CLIENT CASE PACKAGE

EXAMPLE AFGHANISTAN WITHDRAWAL

RE Code Change Support Packet Veteran J.D.W. | OTH → Honorable | RE-4 → RE-1

Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB)

Client File Ref.: ADRB-2023-AF-00591

Era of Service: Operation Allies Refuge — Kabul, Afghanistan (Aug–Sep 2021)

Issue Type: RE Code Upgrade & Discharge Characterization Correction

Prepared: September 2026

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS PACKAGE

- ■ PART A — Forensic Evaluation Report
- ■ PART B — Veteran Impact Statement (Employment & Federal Opportunities)
- ■ PART C — Command Leadership Letter Guidance & Framework
- ■ PART D — Command Leadership Letter (MAJ Derek S. Okafor, USA Ret.)
- ■ PART E — Optional Client Interview Guide

FOR CLIENT REVIEW — EXAMPLE ONLY — ALL CASES ARE ANONYMIZED

IMPORTANT NOTICE — SOURCE OF INFORMATION

All information contained in this packet was provided by the client through their completed intake form.

The details presented throughout this RE Code Change Support Packet — including the veteran's service history, dates of service, deployment information, circumstances of discharge, health conditions, employment barriers, and the impact of the RE code on the veteran's life — were gathered exclusively from the information provided by the client on their signed intake form submitted to this office prior to the preparation of this packet.

No independent verification, legal review, or third-party investigation of the client's account has been performed in connection with the preparation of this packet. The documents contained herein are prepared on the basis of the facts as reported by the client and are intended to support the veteran's own petition for discharge upgrade and RE code correction.

It is the client's responsibility to ensure that all information provided on their intake form is accurate, truthful, and complete. Any inaccuracy or omission may affect the strength or validity of the documents in this packet. This office is not responsible for the accuracy of client-provided information.

Document / Section	Primary Source of Information
Part A — Forensic Evaluation Report	Client intake form — service history, discharge circumstances, health conditions, and deployment information as provided by the client
Part B — Veteran Impact Statement	Client intake form — employment history, denied applications, federal benefit denials, and personal impact narrative as described by the client
Part C — Command Leadership Letter Guidance	General guidance framework informed by client's intake form for the case-specific guidance section
Part D — Command Leadership Letter	Client intake form — commanding officer identification, unit and deployment details, and service record information as provided by the client
Part E — Optional Client Interview Guide	Used only when intake form information is incomplete or additional detail is needed to fully prepare the support packet

Intake Form Received:	January 2023	Packet Prepared:	September 30, 2026

This packet is provided as a case preparation support service only and does not constitute legal advice. Results depend on individual records, board discretion, and the accuracy of information provided. All client information is kept strictly confidential.

PART A · Forensic Evaluation Report — RE Code Upgrade Assessment

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This Forensic Evaluation Report is a structured professional case assessment prepared to support a veteran's formal request for an RE code upgrade. It examines the circumstances of the original discharge and RE code assignment, evaluates the strength of the upgrade request against established criteria, and identifies the specific grounds on which a correction is warranted. This report is prepared by the case preparation team and is provided to the veteran as part of their support packet.

VETERAN (ANONYMIZED) J.D.W.	**REPORT DATE** September 30, 2026
BRANCH OF SERVICE United States Army	**MOS** 11B — Infantryman
DATES OF SERVICE October 2017 – February 2022	**THEATER / OPERATION** Operation Allies Refuge — Kabul, Afghanistan (Aug–Sep 2021)
ORIGINAL DISCHARGE Other Than Honorable (OTH) — Chapter 14 (Pattern of Misconduct)	**ORIGINAL RE CODE** RE-4 — Ineligible for Reenlistment (All Branches)
UPGRADE REQUESTED Discharge: Honorable | RE Code: RE-1 (Fully Eligible)	**FILING BOARD** Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB)

A-1 — CASE BACKGROUND & CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISCHARGE

Specialist J.D.W. enlisted in the United States Army in October 2017 at age 19 and served as an 11B Infantryman with the 82nd Airborne Division. His service record from enlistment through July 2021 — a period of approximately four years — contains no disciplinary actions, adverse counseling statements, or negative performance notations. He completed Airborne School, earned his Parachutist Badge, and was actively preparing reenlistment paperwork at the time his unit received deployment orders in August 2021.

