

COURT No.2
ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH: NEW DELHI

8.

OA 823/2025 with MA 1228/2025

Wg Cdr Baljeet Singh (Retd) Applicant
VERSUS
Union of India and Ors. Respondents

For Applicant : Ms. Deepika Sheoran, Advocate
For Respondents : Mr. Neeraj Sr. CGCS
with Mr. Sanjay, Advocate
Mr. Pankaj Sharma, In-charge DAV, Legal
Cell

CORAM

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE ANU MALHOTRA, MEMBER (J)
HON'BLE MS. RASIKA CHAUBE, MEMBER (A)

ORDER
24.03.2025

MA 1228/2025

MA 1228/2025 has been filed by the applicant seeking condonation of 459 days delay in institution of the OA which in view of the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of *UOI & Ors. Vs Tarsem Singh* 2009(1)AISLJ 371 and *in Ex Sep Chain Singh Vs Union of India & Ors.* (Civil Appeal No. 30073/2017 and the reasons mentioned, the MA 1228/2025 is allowed and delay condoned.

OA 823/2025

2. The applicant vide the present OA makes the following prayers :-

“(a) To quash and set aside the impugned order letter no. Air H/99797/RP/O/DAV dated 31.05.2023.

(b) To direct the respondents to grant benefits of OROP to the applicant in the same manner as applicable to all retirees who superannuated from service and pay him the arrears from 01.07.2019 with an interest @12% per annum from the date the amount was due till date of its realization.

(c) To award any other/further relief which this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case along with the cost of application in favour of the applicant and against the respondents."

3. In reply to a Specific Court Query learned counsel for the applicant submits that the prayers through the present OA are confined to seeking the grant of the OROP benefits in terms of the orders of the AFT, Principal Bench, New Delhi in OA 313/2024 dated 31.01.2025 whereby the OROP benefits have been permitted to be granted to those personnel of Armed Forces who have sought premature voluntary retirement.

4. The applicant has been denied the OROP benefits. The issue involved in the present matter is no more *res integra*. This is so in view of the order dated 31.01.2025 of this Tribunal in OA 313/2022 in the case of *Cdr Gaurav Mehra (Retd.) vs. Union of India & Ors.* whereby vide Para 83 and 84 thereof, it was directed to the effect :-

"83. Pensioners form a common category as indicated in detail hereinabove. PMR personnel who qualify for pension are also included in this general category. The pension regulations and rules

applicable to PMR personnel who qualify for pension are similar to that of a regular pensioner retiring on superannuation or on conclusion of his terms of appointment. However, now by applying the policy dated 07.11.2015 with a stipulation henceforth, the prospective application would mean that a right created to PMR pensioner, prior to the issue of impugned policy is taken away in the matter of grant of benefit of OROP. This will result in, a vested right available to a PMR personnel to receive pension at par with a regular pensioner, being taken away in the course of implementation of the OROP scheme as per impugned policy. Apart from creating a differentiation in a homogeneous class, taking away of this vested right available to a PMR personnel, violates mandate of the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in various cases i.e. Ex-Major N.C. Singhal vs. Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (1972) 4 SCC 765, Ex. Capt. K.C. Arora and Another Vs. State of Haryana and Others (1984) 3 SCC 281 and this also makes the action of the respondents unsustainable in law.

84. *Even if for the sake of argument it is taken note of that there were some difference between the aforesaid categories, but the personnel who opted for PMR forming a homogenous class; and once it is found that every person in the Army, Navy and the Air Force who seeks PMR forms a homogenous category in the matter of granting benefit of OROP, for such personnel no policy can be formulated which creates differentiation in this homogeneous class based on the date and time of their seeking PMR. The policy in question impugned before us infact*

bifurcates the PMR personnel into three categories; viz pre 01.07.2014 personnel, those personnel who took PMR between 01.07.2014 and 06.11.2015 and personnel who took PMR on or after 07.11.2015. Merely based on the dates as indicated hereinabove, differentiating in the same category of PMR personnel without any just cause or reason and without establishing any nexus as to for what purpose it had been done, we have no hesitation in holding that this amounts to violating the rights available to the PMR personnel under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution as well as hit by the principles of law laid down by the Supreme Court in the matter of fixing the cut off date and creating differentiation in a homogeneous class in terms of the judgment of D.S. Nakara (supra) and the law consistently laid down thereafter and, therefore, we hold that the provisions contained in para 4 of the policy letter dated 07.11.2015 is discriminatory in nature, violates Article 14 of the Constitution and, therefore, is unsustainable in law and cannot be implemented and we strike it down and direct that in the matter of grant of OROP benefit to PMR personnel, they be treated uniformly and the benefit of the scheme of OROP be granted to them without any discrimination in the matter of extending the benefit to certain persons only and excluding others like the applicants on the basis of fixing cut off dates as indicated in this order. The OAs are allowed and disposed of without any order as to costs."

5. Furthermore, it is essential to observe that vide judgment dated 09.12.2024 in Civil Appeal no. 1943/2022 in *Lt Col Suprita Chandel vs. UOI & Ors.* which has been observed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide Para 14 and 15 thereof, to the effect :-

"14. It is a well settled principle of law that where a citizen is aggrieved by an action of the government department has approached the court and obtained a declaration of law in his/her favour, others similarly situated ought to be extended the benefit without the need for them to go to court. [See Amrit Lal Berry vs. Collector of Central Excise, New Delhi and Others, (1975) 4 SCC 714]

15. In K.I. Shephard and Others vs. Union of India and Others, (1987) 4 SCC 431, this Court while reinforcing the above principle held as under:-

"19. The writ petitions and the appeals must succeed. We set aside the impugned judgments of the Single Judge and Division Bench of the Kerala High Court and direct that each of the three transferee banks should take over the excluded employees on the same terms and conditions of employment under the respective banking companies prior to amalgamation. The employees would be entitled to the benefit of continuity of service for all purposes including salary and perks throughout the period. We leave it open to the transferee banks to take such action as they consider proper against these employees in

accordance with law. Some of the excluded employees have not come to court. There is no justification to penalise them for not having litigated. They too shall be entitled to the same benefits as the petitioners.”

(Emphasis Supplied)”

6. In the circumstances, subject to verification of the date of discharge and the nature of discharge of the applicant being on the grounds of premature voluntary retirement, the benefits of the OROP to the applicant to the extent as granted vide order dated 31.01.2025 in OA 313/2022 be granted to the applicant by the respondents.

7. The OA is disposed of, accordingly.

(JUSTICE ANU MALHOTRA)
MEMBER (J)

(MS. RASIKA CHAUBE)
MEMBER (A)