

SUMMARY: The applicant was discharged on 15 June 2022 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, with an Entry Level Separation (ELS) for Erroneous Entry. The applicant appealed for a change to his reentry code.

The applicant was not represented by counsel.

The applicant requested the Board be completed based on a records only review. The Board was conducted on 16 November 2023.

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.

The applicant contended he struggled with mental health issues due to unresolved issues back home. He claimed he had self-harm issues and was worried about his job. Once he got out of the military, he got help for his issues and has since been cleared by a psychologist to be symptom free. He requested a change to his reentry code so he can reenter the service.

A review of the applicant's records revealed that while attending Basic Military Training (BMT) he was referred to Behavioral Health due to safety concerns. He was evaluated and was diagnosed with adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood. It was determined his condition was severe enough that he should be discharged, and he did not desire to remain in training. He submitted a letter from a civilian mental health provider that assessed him and determined he did not currently have any mental health conditions.

LIBERAL CONSIDERATION:

Due to the applicant's contention of a mental health condition, the Board considered the case based on the liberal consideration (LC) standards required by guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and 10 USC §1553. The Board included a member who is a physician, clinical psychologist, or psychiatrist. Specifically, the Board reviewed the four questions the Under Secretary of Defense provided that Boards should consider when weighing evidence in requests for modification of discharges due in whole or in part to mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD); Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); sexual assault, and sexual harassment. The Board considered the following:

1. Did the veteran contend that a condition or experience may have excused or mitigated their misconduct or discharge?

The applicant contended "I was struggling with mental health because of unresolved issues at home before basic military training one of the reasons of which I had self-harm thoughts and also was worried due to my job choice I made. I got out and spoke with family and resolved the issues."

2. Did that condition exist/experience occur during military service?

A review of the applicant's in-service records revealed he received inpatient mental health services during his brief time in service due to suicidal ideations with a plan to cut self and was found in the dormitory bathroom in the middle of the night with a razor blade. The applicant reported to providers during his time in service that he was experiencing mental health symptoms including suicidal ideation, depressed mood, sleep disturbance, and intermittent panic attacks in response to being in the military training environment.

3. Does that condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge?

A review of the applicant's DD214 revealed he was discharged with an uncharacterized entry level separation due to erroneous entry with fifteen days time in service.

In a memorandum for the commander written by the applicant's mental health provider and signed by the applicant, the provider stated "[h]e endorsed worsening depressed mood, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts in the context of initiation of military training. As such, the member does not desire to return to the training environment due to the stress it causes him." The provider further opined "the service member's mental health condition is so severe that the member's ability to function effectively in a military environment is significantly impaired and would be worsened by return to active military training." The applicant hand wrote on his ADC consultation questionnaire during his discharge processing "I do not feel safe in the USAF and leaving is my best option due to my anxiety that was created here at BMT."

There is evidence the applicant exhibited and endorsed difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle and poor coping skills, resulting in his in-service diagnosis of adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depression, which may explain his discharge but does not mitigate the discharge.

The applicant stated on his application that he "was struggling with mental health because of unresolved issues at home before basic military training one of the reasons of which I had self-harm thoughts and also was worried due to my job choice I made." The applicant also stated "...and now I wish to join the US Armed Forces to serve my country the healthy way and give back to the world my love for what I actually want to do." The applicant also provided a statement from a provider three months post-discharge that his in-service mental health condition that led to his discharge was an isolated event. The Discharge Review Board is not the waiver authority for re-entry and will not opine on the applicant's current fitness for military service. At the "snapshot in time" of the applicant's service his records revealed he exhibited and endorsed symptoms of mental health conditions and did not desire to continue his military training. There is no evidence the applicant's discharge was improper or did not follow the requirements of Entry Level Separations IAW 36-3208.

4. Does that condition or experience outweigh the discharge?

There is no evidence the applicant's discharge was improper or did not follow the requirements of Entry Level Separations IAW 36-3208. The applicant did not complete the entry level status of 180 days of service as detailed in AFI 36-3208, thus the characterization of the applicant's service was appropriately deemed as uncharacterized and is not outweighed by a mental health condition.

Additionally, the Board considered the factors laid out in the attachment to the Under Secretary of Defense memorandum, *Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Regarding Equity, Injustice, or Clemency Determinations*, dated 25 June 2018, known as the "Wilkie Memo." The Board considered the factors listed in paragraphs (6)(a)-(6)(l) and (7)(a)-(7)(r) of this memorandum and found no evidence of inequity or impropriety.

FINDING: The DRB voted unanimously to **deny** 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.

Should the applicant wish to appeal this decision, the applicant must request a personal appearance before this Board before applying for relief to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR). In accordance with DAFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records*, all applicants before the AFBCMR must first exhaust available administrative avenues of relief before applying to the AFBCMR, otherwise their AFBCMR case will be administratively closed until such time that the applicant avails themselves of the available avenue of relief. Therefore, should the applicant wish to appeal this decision, they must first exercise their right to make a personal appearance before the AFDRB.

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 was proper and equitable. Therefore, the awarded characterization of service shall remain "Entry Level Separation," the narrative reason for separation shall remain "Erroneous Entry," and the reentry code shall remain "2C." The Air Force DRB (AFDRB) results were approved by the Board president on 1 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)

