

Contents

<i>About the Authors</i>	xvii
<i>About the Contributors</i>	xix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxi
<i>Preface</i>	xxiii
<i>Introduction</i>	xl
<i>Glossary of Common Discharge Upgrade Acronyms and Terms</i>	lii

PART I. INTRODUCTION TO MILITARY AND DISCHARGE UPGRADE LEGAL STRUCTURES 1

Chapter 1. Introduction to Military Structures and Military Law	3
1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Scope	4
2.0 Overview of Branches of Service and Organizational Structures	4
2.1 Secretarial Authority for Discharge Upgrades and Records Corrections	5
2.2 Chain of Command and Unit Structure: A Primer	5
3.0 Life Cycle of a Servicemember	9
3.1 Enlisted Servicemembers	9
3.2 Warrant Officers	12
3.3 Commissioned Officers	12
4.0 Military Administrative Discharge System	13
4.1 Overview	13
4.2 Misconduct-Based Administrative Discharges	14
4.2.1 Documentation of the Underlying Misconduct	15
4.2.2 Post-Adjudication Documentation of Misconduct	20
4.3 Unsatisfactory Performance-Based Administrative Discharges	25
4.4 Other Administrative Discharges	26
4.5 The Administrative Separation Process	27
4.5.1 Notice	27
4.5.2 Acknowledgment Documentation	28
4.5.3 Administrative Separation Boards	29
5.0 Discharge in Lieu of Court-Martial	33
5.1 Officers: Resignations for the Good of the Service	33
5.2 Enlisted: Administrative Separations in Lieu of Court-Martial	33

6.0	Courts-Martial	35
6.1	Special Courts-Martial	36
6.2	General Courts-Martial	37
7.0	Discharge Characterizations	38
7.1	Administrative Discharge Characterizations	38
	7.1.1 Honorable	38
	7.1.2 General (Under Honorable Conditions)	39
	7.1.3 Other Than Honorable (OTH)	40
7.2	Punitive Discharges	40
	7.2.1 Bad Conduct Discharge (BCD)	41
	7.2.2 Dishonorable Discharge/Dismissal	41
8.0	Documentation of Discharges: The Department of Defense Form 214 (DD 214)	42

Chapter 2. Law of Discharge Upgrades **45**

1.0	Introduction	47
1.1	Scope	48
2.0	Overview of Records Correction and Discharge Upgrades	48
2.1	Discharge Upgrades: The Big Picture	49
2.2	Character of Service and Discharge Status	50
2.3	Narrative Reason, Separation Code, and Reentry Code	50
2.4	Caseloads and Backlogs	51
2.5	Who Can Apply for a Discharge Review or Records Correction	52
2.6	Legal Standards	52
	2.6.1 Error and Impropriety	52
	2.6.2 Injustice and Inequity	53
	2.6.3 Clemency	55
	2.6.4 Standard of Proof	56
	2.6.5 Presumption of Regularity	56
	2.6.6 Department of Defense Memoranda	57
2.7	Precedent	58
2.8	Guidance on Framing Requested Relief	59
2.9	Secretarial Review	60
2.10	Article 74(b) Review	60
2.11	Issuance of a New DD 214	62
2.12	Differences among the Military Review Boards	62
3.0	Discharge Review Boards	63
3.1	Legal Standards	63
3.2	Structure and Composition	63
3.3	Powers	64
3.4	Records and Evidence	64
3.5	Records Review and Personal Appearance Hearings	66
3.6	Relief	68
3.7	Statute of Limitations	69
3.8	Reconsideration	69
3.9	Timeline and Expediting	70
3.10	Success Rates at the Discharge Review Boards	71

