

1. Applicant's Name:

- 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 period under review is under other than honorable conditions. The applicant requests an upgrade to general.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, was a platoon sergeant during a tour in Iraq in between 2004 and 2005, who encountered 200 plus IEDs which caused devastation of the platoon. The applicant was charged with disobeying a direct order from an E7 which would have endangered their lives. Instead of going through a long-drawn-out court-martial, the applicant agreed to an under other than honorable conditions discharge and carried some benefits with it as the applicant has an honorable discharge back in 1995. The applicant was evaluated while on active duty and diagnosed with PTSD. The applicant was awarded the CIB and Good Conduct Medal along with several other medals. While stationed in Germany, the applicant started having problems which led to being diagnosed with PTSD. The applicant has been treated and diagnosed with PTSD at VAMC Biloxi. In addition, they have been diagnosed with TBI because of the IED's they were exposed to while in the combat zone. The applicant believes the PTSD and TBI contributed to the under other than honorable conditions discharge. Please consider the applicant's total service to the country when considering the upgrade.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 24 January 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board denied the request upon finding the separation was both proper and equitable.

Please see Section 9 of this document for more detail regarding the Board's decision.

(Board member names available upon request)

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: In Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial / AR 635-200, Chapter 10 / KFS / RE-4 / Under Other Than Honorable Conditions

b. Date of Discharge: 7 October 2005

c. Separation Facts: The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) includes partial facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army.

(1) Date and Charges Preferred (DD Form 458, Charge Sheet): NIF

(2) Legal Consultation Date: NIF

(3) Basis for Separation: Pursuant to the applicant's request for discharge under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 10, in lieu of trial by court-martial.

(4) Recommended Characterization: NIF

(5) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 26 September 2005 / Under Other Than Honorable Conditions

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 6 December 2004 / indefinite

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 31 / High School Graduate / 101

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-6 / 11C30, Indirect Fire Infantry / 14 years, 8 months, 23 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: RA, 22 August 1991 – 21 January 1995 / HD
USAR, 22 January 1995 – 21 April 1995 / NIF
ARNG, 22 April 1995 – 13 January 1998 / HD
RA, 14 January 1998 – 26 July 2000 / HD
RA, 27 July 2000 – 3 June 2002 / HD
RA, 4 June 2002 – 5 December 2004 / HD

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Germany, Korea, SWA / Iraq (7 February 2004 – 25 February 2005)

f. Awards and Decorations: ARCOM, AAM-3, AGCM-3, NDSM, ASR, OSR-3, CIB, GWOTEM, GWOTSM

g. Performance Ratings: None during the period under review

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: The applicant's Enlisted Record Brief (ERB), 3 October 2005, reflects the applicant was flagged for Adverse Action (AA), effective 20 January 2005 and APFT failure (JA), effective 13 June 2005.

Orders 276-001, 3 October 2005, reflect the applicant was to be reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and discharged on 7 October 2005 from the Regular Army.

The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), reflects the applicant was discharged under the authority of AR 635-200, chapter 10, with a narrative reason of In Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial. The DD Form 214 was authenticated with the applicant's signature.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: United States Army Medical Activity, Wuerzburg Department of Psychiatry, Master Problem List, 25 August 2005, reflects a diagnosis of Axis I: PTSD.

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

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; two Certificates of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; United States Army Medical Activity, Department of Psychiatry, Master Problem List.

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 3-7a 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 3-7c states Under Other Than Honorable Conditions discharge is an administrative separation from the Service under conditions other than honorable and it may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, security reasons, or in lieu of trial by court martial based on certain circumstances or patterns of behavior or acts or omissions that constitute a significant departure from the conduct expected of Soldiers in the Army.

(5) Chapter 10 provides, in pertinent part, that a member who has committed an offense or offenses for which the authorized punishment includes a punitive discharge may submit a request for a discharge for the good of the Service in lieu of trial by court-martial. The request may be submitted at any time after charges have been preferred and must include the individual's admission of guilt.

(6) Paragraph 10-8a stipulates a discharge under other than honorable conditions normally is appropriate for a Soldier who is discharged in lieu of trial by court-martial. However, the separation authority may direct a general discharge if such is merited by the Soldier's overall record during the current enlistment. (See chap 3, sec II.)

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 "KFS" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 10, In Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial.

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's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR) includes partial facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army. The applicant's AMHRR does contain a properly constituted DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), which was authenticated by the applicant's signature. The applicant's DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 10, by reason of In Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial, with a characterization of service of under other than honorable conditions.

The applicant contends being diagnosed with PTSD and TBI due to a deployment and believes these conditions contributed to their behavior which resulted in an under other than honorable conditions discharge. The applicant provided a United States Army Medical Activity, Wuerzburg Department of Psychiatry, Master Problem List, 25 August 2005, reflecting a diagnosis of Axis I: PTSD. The applicant's AMHRR includes no documentation of PTSD diagnosis.

The applicant contends good service, including a combat tour and receiving numerous awards. 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, MDD.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found the applicant was diagnosed with PTSD during service and is SC for treatment only of PTSD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **No.** The Board determined, based on the BMA's opine, that the applicant's behavioral health

conditions do not mitigate the discharge. The applicant's file does not contain sufficient information to determine the basis of separation. Without knowing the facts and circumstances, the Board is unable to determine if the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder provide medical mitigation for the applicant's misconduct.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **No.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor opine, the Board determined that the available evidence did not support a conclusion that the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, and self-asserted Traumatic Brain Injury outweighed the applicant's misconduct due to insufficient information regarding the applicant's offenses.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends being diagnosed with PTSD and TBI due to a deployment and believes these conditions contributed to their behavior which resulted in an under other than honorable conditions discharge. The Board liberally considered this contention but determined that the available evidence did not support a conclusion that the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, and self-asserted Traumatic Brain Injury outweighed the applicant's misconduct due to insufficient information regarding the applicant's offenses.

(2) The applicant contends good service, including a combat tour and receiving numerous awards. The Board considered the applicant's 14 years of service, including a combat tour in Iraq and numerous awards received, but could not find that the applicant's record of service outweighed the applicant's discharge due to a lack of information surrounding the applicant's misconduct leading to separation.

c. The Board determined that the discharge is, at this time, proper and equitable, in light of the current evidence of record. The applicant has exhausted all available appeal options available with ADRB. However, the applicant may still apply to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records. The applicant is responsible for satisfying the burden of proof and providing documents or other evidence sufficient to support the applicant's contention(s) that the discharge was improper or inequitable.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted not to change the applicant's characterization of service because, despite applying liberal consideration to all the evidence before the Board, the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, and self-asserted Traumatic Brain Injury did not outweigh the applicant's misconduct due to a lack of information concerning the applicant's misconduct. The Board also considered the applicant's contention regarding good service but found that the totality of the applicant's record does not warrant a discharge upgrade. The applicant did not present any issues of impropriety for the Board's consideration. The discharge was consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation, was within the discretion of the separation authority, and the applicant was provided full administrative due process. Therefore, the applicant's Under Other Than Honorable Conditions discharge was proper and equitable as the applicant's conduct fell below that level of satisfactory service warranting a General discharge or meritorious service warranted for an upgrade to Honorable discharge.

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(2) The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code under the same pretexts, and the reason the applicant was discharged was both proper and equitable.

(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 / Separation Order: No
- b. Change Characterization to: No Change
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: No Change
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

1/29/2025

X

Presiding Officer, COL, U.S. ARMY
Army Discharge Review Board

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