

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, their discharge was inequitable due to combat-related injuries, misinformed administrative processing, and untreated service-connected conditions. The applicant contends they served honorably in Afghanistan, where they sustained serious injuries from an IED explosion, resulting in multiple physical wounds, PTSD, and TBI. Following MEDEVAC, the applicant was heavily medicated, mentally impaired, and overwhelmed by physical and psychological trauma. The applicant contends their AWOL incidents occurred while coping with these injuries and the effects of multiple medications and were not willful misconduct. The applicant states they self-reported, returned voluntarily, complied with orders, and resumed being an outstanding Soldier. The applicant further contends they were only 21 years old with limited military experience and were misled by command into signing discharge paperwork without full understanding of the consequences. They were promised an "under honorable" discharge which would preserve VA and GI Bill benefits, but later learned this was inaccurate. Their DD Form 214 also omits deployment to Afghanistan, combat awards, and a Purple Heart. The applicant respectfully requests an upgrade to Honorable to reflect their record of combat service, sacrifice, and the mitigating impact of TBI and PTSD on their conduct. They assert they have maintained good post-service conduct, wants to pursue education through the GI Bill, and requests for a fair correction to secure a stable future.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 8 July 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's AWOL offenses. 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. The Board determined the reentry code is proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

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 (AWOL) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (1) / JKD / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 3 May 2010

c. Separation Facts: The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) is void of the case separation file.

- (1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** NIF
- (2) **Basis for Separation:** NIF
- (3) **Recommended Characterization:** NIF
- (4) **Legal Consultation Date:** NIF
- (5) **Administrative Separation Board:** NIF
- (6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** NIF

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 26 August 2008 / The orders mobilizing the applicant to active duty are void from the applicant's AMHRR, however, the record does include Orders A-08-923827, retaining the applicant on active duty on 25 August 2009, for period of 358 days.

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / GED / 94

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 11B10, Infantryman / 2 years, 4 months, 28 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: ARNG, 6 December 2007 – 3 May 2010 / GD
IADT, 12 March 2008 – 27 June 2008 / HD
(Concurrent Service)

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA / Afghanistan (3 November 2008 – 20 July 2009)

f. Awards and Decorations: PH, ARCOM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, AFRM-M, NATOMDL, CIB, ACM-BS, NMCAM

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: Orders 118-0135, 28 April 2010, reflect the applicant was to be reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and discharged on 3 May 2010 from the National Guard.

Orders 010-113, 10 January 2011, reflect the applicant was discharged and reassigned to the United States Army Reserve Control Group: Annual Training on 1 May 2010 from the National Guard.

The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflects the applicant had completed the first full term of service. The applicant was discharged under the authority of AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12c (1), with a narrative reason of Misconduct (AWOL). The DD Form 214 was authenticated with the applicant's signature. The applicant had lost time for the periods 10 to 22 September 2009; 5 October to 5 November 2009; 15 to 22 November 2009; and 4 December 2009 to 18 March 2010.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: 154 days:

NIF, 10 September 2009 to 22 September 2009 / NIF

NIF, 5 October 2009 to 5 November 2009 / NIF

NIF, 15 November 2009 to 22 November 2009 / NIF

NIF, 4 December 2009 to 18 March 2010 / NIF

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; Applicant's Statement; Purple Heart certificate; Army Commendation Medal certificate; Navy and Marine Achievement Medal certificate; Award of the Afghanistan Campaign Medal memorandum for record; NATO Medal certificate; Combat Infantry Badge orders; 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 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(1) allows for an absentee returned to military control from a status of absent without leave or desertion to be separated for commission of a serious offense.

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 "JKD" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 12c(1), misconduct (awol).

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 waiverable and nonwaiverable separations. Table 3-1, defines reentry eligibility (RE) codes: RE-3 Applies to: Person who is not considered fully qualified for reentry or continuous service at time of separation, but disqualification is waiverable. Eligibility: Ineligible unless a waiver is granted.

