

SUMMARY: The Applicant was discharged on September 13, 2018 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, with an Honorable Service Characterization for Unsatisfactory Performance. The Applicant requested a change to the Reentry Code.

The Applicant appeared and testified before the Discharge Review Board (DRB), without counsel, via video teleconference using Zoom on January 29, 2026. No witnesses were present to testify on the Applicant's behalf.

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, including evidence submitted by the Applicant. The Board thoroughly reviewed 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 dereliction of duty

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 asserts they were improperly discharged. They stated that the reason for their discharge was an inability to perform their job, but they have since been employed with STRATCOM, which shows their capability. During their time in service, they claimed to have been belittled and treated unfairly, which led them to file an Inspector General (IG) complaint for abuse of power. The Applicant stated this complaint was substantiated. They believed the substantiated IG complaint amplified the issues they were experiencing and ultimately led to their discharge.

The DRB determined the discharge was proper and equitable. A review of the Applicant's record revealed the Command explored all educational, rehabilitative, and probationary avenues prior to administratively separating the Applicant. The DRB was pleased to see that the Applicant has been successful since leaving the Air Force.

However, the Board reviewed the Applicant's entire service record and found no evidence of impropriety or inequity to warrant any changes to the discharge.

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?

Yes. A review of available records revealed the Applicant had a condition of Dysthymic Disorder that was determined to be service connected by the Veterans Administration.

On the DD293 application form, the Applicant contended that, "PTSD and mental health issues from treatment" were the reasons he provided to grant the requested change. In this particular case, the Applicant has only requested an RE code change.

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

Yes. The Board considered the "Kurta Memo" guidance that "A determination made by the Department of Veterans Affairs that a veteran's mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI [Traumatic Brain Injury]; sexual assault; or sexual harassment is connected to military service, while not binding on the Department of Defense, is persuasive evidence that the condition existed or experience occurred during military service." In this case, the Applicant received a rating of 50% from the VA for Dysthymic Disorder. Consequently, the Board is persuaded that the Applicant had Dysthymic Disorder and the condition existed during military service. Although the Applicant contended 'PTSD and mental health issues' were related to their request, they were never formally diagnosed with PTSD during their time in service or by the VA after service.

A review of available records revealed the Applicant had very limited contact with mental health services during their time in service. The Applicant was referred to Mental Health for a non-emergency Command-Directed Mental Health Evaluation (CDE) in October 2017 due to safety reasons related to concerns about the Applicant's ability to perform their duties. Leadership was interested in learning if the Applicant had a learning disorder or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) that could be a factor in their work performance. The CDE found the Applicant "did not endorse any symptoms of AD/HD, a learning disability, or a personality disorder." The Applicant was referred for neuropsychological testing to further assess the presence of these concerns. A review of available records indicated the neuropsychologist conducted an interview with the Applicant and noted they exhibited no evidence of ADHD or any other diagnosis and also denied any history of learning difficulties or ADHD. As a result, the Applicant was not scheduled for any neuropsychological testing as 'he does not meet the necessary diagnostic criteria of past history to qualify for either a diagnosis of a learning disability or ADHD.' The Applicant received feedback on their CDE in February and March 2018. This was the full extent of the Applicant's contact with mental health services during their time in service.

As noted above, the Applicant was determined to have a service-connected diagnosis of Dysthymic Disorder by the VA. A review of available records revealed insufficient evidence to substantiate how the VA arrived at this diagnosis, but it was determined that the VA made this decision in January 2020, approximately 16 months after separation. Additionally, a review of records provided by the Applicant to support their case revealed the

Applicant indicated poor leadership and a poor training environment at their first duty station were the main factors in their discharge, but the Applicant made no references to mental health issues as having any impact on any aspect of their service.

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

No. The Board considered the “Kurta Memo” guidance that “Conditions or experiences that may reasonably have existed at the time of discharge will be liberally considered as excusing or mitigating the discharge.” However, the Board finds that the Applicant’s condition or experience did not excuse or mitigate the discharge.

A review of the Applicant’s DD214 revealed the Applicant was discharged with an Honorable characterization of service based on Unsatisfactory Performance with 3 years, 3 months, 11 days time in service. The discharge package was not available for review. Records provided by the Applicant revealed they contended they were discharged for failing to achieve his 5-level in their career field but they indicated that poor unit leadership, a poor training environment, and seemingly fabricated tests to assess their readiness for 5-level is what led to their discharge. Specifically, the Applicant contended they were tested on items that were beyond a 5-level skillset and when they failed one of the items, they were reportedly recommended not to continue in the career field. The Board is not an investigative body and presumes regularity in the conduct of governmental affairs. This means that, absent evidence to the contrary, the Board presumes the military and civilian personnel involved in a member’s discharge carried out their duties correctly, lawfully, and in good faith. The Applicant bears the burden of providing evidence to overcome this presumption, and the Board will only grant relief if it determines there is sufficient evidence to conclude the Applicant’s discharge was not proper or equitable in accordance with Enclosure 4 of DoDI 1332.28.

The Applicant contended that “PTSD and mental health issues from treatment” were reasons why the Board should grant their request for a change to his Separation Code and Reenlistment Code. A review of available records revealed the Applicant had a total of 4 appointments with mental health services during their military service, all of which were related to a Commander-Directed Mental Health Evaluation focused on concerns regarding the Applicant’s ability to safely and effectively complete their duties at work. The Applicant was never diagnosed with a mental health condition during their time in service, to include PTSD. Post-service, the Applicant was determined by the VA to have a service-connected diagnosis of Dysthymic Disorder. The VA, operating under a different set of laws than the military, is empowered to offer compensation for any medical or mental health condition with an established nexus to military service, without regard to its impact on a member’s fitness to serve, the narrative reason for release from service, or the length of time that has transpired since the date of discharge. At the ‘snapshot in time’ of the Applicant’s service, there is insufficient evidence the Applicant had a mental health condition that caused or mitigated the misconduct that led to the Applicant’s discharge.

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

No. Since the Applicant’s condition or experience did not excuse or mitigate the discharge, the Applicant’s condition or experience also did not outweigh the 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.

FINDING AND 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. The DRB voted two to one to **deny** the Applicant’s request. Therefore, the awarded Service Characterization shall remain “Honorable,” the Narrative Reason for separation

shall remain Unsatisfactory Performance, and the Reentry Code shall remain 2C. The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on February 20, 2026.

Should the Applicant wish to appeal this decision, they must seek relief before the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR) in accordance with DAFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records*.

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

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)