

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, a desire to use their education benefits. The applicant is a Purple Heart recipient who needs access to medical care.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 29 August 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge was inequitable based on the applicant's behavioral health (BH) condition mitigating the basis of separation (BOS) misconduct. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the separation authority to AR 635-200 paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), the separation code to JKN, and the reentry code to RE-3.

Please see the Board Discussion and Determination portion 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:** Misconduct (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 6 September 2013

c. Separation Facts:

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 26 July 2013

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: Wrongful use of drugs on or about 28 May 2013.

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

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** 30 July 2013

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 19 August 2013 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 23 October 2012 / 3 years
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 20 / High School Graduate / 95
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 92R10, Parachute Rigger / 3 years, 1 month, 24 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** RA, 13 July 2010 – 22 October 2012 / HD
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Afghanistan (1 March 2011 – 12 January 2012)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** PH, ARCOM, NDSM, ACM-2CS, GWOTSM, ASR, OSR, NATOMDL, CAB
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Electronic Copy of DD Form 2624, 5 June 2013, reflects the applicant tested positive for THC 42 (marijuana), during an Inspection Unit (IU) urinalysis testing, conducted on 28 May 2013.

Commander's report undated reflects, On 27 June 2013, the applicant received a Field Grade Article 15, for violating Article 112a (Wrongful Use of Drugs). The following punishment was imposed: Reduction to the grade of E-3; Forfeiture of \$949 pay; 45 days extra duty; and 45 days restriction.

Two Developmental Counseling Forms, for positive urinalysis and positive illegal substance.

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

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

(1) **Applicant provided:** None

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** Report of Mental Status Evaluation, 16 July 2013, 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 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; Purple Heart Certificate.

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) 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 14-12c(2) terms abuse of illegal drugs as serious misconduct. It continues; however, by recognizing relevant facts may mitigate the nature of the offense. Therefore, a single drug abuse offense may be combined with one or more minor disciplinary infractions or incidents of other misconduct and processed for separation under paragraph 14-12a or 14-12b as appropriate.

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 "JKK" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, misconduct (drug abuse).

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 contends an upgrade would allow educational benefits through the GI Bill. Eligibility for veteran's benefits to include educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill does not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs for further assistance.

The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge would allow veterans benefits. Eligibility for veteran's benefits does not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs for further assistance.

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, the applicant's statement, and/or civilian provider documentation and found that the applicant has the following potentially mitigating diagnoses/experiences: Adjustment Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found that the applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and is service connected by the VA for MDD. Service connection establishes that the applicant's MDD also existed during military service.

(3) Does the condition or experience excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that the applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and is service connected by the VA for MDD. Given the nexus between MDD and self-medicating with substances, the drug use 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's opine, the Board determined that the applicant's MDD outweighed the drug use BOS.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends an upgrade would allow educational benefits through the GI Bill. The Board liberally considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address it in detail due to an upgrade being granted based on medical mitigation of the BOS misconduct. The applicant should contact a local VA office for further assistance as VA benefits do not fall under the purview of the Army Discharge and Review Board (ADRB).

(2) The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge would allow veterans benefits. The Board liberally considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address it in detail due to an upgrade being granted based on medical mitigation of the BOS misconduct. The applicant should contact a local VA office for further assistance as VA benefits do fall under the purview of the ADRB.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's MDD mitigating the BOS misconduct. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the separation authority to AR 635-200 paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), the separation code to JKN, and the reentry code to RE-3.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's MDD mitigated the BOS misconduct. 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.

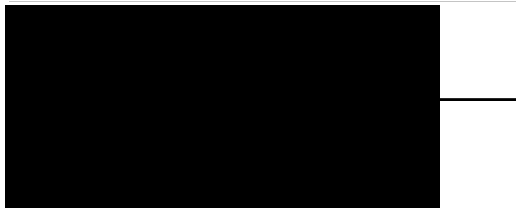
(3) The Board voted to change the reentry code to RE-3 based on the new narrative reason/SPD and BH condition.

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: RE-3
- e. Change Authority to: AR 635-200

Authenticating Official:

9/6/2024



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