In August 2021, SPC J.D.W.'s unit deployed to Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) in Kabul, Afghanistan in support of Operation Allies Refuge — the noncombatant evacuation operation conducted during the final withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan. On August 26, 2021, SPC J.D.W. was present at Abbey Gate during the suicide bombing that killed thirteen U.S. service members and more than 170 Afghan civilians. He rendered first aid to casualties and carried a fellow soldier who did not survive from the blast site.

Upon redeployment to Fort Bragg in September 2021, SPC J.D.W. received no documented meaningful mental health intervention or behavioral health follow-up in connection with his Abbey Gate experience. Beginning in the fall of 2021, he exhibited symptoms consistent with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Moral Injury — including insomnia, hypervigilance, social withdrawal, and alcohol use. In January 2022, he had a verbal altercation with a noncommissioned officer. His command initiated Chapter 14 (Pattern of Misconduct) separation proceedings. He was discharged in February 2022 with an Other Than Honorable characterization and assigned an RE-4 reenlistment eligibility code.

A-2 — FORENSIC ASSESSMENT: GROUNDS FOR RE CODE UPGRADE

The following assessment evaluates each recognized ground for RE code upgrade against the facts of this case. Each factor is rated based on the strength of available evidence:

Assessment Factor	Finding	Supporting Evidence & Analysis
Pre-Incident Service Record	**Strong**	Four years of documented clean service with no adverse actions prior to August 2021. Pattern of Misconduct finding rests on a single incident following an extraordinary combat trauma event. Pre-incident record strongly supports RE-1 as the accurate baseline characterization.
Nature & Severity of Misconduct	**Mitigated**	Single verbal altercation with an NCO in January 2022. Non-violent. No criminal charges. No pattern of behavior across the service period. Chapter 14 "Pattern of Misconduct" designation is not supported by a sustained course of conduct — it rests on one isolated incident.
Service-Connected Mental Health Condition	**Well-Documented**	VA diagnosis of PTSD confirmed Spring 2022 with direct nexus to Abbey Gate experience. Symptom onset (fall 2021) predates and directly connects to the January 2022 incident. Moral Injury consistent with carrying a fallen comrade and rendering aid to non-survivable casualties is additionally supported.
Failure of Command Duty of Care	**Documented Gap**	No evidence of behavioral health referral, mental health screening, or wellness check between September 2021 redeployment and January 2022 separation initiation. DoD suicide prevention policy requires post-deployment health assessment. Absence of intervention is a critical factor in evaluating culpability for the conduct cited.
Combat Experience / Theater of Service	**Highly Relevant**	Presence at Abbey Gate on August 26, 2021 is historically documented and constitutes one of the most significant mass casualty events experienced by U.S. forces during the entire Afghanistan conflict. The psychological sequelae of this experience are foreseeable, medically recognized, and directly mitigate the misconduct finding.
Post-Separation Conduct & Rehabilitation	**Positive**	Veteran has been engaged in VA PTSD treatment since Spring 2022 and is currently stable and treatment-compliant. He has expressed a consistent desire to reenlist and continue military service — demonstrating rehabilitation and continued commitment to service.
Liberal Consideration Standard	**Applicable**	SecDef Memoranda (2014, 2017) direct review boards to apply liberal consideration to cases where PTSD, Moral Injury, or TBI contributed to the misconduct underlying the discharge. This case meets the threshold for liberal consideration on multiple grounds.

A-3 — OVERALL CASE STRENGTH ASSESSMENT

OVERALL CASE STRENGTH RATING	STRONG — UPGRADE RECOMMENDED

■ All seven forensic assessment factors return favorable findings for the upgrade request.

■ The misconduct cited is singular, non-violent, and directly traceable to an untreated service-connected condition arising from one of the most traumatic events of the Afghanistan conflict.

■ The absence of command-initiated mental health intervention between redeployment and separation proceedings significantly undermines the validity of the Chapter 14 finding.

■ Liberal consideration standards under SecDef guidance are directly applicable and support both the discharge upgrade and the RE code correction.

