

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 2 October 2021**b. Date Received:** 18 October 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, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which developed following deployment to Iraq, played a significant role in the applicant's discharge from the Army. While serving in Iraq, the applicant participated in numerous convoys and endured relentless mortar attacks on the applicant's unit, leading to severe anxiety and depression. To cope with recurring nightmares and emotional distress after returning from deployment, the applicant turned to alcohol. The combined impact of PTSD and alcohol dependency has profoundly affected the applicant's life for many years. The applicant is now seeking support to rebuild and reclaim the applicant's life.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 23 October 2025, and by a 3-0 vote. The Board voted to grant relief by upgrading the characterization of service to Honorable and revising the narrative reason for separation with a code of JKN. The Board further concluded that the existing reentry code was appropriate and equitable and therefore elected not to modify it. 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 (Desertion) / AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12c(1) / JKF / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 10 April 2012

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 14 December 2011

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: On 15 February 2011, the applicant absented the applicant's self from the applicant's unit without authority until 30 March 2011 and on 29 September 2011 the applicant willfully disobeyed a lawful order from a noncommissioned officer (NCO).

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 22 February 2012

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 15 March 2012 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 26 July 2007 / 6 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 23 / HS Graduate / 100

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 89B1O / Ammunition Specialist / 4 years, 7 months

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA / Iraq (21 September 2008 – 20 September 2009)

f. Awards and Decorations: ICM-2CS, ARCOM, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR, OSR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Memorandum, 22 March 2011, shows the applicant was disqualified for award of the AGCM during the period of 24 July 2007 to 25 July 2010. The disqualification was due to the applicant being AWOL.

(2) Field Grade Article 15, 25 May 2011, for being AWOL from on or about 15 February 2011 to on or about 30 March 2011. The applicant's punishment included reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$733 pay per month for two months (suspended), and 45 days of extra duty and restriction. The suspension of forfeiture was vacated on 27 September 2011 due to the applicant failing to report to the applicant's place of duty.

(3) Developmental Counseling, 13 June 2011, for non-recommendation for promotion for the month of June 2011. The applicant had recently received a Field Grade Article 15, and the applicant was on restriction/extra duty at that time.

(4) Summarized Article 15, 26 October 2011, for failing to report to the applicant's place of duty on 11 July 2011 and 27 September 2011, and willfully disobeying a lawful order from an NCO on 29 September 2011. The applicant's punishment included 14 days of extra duty and an oral reprimand.

(5) A Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 11 October 2012, which shows the applicant was screened for PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and those conditions were either not present or if present, did not meet AR 40-501 (Standards of Medical Fitness) criteria for a medical evaluation board (MEB). The applicant was also screened for substance use disorders and the MSE did not provide any findings. The applicant understood and could participate in administrative proceedings, understood the difference between right and wrong, and met medical retention requirements.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: 42 days (15 February 2011 – 29 March 2011)

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: The applicant provides a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Staff Psychiatrist, 5 October 2021, which shows the applicant was diagnosed with PTSD, chronic mood disorder due to general medical conditions. The applicant also provides a letter from a VA Social Worker, 8 October 2021, which reflects on 30 July 2021 the applicant was admitted into the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Substance Abuse Treatment Program at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin, GA. He received individual and group therapy.

(2) AMHRR provided: None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: DD Form 293; Personal Statement; Orders 228-7892; Orders 241-7068; Enlisted Record Brief; DD Form 214; Letter from VA Staff Psychiatrist; Letter from VA Social Worker

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), dated 25 September 2019, sets forth the policies and procedures under which the Army Discharge Review Board is authorized to review the character, reason, and authority of any Servicemember discharged from active military service within 15 years of the Servicemember's date of discharge. Additionally, it prescribes actions and composition of the Army Discharge Review Board under Public Law 95-126; Section 1553, Title 10 United States Code; and Department of Defense Directive 1332.41 and Instruction 1332.28.

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 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. It states:

(a) 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.

