

**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 should have been for medical reasons as recommended by the applicant's psychiatrist, instead of for being absent without leave (AWOL) because the applicant had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The command did not consider the circumstances which led to the discharge and the reasons for the applicant being AWOL. The applicant would never have been in trouble with civilian authorities in Killeen, Texas, or arrested if it had not been for the effects of PTSD.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 25 February 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 to 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 **Board Discussion and Determination** section 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, Paragraph 14-12c (1) / JKD / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 24 March 2010

**c. Separation Facts:**

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 26 February 2010

(2) **Basis for Separation:** Under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, the applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant was absent from their unit from 22 September to 25 October 2006, 3 October 2008 to 13 February 2009, and 9 March to 22 July 2009.

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

**(4) Legal Consultation Date:** In an undated Election of Rights memo, the applicant waived legal counsel.

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

**(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** On 4 March 2010, 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:** 29 March 2005 / 4 years / The applicant was retained 153 days for the convenience of the government.

**b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 19 / HS Graduate / 113

**c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 / 68W10, Health Care Specialist / 4 years, 1 month, 20 days

**d. Prior Service / Characterizations:** None

**e. Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Iraq (1 November 2006 – 1 November 2007)

**f. Awards and Decorations:** ICM-2CS, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, OSR

**g. Performance Ratings:** NA

**h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Seven Personnel Action forms, reflect the applicant's duty status changed as follows:

From Ordinary Leave to Absent Without Leave (AWOL), effective 22 September 2006;  
From AWOL to Present for Duty (PDY), effective 25 October 2006;  
From PDY to AWOL, effective 3 October 2008;  
From AWOL to Dropped From Rolls (DFR), effective 4 November 2008;  
From DFR to PDY, effective 23 February 2009;  
From PDY to AWOL, effective 9 March 2009; and  
From AWOL to PDY, effective 22 July 2009.

Field Grade Article 15, 24 December 2009, for on two occasions being absent without leave (between 3 October 2008 and 23 February 2009 and 9 March and 22 July 2009). The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-1; forfeiture of \$450 pay per month for two months (suspended); and extra duty for 45 days.

Developmental Counseling Form, 23 July 2009, for being AWOL.

**i. Lost Time / Mode of Return:** 10 months, 6 days:

AWOL, 22 September 2006 – 24 October 2006 / NIF  
AWOL, 3 October 2008 – 22 February 2009 / NIF  
AWOL, 9 March 2009 – 21 July 2009 / NIF

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

**(1) Applicant provided:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Rating Decision, 21 March 2012, reflects the applicant was rated 70 percent disabled for PTSD, and 10 percent for tinnitus.

**(2) AMHRR Listed:** Report of Mental Status Evaluation, 3 February 2010, reflects a traumatic brain injury screen indicated the applicant's prior issues have been addressed, no referral necessary. The prior diagnosis of PTSD appeared to have been resolved, current diagnosis was adjustment disorder with anxiety. The applicant was experiencing post deployment related symptoms, but they were not at a level meeting the criteria for PTSD or required medical disposition. The provider recommended the command consider Chapter 5-17 instead of Chapter 14, or expiration term of service.

*The ARBA's medical advisor reviewed DoD and VA medical records and not solely those documents listed in 4j(1) and (2) above.*

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Application for Correction of Military Record; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; VA Rating Decision; and Army Review Boards, Case Management Division letter.

**6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted with the applicant.

**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) Paragraph 5-17, in effect at the time, entitled other designated physical or mental conditions, specifically provides that a Soldier may be separated under this paragraph on the basis of other physical or mental conditions not amounting to disability (AR 635-40) and excluding conditions appropriate for separation under paragraph 5-11 or 5-13 that potentially interfere with assignment to or performance of duty. Nothing in this paragraph precludes separation of a Soldier under any other provisions of this regulation.

(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 14-2c, prescribes Commanders will not take action prescribed in this chapter instead of disciplinary action solely to spare an individual who may have committed serious misconduct from the harsher penalties that may be imposed under the UCMJ.

(7) 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.

(8) 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 contends PTSD affected behavior, which led to the discharge, and the discharge should have been for medical reasons, as recommended by their psychiatrist. The applicant provided the VA Rating Decision, which reflects the applicant was rated 70 percent disabled for PTSD, and 10 percent for tinnitus. The applicant's AMHRR shows the applicant underwent a mental status evaluation (MSE) on 3 February 2010, which indicates traumatic brain injury screen indicated the applicant's prior issues had been addressed, no referral necessary. The prior diagnosis of PTSD appeared to have been resolved, current diagnosis was adjustment disorder with anxiety. The applicant was experiencing post deployment related symptoms, but they were not at a level meeting the criteria for PTSD or required medical disposition. The provider recommended the command consider Chapter 5-17 instead of Chapter 14, or expiration term of service. The MSE was considered by the separation authority. Army

Regulation 635-200, paragraph 5-17, states nothing in this paragraph precludes separation of a Soldier under any other provisions of this regulation.

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: PTSD, various Adjustment Disorders subsumed by PTSD.

**(2)** Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found the applicant is 70 percent SC 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 and avoidant behavior, the applicant's AWOL offenses 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 PTSD affected behavior, which led to the discharge, and the discharge should have been for medical reasons, as recommended by their psychiatrist. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's AWOL offenses.

**(2)** The applicant contends good service, including a combat tour. 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 to 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.

**ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE**

**AR20210000411**

**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.

**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:**

3/7/2025



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

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