

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

a. **Application Date:** 6 March 2021

b. **Date Received:** 10 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, in effect, the applicant was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and was not in the right state of mind and was 90 days from the expiration of time in service (ETS) date. The applicant currently has a 100-percent disability rating due to PTSD.

Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 30 May 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service, to include combat service, the circumstances surrounding the discharge (PTSD diagnosis), and post-service accomplishments. 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 determined the reentry code is proper and equitable and voted not to change it. 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:** Pattern of Misconduct / AR 635-200, Paragraph 14-12b / JKA / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 6 February 2013

c. **Separation Facts:** The applicant's AMHRR is void of the complete facts and circumstances pertaining to the applicant's separation from active duty.

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** NIF

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: NIF

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** NIF

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** NIF

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 16 January 2013 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 12 May 2009 / 4 years
- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 22 / HS Graduate / NIF
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 / 25U10, Signal Support System Specialist / 3 years, 8 months, 14 days
NIF
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Iraq (25 May 2011 – 18 December 2011)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** AGCM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ICM-CS, ASR
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** DA Forms 4187 (Personnel Action), reflects the applicant's duty status changed from Present for Duty (PDY) to Absent Leave (AWOL), effective 12 October 2021; and from AWOL to PDY, effective 22 October 2012.
- i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** AWOL x 11 days (12 October 2012 – 22 October 2012) / Returned
- 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:** The applicant provides a letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), 16 February 2021, which reflects, in part, the applicant was awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of 70-percent, effective 1 December 2020. The nature of the disabilities is not listed.

(2) **AMHRR provided:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: DD Form 293, DD Form 214, Letter from VA

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. 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 14-12b, 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.

(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

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 honorable. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The applicant's service AMHRR is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to his discharge from the Army. The applicant's DD Form 214 reflects the applicant was separated under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12b, with a general (under honorable conditions) discharge and a RE code of "3." The narrative reason specified by Army Regulations for a discharge under this chapter is "Pattern of Misconduct" and the separation code is "JKA."

c. The applicant contends the applicant was suffering from PTSD and was not in the right state of mind and the applicant currently has a 100-percent service-connected disability rating due to PTSD. The applicant's AMHRR is void of mental health diagnosis. The applicant provides a letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), 16 February 2021, which reflects, in part, the applicant was awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of 70-percent, effective 1 December 2020. The nature of the disabilities is not listed.

d. The applicant states the applicant was 90 days from the ETS date. The applicant completed 3 years, 8 months, and 14 days of a 4-year enlistment.

e. If the applicant desires a personal appearance hearing, it is his responsibility to meet the burden of proof and provide the appropriate documents (i.e., the discharge packet) or other evidence sufficient to explain the facts, circumstances, and reasons underlying the separation action, for the Board's consideration because they are not available in the official record.

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. [Note-Adjustment DO is subsumed under the diagnosis of PTSD.].

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found VA service connection for PTSD establishes nexus with 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 as the basis for separation was because of being AWOL, and wrongfully using substances, these offenses would be mitigated by their diagnosis of PTSD given the association between PTSD, avoidant behavior and self-medication.

(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 applicant's diagnosis of PTSD outweighed the basis of separation, AWOL and substance abuse.

b. Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends the applicant was suffering from PTSD and was not in the right state of mind and the applicant currently has a 100-percent service-connected disability rating due to PTSD. The Board considered this contention and determined that it was valid due to the applicant's

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's AWOL and substance abuse offenses. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

c. 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, PTSD, mitigates the basis of separation, AWOL and substance abuse and warrants a change to the characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), and the separation code to JKN. The Board determined the RE Code was proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

d. 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 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's misconduct of substance abuse and AWOL. 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.

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

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

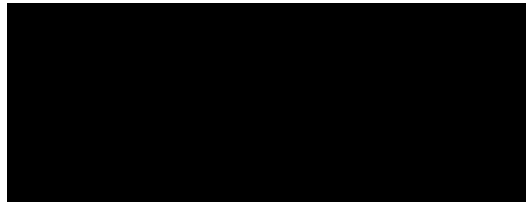
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10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- 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

Authenticating Official:

6/26/2025



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
UOTHHC – Under Other Than
Honorable Conditions
VA – Department of Veterans
Affairs