

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 13 July 2021**b. Date Received:** 27 July 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 and that the deployment time be added to the applicant's DD Form 214.

b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant was separated for the wrongful use of cocaine and the misconduct was related to undiagnosed PTSD.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 04 February 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined that the discharge was too harsh based on the applicant's length and quality, to include combat, of service and post service accomplishments, and as a result it is inequitable. Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to honorable and changed the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), with a corresponding separation code of JKN, and the re-entry code to 3. 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: Misconduct (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 16 June 2016

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 25 May 2016

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reason: The applicant wrongfully used cocaine.

(3) Recommended Characterization: General (Under Honorable Conditions)

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 1 June 2016

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 8 June 2016 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 31 July 2012 / 6 years

- b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 29 / High School Graduate / 121
 - c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 11B1O, Infantryman / 3 years, 10 months, 16 days
 - d. Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
 - e. Overseas Service / Combat Service:** None / Afghanistan, 18 May 2013 – 18 August 2013
 - f. Awards and Decorations:** AGCM, NDSM, ACM-CS 1 (DD 214 incorrectly reflects ACM-CS 2), GWTSM, ASR, NATOMDL
 - g. Performance Ratings:** NA
 - h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**
 - (1)** Field Grade Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 12 April 2016, the applicant wrongfully used cocaine between on or about 9 March 2016 and on or about 14 March 2016. The applicant was reduced from E-4 to E1, forfeiture of \$783 pay per month for two months (suspended), and 45 days restriction and extra duty.
 - (2)** Electronic Copy of Specimen Custody Document – Drug Testing, 20 March 2016, indicates the applicant tested positive for COC 283 (cocaine) during an Inspection Unit (IU) urinalysis testing conducted on 14 March 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:** Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 26 April 2016, indicates the applicant was cleared for any administrative actions the command deemed appropriate. The applicant demonstrated the ability to understand and participate in administrative proceedings, appreciated the difference between right and wrong, and met medical retention requirements. PTSD and mTBI screenings were conducted, but the conditions were negative.
- 5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Application for Correction of Military Record.
- 6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted in support of 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.

(d) Paragraph 3-9 states a separation will be described as entry-level with service uncharacterized if processing is initiated while a Soldier is in entry-level status.

(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) Paragraph 14-2c, prescribes Commanders will not take action prescribed in this chapter instead of disciplinary action solely to spare an individual who may have committed serious misconduct from the harsher penalties that may be imposed under the UCMJ.

(b) Paragraph 14-3, prescribes 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.

(c) Paragraph 14-12c (2) terms abuse of illegal drugs as serious misconduct. It continues; however, by recognizing relevant facts may mitigate the nature of the offense. Therefore, a single drug abuse offense may be combined with one or more minor disciplinary infractions or incidents of other misconduct and processed for separation under paragraph 14-12a or 14-12b as appropriate.

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 "JKK" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, misconduct (drug abuse).

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 and that the applicant's combat tour information be added to block 18 of the DD Form 214. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The applicant wrongfully used cocaine between on or about 9 March 2016 and on or about 14 March 2016.

c. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR) contains evidence concerning the events leading to the discharge from the Army. The applicant's AMHRR includes a properly constituted DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), which was authenticated by the applicant's electronic signature. The applicant's DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12c (2), by reason of Misconduct (Drug Abuse), with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions).

d. The applicant's separation packet includes a positive urinalysis for cocaine from a unit inspection, for which the applicant received nonjudicial punishment under Article 15. The applicant contends that this misconduct was the result of undiagnosed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, records from the time of separation confirms the applicant was screened for both PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and the results of both screenings were negative.

e. While adding combat time directly to an applicant's DD Form 214 is outside the purview of this board, the record shows that this correction has already been made. A DD Form 215 was issued on 18 February 2022 to officially reflect the applicant's combat time.

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 found evidence of an Anxiety Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** Service connected for anxiety, but unknown origin/timeframe. Applicant asserts PTSD, but documentation is void of the diagnosis.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **No.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that without clarification on the service-connected Anxiety, i.e. symptoms pre-existed the drug use, mitigation cannot be determined.

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

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention: The applicant contends the misconduct is the result of undiagnosed PTSD. The Board reviewed the applicant's medical records and could not confirm a service-connected PTSD diagnosis. However, the Board voted to upgrade based upon the applicant's length, combat experience and quality of service.

d. The Board determined the applicant's discharge was inequitable. The Board voted to upgrade due to the applicant's length, combat experience and quality of service. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), and the separation code to JKN and an RE 3.

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 length, combat experience and quality of service outweighed the applicant's misconduct single illicit drug use. 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 pretexts, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JKN.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

AR20210017651

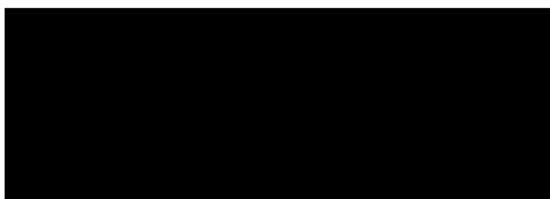
(4) The RE code will change to RE-3.

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: RE-3
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

2/10/2026



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