

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. Application Date: 15 March 2021
- b. Date Received: 15 March 2021
- c. Counsel: None

2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:

a. **Applicant Requests:** The current characterization of service for the period under review is general (under honorable conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

b. **Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s):** The applicant requests relief contending, the applicant used alcohol to cope with personal problems with a significant other. The applicant's application contends post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health issues/condition was related to the request.

c. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 09 July 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the circumstances surrounding the discharge, MDD and PTSD. The applicant's BH conditions mitigate the basis of separation, DUI. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed 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 RE-Code. Please see **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more detail regarding the Board's decision. Board member names are available upon request.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. **Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization:** Misconduct (Serious Offense) / AR 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c / JKQ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 19 March 2012

c. **Separation Facts:**

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 15 February 2012

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant was arrested for Driving Under the Influence on 15 October 2011.

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** General (Under Honorable Conditions)

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** 21 February 2012

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 29 February 2012 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment/Reenlistment Under Review: 1 October 2010 / 3 years, 22 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 22 / HS Graduate / 85

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-3 / 92Y10, Unit Supply Specialist / 1 year, 5 months, 19 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (GOMOR), 22 November 2011, reflects the applicant was reprimanded for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol.

(2) Field Grade Article 15, 15 December 2011, reflects the applicant physically controlled vehicle while the alcohol concentration in the applicant's breath was, as shown by chemical analysis, equal to or exceeded .08 grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath, which was the legal limit. The punishment consisted of reduction to private/E-1; forfeiture of \$733 pay or 2 months, suspended, to be automatically remitted if not vacated before 25 April 2012; and extra duty and restriction for 45 days.

(3) Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 25 January 2012, reflects the applicant could understand and participate in administrative proceedings and could appreciate the difference between right and wrong. The applicant was diagnosed with Alcohol Abuse, in early remission.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s): The following documents have been provided to the ARBA Medical Advisor, if applicable. See **“Board Discussion and Determination”** for Medical Advisor Details.

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) AMHRR provided: See MSE as described in item 4h(3).

4. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: DD Form 293

5. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None submitted with the application.

6. 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. Office, Secretary of Defense memorandum (Supplemental Guidance to Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Discharge Upgrade Requests by Veterans Claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), 3 September 2014, directed the Service Discharge Review Boards (DRBs) and Service Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NRs) to carefully consider the revised PTSD criteria, detailed medical considerations and mitigating factors when taking action on applications from former service members administratively discharged UOTHC and who have been diagnosed with PTSD by a competent mental health professional representing a civilian healthcare provider in order to determine if it would be appropriate to upgrade the characterization of the applicant's service.

c. Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Clarifying Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Requests by Veterans for Modification of their Discharge Due to Mental Health Conditions, Sexual Assault, or Sexual Harassment), 25 August 2017 issued clarifying guidance for the Secretary of Defense Directive to DRBs and BCM/NRs when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharges due in whole or in part to mental health conditions, including PTSD; Traumatic Brain Injury; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Boards are to give liberal consideration to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part to those conditions or experiences. The guidance further describes evidence sources and criteria and requires Boards to consider the conditions or experiences presented in evidence as potential mitigation for misconduct that led to the discharge.

d. Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Regarding Equity, Injustice, or Clemency Determinations), 25 July 2018 issued guidance to Military DRBs and BCM/NRs regarding equity, injustice, or clemency determinations. Clemency generally refers to relief specifically granted from a criminal sentence. However, the guidance applies to more than clemency from a sentencing in a court-martial; it also applies to other corrections, including changes in a discharge, which may be warranted based on equity or relief from injustice.

(1) This guidance does not mandate relief but rather provides standards and principles to guide Boards in application of their equitable relief authority. In determining whether to grant relief on the basis of equity, injustice, or clemency grounds, DRBs shall consider the prospect for rehabilitation, external evidence, sworn testimony, policy changes, relative severity of misconduct, mental and behavioral health conditions, official governmental acknowledgement that a relevant error or injustice was committed, and uniformity of punishment.

