

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

a. **Application Date:** 8 September 2021

b. **Date Received:** 13 September 2021

c. **Counsel:** None

2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:**a. Applicant's Requests and Issues:**

(1) The current characterization of service for the period under review is General (Under Honorable Conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

(2) The applicant seeks relief contending at the time of the incident they were having mental health issues from undiagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after their deployment to Iraq. Their judgement was clouded due to their undiagnosed mental health issues. They have a current diagnosis for PTSD and they are enclosing their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability rating as evidence.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 15 October 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined that the discharge is inequitable because the applicant's diagnoses of Alcohol Dependence and PTSD outweighed the offenses of Driving Under the Influence. 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.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Misconduct (Serious Offense) / Army Regulations 635-200, Paragraph 14-12C / JKQ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 30 November 2011

c. Separation Facts:

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 3 May 2011

(2) **Basis for Separation:** received a Driving Under the Influence on 3 February 2007 and 21 February 2011.

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** Under Other Than Honorable Conditions

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** 12 May 2011

(5) **Administrative Separation Board:** On 14 June 2011, the applicant was notified to appear before an administrative separation board and advised of their rights. On 1 August 2011, the administrative separation board convened, and the applicant appeared with counsel. The board recommended the applicant's discharge with characterization of service of general (under

honorable conditions). On 6 September 2011, the separation authority approved the findings and recommendations of the administrative separation board.

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 6 September 2011

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Reenlistment: 11 December 2007 / 6 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 24 / HS Graduate / 108

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-6 / 74D30, Chemical Operations Specialist / 10 years, 4 months, 21 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Germany, SWA / Iraq (6 October 2004 – 23 September 2005 and 6 August 2007 – 23 October 2008)

f. Awards and Decorations: ARCOM-2, AAM-2, MUC, VUA-2, AGCM-3, NDSM, GWTEM, GWTSM, ICM-CS, NCOPDR-2, ASR, OSR-3

g. Performance Ratings: NA

- April 2004 – March 2005 / Among the Best
- April 2005 – February 2006 / Among the Best
- 1 March 2006 – 28 February 2007 / Marginal
- 1 March 2007 – 31 October 2010 / Among the Best

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) A DA Form 2627 (Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)) dated 13 February 2007, reflects the applicant received nonjudicial punishment, in that they, did at or near Rose Barrack, Germany, on or about 3 February 2007, physically control a vehicle while their alcohol concentration in their blood or breath equaled or exceeded their limit as shown by chemical analysis, in violation of Article 111 (Drunken Driving), UCMJ. Their punishment consisted of a reduction in rank/grade from sergeant/E-5 to specialist/E-4, forfeiture of \$989.00 pay for two months, and extra duty and restriction for 45 days. The applicant elected not to appeal.

(2) A DA Form 2166-8 (NCO Evaluation Report (NCOER)) covering the period 1 March 2006 – 28 February 2007, reflects in –

- Part IV (Army Values/Attributes/Skills/Actions) – Integrity “NO”, with comment, NCO did not live up to Army Values; arrested for drinking and driving with a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.0164
- Part IV(d) (Leadership) – “NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Much)” with comments – demonstrated poor judgement by operating a personally owned vehicle after drinking alcohol
- Part V(a) (Rater, Overall Potential for Promotion) – “MARGINAL”
- Part V(c) (Senior Rater Overall Performance) – “4” Fair
- Part V(d) (Senior Rater Overall Potential) – “3” Superior

- Part Ve (Senior Rater Bullet Comments) – “[Applicant’s] decision to drive while intoxicated has marred an otherwise exemplary training period

(3) A memorandum, Headquarters, 82nd Airborne Division, subject: General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (GOMOR), dated 3 March 2011, reflects the applicant was reprimanded in writing for driving while impaired. The commanding general states, on 21 February 2011, the applicant was arrested after a Raleigh Police Officer found them asleep in their vehicle while the engine was running. A breathalyzer test administered to them determined their BAC to be 0.23-percent, which is over the legal limit authorized to operate a motor vehicle in the State of North Carolina.

