

SUMMARY: The Applicant was discharged on 15 March 2019 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, with an Uncharacterized - Entry Level Separation discharge for Condition, Not A Disability. The Applicant appealed for a change to the reentry code.

The Applicant requested the Board be completed based on a records only review. The Board was conducted on 05 December 2024. 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 stated that at the time of their discharge, they were in a deeply distressed state of mind due to the devastating news of their grandfather's passing. This loss left them feeling heartbroken and emotionally shattered, particularly because they were unable to be there to support their family during that difficult time. However, the Applicant believed that through personal growth and the lessons they had learned over time, they had become better equipped to overcome life's challenges. They expressed hope and a sincere desire for another opportunity to serve in the Air Force.

The DRB concluded that there was no evidence of inequity or impropriety in the Applicant's discharge. The separation was based on an adjustment disorder that significantly impaired the Applicant's ability to perform military duties. Medical records indicated the Applicant reported suicidal ideations, experienced stress from the training environment, and explicitly expressed a desire to leave the military—all factors that were appropriately evaluated during the discharge process.

The board further noted that the Applicant failed to provide evidence to refute the presumption of regularity

or demonstrate that their discharge was improper or unfair. While the Applicant attributed their distress to personal loss and highlighted personal growth since their discharge, they did not present supporting documentation, such as medical records or evidence of post-service rehabilitation, to substantiate these claims or to demonstrate significant improvement in their mental health. Therefore, the board has determined that the applicant's discharge status should remain as it currently stands.

The Applicant requested their uncharacterized Entry Level Separation be upgraded to Honorable. However, this would violate current policy in accordance with 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.

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 contended "At the time of my discharge I was in a bad state of mind. Dealing with the news I learned I found out my Grandfather was dying. That information put me in a place and position I had never experienced before. My spirit and heart was broken because I couldn't be there for my family. With the things I have learned over time I know I can overcome any obstacles that come my way. I hope and pray to obtain another chance to join the greatest Air Force."

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

A review of the applicant's in-service medical records revealed the applicant reported suicidal ideations in response to the military training environment and experiencing a recurrence of knee pain from a pre-service injury. The applicant's records revealed the applicant was admitted to inpatient psychiatry treatment during his time in service and made it known to his mental health providers and command that he believed joining the military was a mistake and did not wish to return to the training environment due to the stress it caused him. The applicant's records revealed 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 a condition, not a disability with twenty seven days time in service.

A review of the applicant's in service mental health evaluations revealed the applicant received inpatient mental health services during his time in service due to stating suicidal ideations due to the stress of the military training environment and made his wishes to return home and discontinue training known to medical providers and to his command.

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, which may explain the applicant's misconduct but does not mitigate the applicant's 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 is not outweighed by a mental health condition. 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 with a narrative reason of condition, not a disability, 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. 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 applicant's discharge is not outweighed by the mental health condition that caused the applicant's discharge.

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 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 "Condition, Not A Disability," and the reentry code shall remain "2C." The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on December 20, 2024. 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://afrbportal.azurewebsites.us>

Attachment:

Examiner's Brief (Applicant Only)

