

## Appendix A. Descriptions of Military Character of Discharge

Character of Discharge	Description
<b>Honorable</b>	When the quality of the servicemember's service generally has met the standards of acceptable conduct and performance of duty for military personnel or is otherwise so meritorious that any other characterization would be clearly inappropriate.
<b>General (Under Honorable Conditions)</b>	When a servicemember's service has been honest and faithful, it is appropriate to characterize that service under honorable conditions. Characterization of service as general (under honorable conditions) is warranted when the negative aspects of the servicemember's conduct or performance of duty outweigh positive aspects of the servicemember's conduct or performance of duty as documented in his or her service record.
<b>Other than Honorable (OTH) Conditions</b>	When separation is based upon a pattern of behavior that constitutes a significant departure from the conduct expected of servicemembers. Or, when separation is based upon one or more acts or omissions that constitute a significant departure from the conduct expected of servicemembers. Examples of factors that may be considered include the use of force or violence to produce serious bodily injury or death; abuse of a special position of trust; disregard by a superior of customary superior-subordinate relationships; acts or omissions that endanger the security of the United States or the health and welfare of other servicemembers; and deliberate acts or omissions that seriously endanger the health and safety of other persons.
<b>Bad-Conduct (by General Court-Martial and Special Court-Martial)</b>	A bad-conduct discharge applies only to enlisted persons and may be adjudged by a general court-martial and by a special court-martial which has met the requirements of R.C.M. §201(f)(2)(B). A bad-conduct discharge is less severe than a dishonorable discharge and is designed as a punishment for bad-conduct rather than a punishment for serious offenses of either a civilian or military nature. It is also appropriate for an accused who has been convicted repeatedly of minor offenses and whose punitive separation appears to be necessary.
<b>Dishonorable</b>	A dishonorable discharge applies only to enlisted persons and warrant officers who are not commissioned and may be adjudged only by a general court-martial. A dishonorable discharge may be adjudged for any offense of which a warrant officer who is not commissioned has been found guilty. A dishonorable discharge should be reserved for those who should be separated under conditions of dishonor, after having been convicted of offenses usually recognized in civil jurisdictions as felonies, or of offenses of a military nature requiring severe punishment.
<b>Dismissal</b>	Dismissal applies only to commissioned officers, commissioned warrant officers, cadets, and midshipmen and may be adjudged only by a general court-martial. A dismissal may be adjudged for any offense of which a commissioned officer, commissioned warrant officer, cadet, or midshipman has been found guilty. <i>Functionally equivalent to a dishonorable discharge.</i>

Source: CRS, using data from the Manual for Courts-Martial United States (2012 edition).

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