(4) A DA Form 4856 (Developmental Counseling Form) dated 11 March 2011, reflects the applicant received separation counseling with the type of separation of Army Regulation 635-200, paragraph 14-12c (Commission of a Serious Offense). The Key Points of Discussion states, adequate counseling and rehabilitation measures have been provided to the applicant, i.e., Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), Driver Improvement Training, etc.,. The chain of command made maximum use of counseling and rehabilitation before determining that the applicant no longer has potential for further useful service in the military. Their recent receipt of Driving Under the Influence is a serious offense that could have spurred a number of residual effects. Therefore, their actions have been determined to be disruptive to good order and discipline, as well as unit morale and cohesion. The applicant agreed with the information, provided no remarks, and signed the counseling form.

(5) A DD Form 2808 (Report of Medical Evaluation) dated 22 March 2011 reflects the examining physician marked “Normal” for all items examined, except for item 37 (Identifying Body Marks, Scars, Tattoos); the applicant is qualified for service with no physical profile; and listed no diagnoses.

(6) A DA Form 3822 (Report of Mental Status Evaluation) dated 7 July 2017, reflects the applicant has the mental capacity to understand and participate in the proceedings, was mentally responsible, and meets retention requirements. The staff psychologist states the applicant has no Axis I (Psychiatric Conditions) diagnosis. The applicant has been screened for PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), these conditions are either not present or, if present, does not meet criteria for medical evaluation board. The staff psychologist states there is no evidence of an emotional or mental disorder of psychiatric significance at this time to warrant disposition through medical channels; therefore, the applicant is psychiatrically cleared for any administrative action deemed appropriate by command, including administrative discharge.

(7) A memorandum, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System), subject: Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 3 May 2011, the applicant’s company commander notified the applicant of their intent to separate them under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, paragraph 14-12c, for Commission of a Serious Offense, as described above in paragraph 3c(2). The company commander recommended the applicant’s characterization of service as Under Other Than Honorable Conditions. On the same day, the applicant acknowledged the basis for the separation and of the right available to them.

(8) In the applicant’s memorandum, subject: Election of Rights under Army Regulation 635-200 Administrative Board Procedures, dated 12 May 2011, they acknowledged that they are entitled to an administrative separation board because they have six years or more of active and reserve service at the time of notification of separation and they have been given notice that they are being recommended for a separation under other than honorable conditions.

They have been given the opportunity to confer with counsel and they request a personal appearance before an administrative separation board and will submit statements on their behalf to the separation board.

(9) A memorandum, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System), subject: Commander's Report – Proposed Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 13 May 2011, the applicant's company commander submitted a request to separate them prior to their expiration term of service.

(10) A memorandum, Headquarters, 18th Fires Brigade (Airborne), subject: Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 17 May 2011, the applicant's brigade commander recommended the applicant be separate prior to their expiration term of service. They recommended the applicant's service be characterized as General (Under Honorable Conditions).

(11) A memorandum, Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System), subject: Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 18 May 2011, the applicant's battalion commander recommended the applicant be separate prior to their expiration term of service. They recommended the applicant's service be characterized as General (Under Honorable Conditions).

(12) A memorandum, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment, subject: Notification to Appear Before a Board of Officers, dated 14 June 2011, the board president notified the applicant that a Board of Officers will hold a hearing to determine whether they should be discharged from the U.S. Army.

(13) A DA Form 1574 (Report of Proceedings by Investigating Officer/Board of Officers) dated 1 August 2011, reflects the administrative separation board carefully considered all of the admitted evidence before it and finds the applicant did not on or about 21 February 2011 receive a Driving Under the Influence and the applicant did on or about 3 February 2007 receive a Driving Under the Influence. In view of the findings, the board recommends the application be separated with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions), but the separation be suspended for 12 months.