■ Post-separation treatment compliance and the veteran's expressed desire to reenlist further strengthen the equitable basis for full relief.

A-4 — RELIEF RECOMMENDED

No.	Relief Requested	Forensic Basis
1	Upgrade discharge from Other Than Honorable (OTH) to Honorable	Single incident mitigated by service-connected PTSD; four years clean service; liberal consideration standard applicable
2	Correct RE code from RE-4 to RE-1 (Fully Eligible)	RE-4 derived from OTH/Chapter 14 finding; correction of discharge character necessitates corresponding RE code correction
3	Amend narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority	Chapter 14 finding not independently supported absent the mitigated misconduct; stigmatizing notation should be removed
4	Issue corrected DD Form 214 reflecting all corrections	Required to restore employment, reenlistment, and benefit eligibility

PART B · Veteran Impact Statement — Employment & Federal Opportunities

PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT

This Veteran Impact Statement documents the specific, concrete ways in which the RE-4 reenlistment eligibility code and Other Than Honorable discharge have affected this veteran's employment, federal career opportunities, financial stability, and future prospects. It is submitted to the review board to demonstrate the real-world consequences of the current record and the urgency of the correction being requested.

STATEMENT OF VETERAN J.D.W.

11B Infantryman | 82nd Airborne Division | Operation Allies Refuge — Kabul, Afghanistan

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EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

When I separated in February 2022 I had a plan. I was going to use my infantry and airborne training, my security experience, and my four years of service to build a career in federal law enforcement or defense contracting. That was a realistic plan before my discharge. After my discharge it became a plan that my own DD-214 made impossible.

In March 2022, one month after I got out, I applied for a position with a private defense contractor that provides security support to federal facilities. The position required a security clearance. I was disqualified during the background investigation phase specifically because of my discharge character and RE code. I was not given an opportunity to explain the circumstances. The paperwork said what it said and that was the end of the application.

In September 2022 I applied to a local police department. I passed the written exam and the physical fitness test. I was disqualified at the background investigation stage. The investigator told me directly that my OTH discharge was disqualifying under their hiring standards. I asked if there was an appeal process. There was not.

In early 2023 I applied for a position as a Transportation Security Officer with the TSA. Federal employment. The position I applied for did not require a clearance but it did require a background investigation. My application was rejected. The rejection letter cited my discharge characterization.

Employment & Opportunity Barriers — Summary

Opportunity	Date	Outcome	Reason Given
Defense Contractor (Security / Clearance)	March 2022	**Disqualified**	OTH discharge / RE-4 flagged in background investigation
Local Police Department Officer Application	September 2022	**Disqualified**	OTH discharge disqualifying under department hiring standards
TSA Transportation Security Officer	January 2023	**Rejected**	Discharge characterization cited in rejection
Federal Contract Security Supervisor	April 2023	**Not Considered**	Application withdrawn after learning clearance requirement

State Corrections Officer	August 2023	**Disqualified**	Military discharge record failed background review

FEDERAL BENEFITS IMPACT

The employment barriers are serious. The loss of federal benefits has been just as damaging in a different way. I served four years. I expected to have access to the benefits that four years of service is supposed to earn. Every one of them has been blocked or limited by my discharge record.

I looked into using the GI Bill to pursue an emergency medical technician certification program in the fall of 2022. The program cost approximately $4,800. I did not have that money sitting in a savings account. I expected to use the GI Bill I spent four years earning. My discharge character made me ineligible. I did not take the program.

In the spring of 2023 my wife and I tried to purchase a home. We had been renting since I got out and our landlord was selling the property. We looked into a VA home loan because we did not have a large enough down payment for a conventional loan. I was ineligible due to my discharge characterization. We did not buy the home. We moved into a smaller rental unit that costs more per month than a mortgage payment would have.

I applied for assistance through a veterans' emergency housing program in the winter of 2022 during a period when we were behind on rent. I was told my discharge made me ineligible for their services. I was a veteran who had been at Abbey Gate four months earlier asking a veterans' program for emergency help and being turned away because of what is written on my discharge paperwork.

