

**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 uncharacterized. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, the original discharge is incorrect. The applicant was being discharged for inability to adapt; however, during the time of the discharge the applicant was suffering from what is now known as sexual PTSD which was a result of childhood and teenage sexual abuse and incest. The DA class on rape triggered, painful, repressed, and unresolved memories, creating a response of depression, and despondency. The applicant believes if this situation did not happen, they would still be an active and proud member of the U.S. Army.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 18 September 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the original discharge was proper and equitable and did not warrant an upgrade in characterization. However, the Board directed administrative corrections to the DD Form 214, changing the separation authority to AR 635-200, Chapter 15, the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, and the separation code to SA. The Board determined the RE code was proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

*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:** Entry Level Performance and Conduct / AR 635-200, Chapter 11 / JGA / RE-3 / Uncharacterized

b. **Date of Discharge:** 24 September 1998

c. **Separation Facts:** The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) is void of the case separation file. However, the applicant provided documents which are described below in 3c (1) through (6).

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** undated

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: Failure to adapt to the Military Environment and Adjustment Disorder.

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** Uncharacterized

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** On 16 September 1998, the applicant waived legal counsel.

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 18 September 1998 / Uncharacterized

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 13 August 1998 / 4 years

b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 18 / High School Letter / NIF

c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-2 / None / 1 month, 12 days

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

e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** None

f. **Awards and Decorations:** None

g. **Performance Ratings:** NA

h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Four Developmental Counseling Forms, for initial counseling, entry level separation, and recommendation for chapter 11 x2.

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

j. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):** The following documents have been provided to the ARBA Medical Advisor, if applicable. See "**Board Discussion and Determination**" for Medical Advisor Details.

(1) **Applicant provided:** Report of Mental Status Evaluation, 9 September 1998, reflects the applicant was 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 Axis I: Adjustment Disorder w/mixed anxiety and depressed mood and acute stress disorder (provisional).

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Application for the Review of Discharge; separation packet; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

**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 3-9 states a separation will be described as entry-level with service uncharacterized if processing is initiated while a Soldier is in entry-level status.

**(5)** Chapter 11 provides for the separation of personnel due to unsatisfactory performance, conduct, or both, while in an entry level status (ELS).

**(6)** Paragraph 11-3a (2) stipulates the policy applies to Soldiers who are in entry-level status, undergoing IET, and, before the date of the initiation of separation action, have completed no more than 180 days of creditable continuous AD or IADT or no more than 90 days of Phase II under a split or alternate training option. (See the glossary for precise definition of entry-level status.)

**(7)** Paragraph 11-8, stipulates service will be described as uncharacterized under the provisions of this chapter.

**(8)** 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.

**(9)** Glossary defines entry-level status for RA Soldiers is the first 180 days of continuous AD or the first 180 days of continuous AD following a break of more than 92 days of active military service

**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 "JGA" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 11, entry-level performance and conduct.

**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 non-waiverable 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.

An honorable discharge (HD) may be given only in cases which are clearly warranted by unusual circumstances involving outstanding personal conduct and/or performance of duty. An HD is rarely ever granted.

The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR) is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army. However, the applicant provided several documents reflecting the circumstances leading to the discharge. 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 11, by reason of Entry-level performance and conduct, with a characterization of service of uncharacterized.

The applicant contends separation under Entry Level Status (ELS) was not appropriate and should have received an honorable discharge. Army Regulation 635-200 states a separation will be described as entry-level with service uncharacterized if, at the time separation action is initiated, the Soldier has less than 180 days of continuous active-duty service. The evidence of the Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) reflects the notification memorandum is undated; however, the initiation memorandum is dated 14 September 1998. At the time of the initiation, the applicant had 32 days of continuous active-duty service. Based on the time in service, the applicant was in an ELS status, and the uncharacterized discharge was appropriate.

The applicant contends suffering from sexual PTSD resulting from childhood and teenage sexual abuse and incest. The DA class on rape triggered painful, repressed, and unresolved memories, leading to depression and despondency. The applicant provided a Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 9 September 1998, reflecting the applicant was 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 Axis I: Adjustment Disorder w/mixed anxiety and depressed mood and acute stress disorder (provisional). The applicant's AMHRR includes no documentation of PTSD diagnosis.

#### **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? **No.** 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

evidence of BH conditions to include in-service diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder and Acute Stress Disorder. However, there is no misconduct associated with the discharge to potentially excuse or mitigate. The applicant's self-asserted PTSD associated with pre-service trauma is acknowledged, but the applicant was separated in accordance with the appropriate regulations given the applicant's circumstances.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **N/A**

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **N/A**

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **No.** After liberal consideration of all evidence, the ADRB determined that the applicant's conditions did not outweigh the basis for separation, as there was no misconduct to mitigate.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends suffering from sexual PTSD resulting from childhood and teenage sexual abuse and incest. The DA class on rape triggered painful, repressed, and unresolved memories, leading to depression and despondency. The Board considered this contention but found no evidence of a behavioral health condition that mitigated the basis for separation or altered the propriety of the discharge

(2) The applicant contends separation under ELS was not appropriate and should have received an honorable discharge. The Board considered this contention but determined that the applicant's separation was appropriate and consistent with applicable regulations.

d. The Board determined not to change the applicant's characterization of service because, despite applying liberal consideration of all the evidence before the Board, the applicant did not have a condition which mitigates the basis of separation. 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 Uncharacterized discharge was proper and equitable. The board directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the separation authority to AR 635-200, Chapter 15, the narrative reason for separation to Secretary Authority, and the separation code to SA. The Board determined the RE Code was proper and equitable and voted not to change it. 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.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted not to change the applicant's characterization of service because, despite applying liberal consideration of all the evidence before the Board, the applicant's behavioral health conditions did not excuse or mitigate the basis for separation under Entry Level Status. The discharge was consistent with regulatory requirements, within the discretion of the separation authority, and the applicant received full administrative due process.

(2) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Secretarial Authority with a corresponding SPD code of SA, as the original reason was no longer appropriate.

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(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: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: No Change
- 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:**

9/29/2025



**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