(14) A memorandum, Headquarters, 82nd Airborne Division, subject: Administrative Separation Pursuant to Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, dated 6 September 2011, reflects the Staff Judge Advocate recommended the commanding general approve the findings and recommendations of the administrative separation board in part and that the applicant be separated with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service.

(15) A memorandum, Headquarters, 82nd Airborne Division, subject: Administrative Separation Pursuant to Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, dated 6 September 2011, reflects the commanding general [separation authority] reviewed the findings and recommendations of the administrative separation board proceedings pertaining to the applicant. The commanding general approved the findings and recommendations of the board in part and directed the applicant be discharged from the U.S. Army with a characterization of service as General (Under Honorable Conditions).

(16) A DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflects the applicant was discharged on 30 November 2011, with 10 years, 4 months, and 21 days of net active service this period. The DD Form 214 shows in:

- item 24 (Character of Service) – General (Under Honorable Conditions)
- item 26 (Separation Code) – JKQ
- item 27 (Reentry Code) – 3
- item 28 (Narrative Reason for Separation) – Misconduct, (Serious Offense)

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: NA

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: VA Rating Decision dated 21 July 2021 reflecting an evaluation of PTSD, which was currently evaluated 100-percent disabling, was decreased to 70-percent effective 1 October 2021.

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:

- DD Form 293 (Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States)
- VA Rating Decision

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None submitted with application

7. STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCE(S):

a. Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1553, (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, Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 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 (DoD) 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 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) 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; Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1553; and DoD Directive 1332.41 and DoD Instruction 1332.28.

d. Army Regulation 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations) effective 6 September 2011, 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. It prescribes the policies, procedures, and the general provisions governing the separation of Soldiers before expiration term of service or fulfillment of active duty obligation to meet the needs of the Army and its Soldiers.

(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) A Under Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge is an administrative separation from the Service under conditions other than honorable. It may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, security reasons, or in lieu of trial by court-martial.

(4) Paragraph 1-16 (Counseling and Rehabilitative Requirements) stated Army leaders at all levels must be continually aware of their obligation to provide purpose, direction, and motivation to Soldiers. It is essential that Soldiers who falter, but have the potential to serve honorably and well, be given every opportunity to succeed. The rehabilitative transfer requirements in chapter 14 (Separation for Misconduct) may be waived by the separation authority in circumstances where common sense and sound judgment indicate that such transfer will serve no useful purpose or produce a quality Soldier.

(5) Chapter 14 (Separation for Misconduct) establishes policy and prescribes procedures for separating personnel for misconduct because of minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, commission of a serious offense, conviction by civil authorities, desertion, and absence 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 14-12c (Commission of a Service Offense), stated 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.

(6) Chapter 15 (Secretarial Plenary Authority), currently in effect, 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 "JKQ" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12c, misconduct (serious offense).

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 DoD Instructions 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 waivable. Eligibility: Ineligible unless a waiver is granted.

(3) RE-4 Applies to: Person separated from last period of service with a nonwaivable 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)) governs the program and identifies Army policy on alcohol and other drug abuse, and responsibilities. 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. 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.

h. Manual for Courts-Martial, United States (2008 Edition) stated, 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 order and discipline in the Armed Forces. Appendix 12 (Maximum Punishment Chart) Manual for Courts-Martial shows the maximum punishments include punitive discharge for violating Article 111 (Drunken Driving).

i. Title 38, U.S. Code, Sections 1110 and 1131, permits the VA to award compensation for a medical condition which was incurred in or aggravated by active military service. The VA, however, is not required by law to determine medical unfitness for further military service. The VA, in accordance with its own policies and regulations, awards compensation solely on the basis that a medical condition exists and that said medical condition reduces or impairs the social or industrial adaptability of the individual concerned. Consequently, due to the two concepts involved, an individual's medical condition, although not considered medically unfitting for military service at the time of processing for separation, discharge, or retirement, may be sufficient to qualify the individual for VA benefits based on an evaluation by the agency.

