

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. Application Date: 26 April 2021
- b. Date Received: 26 April 2021
- c. Counsel: None

2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:

- a. **Applicant's Requests and Issues:** The current characterization of service for the period under review is general (under honorable conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The applicant states coming home after deployments and reintegrating back into society was, for the most part, tougher than being in Iraq. Even though coming home felt great and they were very happy to see family and friends, after the welcoming home party was over and when the medals were handed out, the applicant felt alone, angry, depressed, and worthless. The applicant's experiences in Iraq began to take a toll on their mental health, and they did not know at the time they were suffering from symptoms consistent with PTSD. The applicant used alcohol and marijuana to cope with their symptoms. The applicant states if upgraded, they will have the option of using the Montgomery GI Bill or the Post-9/11 GI Bill. They will have the financial stability of attaining the highest level of education and afterwards obtain secure private or government employment.

- b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 10 July 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), with a corresponding separation code of JKN, and the reentry code to RE-3.

Please see Section 9 of this document for more detail regarding the Board's decision.

(Board member names available upon request)

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

- a. **Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization:** Misconduct (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

- b. **Date of Discharge:** 8 August 2007

- c. **Separation Facts:**

- (1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 25 June 2007

- (2) **Basis for Separation:** The unit commander informed the applicant under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Commission of a Serious Offense, of the following reasons: The applicant wrongfully used marijuana and subsequently tested positive for marijuana on 18 August 2006. In accordance with AR 600-85 Paragraph 1-35a(3) all Soldiers

who are identified as drug abusers will, without exception, be processed for administrative separation.

(3) Recommended Characterization: General (Under Honorable Conditions)

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 25 June 2007

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: In an undated memorandum, the separation authority approved the applicant's separation under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense. / General (Under Honorable Conditions).

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 28 April 2006 / 4 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 28 / High School Graduate / 94

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-5 / 11C1O, Indirect Fire Infantry / 4 years, 11 months, 10 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: ARNG, 29 August 2002 – 30 September 2003 / HD RA, 1 October 2003 – 27 April 2006 / HD

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA / Iraq (28 October 2003 – 26 March 2004; 24 January 2005 – 10 June 2005; 1 August 2006 – 24 July 2007)

f. Awards and Decorations: ARCOM-2, AAM, NDSM, GWOTEM, GWOTSM, ICM, NCOPDR, ASR, CIB

g. Performance Ratings: 1 June 2006 – 17 November 2006 / Marginal

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: Electronic Copy of Specimen Custody Document – Drug Testing, 26 July 2006, reflects the applicant tested positive for THC 122 (marijuana) during an Inspection Random (IR) urinalysis testing conducted on 18 July 2006.

FG Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 16 November 2006, for wrongfully using marijuana (between 18 June and 18 July 2006). The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-4, forfeiture of \$921 pay per month for two months and oral reprimand.

Two Developmental Counseling Forms for wrongful use of a controlled substance.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: Department of Veterans Affairs letter from M. M, undated, reflects in their clinical opinion and of the entire clinical treatment team at the PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Program (PRRP), the applicant used illegal substances to sedate their and potentially disabling PTSD symptoms to fulfill their duty to this country.

(2) AMHRR Listed: Report of Mental Status Evaluation, 12 June 2007, reflects the applicant was cleared for any administrative actions deemed appropriate by the command. The applicant could understand and participate in administrative proceedings; could appreciate the difference between right and wrong; and met medical retention requirements.

The ARBA's medical advisor reviewed DoD and VA medical records, including documents listed in 4j(1) and (2) above.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; Application for the Review of Discharge; self-authored letter; three letters of support.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant earned an associate degree with honors and sought help from the VA for their mental health.

7. STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCE(S):

a. Section 1553, Title 10, United States Code (Review of Discharge or Dismissal) provides for the creation, composition, and scope of review conducted by a Discharge Review Board(s) within established governing standards. As amended by Sections 521 and 525 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, 10 USC 1553 provides specific guidance to the Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards when considering discharge upgrade requests by Veterans claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual trauma, intimate partner violence (IPV), or spousal abuse, as a basis for discharge review. The amended guidance provides that Boards will include, as a voting board member, a physician trained in mental health disorders, a clinical psychologist, or a psychiatrist when the discharge upgrade claim asserts a mental health condition, including PTSD, TBI, sexual trauma, IPV, or spousal abuse, as a basis for the discharge. Further, the guidance provides that Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards will develop and provide specialized training specific to sexual trauma, IPV, spousal abuse, as well as the various responses of individuals to trauma.

b. Multiple Department of Defense Policy Guidance Memoranda published between 2014 and 2018. The documents are commonly referred to by the signatory authorities' last names (2014 Secretary of Defense Guidance [Hagel memo], 2016 Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Carson memo], 2017 Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Kurta memo], and 2018 Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Wilkie memo].