4.0	Boards for Correction of Military or Naval Records	71
4.1	Legal Standards	71
4.2	Structure and Composition	72
4.3	Powers	72
4.4	Records and Evidence	73
4.5	Hearings	73
4.6	Relief	73
4.7	Statute of Limitations	73
4.8	Reconsideration	74
4.9	Timeline and Expediting	75
4.10	Success Rates at the Records Correction Boards	75
5.0	Discharge Appeal Review Board	76
6.0	Federal Court Judicial Review	76
6.1	Administrative Procedure Act	77
6.1.1	Legal Standards	77
6.1.2	Jurisdiction, Statute of Limitations, Venue, and Proper Parties	78
6.1.3	Exhaustion	78
6.1.4	Relief	79
6.2	Tucker Act	80
6.2.1	Legal Standards	80
6.2.2	Jurisdiction, Statute of Limitations, Venue, and Proper Parties	81
6.2.3	Exhaustion	82
6.2.4	Relief	82
6.3	Other Federal Causes of Action	83
6.3.1	Privacy Act	83
6.3.2	Declaratory Judgment Act	83
6.3.3	Freedom of Information Act	83
6.3.4	United States Constitution	84
7.0	Class Actions	85
7.1	Basic Principles of Class Actions	85
7.1.1	Rule 23 Requirements and Timing for Class Action Certification	85
7.1.2	Rule 23(a) Numerosity, Commonality, Typicality, and Adequacy	86
7.1.3	Rule 23(b) Types of Class Actions	88
7.2	Evolution of Veterans Discharge Upgrade Class Actions	88
8.0	Equal Access to Justice Act and Other Fee-Shifting Statutes	93
8.1	Equal Access to Justice Act	93
8.1.1	Party's Net Worth	94
8.1.2	Prevailing Party Status	94
8.1.3	Government's Position Not Substantially Justified	96
8.1.4	Application for Fees and Costs and Reasonableness Standard	96
8.1.5	Other Considerations	97
8.2	Attorneys' Fees under the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act	98
9.0	The Alternative or Complementary Path of a VA Character of Discharge Determination	98
10.0	Discharge Appeal Review Board	99
	Appendix A: Applicable Regulations	101
	Appendix B: Applicable Department of Defense Memoranda	103

PART II. BUILDING A CASE **129**

Chapter 3. Intake and Record Development	131
1.0 Introduction	132
1.1 Scope of Chapter	133
2.0 Intake	133
2.1 Explaining the Upgrade Process and Available Remedies	133
2.2 Topics to Cover in the Initial Interview	134
2.3 Possible Sources for Statements	134
2.4 Document Requests	135
3.0 Records Collection	136
3.1 Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)	136
3.1.1 Online OMPF Access	139
3.1.2 National Guard and Reserve Records	139
3.2 Other Service Records	139
3.2.1 Unit Specific and Other Non-OMPF Documents	140
3.2.2 Criminal Investigations	141
3.2.3 Courts-Martial Transcripts	142
3.2.4 Previous Board Decisions	142
3.3 In-Service Medical Records	142
3.3.1 Inpatient Service Treatment Records (STRs)	143
3.3.2 Outpatient STRs	143
3.3.3 Medical Records Requests for Recently Discharged Veterans	144
3.3.4 In-Theater Treatment Records for OIF or OEF Servicemembers	144
3.3.5 Records Requests for Substance Abuse Treatment or Psychiatric Records	145
3.4 Post-Service Medical Records	145
3.4.1 VHA Treatment Records Requests	145
3.4.2 Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Records	146
3.4.3 Non-VA Post-Service Medical Records	147
4.0 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act Requests	148
4.1 FOIA	148
4.2 The Privacy Act	149
5.0 Contents of the Official Military Personnel Record	150
5.1 DD 214	150
5.2 Standard Documents in the OMPF	152
5.3 Service Treatment Records	153
5.4 What to Do When Records Are Missing	153
Appendix A: Service Branch Museums and Libraries	155
Appendix B: Service Branch Military Investigation Records Contacts	159
Appendix C: Service Branch Courts-Martial Transcripts Contacts	161
Appendix D: Service Branch FOIA Offices	163
Appendix E: Sample Letters, Releases, and Document Requests	165
 Chapter 4. Supporting Statements and Working with Experts	 171
1.0 Introduction	171
1.1 Scope of Chapter	172
2.0 Supporting Statements	172
2.1 Personal Statement	172

