§ 865.120 Discharge review standards.  
(a) Objective of review. The objective of a discharge review is to examine the propriety and equity of the applicant’s discharge and to effect changes, if necessary. The standards of review and the underlying factors which aid in determining whether the standards are met shall be historically consistent with criteria for determining honorable service. No factors shall be established which require automatic change or denial of a change in a discharge. Neither the DRB nor the Secretary of the Air Force shall be bound by any methodology of weighing of the factors in reaching a determination. In each case, the DRB or Secretary of the Air Force shall give full, fair, and impartial consideration to all applicable factors prior to reaching a decision. An applicant may not receive a less favorable discharge than that issued at the time of separation. This does not preclude correction of clerical errors.

(b) Propriety. A discharge shall be deemed to be proper unless in the course of discharge review, it is determined that:

(1) There exists an error of fact, law, procedures, or discretion associated with the discharge at the time of issuance; and that the rights of the applicant were prejudiced thereby (such error shall constitute prejudicial error, if there is substantial doubt that the discharge would have remained the same if the error had not been made); or

(2) A change in policy by the Air Force made expressly retroactive to the type of discharge under consideration, requires a change in the discharge.

(c) When a record associated with the discharge at the time of issuance involves a matter in which the primary responsibility for corrective action rests with another organization (for example, another Board, agency, or court), the DRB will recognize an error only to the extent that the error has been corrected by the organization with primary responsibility for correcting the record.

(d) The primary function of the DRB is to exercise its discretion on issues of equity by reviewing the individual merits of each application on a case-by-case basis. Prior decisions in which the DRB exercised its discretion to change a discharge based on issues of equity (including the factors cited in such decisions or the weight given to factors in such decisions) do not blind the DRB in its review of subsequent cases because no two cases present the same issues of equity.

(e) The following applies to applicants who received less than fully honorable administrative discharges because of their civilian misconduct while in an inactive reserve component and who were discharged or had their discharge reviewed on or after April 20, 1971: The DRB shall either recharacterize the discharge to honorable without any additional proceedings or additional proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Court’s Order of December 3, 1981, in Wood v. Secretary of Defense to determine whether proper grounds exist for the issuance of a less...