

**AIR FORCE DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD DECISIONAL DOCUMENT**

**SUMMARY:** The applicant was discharged on 1 September 2020 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, with an Entry Level Separation for Failed Medical/Physical Procurement Standards. The applicant appealed for an upgrade of his discharge characterization, a change to the separation code, and a change to the reentry code.

The applicant was represented by counsel.

The applicant appeared and testified before the Discharge Review Board (DRB), with counsel, via video teleconference using Zoom on 28 November 2023. No witnesses were present to testify on the applicant's behalf.

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.

**DISCUSSION:** The Discharge Review Board (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 reentry 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 documentary evidence the Board considered as part of the review includes, but is not limited to the DD Form 293, *Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States*, and any additional documentation submitted by applicant and/or counsel; the applicant's personnel file from the Automated Records Management System (ARMS); and the DRB Brief detailing the applicant's service information and a summary of the case.

Through counsel, the applicant requested an upgrade based on propriety and equity. In his application he contended he failed his initial hearing test at MEPS but when he passed a second test he was cleared by MEPS for entry into the service. At Basic Military Training the applicant noted his tinnitus increased since MEPS and had become a distraction for him with training and sleeping. He further claimed he had high motivation to stay in the Air Force so did not mention the tinnitus at MEPS because at that time it was not bothering him. The applicant also claimed he began having problems hearing normal conversations and was further evaluated. The evaluators recommended separation but did also mention a hearing aid could be used as a means of managing the issue. Instead, the command administratively separated him without treating him.

At his personal appearance hearing the applicant testified that his tinnitus started shortly after receiving mandatory vaccinations during training. He claimed he informed his training instructor because he wanted to be honest about his situation. He further claimed after he was evaluated he was told he could either return home for six months to see if his condition improved and then return to training, or he could be discharged. The applicant also testified that his condition improved approximately four months after his discharge, and he no longer is experiencing any symptoms. He has contacted a recruiter and testified he is attempting to reenter the service if a waiver is approved.

A review of the applicant's record revealed he was found to have a disqualifying medical condition under DoDI 6130.03, *Medical Standards for Military Service*, while attending training, specifically Chronic Eustachian tube dysfunction. Based on his condition the applicant was administratively discharged for failed medical/physical procurement standards, not erroneous enlistment as contended in his application.

The Board noted that even though hearing aids could possibly manage the condition, Air Force policy dictates individuals with disqualifying conditions are not considered for retention. The applicant did not request a waiver and declined to submit a response to the discharge notification.

After considering all the evidence, and the applicant's testimony, the Board concluded it was likely the applicant's condition was of a temporary nature as he did pass accession standards for entrance into the service. However, the DRB is not the waiver authority for medical conditions. The Board determined, if upon further evaluation the application is able to pass an accession physical, he should be allowed to pursue a waiver. Therefore, the Board approved changing the applicant's reentry code to allow him the opportunity to seek a waiver to reenter the service.

The applicant also requested his uncharacterized Entry Level Separation be upgraded to "Honorable." However, this would violate current Air Force policy IAW AFI 36-3208, which states Airmen are in entry level status during the first 180-days of continuous active military service and if a separation action is initiated during this time, they will receive an entry level separation without service characterization. Therefore, the applicant's request to "upgrade" to "Honorable" could not be approved.

**FINDING:** The DRB voted unanimously to *approve* the applicant's request to change his reentry code. The DRB also voted unanimously to *deny* upgrading his discharge characterization and changing the discharge narrative reason and associated separation code.

Should the applicant wish to appeal this decision, the applicant must seek relief before the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR) in accordance with DAFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records*.

**CONCLUSION:** After a thorough review of the available evidence, to include the Applicant's issues, summary of service, service/medical record entries, and discharge process, the Board found the discharge characterization and narrative reason proper and the reentry code inequitable. Therefore, the awarded characterization of service shall remain "Entry Level Separation," the narrative reason for separation shall remain "Failed Medical/Physical Procurement Standards," and the reentry code shall change to "3K." The Air Force DRB (AFDRB) results were approved by the Board President on 6 December 2023. 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

Instructions on how to appeal an AFDRB decision can be found at <https://afrbportal.azurewebsites.us>

Attachment:  
Examiner's Brief (Applicant Only)