2.2	Corroborating Statements	173
2.2.1	Tips for Fellow Veteran or Current Servicemember Statements	174
2.2.2	Tips for Chain of Command/Supervisor Statements	175
2.2.3	Tips for Former Attorney/JAG Statements	175
2.2.4	Tips for Family Statements	176
3.0	Medical Evidence—Working with Experts	177
3.1	Obtaining Health Care and a Mental Health Diagnosis	178
3.2	Medical Statements	178
3.2.1	Finding a Medical Expert	179
3.2.2	Tips for Expert Medical Statements	180
3.3	Working with Congressional Offices	181
	Appendix A: Information in a Typical Psychological Report	183
	Appendix B: List of Potential Questions for Experts to Address by Case Type	185
Chapter 5. Writing a Persuasive Brief		189
1.0	Introduction	190
1.1	Scope of Chapter	190
2.0	Where to Apply	190
3.0	Structuring the Brief for the DoD Administrative Boards	192
3.1	Separating Contentions	192
3.2	Clearly State All the Remedies Sought	193
3.3	Tying Each Contention to All Remedies Sought	193
3.4	Making the Record	193
4.0	Applicable Legal Standards	194
4.1	Presumption of Regularity	194
4.2	Value of Precedent in BCMR Cases	196
4.3	Value of Precedent in DRB Cases	197
4.4	Overview of Standards of Review	198
4.4.1	Propriety	199
4.4.2	Equity	199
5.0	Crafting Contentions	200
5.1	Sample Propriety Contention Template	200
5.1.1	Impropriety Template: Based on an Error Prejudicial to the Discharge	200
5.2	Sample Equity Contention Template	201
5.2.1	Equity Template Based on a Future Policy Change	201
	Appendix A: Sample Contentions by Case Type	203
	Appendix B: Sample AFDRB Decisional Template	207
Chapter 6. Identifying Contentions		213
1.0	Introduction	214
2.0	Identifying Contentions	215
2.1	First Steps for Identifying Contentions: Military Regulations	216
2.2	Identifying Relevant Regulations	216
2.3	General Checklist for Identifying Both Improprieties and Inequities	217
2.4	Service-Wide Standards for Character of Service	219
2.5	Limits on Characterization	220
3.0	Contentions Based on DoDI 1332.14 Enclosure 3: Reasons for Separation	221
3.1	Expiration End of Service or End Term of Service Reasons for Separation	221
3.1.1	Examples of Recent Board Case Based on EOS/ETS Contentions	223

