

**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, according to the DD Form 214, the pattern of behavior was minor. The applicant served a tour in a combat zone, which contributed to their anxiety.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 1 February 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Depression outweighing the applicant's FTR, AWOL, Dereliction of Duty, and DUI offenses and trauma disorder outweighed the applicant's disrespect. 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:** 9 September 2014

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:** 16 August 2014 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 10 September 2012 / 3 years, 20 weeks
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 20 / GED / 117
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 / 13B10, Cannon Crewmember / 2 years
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Afghanistan (4 July 2013 – 1 March 2014)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** ACM-CS, ARCOM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, NATOMDL
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Orders 235-0113, 23 August 2014, reflects the applicant was to be reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and discharged on 9 September 2014 from the Regular Army.

The applicant's Enlisted Record Brief (ERB), 10 September 2014, reflects the applicant was flagged for Involuntary Separation or Discharge (Field Initiated) (BA) effective 27 May 2014. The applicant was reduced from E-3 to E-1 effective 13 May 2013.

The applicant's DD Form 214, 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 Pattern 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:** Letter from a licensed psychologist reflecting the applicant had been seen from 14 July 2014 to 4 August 2014. The applicant was diagnosed with Adjustment Disorder with Depression and Anxiety and Alcohol Use Disorder. The applicant may benefit from medication management of these symptoms.

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** DD Form 214; DD Form 293; Chupik Counseling and Consulting letter.

**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) includes partial 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 serving a tour in a combat zone, which contributed to their anxiety. The applicant provided a letter from a licensed psychologist reflecting the applicant was seen from 14 July to 4 August 2014. The applicant was diagnosed with Adjustment Disorder with Depression and Anxiety and Alcohol Use Disorder. The applicant may benefit from medication management of these symptoms. The AMHRR is void of a mental status report.

The applicant contends according to the DD Form 214, the pattern of behavior was minor. Army Regulation 635-200, stipulates circumstances in which the conduct or performance of duty reflected by a single incident provides the basis for a characterization.

#### **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, Depression, Unspecified Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorder.

(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 Depression, and the VA has service connected the Depression, as well combat-related Unspecified Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorder.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that, given the nexus between Depression, a trauma disorder, avoidance, and self-medicating with substances, the applicant's BH conditions mitigate FTRs, AWOL/dereliction of duty, and a DUI. There is also a nexus between a trauma disorder and difficulty with authority, so the applicant's disrespect to an NCO is also mitigated.

(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 Depression and Trauma Disorder outweighed the applicant's FTR, AWOL, Dereliction of Duty, Disrespect toward an NCO, and DUI offenses.

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends serving a tour in a combat zone, which contributed to their anxiety. The Board liberally considered the applicant's behavioral health conditions and determined that the applicant's Depression and Trauma Disorder outweighed the applicant's FTR, AWOL, Dereliction of Duty, Disrespect toward an NCO, and DUI offenses.

(2) The applicant contends according to the DD Form 214, the pattern of behavior was minor. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Depression and Trauma Disorder outweighing the applicant's FTR, AWOL, Dereliction of Duty, Disrespect toward an NCO, DUI offenses.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Depression outweighing the applicant's FTR, AWOL, Dereliction of Duty, and DUI offenses and the applicant's trauma disorder outweighing the applicant's disrespect to an NCO. The Board voted 5-0 and concurred the basis of separation was a pattern of misconduct (failure to report x 2, AWOL x 2 days, dereliction of duty, disrespect to an NCO, and DUI). 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 Depression and Trauma Disorder outweighed the applicant's FTR, AWOL, Dereliction of Duty, Disrespect toward an NCO, and DUI 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 (RE-3) due to the applicant's behavioral health conditions requiring review prior to any reentry into military service.

**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:**

4/2/2024



Signed by: USA