

SUMMARY: The Applicant was discharged on, 21 Aug 2024, in accordance with Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3211, *Military Separations*, with an Uncharacterized discharge for Erroneous Entry. The Applicant appealed for a change to their 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 06 March 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 appealed for a change to their narrative reason and re-entry code as they felt it misrepresented their mental health and discharge reason, and it was inaccurate and stemmed from misunderstandings surrounding their medical history and challenges faced during Basic Military Training. The Applicant stated their mental health diagnosis and emotional support animal, which was pre-approved, did not preclude them from serving in the military. The Applicant felt they were mentally sound and fit to serve in the Air Force.

The DRB determined the Applicant's discharge was appropriate. The Applicant voluntarily sought separation due to longstanding psychological distress, specifically anxiety interfering with task performance and a concern of symptom exacerbation if they remained in service. While the Applicant argued the Re-entry "2C" code implied they withheld information, the Board determined that the code accurately reflected the fact of the entry-level separation due to failure to adapt, not necessarily the intent. This was based on the severity of the Applicant's condition, and that it significantly impaired their ability to function effectively in the military.

However, the Board did recognize the nuance that the Applicant's pre-existing anxiety, while waived, played a role in the discharge. Changing the narrative to "condition, not a disability" acknowledges the mental health aspect without contradicting the administrative reality of the uncharacterized, entry-level separation.

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 "I came into bootcamp unknowingly sick and struggled to adapt in the first weeks due to illness and heat. I believe the code for Erroneous Entry is not valid as I have previously disclosed my medical records, I had disclosed that I had a previous Emotional support animal that was approved by the surgeon general before going to bootcamp. This is not my parents' dog, and I originally had him to avoid extra rent payments which I made this clear to the surgeon general when he asked about the animal."

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

A review of the Applicant's records revealed the Applicant self-referred to behavioral analysis services (BAS) during their time in service due difficulty adjusting to the training environment. The Applicant's records revealed the Applicant reported longstanding psychological distress (with functional impairment) that worsened in basic military training due to insufficient coping skills and difficulty adjusting to the training environment.

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

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

A review of the Applicant's in-service records revealed the Applicant did disclose a pre-service history of anxiety to MEPS providers and disclosed that they requested, and were granted, a physician recommendation for a companion emotional support animal prior to service. The Applicant's MEPS records revealed the Applicant was granted a waiver for his pre-service condition of anxiety. The Applicant's records also revealed the Applicant reported to in-service providers that they did not wish to continue in the military and reported they felt unhappy, experienced frequent crying spells, diminished energy and motivation, and did not want to continue training or pursue a future in the military. The Applicant's records further revealed, they wished to leave the military environment to avoid further exacerbation of his symptoms.

There is evidence the Applicant exhibited and endorsed difficulty adjusting to the military lifestyle and poor coping skills, resulting in their in-service diagnosis of unspecified anxiety disorder, which may explain the Applicant's discharge 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 DAFI 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.

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 DAFI 36-3208 regarding the Applicant's characterization of service. The Applicant did not complete the entry-level status of 360 days of service as detailed in DAFI 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 Applicant's discharge was caused by an unsuiting mental health condition; thus, their discharge is not mitigated by their mental health condition. However, in reviewing the Applicant's records, there is evidence the Applicant's pre-service condition of anxiety was waived for entry, therefore "condition, not a disability" is designated as the appropriate code family for separations based on non-disability mental health conditions. The Board recommends granting a change in the Applicant's narrative reason for separation to "condition, not a disability."

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.

FINDING: The DRB voted unanimously to **approve** to change the discharge narrative reason. However, 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.

Instructions on how to appeal an AFDRB decision can be found at <https://afirportal.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 improper. Therefore, the awarded characterization of service shall remain "Uncharacterized," the narrative reason for separation shall change to "Condition, Not A Disability," and the reentry code shall remain "2C." The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on 28 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)