3.2	Convenience of the Government	225
3.2.1	Dependency or Hardship	225
3.2.2	Pregnancy or Childbirth	227
3.2.3	Parenthood	228
3.2.4	Conscientious Objection	230
3.3	Defective Enlistments and Inductions	231
3.3.1	Defective Enlistment Agreements	233
3.3.2	Fraudulent Entry	235
3.4	Unsatisfactory Performance	236
3.5	Weight Control Failure	238
3.6	Misconduct	240
3.6.1	Minor Disciplinary Infractions	241
3.6.2	A Pattern of Misconduct	241
3.6.3	Commission of a Serious Offense	242
3.6.4	Civilian Conviction	242
3.6.5	Assessing Misconduct-Based Discharges for Errors	242
3.6.6	Common Errors Misconduct-Based Discharges	243
3.7	Separation in Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial	244
3.7.1	Common Errors in Separation in Lieu of Courts-Martial Cases	245
4.0	Common Errors Organized by Stages in the Separation Process	246
4.1	Pre-Initiation of Separation Process Errors	246
4.1.1	Performance Evaluations	247
4.1.2	Inadequate Counseling or Rehabilitation	250
4.2	Initiation of Separation Errors	252
4.2.1	Notice Requirements for Administrative Separations	252
4.2.2	Commander's Separation Memo	254
4.3	Processing Separation Errors	256
4.3.1	Access to Counsel	256
4.3.2	Administrative Discharge Board Procedures	258
5.0	Crafting Equity Contentions	264
5.1	Standards for Inequity	264
5.1.1	Regulatory Standards	265
5.2	Wilkie Memo	268
5.2.1	Wilkie Guidance on Aspects to Highlight in Equity Claims	268
5.3	Clemency	270
5.4	Common Equity Fact Patterns and Case Examples	270
	Appendix A: Service Branch Regulations	273
	Appendix B: Sample Military Documents	275
	Chapter 7. Final Steps	287
1.0	Introduction	288
1.1	Scope of Chapter	289
2.0	Submission Process	289
2.1	What to Submit	289
2.1.1	DD 293/DD 149	290
2.1.2	Cover Letters	290
2.1.3	Case Theory Coversheets and Executive Summaries	292
2.2	Filing the Application	293
2.2.1	Ability to Supplement	293

3.0	Board Procedures	294
3.1	Board Processes	295
3.1.1	Non-Branch Specific DRB Processes	295
3.1.2	Non-Branch Specific BCMR Processes	295
3.2	Records the Boards Collect	296
3.3	Current Board Practices in Records Gathering	297
4.0	What to Expect Post-Filing	298
5.0	Board-Directed Advisory Opinions	299
5.1	Responding to Advisory Opinions	300
5.2	Ex Parte Communications	300
6.0	In-Person Hearings	301
6.1	DRB Hearings	301
6.2	Basic Hearing Considerations for All DRB Branches	302
6.2.1	Logistical Considerations	302
6.2.2	Hearing Procedure	302
7.0	Post-Decision	303
7.1	Granted Requests	304
7.2	Partial Grants, Denied Requests, and Appeal Options	304
7.2.1	Partial Grants	304
7.2.2	Denied Requests and Appeal Options	305
	Appendix A: Branch Specific Board of Corrections Regulations	307
	Appendix B: Where to File Applications	309
	Appendix C: Sample Letters	311
	Appendix D: Sample Forms and Correspondence from the Boards	321

PART III. SPECIFIC CASE TYPES **335**

Chapter 8. Mental Health and Less-Than-Honorable Discharges	337	
1.0	Introduction	339
1.1	Scope of the Problem	339
1.2	Correlations between Mental Health and Less-Than-Honorable Discharges	340
1.3	Scope of Chapter	341
1.4	Cross-References	341
2.0	Common Mental Health Disorders Affecting Service	342
2.1	The <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i>	343
2.2	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—A Brief History	344
2.3	DSM-5 Definition of PTSD	344
2.3.1	Diagnostic Criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	345
2.4	Traumatic Brain Injury	347
2.5	DSM-5 Definition of TBI	348
2.5.1	DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria for Major or Mild Neurocognitive Disorder Due to Traumatic Brain Injury	349
2.6	Depression	349
2.7	DSM-5 Definition of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)	350
2.8	PTSD, TBI, or MDD and Combat and Operational Stress	351
2.9	PTSD, TBI, or MDD and Military Misconduct	353

