

[REDACTED], ex-PFC, USMC

**CURRENT DISCHARGE AND APPLICANT'S REQUEST**

Application Received: 20130312  
 Characterization of Service Received: (per DD 214) UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS  
 Narrative Reason for Discharge: (per DD 214) MISCONDUCT  
 Authority for Discharge: (per DD 214) MARCORSEPMAN 6210.5 [DRUGS]

Applicant's Request: Characterization change to: HONORABLE, GENERAL (UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS), OR UNCHARACTERIZED  
 Narrative Reason change to: NONE REQUESTED

**SUMMARY OF SERVICE**

**Prior Service:**

Inactive: USMCR (DEP) 20011020 - 20020728 COG Active: NONE

Pre-Service Drug Waiver: YES

**Period of Service Under Review:**

Date of Current Enlistment: 20020729 Age at Enlistment: 18  
 Period of Enlistment: 4 Years 0 Months Highest Rank: PRIVATE FIRST CLASS  
 Date of Discharge: 20030312 AFQT: 31  
 Length of Service: 00 Year(s) 07 Month(s) 13 Day(s)  
 Education Level: 12  
 MOS: 9971  
 Proficiency/Conduct Marks (# of occasions): 4.2 (1) / 4.2 (1) Fitness Reports: NOT APPLICABLE

Awards and Decorations (per DD 214): Rifle SS NDSM

Periods of UA/CONF: NONE

Periods of time lost (per DD 214): 20021118 - 20021122, 5 days

NJP: 1

- 20021209: Article 92 (Failure to obey order or regulation, possession of drug paraphernalia)  
 Article 112a (Wrongful use, possession, etc. of controlled substances, admitted to the usage of marijuana)  
 Awarded: FOP RESTR EPD Suspended: NONE

SCM: NONE SPCM: NONE CC: NONE Retention Warning Counseling: NONE

**TYPES OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED/REVIEWED**

**Related to Military Service:**

DD 214:  Service/Medical Record:  Other Records:

**Related to Post-Service Period:**

Employment:  Finances:  Education/Training:   
 Health/Medical Records:  Rehabilitation/Treatment:  Criminal Records:   
 Personal Documentation:  Community Service:  References:   
 Department of VA letter:  Other Documentation:   
 Additional Statements:  
 From Applicant:  From/To Representation:  From/To Congress member:

Key: NFIR - Not found in record    RESTR - Restriction    NJP - Nonjudicial punishment    SCM - Summary court-martial  
 SPCM - Special court-martial    FOP - Forfeiture of pay    RIR - Reduction in rank    EPD - Extra duties  
 CONF - Confinement    CC - Civilian conviction    CCU - Correctional Custody Unit    CBW - Confinement on bread and water

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
NAVAL DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD (NDRB)  
DISCHARGE REVIEW DECISIONAL DOCUMENT**

**APPLICANT'S ISSUES**

1. The Applicant seeks an upgrade to enhance employment opportunities.
2. The Applicant would like to reenlist.
3. The Applicant contends his discharge was based on an isolated incident, and he never tested positive for marijuana.
4. The Applicant contends his post-service conduct warrants an upgrade.

**DECISION**

Date: 20131003    DOCUMENTARY REVIEW    Location: WASHINGTON D.C.    Representation: NONE

**By a vote of 5-0 the Characterization shall remain UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS.  
By a vote of 5-0 the Narrative Reason shall remain MISCONDUCT.**

**DISCUSSION**

The NDRB, under its responsibility to examine the propriety and equity of an Applicant's discharge, is authorized to change the character of service and the reason for discharge if such change is warranted. In reviewing discharges, the Board presumes regularity in the conduct of governmental affairs unless there is substantial credible evidence to rebut the presumption, to include evidence submitted by the Applicant. The Board did complete a thorough review of the circumstances that led to his discharge and the discharge process to ensure his discharge met the pertinent standards of equity and propriety. The Applicant's record of service included one nonjudicial punishment (NJP) for violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ): Article 92 (Failure to obey order or regulation, 1 specification) and Article 112a (Wrongful use, possession, etc. of controlled substances, 1 specification). The Applicant also had a pre-service drug waiver for using marijuana three times prior to entering the Marine Corps, and acknowledged his complete understanding of the Marine Corps Policy Concerning Illegal Use of Drugs on 16 October 2001. Based on the Article 112a violation, processing for administrative separation is mandatory. When notified of administrative separation processing using the administrative board procedure, the Applicant waived his rights to consult with a qualified counsel, submit a written statement, and request an administrative board.

