

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 14 May 2021**b. Date Received:** 14 May 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 under other than honorable conditions. The applicant requests an upgrade to general (under honorable conditions) and a narrative reason change.

b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant requests relief contending, despite significant family and financial hardships as a single parent, they made consistent efforts to fulfill contractual obligations, communicated with leadership regarding absences, completed approved make-up drills, and demonstrated merit, willingness, and good-faith participation throughout their service, which should be considered in evaluating their request.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 12 February 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board granted the request upon finding the separation was inequitable. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to General, Under Honorable Conditions and changed to the separation authority to AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a. 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: NIF / USAR 135-178 / NIF / NIF / Under Other than Honorable Conditions

b. Date of Discharge: 16 August 2018

c. Separation Facts: The case separation files were not properly stored in the Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR); however, the available details are provided below.

(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 Under Review: 17 January 2013 / 6 years (United States Army Reserve)

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 25 / NIF / NIF

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 92G1O 00 Food Service Specialist / 5 years, 7 months

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) An authenticated DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) provides the applicant attended basic combat training (BCT) and advanced individual training (AIT) between 1 April and 5 September 2013 and was released from active duty training under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 4 for completion of require active service with an honorable characterization of service. The applicant has completed their first full term of service.

(2) On 16 August 2018, the applicant received USAR separation orders effective the same day under the provisions of AR 600-8-19, paragraph 10-15 with an under other than honorable conditions characterization of service, which imposed a reduction to the lowest enlisted paygrade.

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:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: ACTS Online Application

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None provided with application.

7. STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCE(S): 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.

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. Army Regulation 135-178 (Army National Guard and Reserve Enlisted Administrative Separations) sets forth the policies, standards, and procedures, to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Army National Guard and USAR enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons. The separation policies throughout the different Chapters in this regulation promote the readiness of the Army by providing an orderly means to judge the suitability of persons to serve on the basis of their conduct and their ability to meet required standards of duty performance and discipline. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, and convictions by civil authorities.

(1) Chapter 2 provides the possible characterizations include an honorable, general (under honorable conditions), under other than honorable conditions, or uncharacterized if the Soldier is in entry-level status. However, the permissible range of characterization varies based on the reason for separation. The characterization is based upon the quality of the Soldier's service, including the reason for separation and determination in accordance with standards of acceptable personal conduct and performance of duty as found in the UCMJ, Army regulations, and the time-honored customs and traditions of the Army. The reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the discharge are considered on the issue of characterization.

(2) Chapter 13 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, it will normally correct the record to show the following:

- Separation Authority: Army Regulation 135-178, Chapter 13
- Separation Code: NA
- Reenlistment Code: NA
- Narrative Reason for Separation: Secretarial Plenary Authority
- Character of Service: Honorable

8. 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 general (under honorable conditions) and a narrative reason change. A review of the record provides administrative irregularity in the proper retention of records, specifically, the AMHRR is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army Reserve. They served 5 years and 7 months of their 6-year contractual obligation.

(1) Although the specific facts and circumstances surrounding the applicant's separation are unknown, USAR discharge orders reflects they were discharged under the provisions of AR 135-178 with an under other than honorable conditions characterization of service, which imposed a reduction to the lowest enlisted grade.

(2) The applicant contends despite significant family and financial hardships as a single parent, they made consistent efforts to fulfill contractual obligations, communicated with leadership regarding absences, completed approved make-up drills, and demonstrated merit, willingness, and good-faith participation throughout their service, which should be considered in evaluating their request.

b. Army Regulation 135-178 sets forth the policies, standards, and procedures, to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Army National Guard and USAR enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons. The separation policies throughout the different Chapters in this regulation promote the readiness of the Army by providing an orderly means to judge the suitability of persons to serve on the basis of their conduct and their ability to meet required standards of duty performance and discipline. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, and convictions by civil authorities.

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? **No.** The Board reviewed DoD and VA medical records and found no mitigating BH diagnoses on the applicant. The applicant provided no documents or testimony of a condition or experience, that, when applying liberal consideration, could have excused or mitigated a discharge.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **N/A**

(3) Does the condition or experience excuse or mitigate the discharge? **N/A**

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **N/A**

b. Prior Decisions Cited: **N/A**

c. Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends despite significant family and financial hardships as a single parent, they made consistent efforts to fulfill contractual obligations, communicated with leadership regarding absences, completed approved make-up drills, and demonstrated merit, willingness, and good-faith participation throughout their service, which should be considered in evaluating their request. We recognize the applicant's significant family and financial hardships as a single parent, and their consistent efforts to fulfill contractual obligations, and communicated with leadership regarding absences. The Board considered this contention during board proceedings along with the totality of the applicant's service record, and determined that the applicant's length of service outweighed the applicant's absences from drill and relief was warranted.

d. The Board determined in a records review conducted on 12 February 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board granted the request upon finding the separation was inequitable. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to General, Under Honorable Conditions and changed to the separation authority to AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a.

e. Rationale for Decision:

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE**AR20210009283**

(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 application, available records and any supporting documents included with the application.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service because there were mitigating factors for the Board to consider. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to General, Under Honorable Conditions and changed to the separation authority to AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

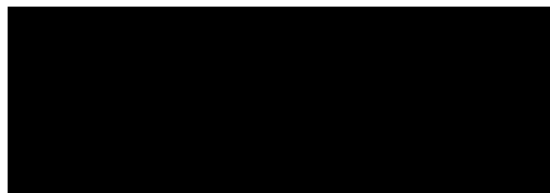
a. Issue a New Separation Order: Yes

b. Change Characterization to: Honorable

c. Change Authority to: AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a

Authenticating Official:

3/11/2026

**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