

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, the discharge is inequitable given the circumstances following their return from deployment in November 2010. At time, the applicant began drinking to cope with what was later diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Facing both war-related trauma and family issues, the applicant made poor decisions and voluntarily enrolled in an off-post treatment facility, Recovery Place in Savannah, Georgia, to seek help for substance use. Although released from the program due to repeated tardiness, the program director acknowledged the applicant was not considered an alcoholic but was encouraged to gain education and support from the class. The applicant expresses sincere pride in their military service, regret over the events leading to discharge, and requests an upgrade to honorable to secure employment, better support their family, and serve as a positive role model for their child.

- b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 29 May 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorder outweighing the applicant's alcohol-related misconduct. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason/SPD code and RE code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them.

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:** Alcohol Rehabilitation Failure / AR 635-200, Chapter 9 / JPD / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

- b. **Date of Discharge:** 17 June 2011

- c. **Separation Facts:**

- (1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 26 May 2011

- (2) **Basis for Separation:** The unit commander informed the applicant under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 9, Alcohol or Other Drug Rehabilitation Failure, of the following reasons: On 14 February 2011, the applicant received a recommendation from the Army Substance Abuse Program to be separated from the service, due to their failure to comply with the treatment plans and goals.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 18 May 2011

(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 9. / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 3 August 2005 / 4 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 21 / GED / 90

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-3 / 91E1O, Machinist / 5 years, 10 months, 15 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA / Afghanistan (13 November 2009 – 3 November 2010); Iraq (28 February 2006 – 9 February 2007)

f. Awards and Decorations: ACM-CS, ARCOM, AAM, AGCM, NDSM, ICM-CS, ASR, OSR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: Summary of Army Substance Abuse Program Rehabilitation Failure (memo), 14 February 2010, the applicant was command referred to the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) on 3 December 2010 due to unexcused absences and suspected alcohol misuse. A Defense Automated Management Information System (DAMIS) background check revealed the applicant had three prior enrollments in ASAP at Fort Sill: from 29 June 2006 to 23 October 2006 for alcohol misuse; from 22 August 2007 to 14 September 2007 for alcohol abuse via command referral; and from 20 November 2008 to 3 April 2009 for alcohol dependence as a self-referral. During the initial screening, the applicant met the diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependence. The applicant was referred to Recovery Place, a civilian facility, for intensive outpatient treatment. The applicant was enrolled in a program consisting of three half-days and two full days of treatment each week. During treatment, the applicant missed group sessions and demonstrated limited participation. On 12 January 2011, the applicant arrived late and admitted to drinking the previous night. As a final opportunity, the applicant was transitioned to the Full Day Program (Monday through Friday, 0900–1600). The command supported continued participation but warned any further drinking or noncompliance would result in classification as a rehabilitation failure. Despite multiple warnings, the applicant was released from Recovery Place on 8 February 2011 for noncompliance. The applicant left without permission on 7 February and failed to provide a urine sample, which the facility counted as a positive result. The applicant also failed to report on time the following day. After discharge from Recovery Place, the applicant briefly visited ASAP as a walk-in but expressed disagreement with the intensity of the care provided and requested outpatient groups only. The applicant declined inpatient hospitalization. Throughout the program, the applicant was subject to random urinalysis, which resulted in positive findings

and personal admissions of substance use. The applicant failed to submit a required urine sample on 7 February. Attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) was recommended but did not yield success. Despite multiple treatment attempts, including three prior ASAP enrollments and intensive services at Recovery Place, the applicant continued alcohol use, demonstrated low motivation, and engaged minimally in treatment. Rehabilitation in a military setting was deemed impractical due to lack of progress. The applicant was considered to lack potential for continued military service. ASAP staff and the company commander recommended administrative separation as a rehabilitation failure under AR 635-200. The applicant may be eligible for services from the Department of Veterans Affairs upon discharge.

Report of Medical Examination, reflects, the examining medical physician noted in the significant or disqualifying defects section: Anxiety Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Etoh Abuse and the applicant should follow up at the VA Hospital.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

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

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for the Review of Discharge; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None submitted with the application.

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 9 outlines the procedures for discharging individuals because of alcohol or other drug abuse. A member who has been referred to the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) for alcohol or drug abuse may be separated because of inability or refusal to participate in, cooperate in, or successfully complete such a program if there is a lack of potential for continued Army service and rehabilitation efforts are no longer practical.

(5) Paragraph 9-4, stipulates the service of Soldiers discharged under this section will be characterized as honorable or under honorable conditions unless the Soldier is in entry-level status and an uncharacterized description of service is required. An honorable discharge is mandated in any case in which the Government initially introduces into the final discharge process limited use evidence as defined by AR 600-85.

e. 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 evidence of the Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) indicates on 14 February 2010, the unit commander, in consultation with the Clinical Director/Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), declared the applicant a rehabilitation failure. The applicant rehabilitation efforts in a military environment were not practical in light of the Soldier's lack of progress.

The applicant contends the discharge is inequitable given the circumstances following their return from deployment in November 2010. At time, the applicant began drinking to cope with what was later diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The applicant did not submit evidence other than their statement to support the contention the discharge resulted from any medical condition. The applicant's AMHRR includes a reference of a PTSD diagnosis in the Report of Medical Examination. The AMHRR is void of a mental status evaluation. The AMHRR does not include any indication or evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable to secure employment, better support their family, and serve as a positive role model for their child. The Board does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

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: Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, Anxiety Disorder NOS.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found that the applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, and Anxiety Disorder NOS and is service connected by the VA for PTSD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board determined, based on the BMA's opine, that the applicant's behavioral health conditions mitigate the discharge. Given the nexus between PTSD, Anxiety Disorder NOS, and using substances for self-medication, the alcohol rehabilitation failure is 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 and Anxiety Disorder outweighed the applicant's alcohol-related misconduct.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends the discharge is inequitable given the circumstances following their return from deployment in November 2010. At time, the applicant began drinking to cope with what was later diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorder outweighed the applicant's alcohol-related misconduct. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable to secure employment, better support their family, and serve as a positive role model for their child. The Board considered this contention but does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

c. The Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorder outweighing the applicant's alcohol-related misconduct. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason/SPD code and RE code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorder outweighed the applicant's alcohol-related misconduct. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

(2) The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code, as the reason the applicant was discharged was both proper and equitable.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE
AR20210000047

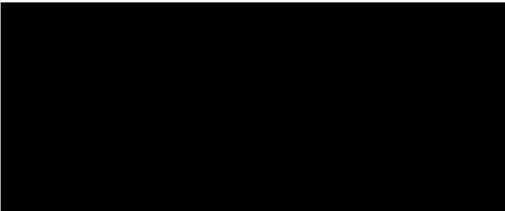
(3) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: No Change
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

6/30/2025



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