

**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 does not fully reflect the mitigating circumstances surrounding two urinalysis failures, which the Department of Veterans Affairs has linked to combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in 2007. The applicant contends a reentry code change to support a goal of returning to military service as an officer or technician. The applicant contends the narrative reason for the discharge needs to be changed.

**a. 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 outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse. 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.*

**3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:**

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

**b. Date of Discharge:** 17 March 2005

**c. Separation Facts:**

**(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 9 February 2005

**(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: The applicant failed a urinalysis test.

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

**(4) Legal Consultation Date:** On 9 February 2005, the applicant waived legal counsel.

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

**(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** On 17 February 2005, 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)

**5. SERVICE DETAILS:**

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 7 February 2002 / 4 years
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 21 / High School Graduate / 114
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 11B1P, Infantryman / 3 years, 1 month, 11 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Iraq (15 March 2003 – 29 January 2004)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** ARCOM, NDSM, GWOTEM, GWOTSM, ASR, CIB, PARABDG
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Patient Lab Inquiry, 16 July 2004, reflects the applicant tested positive for cocaine.

FG Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 12 August 2004, for wrongfully using cocaine (between 14 and 16 July 2004). The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$597 pay per month for two months (suspended), and extra duty and restriction for 45 days.

CID Report of Investigation Final, 17 November 2004, reflects the applicant tested positive for cocaine during a unit urinalysis inspection. The investigation established probable cause to believe the applicant committed the offense of wrongful use of a controlled substance when their use of cocaine was detected during the unit urinalysis inspection. Further investigation established probable cause to believe the applicant committed the offense of wrongful use of a controlled substance when they admitted to using marijuana and further committed the offense of false official statement when they provided a sworn statement which they knew was false.

Three Developmental Counseling Forms for testing positive for the abuse of illegal substance cocaine as a second offense, [con]sumed two pints of liquor, and assumed an efficient amount of alcohol.

- i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None

**j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):**

**(1) Applicant provided:** VA Service Center Manager letter, 9 October 2009, reflects the applicant has a service connected disability evaluated by the VA to the degree of ten percent or more. The document does not reflect the condition for which rated.

**(2) AMHRR Listed:** Report of Mental Status Evaluation, 25 January 2005, reflects the applicant was psychiatrically 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 was diagnosed with occupational problem.

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

**6. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Application for the Review of Discharge; third party letter; VA Personal Claim Information; Notification of Personnel Action; VA Performance Appraisal Program; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

**7. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Achieved outstanding performance rating as a Peer Support Tech at the VA helping other veterans with psycho-education and relapse prevention classes. The applicant provided appropriate, timely, and professional peer support services to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and returning combat veterans with mental health problems.

**8. 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.

(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 "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-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 waiverable. Eligibility: Ineligible unless a waiver is granted.

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.

**9. 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 separated under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense for failing a urinalysis test.

The applicant contends the discharge does not fully reflect the mitigating circumstances surrounding two urinalysis failures, which the Department of Veterans Affairs has linked to combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in 2007. The applicant provided a VA letter, 21 December 2009, reflecting the VA determined the period of service from 7 February 2002 to 17 March 2005 as honorable, however the letter does not indicate any service-connected condition. The evidence in the AMHRR includes a Report of Mental Status

Evaluation, 25 January 2005, reflecting the applicant was psychiatrically 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 was diagnosed with occupational problem. The separation authority considered the mental status evaluation.

The applicant contends a reentry code change to support a goal of returning to military service as an officer or technician. Soldiers processed for separation are assigned reentry codes based on their service records or the reason for discharge. Based on Army Regulation 601-210, the applicant was appropriately assigned an RE code of "4." An RE code of "4" cannot be waived, and the applicant is no longer eligible for reenlistment.

The applicant contends the narrative reason for the discharge needs to be changed. Based on the applicant's AMHRR, someone in the discharge process erroneously entered on the applicant's DD Form 214, block 25, "AR 635-200, Para 14-12c(2)." The discharge packet confirms the separation authority approved the discharge under the provisions AR 635-200, Chapter 14, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of Serious Offense. Army Regulations, at the time, stated a Soldier separated under this provision will receive a narrative reason of Misconduct and a Separation Code of "JKQ."

#### **10. 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's Medical Advisor, a voting member, 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's Medical Advisor 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's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that the applicant is service connected by the VA for PTSD. Given the nexus between PTSD and using substances for self-medication, the failed UA that led to the applicant's separation 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 outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse.

**b.** Response to Contentions:

**(1)** The applicant contends the discharge does not fully reflect the mitigating circumstances surrounding two urinalysis failures, which the Department of Veterans Affairs has linked to combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in 2007. 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.

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(2) The applicant contends a reentry code change to support a goal of returning to military service as an officer or technician. The Board considered this contention and determined that a re-entry code change was warranted to a RE-3. A RE Code of "3" indicates the applicant requires a waiver before being allowed to reenlist. Recruiters can best advise a former service member as to the Army's needs at the time and are required to process waivers of reentry eligibility (RE) codes, if appropriate.

(3) The applicant contends the narrative reason for the discharge needs to be changed. The Board considered this contention and determined that a narrative reason change was warranted.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse. 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 voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense. 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.

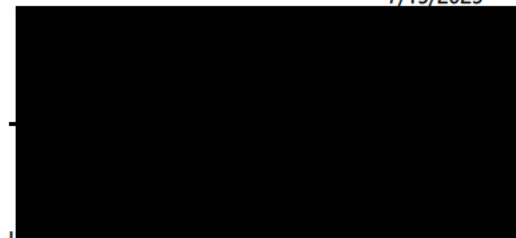
(3) The RE code will change to RE-3.

**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:**

7/15/2025



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

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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