3.0	Application: Current Laws Regarding Mental Health and Military Separations	358
3.1	Federal Laws Addressing Mental Health in the Military	358
3.1.1	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010	358
3.1.2	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013	358
3.1.3	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015	358
3.1.4	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017	359
3.1.5	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020	359
3.2	DoD Memos	360
3.2.1	The Hagel Memo	360
3.2.2	The Carson Memo	362
3.2.3	The Kurta Memo	363
4.0	Application: Building a Case under Kurta	365
4.1	Structuring Mental Health Related Cases under Kurta	365
4.1.1	Did the Veteran Have a Condition or Experience That May Excuse or Mitigate the Discharge?	366
4.1.2	Did That Condition Exist/Experience Occur during Military Service?	367
4.1.3	Does That Condition or Experience Outweigh the Discharge?	368
4.2	Evidence under Kurta	369
4.2.1	Does That Condition or Experience Actually Excuse or Mitigate the Discharge?	369
4.3	Sample Contentions for Discharge Upgrade Petitions	371
4.3.1	Mental Health as Mitigating or Excusing Factor	371
4.3.2	Review of Propriety/Equity Standards under 32 C.F.R. § 70.9	371
4.3.3	General Places to Look for Contentions: Recent Military Regulations	373
4.4	Regulation Specific Mental Health Related Contentions	373
4.4.1	Deployment-Related Health Screenings	374
4.4.2	Pre-Administrative Separation Mental Health Screenings	376
4.4.3	DES Screenings Instead of Misconduct Administrative Separations	376
	Appendix A: Pre- and Post-Deployment Health Assessments	379
	Appendix B: Sample AFBCMR PTSD-Related Upgrade Denial	397

Chapter 9. Military Sexual Trauma and Less-Than-Honorable Discharges **405**

1.0	Introduction	406
1.1	Scope of the Problem	406
1.2	Effect on Bad Paper	407
1.3	Scope of the Chapter	408
1.4	Terminology and Definitions	408
1.5	Current Servicemembers	410
1.6	Cross References	410
2.0	Sexual Assault and Harassment Response Programs	411
2.1	Emergence of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program	411
2.2	SAPR Personnel	411
2.3	SAPR Reporting Options	411
2.4	Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Programs	412

3.0	Application: Case Strategies	413
3.1	MST and Mental Health-Related Misconduct Case Theory	413
3.1.1	In-Service Evidence	414
3.1.2	Post-Service Evidence	416
3.1.3	Mental Health as a Mitigating or Excusing Factor	417
3.1.4	MST Mental Health-Related Policy Change Contentions	418
3.2	MST-Related Retaliation Case Theory	421
3.2.1	Definitions of Retaliation	421
3.2.2	Military Whistleblower Protection Act	421
3.2.3	Evidence of Retaliation	422
3.2.4	MST-Based Retaliation Contention	425
3.2.5	Other Possible Retaliation-Based Contentions	425
	Appendix A: Pertinent Regulations	429
Chapter 10. Condition Not a Disability Based Discharges: The Misuse of Personality and Adjustment Disorders		435
1.0	Introduction	436
1.1	Scope of Problem	436
1.2	Effect on Bad Paper	438
1.3	Scope of the Chapter	439
1.4	Current Servicemembers	439
1.5	Cross References	439
2.0	Medical Definitions of “Nondisabling” Conditions	440
2.1	Military and VA Definitions of CND	440
2.2	Personality Disorder	441
2.2.1	Contentions Based on Misdiagnosed Personality Disorders	441
2.2.2	Misdiagnosis-Based Contentions Questioning the Timing of Diagnosis	444
2.2.3	General Considerations When Making a Misdiagnosis-Based Contention	444
2.3	Adjustment Disorder	445
2.3.1	Contentions Based on Misdiagnosed Adjustment Disorders	446
3.0	Current Regulations for Condition Not a Disability Discharges	448
3.1	DoDI 1332.14	448
3.2	DoDI 1332.14: Specific Protections for Personality Disorder Discharges	453
3.2.1	Protections for Servicemembers Who Are or Have Been Deployed to an Imminent Danger Pay (IDP) Area	454
3.2.2	Other Restrictions on the Use of Personality Disorder	456
3.3	Regulations Governing the Characterization of Service	457
3.3.1	Contentions Based on an Improper Characterization of Service	457
3.4	General Considerations for All Contentions	459
	Appendix A: CND and Personality Disorder Military Regulations	461
Chapter 11. Discrimination-Based Discharges		463
1.0	Introduction	464
1.1	Scope and Aims of the Chapter	464
1.2	Terminology and Definitions	466
1.3	Correlations between Discrimination and Less-Than-Honorable Discharges	467

