

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. **Application Date:** 14 November 2021
- b. **Date Received:** 14 November 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 is not in evidence. The applicant requests an upgrade of their U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) character of service to General (Under Honorable Conditions).

(2) The applicant seeks relief contending they are requesting to join the Army National Guard to fulfill their duties for our country. At the time of their service, they were with their ex-spouse and going through a domestic abuse crisis that they could not get out of. The abuse began in June 2012 and they were being forced to stay home and were not able to attend USAR drill. They were scared to tell anyone at that time. They were a victim of assault and battery in February 2016 when they finally got strong enough to call the authorities. It has now been six years since getting away from that situation, they are stable and currently going to college for their Bachelors for Business and Administration.

(3) They want to keep on pursuing their career and gladly ask the Board to let them rejoin and start their career as part of the National Guard of the United States. They have recently contacted the National Archives and received their military record; however, they do not have their discharge packet from their USAR unit and they have been unable to contact that unit. They really want to rejoin the military and they have nowhere else to turn.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 30 July 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge was inequitable and voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable, changed the separation authority to AR 135-178, Chapter 13.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: NIF

b. Date of Discharge: 4 October 2013 [Based on DA Form 5016 (Chronological Statement of Retirement Points)]

c. Separation Facts: The applicant's case separation file is void from their Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR). On 29 April 2022 the Army Review Boards Agency requested the applicant provide their discharge packet (case separation files), as of this date there has been no response.

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 26 August 2011 / 8 years (USAR)

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 18 / HS Diploma / NIF

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-1 / 92F1O, Petroleum Supply Specialist / 2 years, 1 months, 9 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: None

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) A DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflects the applicant released from active duty training and transferred to their USAR unit on 26 April 2012.

(3) A DA Form 5016 (Chronological Statement of Retirement Points) dated 6 February 2025 reflects the applicant –

- from 27 August 2011 to 26 August 2012, earned 15 Inactive Duty Points (equivalent to 7.5 days of unit drills) and 161 Active Duty Points
- from 27 August 2012 to 26 August 2013, earned one Inactive Duty Points (equivalent to .5 day of unit drills) and zero Active Duty Points
- from 27 August 2013 to 4 October 2013, earned zero Inactive Duty Points and zero Active Duty Points

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: NIF

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s): None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: None provided with application.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None provided 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, 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 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) 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, DoD Directive 1332.41, and DoD Instruction 1332.28.

d. Army Regulation 135-178 (Enlisted Administrative Separations), 13 April 2007, set policies, standards, and procedures to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of ARNG of the United States and USAR enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons.

(1) An honorable characterization 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. When a Soldier is discharged before expiration of the service obligation for a

reason for which an honorable characterization is discretionary, the following considerations apply, to include –

(a) An honorable characterization may be awarded when disqualifying entries in the Soldier's military record are outweighed by subsequent honorable and faithful service over a greater period of time during the current term of service.

(b) It is a pattern of behavior and not an isolated instance which should be considered the governing factor in determining the character of service.

(c) Unless otherwise ineligible, a Soldier may receive an honorable characterization of service if he or she has, during his or her current enlistment, or any extension thereof, received a personal decoration.

(2) A General discharge is if a Soldier's service has been honest and faithful, it is appropriate to characterize that service as under honorable conditions. Characterization of service as general (under honorable conditions) is warranted when significant negative aspect of the Soldier's conduct or performance of duty outweighs positive aspects of the Soldier's military record.

(3) A Under Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge, service may, but is not required to be characterized as under other than honorable conditions only when discharge is for misconduct, fraudulent entry, homosexual conduct, unsatisfactory participation, or security reasons. The Adjutant General will direct reduction in grade to private/E-1 when the Soldier is discharged under other than honorable conditions.

e. Army Regulation 135-180 (Retirement for Non-Regular Service) dated 1 August 1987, implemented statutory authorities governing the granting of retired pay to Soldiers and former Reserve components Soldiers. Paragraph 2-10 (Computation of Service) stated one point for each authorized participation in drills or periods of instruction which conform to the requirements prescribed by the Secretary of the Army.

f. Army Regulation 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations) prescribes policies and standards 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, authority for separation of Soldiers, 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. Chapter 15 (Secretarial Plenary Authority) 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.

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S):

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

b. A review of the available evidence provides an administrative irregularity in the proper retention of records, specifically the AMHRR is void of the case files for approved separation.

Due to the lack of evidence, the specific facts and circumstances surrounding the misconduct that led to their discharged under the provision on Army Regulation 135-178 are unknown.

c. 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: self-asserted IPV.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found applicant asserted they were a victim of IPV during their military 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 a mitigating BH experience, IPV. As IPV is associated with avoidant behaviors and impaired performance, there is a nexus between their experience of IPV, missing drills and unsatisfactory performance.

(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. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends they are requesting to join the Army National Guard to fulfill their duties for our country.

The Board acknowledged this contention and found it compelling.

(2) The applicant contends at the time of their service; they were with their ex-spouse and going through a domestic abuse crisis that they could not get out of and were not able to attend USAR drill.

The Board determined that this contention was valid and voted to upgrade the characterization of service due to self-asserted IPV.

(3) The applicant contends it has now been six years since getting away from that situation, they are stable and currently going to college for their Bachelor's for Business and Administration.

The Board acknowledged this contention and voted to grant relief.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's MST which outweighed the applicant's unsatisfactory participation, basis of separation. The Board acknowledged the Woodward County DA Office letter which alludes to the domestic violence

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stating the incident can be a very traumatic experience physically, emotionally and financially. The Board's Medical Advisor noted the applicant's self-asserted IPV merits consideration by the Board and the timeline matches the applicant's contentions. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable, changed the separation authority to AR 135-178, Chapter 13.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's IPV experience outweighed the applicant's misconduct of unsatisfactory performance. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate. This recommendation was forwarded to the Reserves Command for implementation.

(2) As there were no Reasons/SPD Codes/RE-codes listed on the applicant's discharge paperwork, due to being in the Army Reserves, no upgrade actions are required for these items.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes**
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable**
- c. Change Authority to: AR 135-178, Chapter 13**

Authenticating Official:

12/9/2025



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