

**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 was inequitable because it was based on misbehavior attributed and linked to PTSD after returning from deployment. The applicant contends prior to those events their service was exemplary.

**b. Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 10 September 2024, 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 FTR 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. Accordingly, the narrative reason for separation changed 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 Section 9 of this document for more details regarding the Board's decision. Board member names available upon request.*

**3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:**

**a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization:** Pattern of Misconduct / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12b / JKA / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**b. Date of Discharge:** 30 September 2009

**c. Separation Facts:**

- (1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 12 August 2009
- (2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: failing to report on multiple occasions.
- (3) **Recommended Characterization:** General (Under Honorable Conditions)
- (4) **Legal Consultation Date:** On 2 September 2009, the applicant waived legal counsel.
- (5) **Administrative Separation Board:** NA
- (6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 17 September 2009 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 3 August 2006 / 4 years
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 22 / GED / 108
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 / 92Y10, Unit Supply Specialist / 3 years, 1 month, 28 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Iraq (12 November 2007 – 22 November 2008)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** ARCOM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ICM-CS, ASR, OSR
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** CG Article 15, 9 March 2009, on or about 20 February 2009 without authority fail to go at the time prescribed to their appointed place of duty, 0630 PT formation. On or about 20 February 2009, were derelict in the performance of those duties the applicant negligently failed to keep their barracks room clean, as it was their duty to do so. The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-2; forfeiture of \$366 (suspended); and extra duty and restriction for 14 days.

Record Of Supplementary Action Under Article 15, UCMJ ,10 April 2009, reflects the suspended portion of the punishment imposed on 9 March 2009, was vacated for: Article 134, on or about 19 March 2009, break said restriction.

FG Article 15, 29 April 2009, for on or about 21 March 2009, without authority fail to go at the time prescribed to their appointed place of duty for 0800 extra duty. On or about 19 March 2009, break restriction. The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-1; forfeiture of \$699 pay per month for two months (suspended); and extra duty and restriction for 45 days.

Record Of Supplementary Action Under Article 15, UCMJ, 20 May 2009, reflects the suspended portion of the punishment imposed on 29 April 2009, was vacated for: Article 86, on or about 2 May 2009, fail to. go at the time prescribed to their appointed place of duty, 0800 extra duty.

FG Article 15, 11 June 2009, between 14 and 17 May 2009, fail to go at the time prescribed to their appointed place of duty on three occasions. The punishment consisted of forfeiture of \$699 pay per month for two months (suspended); and extra duty and restriction for 45 days.

Record Of Supplementary Action Under Article 15, UCMJ, 30 June 2009, reflects the suspended portion of the punishment imposed on 11 June 2009, was vacated for: Article 86, on or about 14 June 2009, without authority fail to go at the time prescribed to their appointed place of duty, 0800 extra duty in the battery area.

Numerous Developmental Counseling Forms, for various acts of misconduct.

- i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None
- j. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):**

(1) **Applicant provided:** Progress notes, printed on 31 October 2013, reflects a medical diagnosis.

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** Report of Behavioral Health Evaluation (BHE), 21 July 2009, reflects the applicant was mentally responsible with a clear-thinking process and had the mental capacity to understand and participate in the proceedings. The evaluation included a diagnosis.

*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:** Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; Application for the Review of Discharge; medical records.

**6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** The applicant sought treatment for their mental health from the VA.

**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 14-3 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 14-12b, addresses a pattern of misconduct consisting of either discreditable involvement with civilian or military authorities or discreditable conduct and

conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline including conduct violating the accepted standards of personal conduct found in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Army Regulations, the civilian law and time-honored customs and traditions of the Army.

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 "JKA" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 12b, pattern of misconduct.

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 their discharge was inequitable because it was based on misbehavior attributed and linked to PTSD after returning from deployment. The applicant provided progress notes, printed on 31 October 2013, reflecting a medical diagnosis. The AMHRR includes a Report of Behavioral Health Evaluation (BHE), 21 July 2009, reflecting the applicant was mentally responsible with a clear-thinking process and had the mental capacity to understand and participate in the proceedings. The evaluation included a diagnosis. The separation authority considered the BHE.

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'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: Bipolar Disorder (EPTS escalation with combat trauma) and PTSD with subsumed mood and substance disorders

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** Bipolar Disorder (EPTS escalation with combat trauma) and PTSD with subsumed mood and substance disorders existed during military service.

(3) Does the condition or experience excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board determined, based on the BMA's opine, that combat trauma escalated the applicant's alcohol use. This was trauma occurring before the basis for separation and has a nexus with substance use, so the basis of separation misconduct is mitigated.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor's opine, the Board determined that the applicant's PTSD outweighed the applicant's FTR separating offenses.

**b. Response to Contention(s):**

(1) The applicant contends their discharge was inequitable because it was based on misbehavior attributed and linked to PTSD after returning from deployment. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that the applicant's PTSD outweighed the FTR separating offenses.

(2) The applicant contends good service, including a combat tour. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address it in detail due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's PTSD outweighing the applicant's FTR separating offenses.

**c.** The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD outweighing the applicant's FTR separating 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. Accordingly, the narrative reason for separation changed 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 PTSD outweighed the applicant's FTR offenses. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

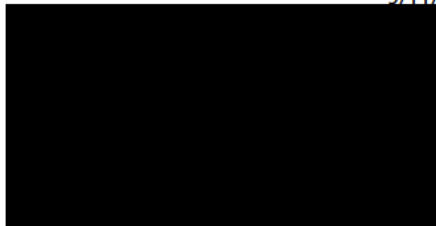
(2) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) under the same pretexts. Thus, the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JKN.

(3) The RE code will not change based on the behavioral health conditions. Additionally, 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:

9/11/2024  


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