Issue 1: (Nondecisional) The Applicant seeks an upgrade to enhance employment opportunities. The NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing employment opportunities. Regulations limit the NDRB's review to a determination of the propriety and equity of the discharge.

Issue 2: (Nondecisional) The Applicant would like to reenlist. Since the NDRB has no jurisdiction over reenlistment, reentry, or reinstatement into the Navy, Marine Corps, or any other of the Armed Forces, the NDRB is not authorized to change a reenlistment code. Only the Board for Correction of Naval Records can make changes to reenlistment codes. Additionally, the NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing reenlistment opportunities. An unfavorable "RE" code is, in itself, not a bar to reenlistment. A request for a waiver can be submitted during the processing of a formal application for reenlistment through a recruiter.

Issue 3: (Decisional) (Propriety/Equity) **RELIEF NOT WARRANTED.** The Applicant contends his discharge was based on an isolated incident, and he never tested positive for marijuana. Despite a service member's prior record of service, certain serious offenses, even though isolated, warrant separation from the Marine Corps to maintain proper order and discipline. Violation of Article 112a is one such offense requiring mandatory processing for administrative separation regardless of grade, performance, or time in service. This usually results in an unfavorable characterization of discharge or, at a maximum, a punitive discharge and possible confinement if adjudicated and awarded as part of a sentence by a special or general court-martial. The Applicant was found guilty of violation of Article 112a because he was in possession of drug paraphernalia and admitted to the in-service use of marijuana. A positive drug test is not needed to find one guilty of violating Article 112a. However, his command did not pursue a punitive discharge but opted instead for the more lenient administrative discharge. The NDRB found the characterization of the Applicant's discharge was equitable and consistent with the characterization of discharge given others in similar circumstances. Relief denied.

Issue 4: (Decisional) (Equity) RELIEF NOT WARRANTED. The Applicant contends his post-service conduct warrants an upgrade. The NDRB considers outstanding post-service conduct to the extent such matters provide a basis for a more thorough understanding of the Applicant's performance and conduct during the period of service under review. The Applicant provided a personal statement, education transcripts, certifications, and a resume of continuous employment. The Applicant could have provided documentation as detailed in the *Post-Service Conduct* paragraph in the Addendum, however, completion of these items alone does not guarantee an upgrade from an unfavorable discharge as each discharge is reviewed by the Board on a case by case basis to determine if post-service conduct establishes that the in-service misconduct was an aberration. The Board determined the characterization of service received was appropriate considering the length of service and UCMJ violations. Relief denied.

Summary: After a thorough review of the available evidence, to include the Applicant's summary of service, service record entries and discharge process, the Board found the discharge was proper and equitable. Therefore, the awarded characterization of service shall remain UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS and the narrative reason for separation shall remain MISCONDUCT. The Applicant remains eligible for a personal appearance hearing for a period of fifteen years from the date of his discharge. The Applicant is directed to the Addendum for additional information.

#### PERTINENT REGULATION/LAW

A. The Marine Corps Separation and Retirement Manual, (MCO P1900.16F), effective 1 September 2001 until Present, Paragraph 6210, MISCONDUCT.

B. Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5420.174D of 22 December 2004, Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB) Procedures and Standards, Part II, Para 211, Regularity of Government Affairs, Part V, Para 502, Propriety and Para 503, Equity.

**ADDENDUM: Information for the Applicant**

**Complaint Procedures:** If you believe the decision in your case is unclear, not responsive to the issues you raised, or does not otherwise comport with the decisional document requirements of DoD Instruction 1332.28, you may submit a complaint in accordance with Enclosure (5) of that Instruction to the Joint Service Review Activity, OUSD (P&R) PI-LP, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-4000. You should read Enclosure (5) of the Instruction before submitting such a complaint. The complaint procedure does not permit a challenge of the merits of the decision; it is designed solely to ensure that the decisional documents meet applicable requirements for clarity and responsiveness. You may view DoD Instruction 1332.28 and other Decisional Documents by going online at "<http://Boards.law.af.mil>."