2.0	History and Context	469
2.1	Racial Discrimination	469
2.1.1	Legal Racial Discrimination before 1948	470
2.1.2	Post-Integration Order: 1948 to Present	471
2.2	Gender-Based Discrimination	476
2.2.1	Brief Timeline of Women in the Military	476
2.2.2	Role Restrictions Preventing Career Advancement	478
3.0	Current Anti-Discrimination Policies	479
3.1	DoD Programs to Prevent Discrimination and Promote Equal Opportunity	479
3.1.1	Distinction between Military and Civilian Personnel	480
4.0	Application: Authorities and Case Theories	480
4.1	Regulatory Framework and DoD Guidance for the BCMRs and DRBs	480
4.1.1	Code of Federal Regulations	480
4.1.2	DoD Wilkie Memo	481
4.2	Case Theories and Contentions	482
4.2.1	Inequity and Impropriety Contentions	483
4.2.2	General Capacity to Serve	484
4.2.3	Mitigation	485
4.2.4	Disparate Treatment	486
4.2.5	Retaliation—MWPA Claims	487
4.2.6	Additional Arguments and Theories to Consider	488
5.0	Supporting Evidence	489
5.1	Proving Discrimination	489
5.1.1	Independent Corroboration	489
Appendix A: List of DoD and Branch-Specific Anti-Discrimination Policies and Regulations		491
Appendix B: List of Resources		493
Chapter 12. LGBTQ Veterans		495
1.0	Introduction	496
1.1	Scope of the Chapter	496
1.2	Current Servicemembers and the Recently Repealed Transgender Military Service Ban	496
2.0	Discharges Resulting from Historical Policies Discriminating on the Basis of Sexual Orientation	497
3.0	Discharge Upgrade Strategies Based on Changes to Discriminatory Policies	500
3.1	Repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell	500
3.2	Other Changes to Military Policies	501
3.3	Contentions Based on 2011 Memorandum	502
3.3.1	Discharge Based Solely on DADT or Similar Prior Policy	502
3.3.2	No Aggravating Factors in Record	505
3.4	Other Contentions Related to the 2011 Memorandum	506
3.5	Requests for Relief	507
3.5.1	Relief Normally Granted	507
3.5.2	Special Note about Reentry Codes and Reenlisting	508
3.5.3	Other Forms of Relief	508
4.0	Contentions Based on Equity Due to Broader Impacts of Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	509
5.0	Name Changes	510

