



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, TEXAS**

More about the Air Force Discharge Review Board

Applicable to: Military

Discharges

The AFDRB is not authorized to revoke any discharge, to reinstate any person who has been separated from the Air Force, or to recall any person to active duty. The AFDRB may also conduct a limited review of bad-conduct discharges given as a result of a special court-martial may be upgraded only on the basis of clemency.

Composition of the DRB

The DRB consists of five members who are commissioned officers and senior non-commissioned officers. If an applicant was diagnosed, after and as a consequence of a deployment, with post-traumatic stress disorder or a traumatic brain injury or was diagnosed with a mental health disorder while serving, then the DRB will include a board member who is a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist or a physician with specialized training in mental health disorders.

Available Relief

An applicant may request that the DRB upgrade the service characterization, change the narrative reason of discharge to "Secretarial Authority", or change the reenlistment code to 3K (a nonspecific code reserved for use by the DRB to grant relief). The DRB may grant, in whole or in part, or deny the requested relief. The DRB may not issue a less favorable discharge than what a member received at the time of separation.

Standards of Review

The DRB will grant relief if it determines that the discharge was improper or inequitable. The DRB reviews every case on an individual basis.

A discharge is deemed proper unless an error of fact, law, procedure or discretion occurred with a discharge and prejudiced a member's rights. A discharge also may be considered improper if a change in Air Force policy, made expressly retroactive to the date and type of discharge, requires a change to an applicant's discharge.

A discharge is deemed equitable unless: 1) there is substantial doubt that a member would have received the same discharge if current policies and procedures had been in effect at the time of discharge; or 2) the discharge was inconsistent with disciplinary standards in effect at the time of discharge; or 3) relief is warranted based on the applicant's service record and other evidence, including quality of service and capability to serve.

The DRB has no legal authority to grant relief based solely on compassion or because an applicant has changed for the better. Nor does it have legal authority to grant relief so that an applicant can become eligible for benefits, such as Veterans Administration benefits or GI Bill benefits, or improve employment opportunities. An applicant must prove that his/her discharge was improper or inequitable.

Presumption of Regularity

The DRB will presume regularity in the conduct of governmental affairs, meaning that it will presume that military administrators involved in a member's discharge carried out their duties correctly, lawfully, and in good faith. Applicants must submit substantial credible evidence to overcome this presumption.

AFDRB Procedures

In order to apply for the DRB to review a discharge, an applicant must submit a completed DD Form 293 to:

Air Force Review Boards Agency SAF/MRBR
Street West, Suite 40 Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4742.

There is no such thing as an automatic upgrade to a discharge characterization. Applicants may apply for review at any time within fifteen (15) years of discharge.

Applicants must state in the DD Form 293 their contention as to the reason why the discharge was improper or inequitable. Applicants may submit evidence, including affidavits of witnesses, police reports and other documents, to support contentions. Applicants may also submit character letters, transcripts and other documents, describing both conduct in the service and post-service conduct, to support the claim that the discharge was inequitable.

Applicants may request that the DRB review service records only or applicants may request a personal appearance before the DRB. If applicants are not satisfied with the DRB's findings following a records only review, a personal appearance before the DRB can be requested. However, if an applicant initially elects a personal appearance and is not satisfied with the DRB's findings, a records review cannot be requested. Once an applicant has a personal appearance before the DRB, the only recourse for further review of discharge is to apply for relief from the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR). A records review by the DRB is recommended as the first level of review.

Personal Appearances

A personal appearance before the Air Force Discharge Review Board is a statutory right. If an applicant requests a personal appearance, he/she may choose to appear in person, with or without counsel (at your own expense if you choose to appear with counsel), or with a representative (such as a representative from a Veteran's Service Organization), at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. Applicants also may request to appear by video teleconference (VTC) from another region:

East - Robins Air Force Base, GA
West - Travis Air Force Base, CA
Midwest - Joint Base Randolph, TX

NOTE: Applicants are responsible for all costs (such as travel and lodging) associated with making a personal appearance.

A personal appearance before the DRB is an administrative hearing, it is not a trial. Formal rules of evidence do not apply. Applicants may make a sworn or unsworn statement.

Applicants may offer the testimony of witnesses. The members of the DRB may ask questions of the applicant and any witnesses who testify. The Board evaluates the case based on documentation in the military record and additional evidence provided by the applicant. This gives the applicant latitude in presenting evidence, witnesses, and testimony in support of his/her case.

Records Review

The application can also be considered on a record review basis prior to a request for personal appearance, whereupon the board will review the case based on documentation in the military record and any additional evidence provided by the applicant.

Notification of DRB's Decision

The time for scheduling hearings, as well as for the issuance of decisions, depends upon the DRB's caseload. Records review cases typically are scheduled within 3-6 months of receipt of a properly completed DD Form 293. Personal appearances, depending on the region, are generally scheduled within 6-18 months of receipt of a properly completed DD Form 293. Written decisions typically are issued within 6-8 weeks of the Board's review.

If an applicant's discharge is changed, he/she will receive a new discharge certificate, a new DD Form 214, and the decisional document of the DRB. If an applicant's discharge is not changed, he/she will receive the decisional document of the DRB, which will provide specific reasons why the discharge was not changed, as well as any further appeal processes available.

Form and Publications

DD Form 293, *Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States*

DOD Instruction 1332.28, *Discharge Review Board (DRB) Procedures and Standards*

DOD Directive 1332.41, *Boards for Correction of Military Records (BCMRs) and Discharge Review Boards (DRBs)*

If you have difficulty downloading DD Form 293 or printing it you may write to: SAF/MRBR
550 C Street W. Suite 40 Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4742