

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 honorable. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, should have received an honorable discharge because they exhibited a pattern of needing to be treated for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a possible brain injury, not a pattern of misconduct. The applicant contends their command failed them by not recognizing the need for medical and psychiatric help in coping with the combat stressors from their deployments to Iraq.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 25 July 2024, 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:** Misconduct (Minor Infractions) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12a / JKN / RE-3 / Honorable

b. **Date of Discharge:** 11 March 2011

c. **Separation Facts:**

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 7 February 2011

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant failed to report to their appointed place of duty at the time prescribed on numerous occasions.

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

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** 8 February 2011

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 28 February 2011 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 2 February 2008 / 6 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 22 / GED / 90

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 11C10, Indirect Fire Infantry / 5 years, 5 months, 28 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: RA, 14 September 2005 – 1 February 2008 / HD

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA / Iraq (5 February 2007 – 15 April 2008; 3 September 2009 – 4 August 2010)

f. Awards and Decorations: ARCOM-2, AAM-2, AGCM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ICM-2CS, ASR, OSR-2, CIB

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: FG Article 15, 20 January 2011, for on or about 29 and 30 December 2010, fail to go at the time prescribed to appointed place of duty. The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-1; forfeiture of \$733 and extra duty for 45 days.

Two Developmental Counseling Forms, for failing to be at the time prescribed to appointed place of duty.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: Department of Veterans Affairs progress notes, printed on 17 February 2012, includes a medical diagnosis.

(2) AMHRR Listed: Memorandum For Mental Health Evaluation, 7 January 2011, reflects the evaluation included a medical 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: DD Form 214; DD form 293, medical records.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant sought mental health treatment 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) 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.

(4) 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.

(5) Paragraph 14-12a addresses minor disciplinary infractions, defined as a pattern of misconduct, consisting solely of minor military disciplinary infractions.

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

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 contends suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a possible brain injury. The applicant provided a Department of Veterans Affairs progress notes, printed on 17 February 2012, includes a medical diagnosis. The AMHRR includes a Memorandum For Mental Health Evaluation, 7 January 2011, reflects the evaluation included a medical diagnosis. The mental health evaluation was considered by the separation authority.

The applicant contends not having a pattern of misconduct. The applicant did not submit any evidence, other than the applicant's statement, to support the contention. The AMHRR indicates the applicant failed to report to their appointed place of duty at the time prescribed on numerous

occasions; received an Article 15 and dismissed from the Warriors Leaders Course, for missing formation.

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/experiences: Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, Depression, TBI.

(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 PTSD, Depression, and TBI. Service connection establishes that the applicant's PTSD, Depression, and TBI also existed during military service.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **No.** 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 PTSD, Depression, and TBI. Given the nexus between PTSD and avoidance, as well as the nexus between Depression and low motivation, sleep difficulties, and avoidance, the applicant's PTSD and Depression contributed to the FTRs that led to the separation.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **N/A.**

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a possible brain injury. The Board considered this contention and determined the current characterization of service is honorable, there is no further relief available with respect to characterization. Liberal consideration was applied to the narrative reason, and it was determined PTSD did mitigate the FTRs, but did not fully excuse the misconduct, the applicant was involuntarily separated for misconduct and the fraction of responsibility remaining with the applicant makes "Minor Infractions" equitable.

(2) The applicant contends not having a pattern of misconduct. Board considered this contention and determined liberal consideration was applied to the narrative reason, and it was determined PTSD did mitigate the FTRs, but did not fully excuse the misconduct, the applicant was involuntarily separated for misconduct and the fraction of responsibility remaining with the applicant makes "Minor Infractions" equitable.

c. The Board determined that the discharge is, at this time, proper and equitable, in light of the current evidence of record. However, the applicant may request a personal appearance hearing to address the issues before the Board. 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 determined the discharge is proper and equitable as the applicant has a Characterization of Honorable; therefore no further relief is available.

(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:

1/10/2025

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