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MILITARY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD BRANCH REFERENCE GUIDE

Internal Staff Reference | All Branches | August 2026

For intake and evaluation use only.

SECTION 1 — WHAT EVERY BRANCH HAS IN COMMON

All military discharge review boards operate under **DoDI 1332.28** — the master Department of Defense instruction that sets the rules every branch must follow. Regardless of service, the following standards apply universally to every discharge review board (DRB) in the U.S. military.

✓	**Same Application Form**	**DD Form 293** is used by ALL branches to apply for discharge review.
✓	**15-Year Time Limit**	All branches: must apply within **15 years of discharge date**. After that, the veteran must go to the Board for Correction of Military Records (BCMR/BCNR).
✓	**Two Grounds for Review**	Every board reviews on only two bases: **(1) Inequity** — discharge was too harsh or unfair; **(2) Impropriety** — discharge violated law, regulation, or policy.
✓	**General Court-Martial Rule**	No discharge review board from **any branch** can review a General Court-Martial (GCM) discharge. Must go to the correction board.
✓	**Same Review Options**	All boards offer: **Records Review** (paper only) or **Personal Appearance** (in person before the board).
✓	**Standard of Review**	All boards use **"preponderance of the evidence"** — more likely true than not.
✓	**Mental Health Liberal Consideration**	All boards must consider **PTSD, TBI, MST**, and related conditions per the Hagel Memo (2014) and

		Kurta Memo (2017). Veteran gets benefit of the doubt if mental health contributed to the conduct.
✓	**Written Decision Required**	Every board must issue a **written decision** explaining why they granted or denied the application.
✓	**No Representation Required**	Veterans can apply on their own. No representative is required, though representation is permitted.
✓	**Right to Submit Evidence**	All veterans can submit **supporting statements, evaluations, character letters, and buddy statements** regardless of branch.
✓	**Post-Service Conduct Considered**	All boards can consider what the veteran has done since discharge: **employment, community involvement, sobriety, education**, and similar factors.
✓	**Same Appeal Path**	If denied, all branches escalate to their respective Board for Correction of Military Records (**BCMR or BCNR**) using DD Form 149.

SECTION 2 — WHAT IS DIFFERENT BY BRANCH

While the governing rules are the same, each branch has its own board, location, governing regulation, and submission address. Below is what APDES intake specialists need to know for each branch.

◆ ARMY Active Duty • Reserve • National Guard

Board Name	Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB)
Governing Regulation	AR 15-180
Physical Location	Fort Belvoir, Virginia
Submission Address	Army Review Boards Agency, 251 18th Street South, Suite 385, Arlington, VA 22202
Online Portal	DoD ADRB Portal — arba.army.pentagon.mil
Handles	Army Regular Active Duty, Army Reserve, Army National Guard
Does NOT Handle	**General Court-Martial discharges** — refer to ABCMR
If Over 15 Years	Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) — DD Form 149

> ✎ *Largest volume of cases across all branches; most established and well-documented process.*

◆ MARINE CORPS

Active Duty • Reserve — Shares Board with Navy

Board Name	Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB) — Marines share this board with the Navy
Governing Regulation	SECNAVINST 5420.174D
Physical Location	Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.
Submission Address	Naval Discharge Review Board, 720 Kennon Street SE, Suite 309, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374
Online Portal	DoD NDRB Portal
Handles	U.S. Marine Corps (Active Duty and Reserve)
Does NOT Handle	**General Court-Martial discharges** — refer to BCNR
If Over 15 Years	Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR) — DD Form 149

> ✎ *Marines and Navy share the same board, the same submission address, and the same governing instruction.*

◆ NAVY

Active Duty • Reserve — Shares Board with Marine Corps

Board Name	Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB) — Navy shares this board with the Marine Corps
Governing Regulation	SECNAVINST 5420.174D
Physical Location	Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.
Submission Address	Naval Discharge Review Board, 720 Kennon Street SE, Suite 309, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374
Online Portal	DoD NDRB Portal
Handles	U.S. Navy (Active Duty and Reserve)
Does NOT Handle	**General Court-Martial discharges** — refer to BCNR
If Over 15 Years	Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR) — DD Form 149

> ✎ *Same board, same process, and same submission address as Marine Corps. No distinction at the board level.*

◆ AIR FORCE

Active Duty • Reserve • Air National Guard — Also Covers Space Force

Board Name	Air Force Discharge Review Board (AFDRB)
Governing Regulation	AFI 36-3208
Physical Location	Washington D.C.
Submission Address	SAF/MRBR, 550-C Street West, Suite 40, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4742
Online Portal	DoD AFDRB Portal
Handles	U.S. Air Force (Active Duty, Reserve, Air National Guard); also U.S. Space Force
Does NOT Handle	**General Court-Martial discharges** — refer to AFBCMR
If Over 15 Years	Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR) — DD Form 149

