

**1. Applicant's Name:**

- a. **Application Date:** 9 April 2021
- b. **Date Received:** 22 April 2021
- c. **Counsel:** None

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

a. **Applicant's Requests and Issues:** The current characterization of service for period under review is General (Under Honorable Conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to Honorable.

b. The applicant seeks relief contending, a change of in their "character of service" allows them to gain some financial help to seek higher education.

c. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 9 October 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board denied the request upon finding the separation was both proper and equitable.

*Please see Section 9 of this document for more detail regarding the Board's decision.*

**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:** 24 September 2014

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:** 9 September 2014 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 10 September 2012 / 3 years, 23 weeks

b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 18 / High School Diploma / 87

c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 (PFC) / 92Y10 Unit Supply Specialist / 2 years, 15 days

**d. Prior Service / Characterizations:** None

**e. Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Afghanistan / 8 months, 10 days: (13 July 2013 – 23 March 2014)

**f. Awards and Decorations:** ACM-CS, ARCOM, AAM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, NATO MDL, COA [although missing on DD Form 214]

**g. Performance Ratings:** NA**h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**

(1) On 10 September 2012, with parental consent, the applicant enlisted in the Regular Army for 3 years and 23 weeks as a PVT (E-1). The Enlisted Record Brief provides on 10 September 2013, they were promoted to PFC (E-3). The applicant deployed to Afghanistan for over eight months (13 July 2013 – 23 March 2014) and was awarded an Army Commendation Medal.

(a) On 16 June 2014, although not in the record, as a result of nonjudicial punishment, the applicant was demoted to PVT.

(b) On 18 August 2014, they were flagged, Suspend Favorable Personnel Actions (FLAG), for field-initiated involuntary separation (BA).

(2) Notwithstanding the missing records, on 9 September 2014, the separation approval authority approved the discharge, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service.

(3) On 12 September 2014, their separation orders were issued. A DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflects the applicant was discharged accordingly on 24 September 2014, with 2 years, 5 months, and 22 days of total service. The applicant provided their electronic signature and has not completed their first full term of service.

**i. Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None**j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):**

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Application for the Review of Discharge

**6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted with 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 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations), set policies, standards, and procedures to ensure the readiness and competency of the force while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Soldiers for a variety of reasons. Readiness is promoted by maintaining high standards of conduct and performance.

**(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 "JKK" 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. 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.

**(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. 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.

**(2)** 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.

**(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.

h. Manual for Courts-Martial (2012 Edition), United States, states military law consists of the statutes governing the military establishment and regulations issued thereunder, the constitutional powers of the President and regulations issued thereunder, and the inherent authority of military commanders. Military law includes jurisdiction exercised by courts-martial and the jurisdiction exercised by commanders with respect to nonjudicial punishment. The purpose of military law is to promote justice, to assist in maintaining good orders and discipline in the Armed Forces. Article 112a (wrongful use of a schedule I, II, or III controlled substance) states in the subparagraph, the maximum punishment consists of a bad conduct discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for five years.

**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 an administrative irregularity in the proper retention of official military records, specifically, a charge sheet and or investigation report(s), the majority of the separation package, and their medical/mental separation examinations. Based on this, the specific facts and circumstances surrounding their separation, are unknown.

b. The available evidence provides the applicant enlisted in the RA, promoted to PFC, and served 1 year, 11 months, and 8 days prior to the misconduct which led to their discharge. As a result of nonjudicial punishment, they were demoted to PVT. Nearly five months post redeployment, the applicant was flagged for involuntary separation. Notwithstanding the missing records, the separation approval authority approved the discharge under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Misconduct (Drug Abuse), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service.

(1) There is no evidence of a medical examination and/or mental status evaluation in their record, which is required under this chapter of separation.

(2) They served 2 years and 15 days of their 3 year-23 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? **No.** The Board's Medical Advisor 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 actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **N/A**

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

**b.** Prior Decisions Cited: None

**c.** Response to Contention: The applicant seeks relief contending, a change of their "character of service" allows them to gain some financial help to seek higher education. The Board considered this contention but does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

**d.** The Board determined that the discharge is, at this time, proper and equitable, in light of the current evidence of record. However, the applicant may request a personal appearance hearing to address the issues before the Board. The applicant is responsible for satisfying the burden of proof and providing documents or other evidence sufficient to support the applicant's contentions that the discharge was improper or inequitable.

**e.** Rationale for Decision:

**(1)** The Board voted not to change the applicant's characterization of service and recommended the applicant request a Personal Appearance. There was not enough information in the file to definitively state it was a case of one-time drug use, and the Board could not determine the basis of separation because the separation file was not included in the case file. The Board acknowledged the misconduct happened 10 years ago, the applicant was only 18 years old at enlistment, and the applicant has Length, Quality, Combat and has a valid case for discharge upgrade if they request a Personal Appearance and provide their separation packet for the Board to review. There was not enough evidence for the Board to make a decision.

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

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AR20210012949

(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: No
- b. Change Characterization to: No change
- c. Change Reason / SPD code to: No change
- d. Change RE Code to: No change
- e. Change Authority to: No change

## Authenticating Official:

10/16/2024

X

Presiding Officer, COL, U.S. ARMY

Army Discharge Review Board

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