

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, believes the reason they went AWOL was a result of a mental health issue which was subsequently diagnosed within a year of discharge.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 18 January 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Major Depression with Psychosis mitigating applicant's AWOL basis for separation. 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 voted not to change the reentry eligibility (RE) code due to the severity of applicant's Major Depression with Psychosis diagnosis.

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:** In Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial / AR 635-200, Chapter 10 / KFS / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 30 January 2002

c. Separation Facts:

(1) **Date and Charges Preferred (DD Form 458, Charge Sheet):** On 18 April 2001, the applicant was charged with: The Charge: Violating Article 86, UCMJ:

Specification 1: On or about 21 December 2000, without authority, absent oneself from the organization and did remain so absent until on or about 28 January 2001.

Specification 2: On or about 29 January 2001, without authority, absent oneself from the organization and did remain so absent until on or about 22 March 2001.

Specification 3: On or about 5 April 2001, without authority, absent oneself from the organization and did remain so absent until on or about 13 April 2001.

(2) **Legal Consultation Date:** 18 April 2001

(3) Basis for Separation: Pursuant to the applicant's request for discharge under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 10, in lieu of trial by court-martial.

(4) Recommended Characterization: Under Other Than Honorable Conditions

(5) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 15 January 2002 / Under Other Than Honorable Conditions

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 29 September 1999 / 4 years

b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 33 / High School Graduate / 122

c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 51B10, Carpentry and Masonry Specialist / 2 years, 25 days

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

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

f. **Awards and Decorations:** ASR

g. **Performance Ratings:** NA

h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Three Personnel Action Forms, reflect the applicant's duty status changed as follows:

From "Present for Duty (PDY)," to "Absent Without Leave (AWOL)," effective 21 December 2000;

From "AWOL" to "Dropped From Rolls (DFR)," effective 20 January 2001; and,

From "PDY" to "AWOL" to "DFR," effective 29 January 2001. (The applicant returned from the first AWOL period on 28 January 2001 and went AWOL again on 29 January 2001)

Charge Sheet as described in previous paragraph 3c(1).

i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** 94 days:

AWOL, 21 December 2000 – 26 January 2001 / Returned to Military Control

AWOL, 29 January 2001 – 21 March 2001 / Apprehended by Civil Authorities

AWOL, 5 April 2001 – 12 April 2001 / NIF

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: Psychiatric Evaluation, 7 March 2001, reflects the applicant was diagnosed with: Axis I: Generalized Anxiety Disorder; Major Depression, severe, recurrent w/psychosis; and Axis IV: Severity psychosocial stressors was mild. The applicant had educational problems. Had a BA in Psychology and was not using it. Had housing problems. Sibling asked the applicant to moveout. Had other psychosocial and environmental problems. Had recurrent psychosis and a long history of mental health treatment.

Vocational-Neuropsychological Evaluation, 18 July 2008, reflects the applicant was diagnosed with: Axis I: Major Depressive Disorder, recurrent, moderate with history of psychotic features,

296.32; R/O Schizoaffective Disorder; Generalized Anxiety Disorder, 300.02; R/O alcohol abuse; Axis II: Obsessive-Compulsive and Schizoid personality features; Axis IV: Moderate psychosocial stressors related to current unemployment, limited social support, chronic mental health difficulties.

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: DD Form 149; DD Form 214; Vocational-Neuropsychological Evaluation; Psychiatric Evaluation; VA Form 21-22; DD Form 458; partial separation packet.

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 10 provides, in pertinent part, that a member who has committed an offense or offenses for which the authorized punishment includes a punitive discharge may submit a request for a discharge for the good of the Service in lieu of trial by court-martial. The request may be submitted at any time after charges have been preferred and must include the individual's admission of guilt.

(5) Paragraph 10-8a stipulates a discharge under other than honorable conditions normally is appropriate for a Soldier who is discharged in lieu of trial by court-martial. However, the separation authority may direct a general discharge if such is merited by the Soldier's overall record during the current enlistment. (See chap 3, sec II.)

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 "KFS" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 10, In Lieu of Trial by Court-Martial.

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 contends going AWOL was a result of a mental health issue which was subsequently diagnosed within a year of being discharged. The applicant provided Psychiatric Evaluation, 7 March 2001, which reflects the applicant was diagnosed with: Axis I: Generalized Anxiety Disorder; Major Depression, severe, recurrent w/psychosis; and Axis IV: Severity psychosocial stressors is mild. Vocational-Neuropsychological Evaluation, 18 July 2008, which reflects the applicant was diagnosed with: Axis I: Major Depressive Disorder, recurrent, moderate with history of psychotic features, 296.32; R/O Schizoaffective Disorder; Generalized Anxiety Disorder, 300.02; R/O alcohol abuse; Axis II: Obsessive-Compulsive and Schizoid personality features; Axis IV: Moderate psychosocial stressors related to current unemployment, limited social support, chronic mental health difficulties. The AMHRR does not contain a Mental Status Evaluation.

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: Major Depression with Psychosis, Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found evidence that the applicant was diagnosed with Major Depression with Psychosis and Generalized Anxiety Disorder during military service.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that there is evidence that the applicant was diagnosed with Major Depression with Psychosis and Generalized Anxiety Disorder during military service to include a psychiatric admission for Major Depression with Psychosis in February 2001. Given that Major Depression with Psychosis is associated with being out of touch with reality, having difficulty with daily functioning, paranoid and delusional thinking, confusion, and avoidance, the applicant's Major Depression with Psychosis most likely contributed to the AWOLs that led to the separation. Therefore, the AWOLs are 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 Major Depression with Psychosis outweighed the AWOL basis for separation for the aforementioned reason(s).

b. Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends going AWOL was a result of a mental health issue which was subsequently diagnosed within a year of being discharged. The Board determined that this contention was valid and voted to upgrade the characterization of service due to Major Depression with Psychosis mitigating the applicant's AWOL charges.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's Major Depression with Psychosis mitigating applicant's AWOL basis for separation. 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 voted not to change the reentry eligibility (RE) code due to the severity of applicant's Major Depression with Psychosis diagnosis. 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 Major Depression with Psychosis mitigated the applicant's misconduct of AWOL. 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 not to change the reentry eligibility (RE) code due to the severity of applicant's Major Depression with Psychosis diagnosis.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

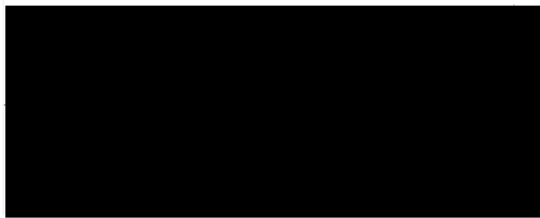
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10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- 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, paragraph 14-12a

Authenticating Official:

4/30/2024



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