

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 requests relief contending, in effect, not having any legal trouble since the discharge and an upgrade of the discharge will allow the applicant to continue living a productive life.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 23 January 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder fully outweighing the applicant's AWOL offense. 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, Chapter 15, and the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code to JFF. 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 (Serious Offense) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c / JKQ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 19 January 2012

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 15 December 2011

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: Between on or about 2 August 2011 without authority the applicant absent themselves from their unit and did remain absent until 11 October 2011.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: On 15 December 2011, the applicant waived legal counsel.

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 5 January 2012 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 26 July 2007 / 6 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 23 / GED / 108

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 25B10, IT Specialist / 4 years, 5 months, 24 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Korea / Afghanistan (4 July 2010 – 30 June 2011)

f. Awards and Decorations: AAM-3, MUC, AGCM, NDSM, ACM-2CS, GWOTSM, KDSM, ASR, OSR-2, NATOMDL

g. Performance Ratings: NA

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

From Present for Duty (PDY) to Absent Without Leave (AWOL), effective 2 August 2011;
From AWOL to Dropped From Rolls (DFR), effective 31 August 2011;
From Dropped From Rolls (DFR), to Present for Duty (PDY), effective 13 October 2011.

FG Article 15, 16 November 2011, for AWOL (2 August to 11 October 2011). The punishment consisted of reduction to the grade of E-1, forfeiture of \$733 per month for two months (suspended), and 45 days of extra duty.

Record Of Supplementary Action Under Article 15, UCMJ, 12 December 2011, reflects the suspended portion of the punishment imposed on 16 November 2011, was vacated for: Article 86, failure to report on or about 28 November 2011.

Two Developmental Counseling Forms, 27 October 2011 and 5 December 2011, for being absent without leave and intent to initiate Chapter action for discharge.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: 2 months, 9 days (AWOL 2 August – 11 October 2011). This period is not annotated in item 29 of the DD Form 214 / Surrendered to Military Authorities

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) AMHRR Listed: Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 15 November 2011, reflects, the applicant could understand and participate in administrative proceedings; could appreciate the difference between right and wrong. The applicant had been screened for PTSD and mTBI. PTSD and mTBI was present and the applicant was referred for further examination or testing. During the evaluation it was determined the applicant had a possibly disqualifying psychiatric condition requiring further assessment and for which they had not been treated.

Referrals were submitted for Fitness for Duty and TBI assessments. The diagnosis of PTSD was listed. Therefore, the applicant was not psychiatrically cleared for chapter separation. Further assessment was needed to determine fitness for duty.

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 the Review of Discharge; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant states not having any legal trouble.

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 14-12c 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.

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-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 not having any legal trouble since the discharge. The applicant's post service accomplishments were carefully reviewed.

The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge will allow the applicant to continue living a productive life. The Board does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

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: Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, Anxiety.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found that the applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, and Anxiety, and the VA has service connected the 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 avoidance, the AWOL that led to the 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 fully outweighed the applicant's AWOL offense.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends not having any legal trouble since discharge. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE**AR20210000434**

to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder fully outweighing the applicant's AWOL offense.

(2) The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge will allow the applicant to continue living a productive life. 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 fully outweighing the applicant's AWOL offense.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's AWOL offense. 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.

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

(2) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Secretarial Authority under the same pretexts, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JFF.

(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: Secretarial Authority / JFF
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: AR 635-200

Authenticating Official:

2/6/2025



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
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

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

AR20210000434

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