

**SUMMARY:** The Applicant was discharged on 22 May 2023 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, Administrative Separation of Airmen, with an Under Honorable Conditions - (General) discharge for Misconduct (Minor Infractions). The Applicant appealed for an upgrade of their discharge characterization 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 09 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 Applicant's record of service included the following documented misconduct leading up to their discharge: Letter of Reprimand for Disrespect to civilian in chain of command, Letter of Reprimand for Disrespectful to Flight Leadership, and Letter of Reprimand for Admission of Drug Use

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.

In the application, the Applicant sought an upgrade to their character of service, separation code, and reentry code, citing PTSD and other mental health conditions. The Applicant contended that if their leadership had shown more care, they could have been rehabilitated from the circumstances leading to their discharge. The Applicant claimed they deserved another chance and stated that they sought treatment from an off-record therapist while in service, who prescribed them sleeping pills.

A review of the Applicant's service record showed a pattern of misconduct, including disrespect towards superiors, disrespect towards a civilian member of the chain of command, as well as an admitted violation of military drug policies. The Applicant's records revealed they were command referred to substance use

services (ADAPT) during her time in service and completed substance use education sessions. While in ADAPT, the Applicant denied mental health symptoms but endorsed difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle. Approximately four months later, the Applicant was seen for a one-time walk in appointment due to relationship issues with their long-distance partner. A few months later, the Applicant attended two on-base mental health appointments reporting dislike of their job, base location, and also relationship issues. There is no evidence the Applicant received the diagnosis of PTSD during their time in service nor evidence the Applicant exhibited or endorsed any clinically significant indicators of PTSD while in service. Conversely, the Applicant did receive the diagnosis of adjustment disorder. The DRB determined that, while the Applicant attributed their misconduct to PTSD and other mental health challenges, the evidence presented did not establish a direct causal link to warrant an upgrade. While the DRB acknowledges the Applicant's self-reported mental health challenges and adjustment difficulties, the severity and pattern of misconduct outweighed any potential mitigating factors. Therefore, the discharge status will remain unchanged.

**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 "PTSD" on the application. The Applicant contended "I know that I were in a different situation with different leadership, someone who actually cared about my well being, I would not be in this state I am in now. I would enjoy my job and realized why I joined in the first place. To break generation curses and to give my last name and good image. As someone who gives others chance after chance who didn't deserve it, I do. I corrected my actions after my first paperwork was given to me and I was judged ever since. While I was in, I did speak with a therapist off record. I was also given pills to help me sleep at night because mentally I couldn't shut my mind off at night."*

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

*A review of the Applicant's records revealed the Applicant was command referred to substance use services (ADAPT) during her time in service and completed substance use education sessions. A review of the Applicant's ADAPT records revealed the Applicant denied mental health symptoms but endorsed difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle and a dislike for her job and the base at which she was stationed. Approximately four months later the Applicant's records revealed the Applicant was seen for a one-time walk in appointment due to the Applicant reporting relationship issues with her long-distance boyfriend. A few months later, the Applicant was referred by her PCM back to mental health services requesting on-base services as the Applicant reported to PCM that she did not follow-up with off-base referrals provided by the mental health clinic previously and was requesting mental health service. The Applicant's records revealed the Applicant attended two on-base mental health appointments reporting dislike of her job and base location and also relationship issues. There is no evidence the Applicant received the diagnosis of PTSD during her time in service. There is no evidence the Applicant exhibited or endorsed any clinically significant indicators of PTSD during her time in service. 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 was discharged with a general character of service due to misconduct (minor infractions) with one year, eight months, nine days time in service. A review of the Applicant's discharge package revealed the Applicant "had multiple issues with basic military courtesy, decorum, respect for those appointed above her, and discipline, all within a relatively short period of time. Accordingly a basis for discharge exists under the provisions of DAFI- 36-3211, paragraph 7.38." A review of the Applicant's records revealed the Applicant described symptom development in response to relational stressors, dislike of her job and difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle; difficulty coping with stressors contributed to additional occupational and disciplinary problems. There is no evidence a mental health condition caused the misconduct(s) that led to the Applicant's discharge. There is evidence the Applicant exhibited and endorsed difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle and poor coping skills which may explain the Applicant's misconducts but it does not constitute a mitigating mental health condition and does not mitigate the misconduct(s) that led to the Applicant's discharge.*

4. Does that condition, or experience outweigh the discharge?

*Because the Applicant's discharge is not mitigated nor excused by a in-service mental health condition, the Applicant's discharge is also not outweighed.*

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 upgrade their discharge characterization 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.

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

**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 "Under Honorable Conditions - (General)," the narrative reason for separation shall remain "Misconduct (Minor Infractions)," and the reentry code shall remain "2B." The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on 03 March 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

Attachment:  
Examiner's Brief (Applicant Only)

