

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

a. Application Date: 11 January 2021

b. Date Received: 10 March 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.

b. The applicant seeks relief contending, they made one mistake that caused them to be discharged and they cannot receive their G.I. Bill benefits. The applicant is a struggling veteran that just wants to start school to further their education.

(1) Unfortunately, the decision was made to separate them, after they made a mistake and failed to act as a servicemember should and forfeited their chance to be a great Soldier. The applicant is requesting a change in separation status, understanding their actions put them in this predicament, but their aspirations have not changed and the applicant feels they still deserve a chance to achieve them. Being a very family oriented person and this being the first time away from their family, as a substitute they began accepting companionship from whomever it came from, which landed them with the wrong group of people and overtime was their downfall. It still frustrates the applicant to this day, how they put themselves in a position to be separated from the Army. Because of this, they have learned firsthand how decisions made can have either a negative or positive effect on their life.

(2) Fortunately, their time in the military instilled in the applicant the confidence and dedication to do better, no matter the situation they find themselves in. As a soldier, they were motivated and passionate with all their work, from in the dining facility to physical fitness. They can confidently say they loved being a servicemember and strived to show that, with every opportunity they were given. This can be seen through their awards and achievements, which are included. They originally enlisted in the Army as a steppingstone, to later return to be part of the justice system. They are a full-time student studying Forensic Investigation, which is their passion. The separation status will add difficulty to their road to be a member of the criminal justice system. After they have forfeited their chance to demonstrate success as a Soldier, due to their actions, they are asking for the opportunity to be a productive member of society as the applicant sees fit without any barriers, resulting from their time in service.

c. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 31 July 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's circumstances surrounding the discharge (Unspecified Depressive and Disorder diagnosis, MST). 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, Chapter 15, and the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code to JFF. The reentry eligibility (RE) code will not change.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Misconduct (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 11 October 2019

c. Separation Facts:

(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:** NA

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** NIF

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 6 July 2016 / 3 years, 21 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / High School Diploma / 96

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 92G10 Culinary Specialist / 3 years, 3 months

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Korea / None (16 January 2017 – 1 February 2018)

f. Awards and Decorations: AAM-6, NDSM, KDMS, HSM, ASR, COA

g. Performance Ratings: None

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) On 06 July 2016, the applicant enlisted in the Regular Army for 3 years and 21 weeks as a PVT. The Enlisted Record Brief provides the applicant completed a one year overseas tour in Korea, promoted to SPC (1 July 2018), and has been awarded six Army Achievement Medals. On 09 May 2019, they were flagged, Suspend Favorable Personnel Actions (FLAG), for drug abuse adverse action (UA) and for field-initiated involuntary separation (BA). On 31 July 2019, they were demoted to PV2.

(2) The AMHRR is void of the entire separation proceedings, however, on 25 September 2019, the applicant was issued separation orders. A DD Form 214 reflects the applicant was discharged accordingly on 11 October 2019, with 3 years, 9 months, and 21 days of service, noting the following:

- Authority: AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2)
- Narrative: Misconduct (Drug Abuse)
- SPD Code: JKK
- Reentry Code: RE-4
- Service Characterization: General (Under Honorable Conditions)
- Total NET Active Service this Period: 3 years, 3 months, 5 days
- Remarks: Delayed Entry Program: 21 December 2015 – 5 July 2016; Member has not completed first full term of service.
- Lost Time: None
- Signature: Electronically signed.

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 (Application for the Review of Discharge); Self-Authored Statement; Six Recommendation for Awards (AAMs); Six Army Achievement Medal Awards

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None submitted for this 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), 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.

d. Army Regulation 635-200 provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) An Under other-than-honorable-conditions discharge is an administrative separation from the Service under conditions other than honorable and it may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, security reasons, or in lieu of trial by court martial based on certain circumstances or patterns of behavior or acts or omissions that constitute a significant departure from the conduct expected of Soldiers in the Army.

(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. 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. 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.

(5) 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.

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 "JJK" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Misconduct (Drug Abuse).

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:

(1) RE-1 Applies to: Person completing his or her term of active service who is considered qualified to reenter the U.S. Army. Eligibility: Qualified for enlistment if all other criteria are met.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

g. Army Regulation 600-85 (Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)), provided a comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control policies, procedures, and responsibilities for Soldiers for ASAP services. The ASAP is a command program that emphasizes readiness and personal responsibility. The ultimate decision regarding separation or retention of abusers is the responsibility of the Soldier's chain of command. Abuse of alcohol or the use of illicit drugs by military personnel is inconsistent with Army values and the standards of performance, discipline, and readiness necessary to accomplish the Army's mission.

(1) Unit commanders must intervene early and refer all Soldiers suspected or identified as alcohol and/or drug abusers to the ASAP. The unit commander should recommend enrollment based on the Soldier's potential for continued military service in terms of professional skills, behavior, and potential for advancement.

(2) ASAP participation is mandatory for all Soldiers who are command referred. Failure to attend a mandatory counseling session may constitute a violation of Article 86 (Absence Without Leave) of the UCMJ.

(3) Alcohol and/or other drug abusers, and in some cases dependent alcohol users, may be enrolled in the ASAP when such enrollment is clinically recommended. Soldiers who fail to participate adequately in, or to respond successfully to, rehabilitation will be processed for administrative separation and not be provided another opportunity for rehabilitation except under the most extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Clinical Director in consultation with the unit commander.