Federal Benefits Impact — Summary

Benefit / Program	Attempted	Status	Financial Impact
GI Bill — Education Benefits	Fall 2022	**Ineligible — OTH discharge**	$4,800 EMT program not completed; no alternative funding available
VA Home Loan Guaranty	Spring 2023	**Ineligible — OTH discharge**	Unable to purchase home; paying higher rent in smaller unit instead
Veterans Emergency Housing Assistance	Winter 2022	**Denied — discharge characterization**	Behind on rent during financial hardship; no veteran program assistance available
VA Healthcare (Full Eligibility)	Ongoing	**Limited access due to discharge character**	Out-of-pocket costs for care that should be covered
State Veterans Property Tax Exemption	2023	**Ineligible in state of residence**	Additional annual tax burden that honorably discharged veterans avoid

REENLISTMENT & CAREER PATH IMPACT

I want to go back. I know people probably find that hard to understand given everything that happened. But the military is what I know. It is what I am good at. It is who I am. When I was separated I lost more than a job — I lost the career I had spent four years building and the future I had planned for my family.

The RE-4 code means I cannot walk into a recruiting office. I cannot join the Guard or the Reserve. I cannot find a part-time way back in while I figure out the civilian world. Every door that leads back to service is closed. The Army

separated me and then took away my ability to serve again as an additional penalty on top of the OTH discharge — for one incident, four months after I was at Abbey Gate.

I have been in VA treatment since the spring of 2022. I am stable. I am working on it every week. I am not the same person I was in January of 2022 and I have the records to prove it. I am asking this Board to give me back the ability to serve again — and to correct a record that does not tell the truth about who I am or what I did for this country.

_____

J.D.W. — Veteran, United States Army (2017–2022)

11B Infantryman | 82nd Airborne Division | Parachutist Badge
Operation Allies Refuge — Hamid Karzai International Airport, Kabul, Afghanistan (August–September 2021)

PART C · Command Leadership Letter — Guidance & Framework

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

This section provides the veteran and their command contact with a structured framework for preparing a strong Command Leadership Letter in support of the RE code upgrade petition. The letter is one of the most influential documents in the support packet — a commanding officer or senior leader who can speak directly to the veteran's service record and character carries significant weight with the review board. This guidance explains what the letter needs to accomplish, how it should be structured, and what specific points it must address to be effective.

C-1 — WHY THE COMMAND LETTER MATTERS

A review board evaluating an RE code upgrade request is looking at a paper record. They see evaluations, disciplinary actions, a discharge characterization, and supporting statements. The command letter is the one document in the package that gives the board a first-person, professional, military voice saying: "I was there. I knew this soldier. This is who they are and this is what happened." That perspective — from someone who held rank over the veteran and can speak to their performance with authority — is irreplaceable.

Boards respond to command letters that are specific, credible, and direct. A letter that speaks in generalities ("he was a good soldier") carries far less weight than one that references specific incidents, dates, duties, and observations. The guidance below is designed to help the letter writer produce the most effective letter possible.

C-2 — WHO SHOULD WRITE THE LETTER

Letter Writer	Ideal Qualifications	Why They Are Effective
Commanding Officer (CO)	Direct command authority over the veteran during the relevant period. Officer rank (O-3 or above preferred).	Highest credibility with the board. Can speak to performance, conduct, and command climate with direct authority.
First Sergeant / Senior NCO	Senior enlisted leader with direct daily knowledge of the veteran. E-8 or E-9 preferred.	Speaks to the day-to-day reality of the veteran's service in ways an officer may not. Highly credible on character and conduct.
Platoon Leader or Platoon Sergeant	Direct supervisor during deployment or the relevant duty period. Must have firsthand knowledge of the veteran's performance.	Most direct knowledge of the veteran in operational settings. Strongest for deployment-specific performance claims.
Senior Officer (Outside the Chain)	Senior officer who knew the veteran through duty, training, or operational contact but was not in the direct chain of command.	Independent credibility — not perceived as a loyalty letter. Effective when the direct chain of command is unavailable or unwilling to write.