Appendix A: 2011 DoD Memorandum re: Correction of Military Records Following Repeal of Section 654 of Title 10, United States Code	513
Appendix B: 2011 DoD Memorandum re: Repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell and Future Impact on Policy, dated January 28, 2011—DADT Policy Repeal Guidance	517
Appendix C: 2016 DoD Memorandum re: Five-Year Anniversary of the Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, dated January 20, 2016	529
Appendix D: 2015 NCTE Name Change Guide	531
Appendix E: "Transgender Name Change Grant," Record of Proceedings Template, AFBCMR	537
Chapter 13. Medical Separations and Retirements	543
1.0 Introduction	544
2.0 Medical Separations and Disability Retirements: The Basic Legal Framework	545
2.1 IDES Generally	546
2.2 IDES Referral	546
2.3 Medical Evaluation Board and Preliminary DES Activity	547
2.4 MEB Referral Required	548
2.5 MEB Findings and Determinations	549
2.6 Informal PEB	549
2.7 Formal PEB	550
2.8 Post-FPEB Review and Appeals	550
2.9 Separation versus Severance	551
2.10 TDRL/PDRL	551
2.11 Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP)	552
2.12 Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)	552
2.13 Role of Counsel in IDES	554
2.14 10 U.S.C. § 1214a (December 31, 2011)	554
3.0 Appealing Final IDES Decisions	555
3.1 The Boards for the Correction of Military and Naval Records	555
3.1.1 Procedures Pertaining to Mental Health Diagnoses Raised in Applications	555
3.1.2 Regulatory Framework of the BCMRs	555
3.1.3 Department of Defense Directive 1332.41	556
4.0 Practice before the BCMRs: The Procedural Basics	557
4.1 Do I Have a Case?	557
4.2 Making an Application	557
4.3 Advisory Opinions	559
4.4 Final BCMR Decisions	560
5.0 Common Case Scenarios	561
5.1 Misdiagnoses or Failure to Diagnose	561
5.2 Failure to Refer into DES and Failure to Follow Regulations	561
5.3 Challenges to Assigned Disability Ratings	562
5.4 General Notes and Concerns on BCMR Practices	562
6.0 Judicial Review of Final BCMR Decisions	562
6.1 Federal District Courts	563
6.2 U.S. Court of Federal Claims	563
6.2.1 The Tucker Act	563
6.2.2 Money-Mandating Statutes	563
Appendix A: Applicable Regulations	565

Chapter 14. Alcohol and Drug Use Separations	567
1.0 Introduction	567
1.1 Scope	568
2.0 Background on Alcohol and Drug Use in the Military	568
3.0 Substance Use Disorders	570
3.1 Background on Substance Use Disorders	570
3.2 Prevalence of Substance Use Disorder in Military Members	571
4.0 The Military’s Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs	573
4.1 Department of Defense Policy	573
4.2 The Service Branches	575
4.2.1 Department of the Navy: U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps	575
4.2.2 U.S. Air Force	580
4.2.3 U.S. Army	583
4.2.4 U.S. Coast Guard	588
5.0 Case Strategies for Challenging Separations for Alcohol or Drug Use	590
5.1 Building Evidence and Support	592
5.2 Building Arguments	593
5.2.1 Procedural Arguments	593
5.2.2 Equitable Arguments	595
Chapter 15. Entry-Level Separations, Uncharacterized Discharges, and Defective Enlistments	599
1.0 Introduction	599
1.1 Scope of Chapter	600
2.0 The Requirements for and Consequences of Entry-Level Separations, Uncharacterized Discharges, and Discharges Based on Defective Enlistment	601
2.1 Requirements	601
2.2 Consequences	606
3.0 History and Recent Trends	609
4.0 Entry-Level Separation Discharge Case Examples and Advocacy Strategies	610
4.1 Arguments Grounded in Procedural Irregularities	611
4.2 Arguments Grounded in Equitable Considerations	614
5.0 Defective Enlistment Case Examples and Advocacy Strategies	617
Appendix A	621
Chapter 16. National Guard and Reserve	623
1.0 Introduction	623
2.0 Scope	624
3.0 Identifying National Guard and Reserve Veterans	624
4.0 Special Evidentiary Issues	625
4.1 Gathering National Guard Records	625
4.2 Multiple Periods of Service in Multiple Capacities	626
5.0 Special Legal Issues	626
5.1 Guard and Reserve Military Law and Separation Regulations	626
5.2 Unsatisfactory Participation	627
5.3 Misconduct Separation from the Active Guard/Reserve (AGR)	628
5.4 Separation from the Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) without Medical Evaluation	630

5.5	Impact of Prior or Subsequent Guard or Reserve Service on Discharge Upgrade Applications of Active-Duty Veterans	630
5.6	Impact of Guard and Reserve Service on Veterans Benefits Eligibility	632
6.0	Procedure and Jurisdiction for Guard Veterans	632
6.1	Military Review Board Jurisdiction over Guard Veterans' Applications	632
6.2	Procedure to Apply for Upgrades on Behalf of Guard Veterans	633
6.3	Judicial Review of Board Decisions in Guard Cases	635
	Appendix: Resources	637

