

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 28 April 2021**b. Date Received:** 3 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 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 discharge is inequitable because it was based on an isolated incident after many months of service with no other adverse action.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 28 January 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable the applicant's CAD and PTSD mitigating the failed PT tests. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable.

3. Discharge Details:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Physical Standards / AR 635-200, Chapter 13-2E / JFT / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 15 March 2017**c. Separation Facts:**

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 2 December 2016

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant failed two consecutive record Army Physical Fitness Tests (APFT), without medical limitation, on 24 May 2016 and 1 August 2016.

(3) Recommended Characterization: General (under honorable conditions)

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 8 December 2016, the applicant waived the right to consult with an attorney.

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 14 December 2016 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment / Reenlistment Under Review: 30 April 2013 / 4 years

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b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 22 years / High School Graduate / 98

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 25U1O, Signal Support System Specialist / 3 years, 10 months, 16 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None / SWA / Afghanistan (9 November 2014 - 23 February 2015)

f. Awards and Decorations: ACM-CS, ARCOM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, NATO Medal

g. Performance Ratings: NIF

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Two Developmental Counseling Forms, 24 May 2016 and 1 August 2016, showing the applicant was counseled for failing two APFTs.

(2) Field grade Article 15, 16 September 2016, issued to the applicant for being disrespectful in language and deportment toward a noncommissioned officer (NCO). The applicant used demonstrative hand gestures and stated to the NCO "I don't care and so what," or words to that effect. The applicant also disobeyed a lawful command from a commissioned officer "to get out of the vehicle and return to the medical patient room," on 18 August 2016.

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 Listed:** A Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 13 September 2016, provides that behavior health (BH) diagnosed the applicant with "adjustment disorder with depressed mood; Rule out: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from childhood." The applicant was determined to meet medical retention requirements and did not qualify for a medical evaluation board. BH also determined the applicant was fit for full duty including deployment.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: None

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant did not state any post service accomplishments in 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) 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 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:

- 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.

- 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.

- 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 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations) 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.

(a) Paragraph 3-5c, provides the reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the separation, will be considered on the issue of characterization. As a general matter, characterization will be based upon a pattern of behavior other than an isolated incident. There are circumstances, however, in which the conduct or performance of duty reflected by a single incident provides the basis for characterization.

(b) Paragraph 3-7a states 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.

(c) Paragraph 3-7b states 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 13 contains the policy and outlines the procedures for separating individuals for unsatisfactory performance, and provides, in pertinent part, commanders will separate a member under this Chapter when, in the commander's judgment, the member will

not develop sufficiently to participate satisfactorily in further training and/or become a satisfactory Soldier.

(a) Paragraph 13-2c (previously paragraph 13-2e) states in pertinent part, separation proceedings will be initiated for Soldiers without medical limitations that have two consecutive failures of the Army Physical Fitness Test. The reason for discharge will be shown as physical standards.

(b) Paragraph 13-8 stipulates the service of Soldiers separated because of unsatisfactory performance will be characterized as honorable or under honorable conditions as warranted by their military records.

(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

h. 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 "JFT" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, in effect at the time, Chapter 13-2e, Physical standards.

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) and the issues submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The applicant contends the discharge is inequitable because it was based on an isolated incident after many months of service with no other adverse action.

c. On 24 May 2016 and 2 August 2016, the applicant failed two consecutive APFT's without medical limitation and the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 13, paragraph 13-2e, by reason of physical standards with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions).

d. AR 635-200 provides the reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the separation. As a general matter, the characterization of service will be based upon a pattern of behavior other than an isolated incident. However, there are circumstances, in which the conduct or performance of duty reflected by a single incident

provides the basis for the characterization. The failure of two consecutive APFT's without medical limitation may be considered one of those circumstances.

e. AR 635-200 also stipulates that individuals who are separated because of unsatisfactory performance will have service characterized as honorable or under honorable conditions as warranted by the military records.

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: Chronic Adjustment Disorder (CAD) and PTSD. [Note: Adjustment DO with depressed mood is subsumed under the diagnosis of CAD.]

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found applicant met criteria for CAD while on active duty. VA service connection for PTSD establishes nexus with active 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 the applicant has two mitigating BH conditions: PTSD and CAD. As there is an association between these conditions, lack of motivation and diminished drive, there is a nexus between these conditions and his failure to pass two APFTs.

(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: **N/A**

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends the separation has hindered the applicant from educational and employment opportunities. The Board considered this contention and 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.

(2) The applicant contends an upgrade would provide access to educational benefits through the GI Bill. The Board determined that this contention was valid and voted to upgrade the characterization of service due to an isolated incident and the applicant's BH diagnoses of CAD and PTSD.

d. The Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable the applicant's CAD and PTSD mitigating the failed PT tests. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable.

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

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's CAD and PTSD mitigated the applicant's failed PT tests. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

(3) 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.

(4) The RE code will not change, as the mitigating conditions are service-limiting.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes

b. Change Characterization to: Honorable

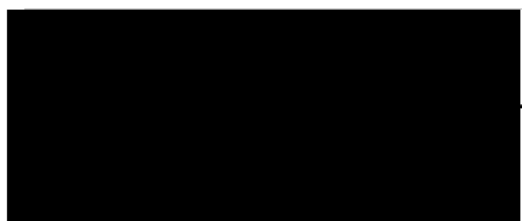
c. Change Reason / SPD code to: No Change

d. Change RE Code to: No Change

e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

2/16/2026



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