

SUMMARY: The Applicant was discharged on 24 February 2021 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, with an Uncharacterized discharge for Erroneous Entry. The Applicant appealed for a change to the discharge narrative reason and a change to the reentry code.

The Applicant requested the Board be completed based on a records only review. The Board was conducted on 10 January 2025. The Applicant was not represented by counsel.

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 DRB provided a notice to inform the service member of resources available to help answer their questions about the application process and/or to help them supplement their application, to include information on the types of evidence that can be submitted to support a claim; information regarding potential eligibility for mental health treatment and evaluation services offered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA); general information regarding Veterans Service Organizations that may assist with DRB applications, and their right to retain counsel; a link to a database of legal services organizations that serve members of the military, veterans, and their families; the weblink to the VA's Directory of Veteran's Service Organizations; and information regarding reasonable accommodation requests from the DRB in the application and adjudication process.

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 that their narrative reason for separation, separation code, and reentry code should have been changed to allow them to reenter military service. They argued that the mental and behavioral conditions exhibited during Basic Military Training were unprecedented in their life and were influenced by external factors, including the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden passing of a close uncle. They emphasized their capability to serve and highlighted that they had passed all pre-entry psychological and physical exams, asserting that the issues experienced during training were isolated events. The Applicant sought the Board's approval for these changes to pursue opportunities in active duty, guard, or reserve components.

The Applicant provided the following documents in support of their claim:

- Discharge Coordination Packet
- DD FORM 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, Aug 2009
- Medical Documents

A review of the records revealed the Applicant was discharged for erroneous entry after being diagnosed with adjustment disorder during Basic Military Training, which impaired their ability to perform duties and was disqualifying under DoDI 6130.03, *Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction*. The Applicant exhibited and endorsed symptoms of a mental health condition that impaired their ability to effectively perform their military duties. Further, they expressed a desire to leave service due to stress, difficulty adjusting, and separation from their support system. The DRB found no evidence the Applicant's discharge was improper or did not follow the requirements of Entry Level Separation IAW 36-3208. Moreover, 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.

LIBERAL CONSIDERATION: Due to the Applicant's contentions or evidence of a mental health diagnosis and/or experiences of sexual assault or sexual harassment and/or records documenting that one or more symptoms of mental health conditions and/or experiences of sexual assault or sexual harassment existed/occurred during military service found in the Applicant's record, 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, psychiatrist or social worker with training on mental health issues connected with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI) or other trauma. 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 PTSD; TBI; sexual assault, and sexual harassment. The Board considered the following:

1. Did the veteran have a condition or experience that may excuse or mitigate the discharge?

The Applicant checked the box for "other mental health" on the application. The Applicant contended "I am requesting a change in my narrative reason for separation, my separation code, and reentry code from their current characterization to ones that will allow me reentry into the enlisted service. I am requesting these changes from the Board because I had not ever experienced any of the mental or behavioral conditions that I showed shortly after entering Basic Military Training prior to entering the training environment and feel that I am still very much so capable of service in an active duty, guard, or reserve component if given the opportunity. I feel many factors played a large role in the decline of my mental-emotional stated in the training environment, the last of which include the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic that was in full global swing during my entry into service as well as the sudden passing of my Uncle whom of which I was very close to and I even seeked personal guidance with my recruiter about. Furthermore, I passed all of my pre-entry psychological and physical exams and feel that this was a one-off event."

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

A review of the Applicant's in-service medical records revealed the Applicant received inpatient and outpatient mental health services during his twenty-nine days' time in service due to stating suicidal ideation and anxious distress related to his inability to cope with the training environment at the initiation of basic military training. The Applicant received the diagnosis, in service, of adjustment disorder.

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

A review of the Applicant's DD214 revealed the Applicant received an uncharacterized, entry level separation due to erroneous entry with twenty-nine days' time in service.

A review of the Applicant's in-service records revealed the Applicant reported daily significant depressed mood, anxious distress and panic attacks in the context of the training environment with high utilization of medical services. The Applicant's records revealed he was informed his condition of adjustment disorder was disqualifying for military service per DoDI 6130.03. There is evidence the Applicant exhibited and endorsed difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle and poor coping skills related to his separation from his primary support system and inability to tolerate the military training environment, resulting in his in-service

diagnosis of adjustment disorder which may explain the Applicant's discharge but does not mitigate the Applicant's discharge. A review of the Applicant's in-service administrative and medical records revealed the Applicant did not want to continue military training and requested to be discharged due to the increased stress of the military environment making it known that he did not want to continue in the military and wanted to return home.

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. The Applicant was discharged due to erroneous entry; at the "snapshot in time" of the Applicant's service the Applicant's records revealed the Applicant exhibited and endorsed symptoms of a mental health condition that impaired his ability to effectively perform his military duties. Further, the Applicant made it known he did not desire to continue his military training due to the stress of the training environment and his dislike of being separated from his primary support system. There is no evidence the Applicant's discharge was improper or did not follow the requirements of Entry Level Separation 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 Separation IAW 36-3208. The Applicant did not complete the entry level status of 360 days of service as detailed in AFI 36-3208, thus the characterization of the Applicant's service was appropriately deemed as uncharacterized and the corresponding narrative reason for separation and re-entry code appropriately corresponded to the Applicant's uncharacterized separation and were 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 the discharge narrative reason and to change the reentry code.

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 "Uncharacterized," the narrative reason for separation shall remain "Erroneous Entry," and the reentry code shall remain "2C." The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on 23 Jan 2025. 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, MD 20762-6435

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

Attachment:

Examiner's Brief (Applicant Only)