**Additional Reviews:** After a document review has been conducted, former members are eligible for a personal appearance hearing, provided the application is received at the NDRB within 15 years of the Applicant's date of discharge. The Applicant can provide documentation to support any claims of post-service accomplishments or any additional evidence related to this discharge. Representation at a personal appearance hearing is recommended but not required. There are veterans organizations such as the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans that are willing to provide guidance to former service members in their efforts to obtain a discharge upgrade. If a former member has been discharged for more than 15 years, has already been granted a personal appearance hearing or has otherwise exhausted their opportunities before the NDRB, the Applicant may petition the Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR), 701 South Courthouse Road, Suite 1001, Arlington, VA 22204-2490 for further review.

**Service Benefits:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determines eligibility for post-service benefits, not the NDRB. There is no requirement or law that grants recharacterization solely on the issue of obtaining veterans benefits and this issue does not serve to provide a foundation upon which the Board can grant relief.

**Employment/Educational Opportunities:** The NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing employment or educational opportunities. Regulations limit the NDRB's review to a determination of the propriety and equity of the discharge.

**Reenlistment/RE-code:** Since the NDRB has no jurisdiction over reenlistment, reentry, or reinstatement into the Navy, Marine Corps, or any other of the Armed Forces, the NDRB is not authorized to change a reenlistment code. Only the BCNR can make changes to reenlistment codes. Additionally, the NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing reenlistment opportunities. An unfavorable "RE" code is, in itself, not a bar to reenlistment. A request for a waiver can be submitted during the processing of a formal application for reenlistment through a recruiter.

**Medical Conditions and Misconduct:** DoD disability regulations do not preclude a disciplinary separation. Appropriate regulations stipulate that separations for misconduct take precedence over potential separations for other reasons. Whenever a member is being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board, and is processed subsequently for an administrative involuntary separation or is referred to a court martial for misconduct, the disability evaluation is suspended pending the outcome of the non-disability proceedings. If the action includes either a punitive or administrative discharge for misconduct or for any basis wherein an Other Than Honorable discharge is authorized, the medical board report is filed in the member's terminated health record. Additionally, the NDRB does not have the authority to change a narrative reason for separation to one indicating a medical disability or other medical related reasons. Only the BCNR can grant this type of narrative reason change.

**Automatic Upgrades -** There is no law or regulation that provides for an unfavorable discharge to be upgraded based solely on the passage of time or good conduct subsequent to leaving naval service.

**Post-Service Conduct:** The NDRB is authorized to consider post-service factors in the recharacterization of a discharge. Outstanding post-service conduct, to the extent such matters provide a basis for a more thorough understanding of the Applicant's performance and conduct during the period of service under review, is considered during Board reviews. Documentation to support a post-service conduct upgrade includes, but is not limited to: a verifiable continuous employment record; marriage and children's birth certificates (if applicable); character witness statements; documentation of community or church service; certification of non-involvement with civil authorities; evidence of financial stability or letters of good standing from banks, credit card companies, or other financial institutions; attendance at or completion of higher education (official transcripts); and documentation of a drug-free lifestyle. The Applicant is advised that completion of these items alone does not guarantee the upgrade of an unfavorable discharge, as each discharge is reviewed by the Board on a case-by-case basis to determine if post-service accomplishments help demonstrate in-service misconduct was an aberration and not indicative of the member's overall character.

**Issues Concerning Bad-Conduct Discharges (BCD):** Because relevant and material facts stated in a court-martial specification are presumed by the NDRB to be established facts, issues relating to the Applicant's innocence of charges for which he was found guilty cannot form a basis for relief. With respect to a discharge adjudged by a special court-martial, the action of the NDRB is restricted to upgrades based on clemency. Clemency is an act of leniency that reduces the severity of the punishment imposed. The NDRB does not have the jurisdictional authority to review a discharge or dismissal resulting from a general court-martial.

**Board Membership:** The names and votes of the members of the NDRB Board are recorded on the original of this document and may be obtained from the service records by writing to:

Secretary of the Navy Council of Review Boards  
Attn: Naval Discharge Review Board  
720 Kennon Street SE Rm 309  
Washington Navy Yard DC 20374-5023