

IN THE CASE OF: [REDACTED]

BOARD DATE: 16 December 2024

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20240004442

APPLICANT REQUESTS: upgrade of his character of service from under other than honorable conditions (UOTHC) to honorable

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING DOCUMENT(S) CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD:

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record), 15 February 2024
- Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits

FACTS:

1. The applicant did not file within the 3-year time frame provided in Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552(b); however, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) conducted a substantive review of this case and determined it is in the interest of justice to excuse the applicant's failure to timely file.
2. The applicant states he was told he could upgrade his discharge to honorable and is requesting to do so, he is in need of medical help and having his discharge upgraded will assist him medically.
3. The applicant enlisted in the Army National Guard of the United States on 17 January 1976, for a 6-year period. He entered active duty for training on 11 April 1976. After completion of his training, he was honorably released from active duty on 14 August 1976. His DD Form 214 (Report of Separation from Active Duty) shows he was awarded the military occupational specialty of 36C (Lineman), he attained the rank of private/E-2, and he served 4 months and 4 days of net active service this period.
4. He was separated from the Army National Guard [REDACTED] with an under honorable conditions (general) character of service, on 15 November 1979. His National Guard Bureau (NGB) Form 22 (Report of Separation and Record of Service) shows he attained the rank of private/E-2 and served 3 years, 9 months, and 29 days of service.
5. The applicant was transferred to the control of the U.S. Army Reserve and was ordered to active duty for training. Orders 173-2, issued by Headquarters, First United

States Army, dated 27 September 1979, ordered the applicant to active duty with a reporting date of 16 November 1979 for a commitment of 18 months and 20 days.

6. On 26 February 1980, court-martial charges were preferred against the applicant, for violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The relevant DD Form 458 (Charge Sheet) shows he was charged with one specification of absenting himself without leave (AWOL) from on or about 16 November 1979 and remaining AWOL until on or about 9 February 1980, when he was apprehended by civilian authorities.

7. The applicant consulted with legal counsel on 3 March 1980, and executed a written request for discharge for the good of the service under the provisions of Army Regulation (AR) 635-200 (Personnel Separations - Enlisted Personnel), Chapter 10 (Discharge for the Good of the Service). He acknowledged his understanding of the following in his request:

a. He understood that he could request discharge for the good of the service because the charges preferred against him could result in the imposition of a punitive discharge.

b. Prior to completing this request, he was afforded the opportunity to consult with appointed counsel, who fully advised him of the basis for his contemplated trial by court-martial, the maximum punishment authorized under the UCMJ, of the possible effects of an UOTHC character of service, and of the procedures and rights available to him.

c. He acknowledged that he was making this request of his own free will and had not been subjected to any coercion by any person. Although counsel furnished him legal advice, this decision was his own. Additionally, he understood he may encounter substantial prejudice in civilian life and submitted a statement in his own behalf, however this document is illegible.

8. On 3 March 1980, the applicant's immediate commander recommended approval of his request for separation and further recommended issuance of an UOTHC discharge. Additionally referencing the applicant's submitted statement, stating his conduct rendered him triable by court-martial under circumstances which could lead to a bad conduct or dishonorable discharge.

9. On the same date, the applicant's intermediate commander recommended approval of the applicant's request for discharge for the good of the service and further recommended an UOTHC discharge.

10. The separation authority approved the applicant's request for discharge for the good of the service on 14 March 1980, and further directed the applicant receive a UOTHC discharge, and that he be reduced to the lowest enlisted grade of E-1.

11. The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) shows he was discharged on 17 April 1980, under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 10, based on administrative discharge conduct triable by court-martial, in the grade of E-1. He received an UOTHC characterization of service, with separation code JFS, and reenlistment code 3. He was credited with 2 months and 9 days of net active service and time lost from 16 November 1979 to 8 February 1980.

12. The applicant additionally provides his application for disability compensation and related compensation benefits form.

13. Discharges under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 10 are voluntary requests for discharge for the good of the service from the Soldier to avoid a trial by court-martial. An UOTHC character of service is normally considered proper.