(4) All Soldiers who are identified as drug abusers, without exception, will be referred to the ASAP counseling center for screening; be considered for disciplinary action under the UCMJ, as appropriate; and be processed for administrative separation in accordance with Army Regulation 635-200.

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S): 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. A review of the records provides there was administrative irregularity in the proper retention of official military records, specifically, the referral to ASAP [a two-part mandatory clinical assessment, required within 4 days of the first positive urinalysis], a charge sheet, investigation report(s), and the separation package.

b. A review of the available evidence provides the applicant enlisted in the Regular Army as a PVT, was stationed in Korea for one year, promoted to SPC, and served for 2 years, 10 months, and 3 days prior to their misconduct. They were flagged for drug abuse adverse action and field-initiated elimination, as a result, demoted to PV2. Aside from their missing separation package, the applicant was separated under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Misconduct (Drug Abuse), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service.

(1) The record is void of a mental status and/or medical examination and whether or not the applicant was evaluated by ASAP.

(2) They served 3 years, 3 months, and 6 days of their 3 year, 21 week contractual obligation.

c. Chapter 14 establishes policy and prescribes procedures for separation members for misconduct. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, commission of a serious offense and convictions by civil authorities. Action will be taken to separate a member for misconduct when it is clearly established that rehabilitation is impracticable or is 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.

d. Published Department of Defense guidance indicates that the guidance is not intended to interfere or impede on the Board's statutory independence. The Board will determine the relative weight of the action that led to the discharge and whether it supports relief or not. In reaching its determination, the Board shall consider the applicant's petition, available records and/or submitted documents in support of the petition.

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: the applicant was diagnosed in-service, via MEB C&Ps, with Unspecified Depressive and Anxiety Disorders. Post-service, the applicant is service connected for Mood Disorder and reported a MST.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The applicant was diagnosed in-service, via MEB C&Ps, with Unspecified Depressive and Anxiety Disorders. The applicant reported a MST.

(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 MST and service-connected conditions diagnosed while serving are mitigating. There is a nexus between trauma, and related service connected diagnoses, and substance abuse.

(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 condition and experience outweighed the basis of separation - Misconduct Drug Abuse.

b. Response to Contention(s): The applicant seeks relief contending, they made one mistake that caused them to be discharged and they cannot receive their G.I. Bill benefits. The applicant is a struggling veteran that just wants to start school to further their education.

The Board determined that eligibility for Veteran's benefits, to include educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill, healthcare or VA loans, do not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs for further assistance.

(1) Unfortunately, the decision was made to separate them, after they made a mistake and failed to act as a servicemember should and forfeited their chance to be a great Soldier. The applicant is requesting a change in separation status, understanding their actions put them in this predicament, but their aspirations have not changed and the applicant feels they still deserve a chance to achieve them. Being a very family oriented person and this being the first time away from their family, as a substitute they began accepting companionship from whomever it came from, which landed them with the wrong group of people and overtime was their downfall. It still frustrates the applicant to this day, how they put themselves in a position to be separated from the Army. Because of this, they have learned firsthand how decisions made can have either a negative or positive effect on their life.

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 BH diagnosis and MST experience fully outweighing the applicant's drug abuse basis for separation.

(2) Fortunately, their time in the military instilled in the applicant the confidence and dedication to do better, no matter the situation they find themselves in. As a soldier, they were motivated and passionate with all their work, from in the dining facility to physical fitness. They can confidently say they loved being a servicemember and strived to show that, with every opportunity they were given. This can be seen through their awards and achievements, which are included. They originally enlisted in the Army as a steppingstone, to later return to be part of the justice system. They are a full-time student studying Forensic Investigation, which is their passion. The separation status will add difficulty to their road to be a member of the criminal justice system. After they have forfeited their chance to demonstrate success as a Soldier, due to their actions, they are asking for the opportunity to be a productive member of society as the applicant sees fit without any barriers, resulting from their time in service.

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 BH diagnosis and MST experience fully outweighing the applicant's drug abuse basis for separation.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the circumstances surrounding the discharge (Unspecified Depressive and Disorder diagnosis, MST). 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, Chapter 15, and the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code to JFF. The reentry eligibility (RE) code will not change.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board carefully considered the applicant's request, supporting documents, evidence in the records, a medical review, and published Department of Defense guidance for liberal consideration of discharge upgrade requests. The Board considered the applicant's statement, record of service, the frequency and nature of

misconduct, and the reason for separation. The Board concurred with the conclusion of the medical advising official that the applicant's medical diagnosis mitigates the basis of separation and warrants a change to the character and narrative reason for separation. Based on a preponderance of evidence, the Board determined that the reason for the applicant's separation was inequitable. The Board decided to retain the RE4 based on the medical diagnosis.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's reason for discharge to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code to JFF.

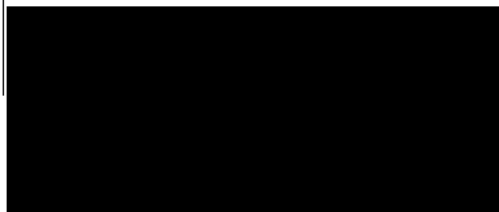
(3) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. **Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order:** Yes
- b. **Change Characterization to:** Honorable
- c. **Change Reason / SPD code to:** Secretarial Authority/JFF
- d. **Change RE Code to:** No change
- e. **Change Authority to:** AR 635-200

Authenticating Official:

9/3/2024



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