✎ *Also handles Space Force (Guardian) cases. Space Force adopted Air Force regulations and shares this board.*

◆ SPACE FORCE

Guardians — Shares Board with Air Force

Board Name	Air Force Discharge Review Board (AFDRB) — Space Force shares this board with the Air Force
Governing Regulation	AFI 36-3208 (adopted by Space Force)
Physical Location	Washington D.C.
Submission Address	Same as Air Force: SAF/MRBR, 550-C Street West, Suite 40, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4742
Handles	U.S. Space Force (Guardians)
Does NOT Handle	**General Court-Martial discharges** — refer to AFBCMR
If Over 15 Years	Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR) — DD Form 149

✎ *Newest branch — established December 2019. Very few discharge cases exist yet. Treat identically to Air Force for intake purposes.*

◆ COAST GUARD — Active Duty • Reserve — Operates Under DHS

Board Name	Coast Guard Discharge Review Board (CGDRB)
Governing Regulation	COMDTINST M1000.4
Physical Location	Washington D.C.
Submission Address	Commandant (CG-133), Attn: DRB, 2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE, Washington, DC 20593
Online Portal	Separate Coast Guard Portal (not DoD portal)
Handles	U.S. Coast Guard (Active Duty and Reserve)
Does NOT Handle	**General Court-Martial discharges** — refer to CGBCMR
If Over 15 Years	Coast Guard Board for Correction of Military Records (CGBCMR) — DD Form 149

✎ ***Important:*** *Coast Guard operates under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), NOT the Department of Defense. It still follows DoDI 1332.28 standards but has additional Coast Guard-specific policies. Use a separate portal. Smallest board with fewest cases.*

SECTION 3 — QUICK ELIGIBILITY CHECK — FOR INTAKE SPECIALISTS

Ask these questions **in order** before proceeding with any intake. Stop immediately if a disqualifying condition is identified and refer accordingly.

Q1. What branch did they serve in?

→	**Army**	Route to **ADRB**
→	**Marine Corps or Navy**	Route to **NDRB**
→	**Air Force or Space Force**	Route to **AFDRB**
→	**Coast Guard**	Route to **CGDRB** (separate portal — DHS, not DoD)

Q2. Was the discharge more than 15 years ago?

→	**YES**	**STOP.** They cannot use a DRB. Refer to the correction board for their branch (ABCMR, BCNR, AFBCMR, or CGBCMR) using **DD Form 149**.
→	**NO**	**Continue to Q3.**

Q3. Was the discharge from a General Court-Martial (GCM)?

→	**YES**	**STOP.** The DRB cannot help. Refer to the correction board for their branch. No DRB has authority over a GCM discharge.
→	**NO**	**Continue to Q4.**

Q4. What type of discharge did they receive?

→	**OTH, General, Bad Conduct (BCD), Dishonorable, or Uncharacterized**	**Eligible for character of discharge review.** Proceed with full intake.
→	**Honorable**	**May still apply** if they want the **reason or narrative reason** changed (not character of discharge). Proceed with intake and clarify the specific request.

✓ IF THE VETERAN PASSED ALL QUESTIONS

Proceed with the full **APDES Intake Form**. Document the branch, discharge type, discharge date, and any mental health history (PTSD, TBI, MST) for inclusion in the evaluation. Confirm form DD-293 is used for the application.

SECTION 4 — WHEN TO REFER TO THE CORRECTION BOARD INSTEAD

If the veteran cannot use a discharge review board — because they are **over 15 years post-discharge** or their discharge resulted from a **General Court-Martial** — they must go to their branch's correction board. These boards have broader authority: they can change military records, restore rank, award back pay, and address matters a DRB cannot.

Branch	Correction Board Name	Form Used	Key Notes
Army	Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR)	DD Form 149	Highest volume of cases; handles GCM discharges and cases beyond 15 years
Marine Corps	Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR)	DD Form 149	Shared with Navy; same board, same submission process
Navy	Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR)	DD Form 149	Shared with Marine Corps; same board, same submission process
Air Force	Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)	DD Form 149	Also covers Space Force (Guardian) cases

Branch	Correction Board Name	Form Used	Key Notes
Space Force	Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)	DD Form 149	Same board as Air Force; treat identically for intake purposes
Coast Guard	Coast Guard Board for Correction of Military Records (CGBCMR)	DD Form 149	Operates under DHS; separate process from DoD correction boards

> ⚠ **INTAKE NOTE — Correction Board vs. DRB Authority**
>
> Correction boards have **broader authority** than DRBs. They can correct any error or injustice in a military record — not just the character or reason for discharge. If the veteran qualifies for a DRB but has additional record issues (e.g., incorrect dates, missing awards, erroneous entry codes), a correction board referral may be appropriate *in addition to* the DRB process. Document both options during intake.