(1) Individually and collectively, these documents provide further clarification to the Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharge due to mental health conditions, including PTSD; TBI; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Liberal consideration will be given to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part on matters relating to mental health conditions, including PTSD; TBI; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Special consideration will be given to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determinations that document a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment potentially contributed to the circumstances resulting in a less than honorable discharge characterization. Special consideration will also be given in cases where a civilian provider confers diagnoses of a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment if the case records contain narratives supporting symptomatology at the time of service or when any other evidence which may reasonably indicate that a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment existed at the time of discharge might have mitigated the misconduct that caused a discharge of lesser characterization.

(2) Conditions documented in the service record that can reasonably be determined to have existed at the time of discharge will be considered to have existed at the time of discharge. In cases in which a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment may be reasonably determined to have existed at the time of discharge, those conditions will be considered potential mitigating factors in the misconduct that caused the characterization of service in question. All Boards will exercise caution in weighing evidence of mitigation in cases in which serious misconduct precipitated a discharge with a less than Honorable characterization of service. Potentially mitigating evidence of the existence of undiagnosed combat related PTSD, PTSD-related conditions due to TBI or sexual assault/harassment as causative factors in the misconduct resulting in discharge will be carefully weighed against the severity of the misconduct. PTSD is not a likely cause of premeditated misconduct. Caution shall be exercised in weighing evidence of mitigation in all cases of misconduct by carefully considering the likely causal relationship of symptoms to the misconduct.

c. Army Regulation 15-180 (Army Discharge Review Board), sets forth the policies and procedures under which the Army Discharge Review Board is authorized to review the character, reason, and authority of any Servicemember discharged from active military service within 15 years of the Servicemember's date of discharge. Additionally, it prescribes actions and composition of the Army Discharge Review Board under Public Law 95-126; Section 1553, Title 10 United States Code; and Department of Defense Directive 1332.41 and Instruction 1332.28.

d. Army Regulation 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations), provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.

(1) Chapter 3, Section II provides the authorized types of characterization of service or description of separation.

(2) Paragraph 3-7a states an Honorable discharge is a separation with honor and is appropriate when the quality of the Soldier's service generally has met the standards of acceptable conduct and performance of duty for Army personnel or is otherwise so meritorious that any other characterization would be clearly inappropriate.

(3) Paragraph 3-7b states a General discharge is a separation from the Army under honorable conditions and is issued to a Soldier whose military record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge.

(4) Chapter 14 establishes policy and prescribes procedures for separating members for misconduct. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, convictions by civil authorities and desertion or being absent without leave. Action will be taken to separate a member for misconduct when it is clearly established that rehabilitation is impractical or unlikely to succeed.

(5) Paragraph 14-3 prescribes a discharge under other than honorable conditions is normally appropriate for a Soldier discharged under this chapter. However, the separation authority may direct a general discharge if such is merited by the Soldier's overall record.

(6) Paragraph 14-12c(2) terms abuse of illegal drugs as serious misconduct. It continues; however, by recognizing relevant facts may mitigate the nature of the offense. Therefore, a single drug abuse offense may be combined with one or more minor disciplinary infractions or incidents of other misconduct and processed for separation under paragraph 14-12a or 14-12b as appropriate.

e. Army Regulation 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes), provides the specific authorities (regulatory or directive), reasons for separating Soldiers from active duty, and the SPD codes to be entered on the DD Form 214. It identifies the SPD code of "JKK" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, misconduct (drug abuse).

f. Army Regulation 601-210, (Regular Army and Reserve Components Enlistment Program), governs eligibility criteria, policies, and procedures for enlistment and processing of persons into the Regular Army, the U.S. Army Reserve, and Army National Guard for enlistment per DODI 1304.26. It also prescribes the appointment, reassignment, management, and mobilization of Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets under the Simultaneous Membership Program. Chapter 4 provides the criteria and procedures for waivable and nonwaivable separations. Table 3-1, defines reentry eligibility (RE) codes: RE-4 Applies to: Person separated from last period of service with a nonwaivable disqualification. This includes anyone with a DA imposed bar to reenlistment in effect at time of separation or separated for any reason (except length of service retirement) with 18 or more years active Federal service. Eligibility: Ineligible for enlistment.

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S): The Army Discharge Review Board considers applications for upgrade as instructed by Department of Defense Instruction 1332.28.

The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

The available evidence reflects the applicant was notified of the intent to discharge them from the U.S. Army for wrongfully using marijuana. The applicant requested consulting counsel and representation by military counsel and was involuntarily discharged from the U.S. Army. The separation authority directed the applicant's discharge under the provisions of 14-12c. The DD Form 214 provides the applicant was discharged with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions) for misconduct (drug abuse).

