

SUMMARY: The Applicant was discharged on August 14, 2023 in accordance with Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3211, Military Separations, with an Under Honorable Conditions (General) Service Characterization for Unacceptable Conduct. The Applicant appealed for 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 11 September 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 Applicant's record of service included the following documented misconduct leading up to their discharge: -Article 15 for wrongfully and dishonorably engaging in a racially discriminatory conversation with an enlisted member and suggesting to that member the intent to steal second chance body armor plates.

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 their discharge resulted from an Article 15 following a two-year investigation, which cited racially discriminatory conversations and theft allegations. Since leaving the military, they reported struggling with mental health, family relationships, and self-confidence.

The DRB noted the Applicant's discharge stemmed from an Article 15. Upon review, the Board determined there were inconsistencies and a lack of clarity in the documentation, and no OSI investigative report substantiated the allegations beyond the recorded dinner conversation. The discussion appeared to show the Applicant being prompted or egged on, raising concerns regarding fairness. The Board further noted the Applicant demonstrated genuine rehabilitation post-discharge by accepting responsibility for their actions, entering into a stable marriage, and engaging in active church and community service. These efforts reflected a consistent commitment to rebuild character and contribute positively.

Additionally, the Applicant's post-service trajectory, including aspirations to serve as a firefighter or police officer, demonstrated a strong commitment to service and public trust. Based on the totality of the record, the Board concluded that while the Applicant's actions warranted separation, the original characterization was unduly harsh in light of the questionable process and mitigating evidence. Accordingly, the Board determined the characterization and narrative reason should be upgraded, effectively removing the stigmatizing label while still acknowledging the basis for separation.

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 inequitable. The DRB voted two to one to ***approve*** the Applicant’s request. Therefore, the awarded Service Characterization shall change to Honorable and the Narrative Reason for separation shall change to Secretarial Authority. The DRB results were approved by the Presiding Officer on September 26, 2025.

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>

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)