VETERAN SERVICE IMPACT STATEMENT

Submitted in Support of Discharge Upgrade & RE Code Correction | ADRB-2023-AF-00591

VETERAN (ANONYMIZED) J.D.W.	**REFERENCE NO.** ADRB-2023-AF-00591
BRANCH OF SERVICE United States Army	**MOS** 11B — Infantryman
DATES OF SERVICE October 2017 – February 2022	**THEATER OF SERVICE** Operation Allies Refuge — Kabul, Afghanistan (Aug–Sep 2021)
ORIGINAL DISCHARGE Other Than Honorable (OTH) — Chapter 14	**RE CODE ASSIGNED** RE-4 (Permanently Ineligible for Reenlistment)
PETITION DATE January 2023	**RELIEF SOUGHT** OTH → Honorable Upgrade | RE-4 → RE-1 Re-code

PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT

This statement is written in the veteran's own voice. It describes the concrete, real-world impact of the Other Than Honorable discharge and RE-4 code on his life — financially, professionally, medically, and personally. It is submitted to help the Army Discharge Review Board understand the full human cost of the separation decision and the urgency of the corrections being requested.

STATEMENT OF VETERAN J.D.W.

11B Infantryman | 82nd Airborne Division | Operation Allies Refuge

I enlisted in the United States Army in October 2017 when I was nineteen years old. I chose the infantry because I wanted to serve in a way that meant something. I wanted to be where it mattered. I passed Airborne School, I earned my parachutist badge, and I was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. For four years I did everything the Army asked of me. My evaluations were solid. I had no disciplinary issues. I was filling out my reenlistment paperwork in the summer of 2021 because I planned to make the Army my career.

In August 2021 my unit received orders to deploy to Kabul. I knew why. Everyone knew why. We were going to help get people out. I was not afraid of that mission. I was a soldier and that was my job and I was ready to do it.

I was at Abbey Gate on August 26th. I do not need to explain to anyone what happened there because it is in the history books now. What I can tell you is what it was like to be standing there when it happened. The noise. The smoke. The screaming. Looking down and not being able to immediately process what you are seeing. My training took over and I started moving toward the casualties. I worked on people I could not save. I carried my buddy away from the blast site. He did not make it. I held his hand. I was twenty-three years old.

When we came home in September 2021 nobody asked me if I was okay. Not once. Not in a way that was real. There was a briefing. There were some pamphlets. There was a number to call. I did not call it because I thought I was supposed to be able to handle what I had seen. I thought that was what being a soldier meant. I was wrong about that and I did not find out I was wrong until it was too late.

I stopped sleeping. When I did sleep I woke up back at Abbey Gate. I started drinking to get through the nights. I stopped talking to people. I got into an argument with my sergeant in January 2022 that I am not proud of. It was one incident. It was the worst moment of a very bad several months, and it became the entire story of my military service as far as my separation paperwork was concerned. Chapter 14. Other Than Honorable. RE-4. February 2022. Done.

I want the Board to understand what those four letters — O, T, H — have done to my life since February 2022. I applied for a job with a federal contractor in the spring of 2022 that required a security clearance. I was disqualified because of my discharge character. I applied for a position with a local law enforcement agency in the fall of 2022. Disqualified again. I applied for housing assistance through a veterans program and was told my discharge made me ineligible for their services. I looked into GI Bill benefits for a trade program. Not eligible. I looked into a VA home loan. Not eligible. Every door I tried to walk through had the same sign on it. I put that sign there myself, at least that is how it feels on the days when I am doing well. On the days when I am not doing well it feels like the Army put it there and handed me the OTH as a punishment for surviving something that broke me.

The RE-4 code is its own wound. I want to go back. I know that probably sounds strange to people who do not understand what it means to have a military identity stripped away from you. But I have been in treatment at the VA since the spring of 2022. I have a PTSD diagnosis and I am working through it. I am stable. I am not the man I was in January 2022. I have done the work. And the one thing I keep coming back to — the one thing that feels like it would give me a path forward — is being able to serve again. The RE-4 code says no. Permanently. Because of one incident. After four years of clean service. After Abbey Gate.

I am not writing this letter to make anyone feel sorry for me. I am writing it because the Board asked for a statement about the impact of my discharge and this is the honest answer. My discharge character and my RE code are not an accurate reflection of my four years of service or of who I am. They are a record of what happened to me when I came home from one of the worst days of the Afghanistan war and nobody made sure I was alright before they handed me a chapter.

I am asking this Board to correct the record. Not to erase what happened — I will carry Abbey Gate for the rest of my life and I know that. But to make the paperwork match the truth. I served honorably for four years. I served at HKIA. I did my job on August 26th when everything was on fire. That is who I am as a soldier and I would like the Army to acknowledge it.

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)

DOCUMENTED IMPACTS OF OTH DISCHARGE & RE-4 CODE		
Impact Area	**Specific Consequence**	**Status**
Federal Employment	Disqualified from security-clearance-required contractor position	**Ongoing barrier**
Law Enforcement Career	Disqualified from local law enforcement application (2022)	**Ongoing barrier**
Education Benefits	GI Bill benefits denied due to OTH discharge character	**Ongoing barrier**
VA Home Loan	VA loan guaranty ineligible under OTH discharge	**Ongoing barrier**
Veterans Housing Assistance	Denied program eligibility due to discharge character	**Ongoing barrier**
Reenlistment (RE-4)	Permanently barred from reenlistment in any U.S. military branch	**Permanent unless corrected**
Mental Health Treatment	VA PTSD treatment ongoing since Spring 2022 — stable and progressing	**Active / Positive**

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