

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 1 June 2021**b. Date Received:** 1 June 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 and a narrative reason change.

The applicant seeks relief contending, in effect, after returning from deployment the applicant returned to a troubled marriage. The applicant was in a dark place and did not possess the coping mechanisms to process the experiences of deployment and the eventual end of a marriage and the applicant turned to alcohol and painkillers. There were very limited mental health resources available, and the applicant didn't realize the struggles were related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The applicant has sought help to cope with PTSD and its triggers. The applicant states there was honorable service prior to the separation.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 26 February 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 (OBHI and PTSD diagnoses), and post-service accomplishments. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason for separation and reenry code is proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

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: Unacceptable Conduct / AR 600-8-24, Paragraph 4-2B and 4-24A(1) / BNC / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 27 August 2006**c. Separation Facts:****(1) Date of Notification to appear before a Board of Inquiry:** NIF**(2) Basis for Separation:** NIF**(3) Board of Inquiry (BOI):** NIF**(4) Legal Consultation Date:** NIF**(5) GOSA Recommendation Date / Characterization:** NIF**(6) DASA Review Board Decision Date / Characterization:** NIF

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

- a. **Date / Period of Appointment:** 17 May 2002
- b. **Age at Appointment / Education:** 23 / Baccalaureate Degree
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** 0-3 / 31A Military Police / 4 years, 3 months, 11 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** Korea, SWA / Iraq (12 July 2004 – 8 February 2005)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** ARCOM-2, AAM, NDSM, ICM, GWOTSM, KKDSM, ASR OSR, CAB
- g. **Performance Ratings:** 28 February 2003 – 9 September 2003 / Best Qualified
10 September 2003 – 24 March 2004 / Best Qualified
25 March 2004 – 31 December 2004 / Best Qualified
1 January 2005 – 4 April 2005 / Best Qualified
5 April 2005 – 1 September 2005 / Best Qualified
2 September 2005 – 3 April 2006 / Do Not Promote
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:** NIF
- i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None
- j. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):**

(1) **Applicant provided:** Applicant provides letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), 18 December 2019, which reflects the applicant was awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of 70-percent. The nature of the applicant's disabilities is not listed. The applicant also provides a document from VA which lists the applicant's active problems, this list reflects, in part, anxiety disorder-anxiety state, unspecified and PTSD.

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: On-Line Application, service records, letters of support-2, Marksmanship Score Cards, ASAP Program Completion, Certificates, Certificates of Achievement-3, Diploma, PT Score Card, OERs, VA medical document, Letter from VA

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant is employed and is a frequent volunteer with the Heroes Project.

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 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges, sets forth the basic authority for the separation of commissioned and warrant officers.

(1) Paragraph 1-23 provides the authorized types of characterization of service or description of separation.

(2) Paragraph 1-23a, states an officer will normally receive an honorable characterization of service when the quality of the officer's service has met the standards of acceptable conduct and performance of duty, or the final revocation of a security clearance under DODI 5200.02 and AR 380-67 for reasons that do not involve acts of misconduct for an officer.

(3) Paragraph 1-23b, states an officer will normally receive a general (under honorable conditions) characterization of service when the officer's military record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge. A separation under general (under honorable conditions) normally appropriate when an officer: Submits an unqualified resignation; Separated based on misconduct; discharged for physical disability resulting from intentional misconduct or neglect; and, for final revocation of a security clearance.

(4) Chapter 4 outlines the policy and procedure for the elimination of officers from the active Army for substandard performance of duty.

(5) Paragraph 4-2b, prescribes for the elimination of an officer for misconduct, moral or professional dereliction, or in the interests of national security.

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 "BNC" as the appropriate code to assign commissioned officers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 600-8-24, Chapter 4-2b, unacceptable conduct.

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

The applicant's service AMHRR is void of the complete facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army. The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 600-8-24, by reason of Unacceptable Conduct, with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions).

The applicant requests the narrative reason be changed. The applicant was separated under the provisions AR 600-8-24 with an under other than honorable conditions discharge. The narrative reason specified by Army Regulations for a discharge under this paragraph is "Unacceptable Conduct." Army Regulation 635-5, Separation Documents, governs preparation of the DD Form 214 and dictates that entry of the narrative reason for separation, entered in block 28 and separation code, entered in block 26 of the form, will be exactly as listed in tables 2-2 or 2-3 of AR 635-5-1. There is no provision for any other reason to be entered under this regulation.

The applicant contends after returning from deployment the applicant returned to a troubled marriage. The applicant was in a dark place and did not possess the coping mechanisms to process the experiences of deployment and the eventual end of a marriage and the applicant turned to alcohol and painkillers. There were very limited mental health resources available, and the applicant didn't realize the struggles were related to PTSD. The applicant has sought help to cope with PTSD and its triggers. The applicant's AMHRR is void of a PTSD diagnosis. Applicant provides letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), 18 December 2019, which reflects the applicant was awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of 70-percent. The nature of the applicant's disabilities is not listed. The applicant also provides a document from VA which lists the applicant's active problems, this list reflects, in part, anxiety disorder-anxiety state, unspecified and PTSD.

The applicant states there was honorable service prior to the misconduct which led to the separation. The Board will consider the applicant service accomplishments and the quality of service according to the DODI 1332.28

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: Adjustment Disorder with Anxiety, variations of Anxiety Disorder, and PTSD.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** Adjustment Disorder with Anxiety and service connected for PTSD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that, given the VA diagnosed and service connected PTSD for combat, and that the trauma occurred prior to the misconduct there is a nexus between trauma and substance use, the basis is mitigated.

(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 or experience outweighed the basis of separation.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends after returning from deployment the applicant returned to a troubled marriage. The applicant was in a dark place and did not possess the coping mechanisms to process the experiences of deployment and the eventual end of a marriage and the applicant turned to alcohol and painkillers. There were very limited mental health resources available, and the applicant didn't realize the struggles were related to PTSD. The applicant has sought help to cope with PTSD and its triggers. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that it was valid due to the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's drug offense. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

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d. The Board determined: The Board considered the applicant's statement, record of service, the frequency and nature of misconduct, and the reason for separation. The Board found sufficient evidence of in-service mitigating factors (Length, Combat, Quality) and concurred with the conclusion of the medical advising official that given the VA diagnosed and service connected PTSD for combat, that the trauma occurred prior to the misconduct, and nexus between trauma and substance use, the basis is mitigated. Based on a preponderance of evidence, the Board determined that the character of service the applicant received upon separation was inequitable and warranted an upgrade.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) 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 drug abuse. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

(2) The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code, as the reason the applicant was discharged was both proper and equitable.

(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: No Change
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

3/22/2026

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

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