The applicant contends suffering from PTSD. The applicant contends using alcohol and marijuana to cope with their symptoms. The applicant provided a Department of Veterans Affairs letter from M. M, undated, reflecting in their clinical opinion and of the entire clinical treatment team at the PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Program (PRRP), the applicant used illegal substances to sedate their and potentially disabling PTSD symptoms to fulfill their duty to this country. There is no evidence in the AMHRR the applicant ever sought assistance before committing the misconduct, which led to the separation action under review. The AMHRR includes a Report of Mental Status Evaluation, 12 June 2007, reflecting the applicant was cleared for any administrative actions deemed appropriate by the command. The applicant could understand and participate in administrative proceedings; could appreciate the difference between right and wrong; and met medical retention requirements.

The applicant contends an upgrade would allow educational benefits through the GI Bill. Eligibility for veterans' benefits, including educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill, does not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local Department of Veterans Affairs office for further assistance.

The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge will allow the applicant to obtain better employment. The Board does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

The applicant contends good service, including three combat tours. The third-party statements provided with the application reflect the applicant's work ethic and outstanding performance. The Board considered the applicant's service accomplishments and the quality of service according to the DODI 1332.28.

The applicant contends earning an associate degree with honors and seeking help from the VA for their mental health. The Army Discharge Review Board is authorized to consider post-service factors in the recharacterization of a discharge. No law or regulation provides for the upgrade of an unfavorable discharge based solely on the passage of time or good conduct in civilian life after leaving the service. The Board reviews each discharge on a case-by-case basis to determine if post-service accomplishments help demonstrate previous in-service misconduct was an aberration and not indicative of the member's overall character.

9. BOARD DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION:

a. As directed by the 2017 memo signed by A.M. Kurta, the board considered the following factors:

(1) Did the applicant have a condition or experience that may excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board reviewed the applicant's DOD and VA health records, applicant's statement, and/or civilian provider documentation and found that the applicant has the following potentially-mitigating diagnoses/experiences: PTSD.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found that the applicant is service connected by the VA for PTSD which establishes that the condition existed during military service.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board determined, based on the Board Medical Advisor's opine, that the applicant's behavioral health conditions mitigate the discharge. Given the nexus between PTSD and the use of substances for self-medication, the wrongful use of and positive test for marijuana are mitigated.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor opine, the Board determined that the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends suffering from PTSD. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends an upgrade would allow educational benefits through the GI Bill. The Board considered this contention and determined that eligibility for Veteran's benefits, to include educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill, healthcare or VA loans, do not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the

applicant should contact a local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs for further assistance.

(3) The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge will allow the applicant to obtain better employment. The Board considered this contention but does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

(4) The applicant contends good service, including three combat tours. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense.

(5) The applicant contends earning an associate degree with honors and seeking help from the VA for their mental health. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), with a corresponding separation code of JKN, and the reentry code to RE-3.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), with a corresponding separation code of JKN, and the reentry code to RE-3.

(2) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) under the same pretexts, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JKN.

(3) The RE code will change to RE-3.

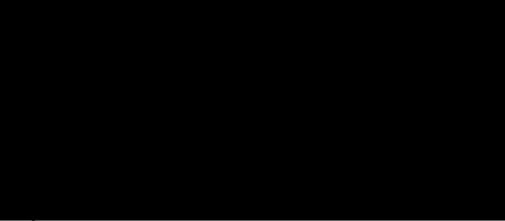
ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE
AR20210000037

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: Misconduct (Minor Infractions)/JKN
- d. Change RE Code to: RE-3
- e. Change Authority to: AR 635-200

Authenticating Official:

7/10/2025



Legend:

AWOL – Absent Without Leave
AMHRR – Army Military Human Resource Record
BCD – Bad Conduct Discharge
BH – Behavioral Health
CG – Company Grade Article 15
CID – Criminal Investigation
Division
ELS – Entry Level Status
FG – Field Grade Article 15

GD – General Discharge
HS – High School
HD – Honorable Discharge
IADT – Initial Active Duty Training
MP – Military Police
MST – Military Sexual Trauma
N/A – Not applicable
NCO – Noncommissioned Officer
NIF – Not in File
NOS – Not Otherwise Specified

OAD – Ordered to Active Duty
OBH (I) – Other Behavioral Health (Issues)
OMPF – Official Military Personnel File
PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RE – Re-entry
SCM – Summary Court Martial
SPCM – Special Court Martial

SPD – Separation Program Designator
TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury
UNC – Uncharacterized Discharge
UOTHC – Under Other Than Honorable Conditions
VA – Department of Veterans Affairs