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 applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR) is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events leading to the discharge from the Army. The applicant's AMHRR includes a properly constituted DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), which was authenticated by the applicant's signature. The applicant's DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12c (1), by reason of Misconduct (AWOL), with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions).

The applicant contends serving honorably in Afghanistan, where they sustained serious injuries from an IED explosion, resulting in multiple physical wounds, PTSD, and TBI. Following MEDEVAC, the applicant was heavily medicated, mentally impaired, and overwhelmed by physical and psychological trauma. The applicant states their AWOL incidents occurred while coping with injuries and the effects of multiple medications and were not willful misconduct. 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 no documentation of a PTSD diagnosis. The AMHRR shows the applicant was transfer to a medical treatment center after discharge for completion of medical care and treatment.

The applicant contends they self-reported, returned voluntarily, complied with orders, and resumed being an outstanding Soldier. The applicant did not submit evidence other than their statement to support the contention.

The applicant contends they were only 21 years old with limited military experience and were misled by command into signing discharge paperwork without full understanding of the consequences. They were promised an "under honorable" discharge which would preserve VA and GI Bill benefits, but later learned this was inaccurate. The AMHRR shows the applicant met entrance qualification standards, including age. The AMHRR does not include any indication or evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

The applicant contends their DD Form 214 also omits deployment to Afghanistan, combat awards, and a Purple Heart. The DD Form 215 corrected the issue the applicant had submitted. The correction involved adding the Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, and NATO Medal.

The applicant contends they have maintained good post-service conduct, wants to pursue education through the GI Bill, and requests for a fair correction to secure a stable future. 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 Board considered the applicant's service accomplishments and the quality of service according to the DODI 1332.28.

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, mTBI, Anxiety Disorder, MDD, Psychotic Disorder, and Unspecified Psychosis.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found the applicant is 50 percent SC for PTSD.

(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 avoidant behavior, the applicant's multiple AWOLs 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 AWOL offenses.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends serving honorably in Afghanistan, where they sustained serious injuries from an IED explosion, resulting in multiple physical wounds, PTSD, and TBI. Following MEDEVAC, the applicant was heavily medicated, mentally impaired, and overwhelmed by physical and psychological trauma. The applicant states their AWOL incidents occurred while coping injuries and the effects of multiple medications and were not willful misconduct. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that the applicant's

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's AWOL offenses. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends they self-reported, returned voluntarily, complied with orders, and resumed being an outstanding Soldier. 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 AWOL offenses.

(3) The applicant contends they were only 21 years old with limited military experience and were misled by command into signing discharge paperwork without full understanding of the consequences. They were promised an "under honorable" discharge which would preserve VA and GI Bill benefits, but later learned this was inaccurate. 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.

(4) The applicant contends their DD Form 214 also omits deployment to Afghanistan, combat awards, and a Purple Heart. The Board determined that the applicant's requested changes to the DD Form 214 does not fall within the purview of the ADRB. The applicant may apply to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR), using a DD Form 293 regarding this matter. A DD Form 293 may be obtained online at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd0293.pdf> or from a Veterans' Service Organization

(5) The applicant contends they have maintained good post-service conduct, wants to pursue education through the GI Bill, and ask for a fair correction to secure a stable future. 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 AWOL offenses.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's AWOL offenses. 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. The Board determined the reentry code is proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

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 outweighed the applicant's AWOL offenses. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

(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 not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

AR20210000113

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

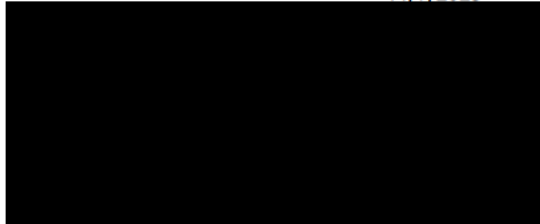
- a. Issue a New DD-214: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: Misconduct (Minor Infractions)/JKN
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: AR 635-200

1. Board Action Directed:

- a. Issue a New NGB Form 22a: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason: Minor Misconduct
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

11/7/2025



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