

IN THE CASE OF: [REDACTED]

BOARD DATE: 3 April 2025

DOCKET NUMBER: AR20240007040

APPLICANT REQUESTS: an upgrade of his bad conduct discharge to general, under honorable conditions.

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

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record)
- Self-Authored Statement
- Character Letters
- DD Form 214, 1992 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
- DD Form 214; 1998

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 would like his bad conduct discharge changed to general, under honorable conditions. He would like to become eligible to receive Veterans benefits such a property tax exemption, health care. Veterans with a bad conduct discharge are ineligible to receive benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The applicant outlined his accomplishments and regrets in his self-authored statement, available for review by the Board.
3. The applicant provides three letters attesting to the character of the applicant. He was described as a well-respected member of the community, hardworking, wonderful father, loving husband, responsible, honest, professional, always willing to share his knowledge and experience, a good neighbor, family man, and a proud Veteran.
4. A review of the applicant's service record shows:
 - a. Having had prior service in the U.S. Army Reserve, he enlisted in the Regular Army on 15 June 1993.

b. On 15 August 1997, court-martial charges were preferred on the applicant for one specification of larceny of various tools and electric razors of a total value of over \$100 and one specification of larceny of cash, of a total value of over \$100. His sentence included reduction to the private (E-1), forfeiture of \$800 pay per month for 5 months, confinement for 5 months, and a bad conduct discharge

c. On 16 October 1997, the convening authority approved the sentence and except for the bad conduct discharge, ordered it executed. The record of trial was forwarded to the Judge Advocate General of the Army for appellate review.

d. General Court-Martial Order Number 144 dated 24 August 1998, after Article 71(c) was complied with and the sentence was affirmed, ordered the bad conduct discharge executed.

c. On 19 October 1998, he was discharged from active duty with a bad conduct characterization of service. His DD Form 214 shows he completed 5 years and 8 days of active service with 117 days of lost time. It also shows he was awarded or authorized:

- Army Commendation Medal
- Army Achievement Medal (2nd award)
- Army Good Conduct Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Noncommissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon
- Army Service Ribbon
- Sharpshooter Marksmanship Qualification Badge with Rifle Bar (M-16)
- Air Assault Badge
- Driver and Mechanic Badge with Driver-W Device

4. By regulation, a member will be given a bad conduct discharge pursuant only to an approved sentence of a general or special court-martial. The appellate review must be completed, and the affirmed sentence ordered duly executed.

5. In reaching its determination, the Board can consider the applicant's petition and his service record in accordance with the published equity, injustice, or clemency determination guidance.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

After reviewing the application, all supporting documents, and the evidence found within the military record, the Board found that relief was warranted. The Board carefully considered the applicant's request, supporting documents, evidence in the records, and published Department of Defense guidance for liberal consideration of discharge upgrade requests. The Board considered the applicant's statement and record of service, the frequency and nature of the applicant's misconduct and the reason for separation. The Board determined the punishment at the time was too harsh.

BOARD VOTE:

Mbr 1 Mbr 2 Mbr 3

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | GRANT FULL RELIEF |
| : | : | : | GRANT PARTIAL RELIEF |
| : | : | : | GRANT FORMAL HEARING |
| : | : | : | DENY APPLICATION |

BOARD DETERMINATION/RECOMMENDATION:

The Board determined the evidence presented is sufficient to warrant relief. As a result, the Board recommends that all Department of the Army records of the individual concerned be corrected by amending the applicant's DD Form 214, for the period ending 19 October 1998 to show in item 24 (Character of Service): General, Under Honorable Conditions.

4/15/2025

X 

CHAIRPERSON


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 (AR) 635-200 (Personnel Separations – Enlisted Personnel), in effect at the time, sets forth the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.
 - a. Paragraph 3-7a (Honorable discharge) states an honorable discharge is a separation with honor. The honorable characterization is appropriate when the quality of the member's service generally has met the standards of the acceptable conduct and performance of duty for Army personnel, or is otherwise so meritorious that any other characterization would be clearly inappropriate.
 - b. Paragraph 3-7b (General discharge) states a general discharge is a separation from the Army under honorable conditions. When authorized, it is issued to a member whose military record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge.
 - c. Paragraph 3-7c (Under Other Than Honorable Conditions) states a discharge under other than honorable conditions is an administrative separation from the service under conditions other than honorable. It may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, homosexuality, security reasons, or for the good of the service.
 - d. Paragraph 3-11 (DD Form 259A (Bad Conduct Discharge Certificate) states a member will be given a bad conduct discharge pursuant only to an approved sentence of a general or special court-martial. The appellate review must be completed and the affirmed sentence ordered duly executed.
3. Title 10, U.S. Code, section 1552, provides that the Secretary of a Military Department may correct any military record of the Secretary's Department when the Secretary considers it necessary to correct an error or remove an injustice. With respect to records of courts-martial and related administrative records pertaining to court-martial cases tried or reviewed under the UCMJ, action to correct any military record of the Secretary's Department may extend only to correction of a record to reflect actions taken by reviewing authorities under the UCMJ or action on the sentence of a court-martial for purposes of clemency. Such corrections shall be made by the Secretary acting through boards of civilians of the executive part of that Military Department.

4. 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/NRs) 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 based on 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//