Chapter 17. Discharge Status and Immigration Concerns 639

1.0	Introduction	639
1.1	Scope of Chapter	640
2.0	Current Service-Based Naturalization Policies	640
2.1	Effects of Military Discharge on Immigration Status	641
2.1.1	Honorable Service Ineligibility	641
2.1.2	Other Than Honorable Ineligibility	642
3.0	Discharge Upgrades for Immigration Purposes	643
3.1	Discharge Upgrade Strategies for Immigration-Related Cases	643
3.1.1	Alienage and Conscientious Objection	643
3.1.2	Misconduct Leading to an Other Than Honorable Discharge	644
3.1.3	Punitive Discharges	644
	Appendix: Resources and Further Reading	645

Chapter 18. Special Vietnam-Era Review Programs 647

1.0	Introduction	647
1.1	Scope	648
2.0	Overview of Special Vietnam-Era Review Programs	648
2.1	Ford Clemency Program	648
2.2	Special Discharge Review Program	649
3.0	How to Determine Whether a Veteran Participated in a Special Vietnam-Era Review Program	651
4.0	Discharge Upgrade Practice and Strategy for Veterans Who Participated in Special Vietnam-Era Review Programs	652
	Appendix: Resources and Further Reading	655

PART IV. THE ALTERNATE PATH OF A VA CHARACTER OF DISCHARGE DETERMINATION 657

Chapter 19. VA Character of Discharge Determinations 659

1.0	Introduction	660
1.1	Scope	662
1.2	General Overview of the Department of Veterans Affairs	662
1.3	Structure of the Department of Veterans Affairs	662
1.4	VBA Adjudication and Appeals Structure	663
2.0	"Other Than Dishonorable": The Primary VA Eligibility Standard	664
2.1	Which Veterans Receive Character of Discharge Determinations and What Is Being Evaluated	665

2.2	Statutory Bars	666
2.3	Regulatory Bars	668
2.4	Insanity Exception	672
2.5	Common Errors in Applying the Other Than Dishonorable Standard	675
	2.5.1 Common Substantive Errors	675
	2.5.2 Common Procedural Errors	678
3.0	Specific Case Types	679
3.1	Mental Health	679
3.2	LGBTQ	681
3.3	Multiple Terms of Service, Back-to-Back Enlistments, and Conditional Discharges	682
3.4	Special Vietnam-Era Review Program Upgrades	684
3.5	Uncharacterized	685
4.0	The Character of Discharge Review Process	686
4.1	How to Initiate a COD Review	686
4.2	How VBA Adjudicates CODs	686
4.3	The Interaction between VHA and VBA in COD Reviews	689
5.0	Advocacy before the Veterans Benefits Administration	690
5.1	First Steps	690
5.2	Fact Development	690
5.3	Legal Standards and Research	692
5.4	Written and Oral Advocacy	693
6.0	Eligibility Standards for Other VA Benefits and Exceptions to the Other Than Dishonorable Standard	694
6.1	Montgomery G.I. Bill and Post-9/11 G.I. Bill Education Benefits	694
6.2	Homeless Veteran Support	695
6.3	Chapter 17 Health Care	696
6.4	Section 1720I Mental Health Care	696
6.5	Temporary Emergency Mental Health Care Access Policy	697
6.6	Vet Centers	697
7.0	VA Character of Discharge Reviews versus DoD Discharge Upgrades: A Comparison	698
7.1	Key Similarities and Differences	698
	7.1.1 Legal Standard of Review	698
7.2	Strategic Considerations in Pursuing CODs and DUs	701
	Appendix A: Important Contact Information	703
	Appendix B: Resources and Further Reading	705
	Appendix C: Other Authorities	707
	Index	723