

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, was a good Soldier and never had any problems or was in trouble until after the second deployment to Afghanistan. The applicant was involved in multiple enemy attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the battles was the battle for Sadr City, which lasted 29 days. In another incident, the applicant was driving a tractor trailer in Afghanistan, and an IED went off as the truck drove over it and knocked out the applicant for about 30 seconds. This incident started causing the applicant to have migraine headaches and multiple other injuries. After returning from deployment, the applicant struggled getting to muster on time. The applicant also had medication prescribed for pain from the injuries. The applicant was in trouble for losing a bottle of pills. The superiors began to keep a file on the applicant and told the applicant they could continue to let the file get bigger or they could just put the applicant out of the Army. The applicant did not want to further their chances of getting into severe trouble and opted to let them discharge the applicant from the Army. The applicant was told the discharge would be honorable; however, when they checked the paperwork, they noticed they received a general (under honorable conditions). The acting 1SG told the applicant the character of service was a done deal and could not be changed; but the applicant could request an upgrade after the discharge.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 5 December 2023, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD mitigating applicant's multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs 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 and determined the reentry eligibility (RE) code was proper and equitable due to applicant's PTSD diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of 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:** Pattern of Misconduct / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12b / JKA / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 6 June 2012

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:** 6 September 2007 / 6 years, 2 weeks
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 20 / High School Transcript / 103
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 91B10, Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic / 6 years, 24 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** ARNG, 13 May 2006 – 5 September 2007 / HD IADT, 13 July 2006 – 8 December 2006 / UNC (Concurrent Service)
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Afghanistan (14 August 2011 – 29 December 2011); Iraq (10 November 2007 – 19 October 2008)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** ACM-CS, AAM-2, AGCM, NDSM, GWOTSM-2, ICM-CS, ASR, OSR, NATOMDL, CAB, PH, MUC
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** Orders 151-0014, 30 May 2012, reflect the applicant was to be reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and discharged on 6 June 2012 from the Regular Army.

The applicant's DD Form 214, reflects the applicant had 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:** None
 - (2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: DD Form 293; DD Form 214; DD Form 215.

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 good service, including two combat tours. The applicant was never in trouble until after the second deployment.

The applicant contends being involved in multiple enemy attacks while being deployed. In one incident, the applicant was driving a tractor trailer and drove over an IED. The applicant was knocked out for about 30 seconds and this incident started to cause the applicant to have migraine headaches along with the other multiple injuries. The applicant had difficulty getting to muster on time and was in trouble for losing pain medicine. The applicant did not submit any evidence, other than the applicant's statement, to support the contention the discharge resulted from any medical condition. The AMHRR does not contain a mental status evaluation.

The applicant contends the superiors began to keep a file on the applicant and told the applicant they could continue to let the file become bigger or they could just put the applicant out of the Army. The applicant did not want to further the chances of getting into more trouble and opted to let them discharge the applicant. The applicant was told they would receive an honorable discharge; however, received a general (under honorable conditions) discharge. The applicant's AMHRR does not contain any indication or evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

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, and Chronic Adjustment Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found the applicant is 50 service connected (SC) for PTSD and 30 percent SC for Chronic Adjustment 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, as there is relationship between PTSD and avoidant behavior, there is a nexus between the applicant's misconduct characterized by missing formation/FTR and applicant's disorder such that applicant's misconduct is mitigated. Also, given the association between PTSD and problems with authority figures, there is a nexus between the applicant's reported minor disrespect of NCO and applicant's SC diagnosis such that the misconduct is 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 PTSD outweighed the multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs basis for separation for the aforementioned reason(s).

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends good service, including two combat tours. The applicant was never in trouble until after the second deployment. 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 PTSD fully outweighing the applicant's multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs basis for separation.

(2) The applicant contends being involved in multiple enemy attacks while being deployed. In one incident, the applicant was driving a tractor trailer and drove over an IED. The applicant was knocked out for about 30 seconds and this incident started to cause the applicant to have migraine headaches along with other multiple injuries. The applicant had difficulty getting to muster on time and was in trouble for losing pain medicine. 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 PTSD fully outweighing the applicant's multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs basis for separation.

(3) The applicant contends the superiors began to keep a file on the applicant and told the applicant they could continue to let the file become bigger or they could just put the applicant out of the Army right now. The applicant did not want to further the chances of getting into more trouble and opted to let them discharge the applicant. The applicant was told they would receive an honorable discharge; however, received a general (under honorable conditions) discharge. 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 PTSD fully outweighing the applicant's multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs basis for separation.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD mitigating applicant's multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs 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 and determined the reentry eligibility (RE) code was proper and equitable due to applicant's PTSD diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of 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:

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

AR20210001401

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's PTSD mitigated the applicant's misconduct of multiple FTRs and disrespect to NCOs. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

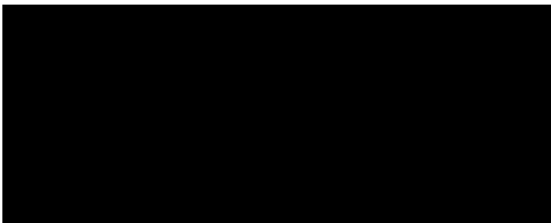
(2) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) under the same pretexts, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JKN.

(3) The RE code will not change due to applicant's PTSD diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of 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
- a. **Change Authority to:** AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a

Authenticating Official:



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