C-3 — REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE LETTER

Every command letter submitted in support of an RE code upgrade petition must address the following elements. Missing any one of these significantly weakens the letter's impact:

Element	What to Include	Example Language
Writer's Identity & Credentials	Full name, rank (current or at retirement), branch, unit, years of service, and any relevant awards or qualifications. Establish authority immediately.	"I am [Rank] [Name], United States [Branch], Retired. I served [X] years on active duty, including command of [Unit] from [Date] to [Date]."
Relationship to the Veteran	Explain exactly how and when you knew the veteran. Be specific about the unit, the time period, and the nature of the duty relationship.	"[Veteran] served directly under my command during [operation/period]. I had daily personal knowledge of his/her performance and conduct."
Specific Service Performance	Name specific duties, deployments, incidents, or accomplishments you personally observed. Do not speak in generalities. Reference dates, locations, and events.	"During [specific operation], I personally observed [Veteran] [specific action]. I recommended him/her for [award] based on [specific reason]."
Knowledge of Circumstances	Address what you know about the events that led to the discharge. Be direct and honest. The board respects a leader who acknowledges difficult facts and provides context — not one who pretends they did not happen.	"I became aware of the circumstances surrounding [Veteran]'s separation. Based on my knowledge of his/her service and the situation, it is my assessment that [specific observation or opinion]."
Direct Statement of Support	State explicitly and without qualification that you support the RE code upgrade and discharge correction. Tell the board what you are asking them to do.	"I am asking this Board to upgrade [Veteran]'s discharge to Honorable and correct the RE code to RE-1. This correction is warranted and I support it without reservation."
Closing & Signature Block	Close professionally. Include your full name, rank, branch, unit, dates of service, and contact information if you are willing to be contacted by the board.	"Respectfully submitted, [Full Name] [Rank], [Branch] ([Ret. if applicable]) [Unit / Position] [Contact Info]"

C-4 — WHAT MAKES A STRONG LETTER VS. A WEAK ONE

Strong Letter	Weak Letter
Uses specific dates, locations, unit names, and incidents	Speaks in vague generalities — "a great soldier," "always professional"
Writer establishes direct personal knowledge of the veteran	Writer's relationship to the veteran is unclear or distant
Directly addresses the circumstances of the discharge without avoiding them	Ignores the discharge incident entirely or glosses over it
Makes a specific, clear ask — upgrade the discharge, correct the RE code	Leaves the board to guess what the writer is supporting
Written in a direct, confident military voice	Overly formal or emotional — sounds like it was not written by a leader

References the veteran's awards, decorations, or specific accomplishments	Contains no reference to documented performance or recognition
Expresses the writer's personal accountability and credibility	Reads like a generic character reference, not a command statement

C-5 — FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

■ The letter should be typed, not handwritten, and formatted as a professional military correspondence letter.

■ Include a complete FROM/TO block at the top: writer's name and address, date, and the name and address of the review board.

■ Include a clear RE: line identifying the veteran by name (or anonymized identifier) and docket number if available.

■ Length: two to four pages is ideal. Long enough to be substantive; short enough to be read carefully.

■ The letter must be signed with an original or clearly legible digital signature. An unsigned letter carries significantly less weight.

■ If the writer is retired, note "Retired" after the rank designation in the signature block.

■ Do not include personal opinions about the military, the discharge process, or the political context of the era of service. Keep the focus on the veteran and the facts.

C-6 — SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR J.D.W.'S CASE

The following points are specific to J.D.W.'s RE code upgrade petition and should be addressed in the Command Leadership Letter for his case:

Topic	What the Letter Should Address
Abbey Gate — August 26, 2021	If the writer was present at or aware of J.D.W.'s actions at Abbey Gate, they should describe what they observed directly. The board needs to understand that J.D.W. was not a bystander — he responded, he treated casualties, and he carried a fellow soldier from the blast site. A CO who can confirm this firsthand is extremely powerful.
Pre-Incident Service Record	The letter should confirm J.D.W.'s four-year clean record. Reference any evaluations, duties, or accomplishments the writer personally observed or signed. This establishes that the misconduct was an aberration, not a pattern.
Post-Redeployment Mental Health Gap	If the writer has knowledge of the command's post-deployment behavioral health procedures — or the lack thereof — they should address it directly. Acknowledging that the command did not get J.D.W. help before initiating separation proceedings is a credible and important statement from a military leader.
RE Code Correction — Specific Ask	The letter must explicitly ask the board to correct the RE code from RE-4 to RE-1 in addition to upgrading the discharge. Some command letters address the discharge upgrade but forget the RE code. Both must be specifically requested.
Veteran's Desire to Reenlist	If the writer can speak to J.D.W.'s character and fitness for continued service, they should do so. A CO endorsing a veteran's desire to return to service is one of the most persuasive statements a command letter can make.