14. In reaching its determination, the Board can consider the applicant's petition, service record, and statements in light of the published guidance on equity, injustice, or clemency.

**BOARD DISCUSSION:**

After reviewing the application and all supporting documents, to include the DoD guidance on liberal consideration when reviewing discharge upgrade requests, the Board determined relief was not warranted. The applicant's contentions, the military record, and regulatory guidance were carefully considered. Based upon the short term of honorable service completed prior to the AWOL offense, which only ended as a result of civilian apprehension, and the lack of any mitigation for such misconduct, the Board concluded there was insufficient evidence of an error or injustice warranting an upgrade to the applicant's characterization of service.

**BOARD VOTE:**

Mbr 1      Mbr 2      Mbr 3

:      :      :      GRANT FULL RELIEF

:      :      :      GRANT PARTIAL RELIEF

:      :      :      GRANT FORMAL HEARING

   DENY APPLICATION

BOARD DETERMINATION/RECOMMENDATION:

The evidence presented does not demonstrate the existence of a probable error or injustice. Therefore, the Board determined the overall merits of this case are insufficient as a basis for correction of the records of the individual concerned.

3/17/2025

 XCHAIRPERSON  


I certify that herein is recorded the true and complete record of the proceedings of the Army Board for Correction of Military Records in this case.

REFERENCES:

1. Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552(b), provides that applications for correction of military records must be filed within 3 years after discovery of the alleged error or injustice. This provision of law also allows the ABCMR to excuse an applicant's failure to timely file within the 3-year statute of limitations if the ABCMR determines it would be in the interest of justice to do so.
2. Army Regulation 635-200 (Personnel Separations – Enlisted Personnel), in effect at the time, provided guidance for the administrative separation of enlisted personnel:
  - a. Chapter 10 of this regulation provided a member who has committed an offense or offenses, the punishment for which, under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Manual for Courts-Martial, includes a bad conduct or dishonorable discharge, may submit a request for discharge for the good of the Service. The discharge request may be submitted after court-martial charges are preferred against the member, or, until final action on the case by the court-martial convening authority. A member who is under a suspended sentence of a punitive discharge may also submit a request for discharge for the good of the Service. An under other than honorable conditions discharge certificate normally is appropriate for a member who is discharged for the good of the Service. However, the separation authority may direct a general discharge certificate if such is merited by the member's overall record during the current enlistment.
  - b. An honorable discharge is a separation with honor. The issuance of an honorable discharge certificate is predicated upon proper military behavior and proficient performance of duty during the member's current enlistment or period of obligated service with due consideration for the member's age, length of service, grade, and general aptitude. Where a member has served faithfully and performed to the best of his

ability, and there is no derogatory information in his military record, he should be furnished an honorable discharge certificate.

c. An under honorable conditions (general) discharge is a separation from the Army under honorable conditions. It is issued to a member whose military record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge.

3. On 25 July 2018, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness issued guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) regarding equity, injustice, or clemency determinations. Clemency generally refers to relief specifically granted from a criminal sentence. BCM/NRs may grant clemency regardless of the type of court-martial. However, the guidance applies to more than clemency from a sentencing in a court-martial; it also applies to other corrections, including changes in a discharge, which may be warranted based on equity or relief from injustice.

a. This guidance does not mandate relief, but rather provides standards and principles to guide Boards in application of their equitable relief authority. In determining whether to grant relief on the basis of equity, injustice, or clemency grounds, BCM/NRs shall consider the prospect for rehabilitation, external evidence, sworn testimony, policy changes, relative severity of misconduct, mental and behavioral health conditions, official governmental acknowledgement that a relevant error or injustice was committed, and uniformity of punishment.

b. Changes to the narrative reason for discharge and/or an upgraded character of service granted solely on equity, injustice, or clemency grounds normally should not result in separation pay, retroactive promotions, and payment of past medical expenses or similar benefits that might have been received if the original discharge had been for the revised reason or had the upgraded service characterization.

//NOTHING FOLLOWS//