

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, discharged for an isolated incident. The applicant served honorably for two and a half years, including a combat tour. The applicant contends they were not given a chance to complete their rehabilitation. The applicant has applied to the VA. for compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and insomnia and believes something is wrong.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 22 April 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder outweighing the separating illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses. 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 the **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more details regarding the Board's decision. Board member names are 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: 26 January 2006

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 9 January 2006

(2) Basis for Separation: The unit commander informed the applicant under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, of the following reasons: On 21 December 2005, the applicant received a Field Grade Article 15 for the wrongful use of marijuana on two occasions.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 10 January 2006

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: On 19 January 2006, 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: 3 June 2003 / 4 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 17 / High School Letter / 102

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 42A10, Human Resources Specialist / 2 years, 7 months, 24 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA / Iraq (12 March 2004 – 11 March 2005)

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, ICM / The applicant's AMHRR reflects the award of the GWOTEM. However, the award is not reflected in the DD Form 214.

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: Killeen Police Department Arrest Report, 23 June 2005, reflects the applicant was charged with resisting arrest of search.

CG Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 14 September 2005, the applicant failed to go at the time prescribed to their appointed place of duty on three occasions (between 12 July and 3 August 2005). The punishment consisted of extra duty and restriction for 10 days.

Electronic Copy of Specimen Custody Document – Drug Testing, 29 November 2005, reflects the applicant tested positive for THC 70 (marijuana) during an Inspection Unit (IU) urinalysis testing conducted on 17 November 2005.

Electronic Copy of Specimen Custody Document – Drug Testing, 8 December 2005, reflects the applicant tested positive for THC 231 (marijuana) during an Inspection Unit (IU) urinalysis testing conducted on 2 December 2005.

FG Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 21 December 2005, for wrongfully using marijuana (between 17 October and 17 November 2005). On or about 18 November and 2 December 2005, wrongfully use marijuana. The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$617 pay per month for two months; extra duty for 45 days and restriction for 45 days. (suspended).

Numerous Developmental Counseling Forms for various acts of misconduct.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** Mental Status Evaluation, 21 December 2005, reflects the applicant was cleared for any administrative actions deemed appropriate by the command. The applicant was mentally responsible and had the mental capacity to understand and participate in the proceedings.

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; Developmental Counseling Form; Adjutant General School Diploma.

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 14-3 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.

(7) 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 waiverable and nonwaiverable separations. Table 3-1 defines reentry eligibility (RE) codes: RE-4 Applies to: Person separated from last period of service with a nonwaiverable 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 applicant contends suffering from PTSD. The applicant did not submit any evidence, other than the applicant's statement, to support the contention. The applicant's AMHRR includes no documentation of a PTSD diagnosis. The AMHRR shows the applicant underwent a mental status evaluation (MSE) on 21 December 2005, indicating the applicant was mentally responsible and recognized right from wrong. The MSE does not indicate any diagnosis. The separation authority considered the MSE.

The applicant contends the event leading to the discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. 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.

The applicant contends they were not given a chance to complete their rehabilitation. Army Regulation 635-200, paragraph 1-17d(2), entitled Counseling and rehabilitative requirements, states the separation authority may waive the rehabilitative requirements in circumstances where common sense and sound judgment indicate such a transfer will serve no useful purpose or produce a quality, Soldier.

The applicant contends good service, including a combat tour. 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: MDD and Unspecified Mood Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found the applicant is 70 percent service connected for MDD.

(3) Does the condition or experience 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 MDD and the use of substances to self-medicate, the wrongful use of marijuana is mitigated. The applicant's additional misconduct of FTR is also mitigated given the nexus between MDD and isolation, withdrawal, amotivation, and issues with memory.

(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 Major Depressive Disorder outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends suffering from PTSD. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder (not PTSD) outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends the event leading to the discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention in detail due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses.

(3) The applicant contends they were not given a chance to complete their rehabilitation. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention in detail due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses.

(4) The applicant contends good service, including a combat tour. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention in detail due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses.

c. The Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder outweighing both the separating illegal substance abuse and additional FTR offenses. 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.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE**AR20210000239****d. Rationale for Decision:**

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's Major Depressive Disorder outweighed the illegal substance abuse (and FTR) offenses. 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 there was in fact drug use misconduct that is mitigated but not excused. Thus, reason the applicant was discharged was both proper and equitable.

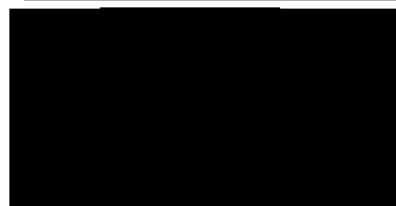
(3) The RE code will not change given the BH diagnosis and service connection. The current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

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:

4/24/2025

**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