(b) 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 14 establishes policy and prescribes procedures for separating members for misconduct. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, convictions by civil authorities and desertion or being absent without leave. Action will be taken to separate a member for misconduct when it is clearly established that rehabilitation is impractical or unlikely to succeed. A discharge under other than honorable conditions is normally appropriate for a Soldier discharged under this chapter. However, the separation authority may direct a general discharge if such is merited by the Soldier's overall record. Paragraph 14-12c, states 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. Paragraph 14-12c(1) states an absentee returned to military control from a status AWOL or desertion may be separated for a commission of a serious offense.

(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

(4) 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 "JKF" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, Misconduct (Desertion).

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

b. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable. The applicant was separated under the provisions of AR 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c(1), by reason of Misconduct (Desertion), with a general (under honorable conditions) discharge. AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12c(1) states an absentee returned to military control from a status AWOL or desertion may be separated for a commission of a serious offense. 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. The applicant contends PTSD, which developed following deployment to Iraq, played a significant role in the applicant's discharge from the Army. While serving in Iraq, the applicant participated in numerous convoys and endured relentless mortar attacks on the applicant's unit, leading to severe anxiety and depression. To cope with recurring nightmares and emotional distress after returning from deployment, the applicant turned to alcohol. The combined impact of PTSD and alcohol dependency has profoundly affected the applicant's life for many years. The applicant's AMHRR is void of a diagnosis for PTSD or a mental health diagnosis. The applicant provides a letter from a VA, Staff Psychiatrist, 5 October 2021, which shows the applicant was diagnosed with PTSD, chronic mood disorder due to general medical conditions. The applicant also provides a letter from a VA Social Worker, 8 October 2021, which reflects on 30 July 2021 the applicant was admitted into the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Substance Abuse Treatment Program at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin, GA and received individual and group therapy.

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: the applicant has been diagnosed by the VA with service-connected PTSD (100%SC) related to combat.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found evidence the applicant has been diagnosed by the VA with service-connected PTSD (100%SC) related to combat.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that there is evidence of a mitigating mental health condition. While there is insufficient evidence the applicant reported or was diagnosed during his active service with a mental health condition, he was diagnosed by the VA with service-connected PTSD related to combat. Given the nexus between PTSD and avoidant and erratic behavior, the applicant's incident of going AWOL, failing to report to his place of duty, and disobeying his NCO, which led to the applicant's separation are mitigated.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor's opine, the Board determined that the applicant's condition or experience outweighed the listed basis for separation for the aforementioned reasons.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: NA – Applies to Personal Appearances only.

c. Response to Contention(s): PTSD, which developed following deployment to Iraq, played a significant role in the applicant's discharge from the Army. While serving in Iraq, the applicant participated in numerous convoys and endured relentless mortar attacks on the applicant's unit, leading to severe anxiety and depression. To cope with recurring nightmares and emotional distress after returning from deployment, the applicant turned to alcohol. The combined impact of PTSD and alcohol dependency has profoundly affected the applicant's life for many years. The Board considered this contention during proceedings and concurred with the medical advisor's assessment that the applicant's actions going AWOL, failing to report for duty, and disobeying a non-commissioned officer with the substance abuse were influenced by PTSD related avoidant and erratic behavior. As a result, these incidents were considered mitigated, and the board voted to upgrade the applicant's discharge to honorable.

d. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD that outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse. 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 separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), and the separation code to JKN. The Board determined the RE Code was proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(5) 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.

(6) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a.

(7) The Board voted to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code to the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) JKN.

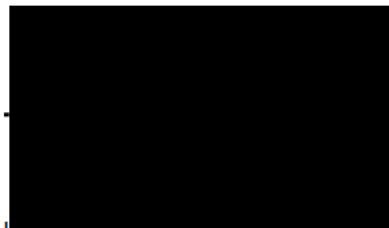
(8) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable Discharge
- c. Change Reason / SPD code to: JKN
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a

Authenticating Official:

11/6/2025



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