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S):

a. The Army Discharge Review Board considers applications for upgrade as instructed by Department of Defense Instruction 1332.28.

b. A review of the available evidence provides the applicant received nonjudicial punishment under the provision of Article 15, UCMJ, in violation of Article 111 (Drunken Driving), received a GOMOR for driving while impaired, and was involuntarily discharged from the U.S. Army. The DD Form 214, signed by the applicant, provides the applicant was discharged with a character of service of general (under honorable conditions) for misconduct (serious offense) rather than a discharge under other than honorable conditions, which is normally considered appropriate. They completed 10 years, 4 months, and 21 days of net active service this period, completed their first full term of service; however, they did not complete their 6-year reenlistment 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; to include abuse of illegal drugs; 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. The applicant's AMHRR does not reflect documentation of a diagnosis of PTSD during their military service. The applicant provided a VA Rating Decision reflecting a 70-percent evaluation for PTSD effective 1 October 2021.

e. 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? **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: Alcohol Dependence.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found the applicant deployed to Iraq from 2004-2005 and 2007-2008. He is 100% 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 the applicant had a mitigating BH condition. The applicant has been diagnosed, treated, and service connected through the VA for PTSD. Substance abuse is a common self-medicating strategy for avoiding uncomfortable emotions and memories related to trauma exposure, and substance use can be a natural sequela to mental health conditions associated with exposure to traumatic and stressful events. Given the nexus between trauma exposure, avoidance of emotion, and substance use and in accordance with liberal consideration, the basis for separation is mitigation is supported.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** Based on liberally considering all the evidence before the Board, the Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB) determined that the applicant's PTSD and Alcohol Dependence outweighed the basis of separation, which included two Driving Under the Influence incidents. The Board recognized that the applicant's substance abuse was a self-medicating response to trauma, mitigating the grounds for discharge.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends at the time of the incident they were having mental health issues from undiagnosed PTSD after their deployment to Iraq. Their judgement was clouded due to their undiagnosed mental health issues. The Board considered this contention and agreed with the medical advisor that the applicant's substance abuse was likely a self-medicating response to undiagnosed PTSD, leading to the decision to grant relief.

(2) The applicant contends they have a current diagnosis for PTSD and they are enclosing their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability rating as evidence. The Board considered this contention and acknowledged the applicant's current diagnosis of PTSD and their VA disability rating. In light of this information, the Board is granting relief, recognizing the impact of the applicant's mental health condition on their service record.

d. The Board determined, after care consideration, and found sufficient evidence of in-service mitigating factors (Length, Combat, Quality) and concurred with the conclusion of the medical advising official that the applicant had a mitigating BH condition. The applicant has been diagnosed, treated, and service connected through the VA for PTSD. Substance abuse is a common self-medicating strategy for avoiding uncomfortable emotions and memories related to trauma exposure, and substance use can be a natural sequela to mental health conditions associated with exposure to traumatic and stressful events. Given the nexus between trauma exposure, avoidance of emotion, and substance use and in accordance with liberal consideration, the basis for separation mitigation is supported. Based on a preponderance of evidence, the Board determined that the character of service the applicant received upon separation was inequitable and an upgrade is warranted. 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.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted to upgrade the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because, after applying liberal consideration to all the evidence, including the VA-confirmed diagnoses of Alcohol Dependence and PTSD, the applicant's behavioral health conditions were found to mitigate the offenses of Driving Under the Influence.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's reason for discharge Minor Misconduct with accompanying SPD code of JKN, under the same pretexts.

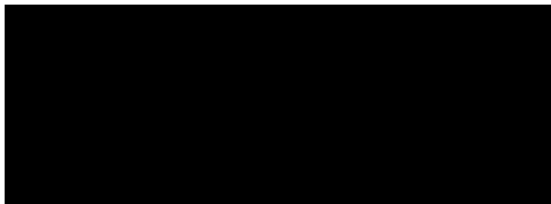
(3) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD code to: Misconduct (Minor Infractions)/JKN
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

3/23/2026



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