

January 7, 1969

Mr. James W. Stancil
Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Sir:

Re: Buckles, Tompkin
C-18 056 379
0116

Following your request to Dean J. Frederick Eagle, M.D. for an independent psychiatric opinion in regard to Mr. Tompkin Buckles, I reviewed the records submitted in two folders - one from the V.A. and one from military service. The questions raised in your letter of December 5, 1968 are, whether Mr. Buckles has a chronic acquired psychiatric disorder; and if he does, when manifestations were first shown to be present.

I have reviewed these records. Mr. Buckles entered military service from a small rural community in Tennessee in July 1948 at the age of 19. He stated he completed 8th grade, was considered literate and achieved a score of 70 (borderline) on the R-6 test (30 July 48). He served in Japan and Korea and first sought medical care on return to U.S. in Aug. 52, complaining of headaches since Jan. 1952. Subsequently, he has repeated admissions for evaluations of lipomata and multiple somatic complaints, interpreted as non-disabling. The record speaks of AWOL and stockade; of demotion from Sergeant; and finally of discharge 4/54 with 30% disability for lipomata.

The record is silent until 1958; an entry in September, 1962; and 1965 to date. The requests on each occasion are for increased compensation. While the social history is sparse, it seems he returned home and did not marry; he worked on his mother's farm 1954-1957; then went to Michigan for a laborer's job; and was discharged when a strike occurred. Thereafter, he continued to work for his mother.

January 7, 1969

Various psychiatric evaluations are recorded. The first, and most complete, is dated Aug. 5, 1952 (Fort Campbell, Ky.). This relates chief symptoms of headaches, borderline blood pressure and many somatic complaints. The history of headaches begins in January 1952. The diagnosis is passive aggressive personality. Subsequent reports are similar, none defining a more active psychiatric condition, and each defining a personality disorder. The record of June 1966 is the first to define more focal symptoms, as "voices telling him to 'rubout or kill people'" and "an alcoholic problem that had caused 4 or 5 arrests for public intoxication."

One other clue is present in the report of 8/23/54 which alleges discharge "for low IQ" after 6 years service.

Opinion

1. Does Mr. Buckles have a chronic acquired psychiatric disorder?

The record portrays an uneducated rural worker of borderline intelligence and limited schooling. On induction, his military adjustment is satisfactory, as evidenced by the sergeant's rating. In 1952, the demands exceed his resources. Combined with the threat of return to a discouraging civilian role, results in pleas for help expressed as a plea for total support ("compensation"). This is denied, and he adapts less and less adequately with more somatization demands. His social, marital and job adjustments are equally unsatisfactory. Alcoholism is present. In the military he was best protected, and to meet his needs he demands more "compensation".

He evinces no psychiatric "disorder", but a lifelong inadequate adjustment. This was not acquired in adulthood. It was present before military duty. It is now chronic. Based on this record, the DSM-II psychiatric classification is Inadequate Personality(301.82); and the secondary classification is Borderline mental retardation (310).

January 7, 1969

2. When were manifestations first present? The record indicates that decompensation became manifest during the period Jan. to August 1952 and has continued.

3. On what is opinion based? The facts cited in the submitted records.

I am Professor of Psychiatry, New York Medical College (since 1966); formerly Research Professor, Washington University, (1962-1966). Certified in Psychiatry (1954) and Neurology (1952). Licensed to practice in New York (1946) and Missouri (1962). Graduated New York University College of Medicine, 1945.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

MF:kp