failing which it shall earn interest @6% p.a. till the actual date of payment.

13. Consequently, the OA 2045/2018 is partly allowed.
14. No order as to costs.
15. Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, stands closed.

Pronounced in the open Court on 26 day of July, 2024.

[JUSTICE P

[DRA MENON]  
CHAIRPERSON

[LT GEN C.P. MOHANTY]  
MEMBER (A)

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