

**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 honorable.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, at the time of discharge, symptoms of PTSD from overseas service were the cause for the misconduct which led to the discharge. The applicant contends not getting in trouble prior to re-enlistment.

**b. Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 22 May 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury outweighing the applicant's DUI and FTR offenses, the circumstances surrounding the discharge (TBI and PTSD diagnoses). 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.*

**3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:**

**a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization:** Misconduct / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c / JKQ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**b. Date of Discharge:** 16 June 2005

**c. Separation Facts:**

**(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 26 May 2005

**(2) Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: Driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) and failed to be at appointed place of duty at the prescribed time.

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

**(4) Legal Consultation Date:** 26 May 2005

**(5) Administrative Separation Board:** NA

**(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** In an undated memorandum. / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 15 December 2004 / 2 years
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 19 / High School Graduate / 108
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 13D1O, Field Artillery Automated Tactical Data System Specialist / 2 years, 8 months, 16 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** RA, 15 December 2004 – 16 June 2005 / HD
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Iraq (29 April 2003 – 1 August 2004)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** PH, ARCOM, NDSM, GWTSM, ICM, ASR
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Kansas Standard Arrest Report, 30 April 2005, reflects the applicant was apprehended for a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and had a \$500 bond.

Report to Suspend Favorable Personnel Actions (FLAG), 2 May 2005, reflects the report was initiated for elimination and was effective immediately.

Three Developmental Counseling Forms for: lying to a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (4 May 2005), missing Physical Training (12 May 2005), and Failure to follow instructions (12 May 2005).

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.

**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 3-5c, provides the reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the separation, will be considered on the issue of characterization. As a general matter, characterization will be based upon a pattern of behavior other than an isolated incident. There are circumstances, however, in which the conduct or performance of duty reflected by a single incident provides the basis for characterization.

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

(6) Paragraph 14-12c prescribes a Soldier is subject to action per this section for commission of a serious military or civilian offense, if the specific circumstances of the offense warrant separation and a punitive discharge is, or would be, authorized for the same or a closely related offense under the Manual for Courts-Martial.

(7) Chapter 15 provides explicitly for separation under the prerogative of the Secretary of the Army. Secretarial plenary separation authority is exercised sparingly and seldom delegated. Ordinarily, it is used when no other provision of this regulation applies, and early separation is clearly in the Army's best interest. Separations under this paragraph are effective only if approved in writing by the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary's approved designee as announced in updated memoranda. Secretarial separation authority is normally exercised on a case-by-case basis.

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

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-1 Applies to: Person completing his or her term of active service who is considered qualified to reenter the U.S. Army. Eligibility: Qualified for enlistment if all other criteria are met.

RE-3 Applies to: Person who is not considered fully qualified for reentry or continuous service at time of separation, but disqualification is waivable. 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 was notified of intent to separate on 26 May 2005 for driving under the influence and failure to be at appointed place of duty at the prescribed time. The applicant consulted counsel on 26 May 2005. The separation authority directed the applicant's separation under the provisions of Chapter 14-12c, misconduct, serious offense, with a characterization of general (under honorable conditions). The applicant was discharged on 16 June 2005.

The applicant contends at the time of discharge, symptoms of PTSD from overseas service were the cause of the misconduct leading to the discharge. The applicant did not submit evidence other than their statement to support the contention. The applicant's AMHRR is void of any Mental Status Evaluation (MSE) or other behavioral health documentation supporting a diagnosis during the period under review.

The applicant contends not getting in trouble before re-enlistment, and the incident was isolated. Army Regulation 635-200, paragraph 3-5, in pertinent part, stipulates there are circumstances in which the conduct or performance of duty reflected by a single incident provides the basis for a characterization.

#### **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 and TBI.

**(2)** Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found that the applicant is diagnosed and service connected by the VA for PTSD and TBI which establishes that the conditions 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. The applicant is diagnosed and service connected by the VA for PTSD and TBI. There is a nexus between PTSD, TBI, and the use of substances for self-medication, so the DUI is mitigated by these conditions. In addition, there is a nexus between PTSD and avoidance, so the FTR is mitigated by the applicant's PTSD.

**(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 Traumatic Brain Injury outweighed the applicant's DUI and FTR offenses.

**b. Response to Contentions:**

**(1)** The applicant contends at the time of discharge, symptoms of PTSD from overseas service were the cause of the misconduct leading to the discharge. The Board considered this contention and agreed with the Medical Advisor's determination that there is a nexus between PTSD, TBI, and the use of substances for self-medication, so the DUI is mitigated by these conditions. In addition, there is a nexus between PTSD and avoidance, so the FTR is mitigated by the applicant's PTSD.

**(2)** The applicant contends not getting in trouble before re-enlistment, and the incident was isolated. 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 and Traumatic Brain Injury outweighing the applicant's DUI and FTR offenses.

**c.** The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury outweighing the applicant's DUI and FTR offenses, the circumstances surrounding the discharge (TBI and PTSD diagnoses). 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 DUI and FTR 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**

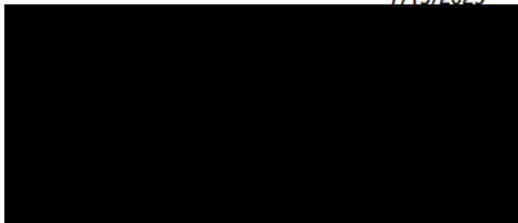
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**10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:**

- 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

**Authenticating Official:**

7/15/2025



**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