

**SUMMARY:** The Applicant was discharged on August 4, 2021 in accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, with an Under Honorable Conditions (General) Service Characterization for Misconduct – (Drug Abuse). The Applicant requested an upgrade of their Service Characterization and a change to the Narrative Reason for separation.

The Applicant requested the Board be completed based on a Record Review. The Board was conducted on December 18, 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, 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:  
-Article 15 for drug abuse

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 during their time in service, there were various undiagnosed mental conditions that went untreated and a proper neurophysiology evaluation was not performed which caused them to self-medicate with THC.

The DRB determined the discharge was proper and equitable. A detailed review of the Applicant's record showed that while they sought mental health treatment on several occasions, it was ineffective because the Applicant did not follow the recommended plans. The Board also confirmed there was no reason to believe the Applicant was unaware of the Air Force's zero-tolerance policy for illegal drug use. Ultimately, the DRB concluded that the Applicant's deliberate misconduct was more significant than the positive aspects of their military service. As a result, the request to upgrade the service characterization and change the reason for separation was denied.

**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 boxes for "PTSD" and "other mental health" on the application. The Applicant contended "during my time of service there were various undiagnosed mental conditions that went untreated. A proper neurophysiology evaluation was not performed during my military service. Due to this I resorted to self-medication."*

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

*Based on a review of the Applicant's records, the Applicant received mental health services for the first time during BMT due to an exacerbation of pre-service symptoms including hand shaking, nervousness. The Applicant's records revealed the Applicant intermittently reported mental health symptoms during their time in service during times of transitions and in relation to external stressors including family member illnesses and deaths. A review of the Applicant's in-service mental health records revealed the Applicant sought mental health treatment with the intention of being separated from the military and abandoned treatment when they were informed their condition and symptoms would not lead to a medical board or a recommendation for administrative separation. The Applicant's records revealed the Applicant was command referred to substance use treatment services during their time in service and deferred pending investigation and then declined services.*

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 (drug abuse) with three years, seven months, sixteen days time in service. A review of the records submitted by the Applicant revealed the Applicant reported to providers that they self-reported a diagnosis of PTSD to their in-service providers related to pre-service experiences including moving more than 27 times. The Applicant reported symptoms of hand tremors while writing that started upon entrance into the military. A review of the Applicant's pre-service records revealed the Applicant endorsed marijuana use prior to service. Based on the available evidence in the Applicant's records along with the Applicant's testimony in their application, there is evidence the Applicant was having difficulty adjusting to military life beginning in BMT and persisting for the duration of their time in service. A review of the Applicant's in-service mental health records revealed the Applicant sought mental health treatment with the intention of being separated from the military and abandoned treatment when they were informed their condition and symptoms would not lead to a medical board or a recommendation for administrative separation. The Applicant reported they chose to use drugs in a way that was incompatible with military service, which may explain the Applicant's drug use, but it does not mitigate the Applicant's misconduct.*

*The Applicant submitted their VA rating and post-service psychological testing report from civilian provider as evidence in support of their claim. A review of the Applicant's post-service psychological testing report revealed significant reporting patterns "common to individuals feigning mental disorders or those demonstrating a 'cry for help'" and thus provided unreliable results and likely revealed a lack of candor. Regarding the Applicant's concurrence with their post-service diagnoses and VA ratings 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. The VA may also conduct periodic reevaluations for the purpose of adjusting the disability rating as the level of impairment from a given condition may improve or worsen over the life of the veteran. At the "snapshot in time" of the Applicant's service, there is no evidence the Applicant was unaware of the Air Force's zero tolerance policy regarding drug use. There is no 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?

*Because the Applicant's discharge is not mitigated or excused by a 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 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 "Under Honorable Conditions (General)," the Narrative Reason for separation shall remain Misconduct – (Drug Abuse), and the Reentry Code shall remain 2B. The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on January 20, 2026.

Should the Applicant wish to appeal this decision, they 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>

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)