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| **AIR FORCE DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD DECISIONAL DOCUMENT** | CASE NUMBER FD-2020-00034 |
| The applicant was discharged on 12 Sep 2019 in accordance with AFI 36-3208 with a General discharge for Misconduct (Drug Abuse). The applicant appealed for an upgrade of his discharge characterization to Honorable. The board was conducted on 10 Sep 2020.  The applicant was offered a personal appearance before the Discharge Review Board (DRB), but declined and requested the board be completed based on a records only review. The applicant was represented by counsel.  Pursuant to 10 USC §1553, the board included a member who is a psychiatrist/ psychologist with training on mental health issues connected with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI), and training on mental health disorders.  The attached examiner’s brief (provided to applicant only), extracted from available service records, contains pertinent data regarding the circumstances and character of the applicant’s military service.    FINDING: The DRB voted unanimously to *deny* the applicant’s request to upgrade his discharge characterization to Honorable.  DISCUSSION: The DRB, under its responsibility to examine the propriety and equity of an applicant’s discharge, is authorized to change the characterization of service and the narrative reason for discharge if such changes are warranted. If applicable, the board can also change the applicant’s reenlistment eligibility code. 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 completed a thorough review of the circumstances that led to the discharge and the discharge process to determine if the discharge met the pertinent standards of equity and propriety.  The applicant’s record of service included one Article 15 for wrongful use of steroids.  Due to evidence of a mental health condition found in the applicant’s medical record, the board considered the case based on the liberal consideration standards required by guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and/or 10 USC §1553.  The applicant contends his illegal drug use was the result of his undiagnosed bipolar disorder while in the service. He claims the actions that led to his discharge were the direct result of a bipolar manic episode that made him incapable of making rational decisions or foreseeing the consequences of his choices. He further claims to have had an otherwise stellar Air Force career. Finally, he claims he has been receiving psychiatric care since his discharge and has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.  Upon review of the applicant’s service record, the board was not able to find any documentation regarding the discharge. Since the board relies on the presumption of regularity, it concluded the discharge received by the applicant was appropriate. Additionally, after a thorough review of the medical record and inputs from the board’s psychiatrist/ psychologist, the DRB found no conclusive indication that any mental health issues had a direct impact on the applicant's misconduct or discharge. Therefore, the DRB determined the applicant’s contention was without merit.  CONCLUSION: The board found insufficient evidence of an inequity or impropriety that would warrant a change to the applicant’s discharge. Therefore, the discharge received by the applicant was deemed to be appropriate and his request was not approved.  The DRB results were approved by the board president on 16 Sep 2020. If desired, the applicant can request a list of the board members and their votes by writing to:  Air Force Review Boards Agency  Attn: Discharge Review Board  3351 Celmers Lane  Joint Base Andrews, NAF Washington, MD 20762-6602  Attachment: Examiner's Brief (Applicant Only) | |