This guidance document is prepared by the case preparation team for use by the veteran and their command letter writer. It does not constitute legal advice. The command letter writer should write in their own voice and based on their own direct knowledge and experience.

PART D · Command Leadership Letter — MAJ Derek S. Okafor (Ret.)

FROM:
Major (Ret.) Derek S. Okafor, USA
United States Army (Retired)
Commanding Officer, C Company, 1st Battalion
82nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team
82nd Airborne Division — Fort Bragg, NC 28310

DATE:
March 11, 2023

TO:
Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB)
Office of the Adjutant General
Department of the Army
251 18th Street South, Suite 385
Arlington, Virginia 22202

RE: Command Leadership Letter in Support of RE Code Upgrade (RE-4 → RE-1) & Discharge Upgrade (OTH → Honorable) | Veteran J.D.W. | ADRB-2023-AF-00591

I am Major Derek S. Okafor, United States Army, Retired. I served seventeen years on active duty as an Infantry officer, culminating in command of C Company, 1st Battalion, 82nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. In August 2021, my company was among the first units deployed to Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) in Kabul, Afghanistan in support of Operation Allies Refuge. Specialist J.D.W. was a member of my company. I write this letter with complete conviction that what happened to him after we came home was a failure of the Army — not a failure of character.

Specialist J.D.W. had served four years as an 11B Infantryman prior to the Kabul deployment. His record through July 2021 was without meaningful blemish. He was a reliable, physically capable, and professionally motivated soldier who was preparing his reenlistment paperwork at the time we received our alert order. He had every intention of making the Army a career. That record matters, and I am asking this Board to weigh it alongside everything that came after.

What SPC J.D.W. experienced at Abbey Gate on August 26, 2021 is a matter of documented historical record. He was present during the suicide bombing that killed thirteen U.S. service members and more than 170 Afghan civilians. He rendered first aid under chaos to wounded soldiers and civilians alike. He carried a fellow soldier — who did not survive — from the blast site. I was twenty meters away when it happened and I saw what he did. He performed his duty in full under conditions that no training can truly prepare a person for. That is not a generality. That is what I personally observed.

When we redeployed in September 2021, SPC J.D.W. was a changed man. That is not a character flaw — that is a human response to what he witnessed and survived. He was irritable, withdrawn, and struggling. I will be direct with this Board: my command did not get SPC J.D.W. the mental health support he needed between our redeployment and January 2022. There was a briefing. There were pamphlets. There was a number to call. That was not enough for a soldier who had done what he did at Abbey Gate, and I own that.

In January 2022, SPC J.D.W. had a verbal altercation with an NCO. His command initiated Chapter 14 proceedings. He was separated in February 2022 with an Other Than Honorable characterization and an RE-4 code. I want this Board to understand what that sequence of events means when you put it next to four years of clean service and one of the worst days of the Afghanistan conflict. The Army separated a soldier who had done everything right for four years, survived Abbey Gate, came home with no real support, had one bad incident, and then closed every door in front of him permanently.

I am asking this Board for two specific corrections. First, upgrade SPC J.D.W.'s discharge characterization from Other Than Honorable to Honorable. The misconduct cited in his Chapter 14 proceedings was a direct result of untreated psychological injury causally connected to his combat service and his presence at one of the deadliest terrorist attacks on U.S. forces in the twenty-year history of the Afghanistan conflict. It does not reflect the soldier he was for four years or the man he is today.

Second, I am asking this Board to correct his RE code from RE-4 to RE-1. SPC J.D.W. has told me he wants to reenlist. He has been in VA treatment since spring 2022 and is stable. He is ready to serve again. An RE-4 code assigned on the basis of a Chapter 14 proceeding that should never have been initiated — not while a soldier was in acute psychological crisis following a mass casualty event, and not without meaningful mental health support first — should not permanently bar a soldier from returning to service. Correcting the RE code to RE-1 is not a special favor. It is the accurate result when the underlying discharge is corrected.

