

**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 and a change to the narrative reason for separation.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, consistently denied help when asking the chain of command to see behavioral health for their issues. After denial by their platoon leader and sergeant, the applicant went outside the chain of command to request assistance from a different unit. The attitude and the lack of assistance caused the applicant's failure in the Army. The applicant, who spent four years in the Army, is asking for an upgrade so they can begin receiving their educational benefits and start their next phase of life.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 30 July 2024, and by a 3-2 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on partial medical mitigation and the applicant's length and quality of service, to include combat service, outweighing the applicant's misconduct. 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, the narrative reason for separation 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 detail 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:** 14 August 2013

c. **Separation Facts:** The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) is void of the case separation file.

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

(2) **Basis for Separation:** NIF

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** NIF

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** NIF

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

**(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: NIF****4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 27 May 2009 / 6 years
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 21 / High School Graduate / NIF
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** NIF / 15E10, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Repairer / 4 years, 2 months, 18 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Afghanistan (17 February 2011 – 21 December 2011; 25 February 2013 – 21 July 2013)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** ACM-3CS, ARCOM, NATOMDL, AGCM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, OSR
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Orders 219-0028, 7 August 2013, reflect the applicant was to be reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and discharged on 14 August 2013 from the Regular Army.

The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), reflects the applicant had not completed the first full term of service. The applicant was discharged under the authority of AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12b, with a narrative reason of Patterns of Misconduct. The DD Form 214 was authenticated with the applicant's electronic signature.

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

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

(1) **Applicant provided:** None

(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:** Online application; self-authored statement.

**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 14-12b, 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) is void of the specific 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 electronic signature. The applicant's DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12b, by reason of Pattern of Misconduct, with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions).

The applicant contends the narrative reason for the discharge needs to be changed. The applicant was separated under the provisions of Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12b, AR 635-200 with a general (under honorable conditions) discharge. The narrative reason specified by Army Regulations for a discharge under this paragraph is "Pattern of Misconduct," and the separation code is "JKA." Army Regulation 635-8 (Separation Processing and Documents), governs preparation of the DD Form 214, and dictates entry of the narrative reason for separation, entered in block 28 and separation code, entered in block 26 of the form, will be exactly as listed in tables 2-2 or 2-3 of AR 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes). The regulation stipulates no deviation is authorized. There is no provision for any other reason to be entered under this regulation.

The applicant contends consistently denied help when asking the chain of command to see behavioral health for their issues. The applicant did not submit any evidence, other than the applicant's statement, to support the contention. The applicant's AMHRR does not contain any indication or evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

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.

## 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: Mood Disorder, Adjustment Disorder with Disturbance in Conduct, Insomnia.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found the applicant is 30 percent SC for Mood Disorder.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Partially.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that the applicant's behavioral health conditions partially mitigate the misconduct. Given the nexus between Insomnia and a Mood Disorder with increased anger, the applicant's offenses of disrespect toward an NCO is mitigated. The applicant's of doing donuts in an LMTV is not mitigated as the misconduct is not natural sequela of any diagnosed BH condition, and the applicant did not have a condition that rendered the applicant unable to differentiate between right and wrong and adhere to the right.

(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 Insomnia, Adjustment Disorder, and Mood Disorder outweighed the applicant's medically unmitigated offense of doing donuts in an LMTV.

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

(1) The applicant contends being denied help when asking the chain of command to see behavioral health for their issues. The Board liberally considered this contention but determined that the available evidence did not support a conclusion that the applicant's Insomnia, Adjustment Disorder, and Mood Disorder outweighed the applicant's medically unmitigated offense of doing donuts in an LMTV. However, the Board found that the applicant's record of service, including combat service, outweighed this offense. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends the narrative reason for the discharge needs to be changed. The Board considered this contention and determined that it was valid due to partial medical mitigation and the applicant's service record.

(3) The applicant contends an upgrade would allow educational benefits through the GI Bill. The Board considered this contention and determined that eligibility for Veteran's benefits, to include educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill, healthcare or VA loans, do 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.

**c.** The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on partial medical mitigation and the applicant's length and quality of service, to include combat service, outweighing the applicant's medically unmitigated misconduct of doing donuts in an LMTV. 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, the narrative reason for separation 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 Insomnia and a Mood Disorder outweighed the applicant's disrespect of an NCO offense. The applicant's record of service, including combat service, mitigated the remaining offense of doing donuts in an LMTV. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

(2) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) for the same reasons, 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, 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: Yes**

**ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE**

**AR20210000949**

- 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:**

8/12/2024



**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