

**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, would like to continue their education using the 9/11 GI Bill.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 18 June 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD outweighing the applicant's disrespect to an NCO on multiple occasions, failure to provide or maintain a family care plan, and making a false official statement basis for separation. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason/SPD code and RE code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them as they appropriate due to the basis for separation and the applicant's BH condition warranting consideration prior to reentry to military service.

*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:** Parenthood / AR 635-200, Chapter 5-8 / JDG / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 6 September 2011

**c. Separation Facts:**

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 29 August 2011

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant failed to provide or maintain a workable family care plan. In addition, the applicant was disrespectful to noncommissioned officers on three occasions and made a false official statement.

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** Honorable

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** On 29 August 2011, the applicant waived legal counsel.

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 30 August 2011 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

**a. Date / Period of Enlistment:** 5 March 2008 / 3 years, 8 months (Extended the 3 year enlistment on 12 February 2012, for 8 months.)

**b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 25 / GED / 102

**c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 91D10, Power-Generation Equipment Repairer / 3 years, 6 months, 2 days

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

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

**f. Awards and Decorations:** AGCM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR

**g. Performance Ratings:** None

**h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** FG Article 15, 19 October 2010, for being disrespectful in language and deportment toward SSG L. and towards SGT B. a noncommissioned officer on or about 2 September 2010. The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-2; forfeiture of \$811 (suspended); extra duty and restriction for 30 days (suspended); and oral reprimand.

FG Article 15, 17 May 2011, for being disrespectful in language and deportment toward a noncommissioned officer on or about 17 March 2011; and made a false official statement on or about 18 March 2011. The punishment consisted of a reduction to E-1; forfeiture of \$733 pay (suspended); extra duty and restriction for 45 days (suspended); and oral reprimand.

Memorandum For Record, 29 June 2011, reflects the applicant elected to waive the 30 days to find a family care plan.

Several Developmental Counseling Forms, for various acts of misconduct.

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

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

**(1) Applicant provided:** None

**(2) AMHRR Listed:** Report of Medical Assessment, 21 June 2011, the examining medical physician noted the applicant's medical conditions in the comments section.

Report of Medical History, 24 June 2011, the examining medical physician noted the applicant's medical conditions in the comments section.

*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 293 and DD Form 214.

**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 5 provides for the basic separation of enlisted personnel for the convenience of the government.

**(5)** Paragraph 5-1, states a Soldier being separated under this paragraph will be awarded a characterization of service of honorable, general (under honorable conditions), or an uncharacterized description of service if in entry-level status.

**(6)** Paragraph 5-7 (previously paragraph 5-8), provides that a Soldier may be separated when parental obligations interfere with fulfillment of military responsibilities. Specific reasons for separation because of parenthood include inability to perform prescribed duties satisfactorily, repeated absenteeism, late for work, inability to participate in field training exercises or perform special duties such as CQ and Staff Duty NCO, and non-availability for worldwide assignment or deployment according to the needs of the Army.

**e.** Army Regulation 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes), in effect at the time, provided 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 "JDG" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who were discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 5-8, Parenthood.

**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 waivable. 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 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: PTSD, Adjustment Disorder with Anxiety and Depressed Mood, and Depressive Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found the applicant 70% SC for PTSD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that a review of the records reflects the applicant has BH conditions that partially mitigate her misconduct as outlined in the BoS. She is 70 percent SC for PTSD and has potentially mitigating diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder with Anxiety and Depressed Mood, and Depressive Disorder, which are subsumed by PTSD. She is also diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, however, the diagnosis is not offered relief under liberal guidance given the condition is dispositioned through administrative separation IAW AR 635-200. The applicant's misconduct characterized by disrespect of and NCO is mitigated by PTSD, given the nexus between PTSD and problems with authority. While it is also reasonable the misconduct was secondary to her personality disorder which would not offer mitigation, in applying liberal guidance, the misconduct is being associated with PTSD. However, the applicant inability to produce a family care plan and her misconduct characterized by providing a false official statement are not mitigated as neither is natural sequela of PTSD.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor opine, the Board determined that the applicant's PTSD partially outweighed the multiple occasions of disrespect to an NCO; however, the applicant's PTSD did not mitigate the applicant's multiple false official statements, failure to provide or maintain a family care plan. The Board determined that the remaining unmitigated misconduct did not rise to a level that negated meritorious service required for an Honorable Discharge.

**b.** Response to Contention(s): 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 that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD outweighing the applicant's disrespect to an NCO on multiple occasions, failure to provide or maintain a family care plan, and partially mitigating making a false official statement basis for separation. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason/SPD code and RE code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them as they appropriate due to the basis for separation and the applicant's BH condition warranting consideration prior to reentry to military service. However, the applicant may request a personal appearance hearing to address further 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 voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's PTSD outweighed the applicant's disrespect to an NCO on multiple occasions, failure to provide or maintain a family care plan, and partial mitigation of making a false official statement. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

**(2)** The Board voted not to change the narrative reason for discharge, as the current narrative reason and accompanying SPD code are proper and equitable. The medical mitigation does not warrant a change to Secretarial Authority because the applicant was involuntarily separated for misconduct, and the applicant's PTSD does not fully excuse the entirety of the applicant's responsibility for the misconduct. Therefore, the Board determined that Secretarial Authority, which is exercised sparingly when no other authority is available, is not warranted because the Parenthood narrative applies in this case.

**(3)** The RE code will not change due to applicant's BH diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of military service.

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

**AR20210001076**

**10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:**

- a. Issue a New DD-214: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: No Change
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

**Authenticating Official:**

10/8/2024



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