

March 18, 2021

Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles
100 Capitol Commerce Blvd.
Montgomery, Alabama 36117

Dear Chairwoman Gwathney and Members Walker and Spurlock:

We write as former servicemembers and advocates for veterans in and outside of Alabama in strong support of our fellow veteran, Mr. Jerry Lett, a former Army Staff Sergeant. Mr. Lett served his country honorably during the Gulf War and as a Staff Sergeant in the Alabama National Guard. He now faces the devastating prospect of being returned to prison through no fault of his own. We urge you to allow Mr. Lett to remain in the community where he has served his parole sentence without incident.

Mr. Lett embodies the Army value of selfless service. As a Gulf War veteran, Mr. Lett helped spare an entire region from tyrannical rule. Mr. Lett also served numerous hardship tours on the volatile Korean peninsula, within striking distance of North Korean artillery. When he returned home, he continued to serve his community as a Staff Sergeant in the Alabama National Guard. His military career exemplifies the courage needed to defend a nation in times of crisis.

But Mr. Lett's unceasing service to his country came with costs, as military service often does. As organizations serving war veterans, we know all too well the trauma of active duty, including (but certainly not limited to) PTSD and poor physical health. When combined with the difficulties of adjusting to civilian life, the stressors stemming from military service can lead to criminal justice system involvement. This was true for Mr. Lett.

As this Board recognized last year, Mr. Lett approached his time in prison with the same selflessness that defined his military career. Though he suffers from a host of medical conditions, including heart failure, diabetes, and ulcers, he worked to improve the lives of those around him. Mr. Lett helped prison staff diffuse potentially violent situations, and he assisted incarcerated people who could not read or write. This Board rightly concluded that Mr. Lett was rehabilitated and ready to return to the community he had long served. Mr. Lett has used this second chance to demonstrate that he can succeed on parole.

If reincarcerated due to a technical error beyond his control, Mr. Lett would be the first veteran in our combined experience who is returned to prison, despite doing everything asked of him on parole. Allowing Mr. Jerry Lett, a sick war veteran, to remain in the community is the only just response to these unique circumstances, and will show that this Board cares about and honors the service of Alabama's veterans.

We thank you for your consideration.