I served beside soldiers for seventeen years. I know who J.D.W. is. He is not a soldier who deserved what he got. He is a soldier who deserved better from the institution he gave four years of his life to — and who was at Abbey Gate when it counted. I am asking this Board to give it to him now.

Respectfully submitted,

_____

Derek S. Okafor

Major, United States Army (Retired)
Former Commanding Officer, C Company, 1-82nd IN, 1st BCT, 82nd Airborne Division
Operation Allies Refuge — HKIA, Kabul, Afghanistan (August–September 2021)
17 Years Active Duty | Bronze Star Medal | Combat Infantryman Badge | Meritorious Service Medal

COMMANDING OFFICER — SERVICE RECORD

Rank at Retirement	Years of Service	Unit / Command	Relationship to Veteran
Major (MAJ)	17 Years Active Duty	C Co., 1-82nd IN, 1st BCT 82nd Airborne Division	Direct Commanding Officer OIF/OAR, 2021

RELIEF SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED BY THIS LETTER

No.	Relief Requested	Current Status	Requested Correction
1	Discharge Characterization	**Other Than Honorable (OTH)**	**Honorable**
2	RE Code	**RE-4 — Ineligible**	**RE-1 — Fully Eligible**
3	Narrative Reason	**Pattern of Misconduct (Ch. 14)**	**Secretarial Authority**
4	DD Form 214	**Original — Not Corrected**	**Corrected DD-214 Issued**

This letter is a client preparation example only. All names, ranks, unit designations, and identifying details are fictitious. This document does not constitute legal advice. Consult a qualified VSO or accredited claims agent for case-specific guidance.

PART E · Optional Client Interview Guide

THIS SECTION IS OPTIONAL. A follow-up interview is used only when the intake form does not provide enough detail to fully prepare the packet. Not every client will need one.

E-1 — WHEN TO USE THIS GUIDE

- **Skip the interview** when the intake form is fully completed with clear, detailed answers across all sections.
- **Schedule a brief call** when key fields are blank, vague, or contain conflicting information.
- **Strongly recommended** when the discharge involves complex events — combat trauma, MST, mass casualty — that need personal context beyond what the form captures.
- **Required** when the client has difficulty writing due to language, education, or disability barriers — conduct the interview and transcribe their responses.
- **Keep it short** — most interviews should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes. Use only the questions that fill gaps in the intake form.

E-2 — QUESTIONS BY TOPIC

Work through only the sections where the intake form is incomplete. Write the client's responses in the space provided or on a separate sheet.

SERVICE BACKGROUND

Q	Question	Notes
1	Walk me through your service — job, where you were stationed, any deployments.	_____ _____
2	What was your record like before the incident that led to your discharge?	_____ _____
3	Did you receive any awards or recognition during your service?	_____ _____

DISCHARGE CIRCUMSTANCES

Q	Question	Notes
4	In your own words — what happened that led to your discharge?	_____ _____
5	Did anything happen during your service — a deployment, an incident, an injury — that affected you before the discharge?	_____ _____
6	Did anyone in your chain of command offer you mental health support before they started separation proceedings?	_____ _____
7	Is there anything about how your discharge was handled that felt unfair?	_____ _____

RE CODE & LIFE IMPACT

Q	Question	Notes
8	Have you been turned down for jobs or federal positions because of your discharge or RE code?	_____ _____
9	Have you been denied any VA benefits, education benefits, or housing assistance?	_____ _____
10	Do you want to reenlist or rejoin the military in any capacity?	_____ _____
11	How has this affected your family or finances?	_____ _____

LETTER WRITERS

Q	Question	Notes
12	Do you have a former CO, first sergeant, or platoon leader who would write a letter for you?	_____ _____
13	Is there an employer, mentor, pastor, or community member who knows your character and could write on your behalf?	_____ _____
14	Are you currently in any treatment program — VA or private — and would your provider write?	_____ _____

E-3 — INTERVIEW LOG

Date	Conducted By	Format	Duration
_____	_____	■ Phone ■ In-Person ■ Video	_____

This interview guide is an internal working tool. Responses are confidential and used solely to prepare the support packet. Conduct only the portions relevant to gaps in the client's intake form.