(2) Changes to the narrative reason for discharge and/or an upgraded character of service granted solely on equity, injustice, or clemency grounds normally should not result in separation pay, retroactive promotions, and payment of past medical expenses or similar

benefits that might have been received if the original discharge had been for the revised reason or had the upgraded service characterization.

e. Army Regulation 15-180 (Army Discharge Review Board), dated 25 September 2019, 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.

f. Army Regulation 635-200 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. It states:

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

(2) 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. 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. Paragraph 14-12c, states a Soldier is subject to action per this section for commission of a serious military or civilian offense, if the specific circumstances of the offense warrant separation and a punitive discharge is, or would be, authorized for the same or a closely related offense under the Manual for Courts-Martial.

(3) Chapter 15 provides explicitly for separation under the prerogative of the Secretary of the Army. Secretarial plenary separation authority is exercised sparingly and seldom delegated. Ordinarily, it is used when no other provision of this regulation applies, and early separation is clearly in the Army's best interest. Separations under this paragraph are effective only if approved in writing by the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary's approved designee as announced in updated memoranda. Secretarial separation authority is normally exercised on a case-by-case basis. If Secretarial Authority is granted normally correct the record to show the following:

- Separation Authority: Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 15
- Separation Code: JFF
- Reenlistment Code: RE1
- Narrative Reason for Separation: Secretarial Plenary Authority
- Character of Service: Honorable

7. SUMMARY OF FACT(S): Standard of Review. The Army Discharge Review Board considers applications for upgrade as instructed by Department of Defense Instruction 1332.28.

- a.** The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable. The applicant's AMHRR, the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.
- b.** The applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12c, by reason of Misconduct (Serious Offense), with a characterization of service of General (Under Honorable Conditions).
- c.** The applicant requests relief contending, the applicant used alcohol to cope with personal problems with a significant other. There is no evidence in the AMHRR the applicant ever sought assistance before committing the misconduct, which led to the separation action under review.
- d.** The applicant's application contends PTSD and other mental health issues/condition were related to the request. The applicant's AMHRR is void of a mental health diagnosis. The applicant underwent a MSE on 25 January 2012, which reflects the applicant could understand and participate in administrative proceedings and could appreciate the difference between right and wrong. The applicant was diagnosed with Alcohol Abuse, in early remission. The applicant did not provide evidence of mental health diagnosis.

8. 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: MDD, self-asserted PTSD.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found VA service connection for Major Depressive Disorder establishes nexus with active 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 the applicant had two mitigating BH conditions, MDD and PTSD. As there is an association between MDD, PTSD and self-medication with alcohol, there is a nexus between his diagnosis of MDD, PTSD, and his two incidents of DUI.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** Based on liberally considering all the evidence before the Board, the ADRB determined that the conditions (MDD, PTSD) outweighed the basis of separation,

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None.

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant requests relief contending, the applicant used alcohol to cope with personal problems with a significant other.

The Board considered this contention during deliberations and found it valid. The Board concurred with the Medical Advisor's opine that there is an association between MDD, PTSD and self-medication with alcohol, therefore there is a nexus between the applicant's diagnosis of MDD, PTSD, and his two incidents of DUI.

(2) The applicant contends PTSD and other mental health issues/condition were related to the request.

The Board's Medical Advisor reviewed DoD and VA medical records and found VA service connection for Major Depressive Disorder establishes nexus with active service. The Board concurred with the Medical Advisor's opine that states the applicant had two mitigating BH conditions, MDD and PTSD.

d. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the circumstances surrounding the discharge, MDD and PTSD. The applicant's BH conditions mitigate the basis of separation, DUI. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed 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 RE Code, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) Published Department of Defense guidance indicates the guidance is not intended to interfere or impede on the Board's statutory independence. The Board determines the relative weight of the action that was the basis for the discharge and whether it supports relief or not. In reaching its determination, the Board considers the applicant's petition, available records and any supporting documents included with the petition.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's MDD and PTSD outweighed the applicant's misconduct, DUI. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

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

(4) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

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9. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order:** 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:

7/30/2025

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
FTR – Failure to Report

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