

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. **Application Date:** 29 December 2021
- b. **Date Received:** 29 December 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 narrative reason change.

b. **Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s):** The applicant requests relief contending, in effect, while serving as a Radiology Specialist, significant mental health challenges, including visions, nightmares, anxiety, depression, and PTSD, began to interfere with the applicant's ability to perform duties in the operating room. At the time, all of these conditions were undiagnosed. When the applicant reported these issues to the first-line supervisor, the applicant was instructed to complete multiple counseling forms, which were documented over various dates as part of the discharge process. The applicant contends the applicant was informed by the first sergeant (1SG), company commander, and a legal representative, who spoke with the battalion commander, that the discharge would be classified as honorable. However, on the applicant's final day of out-processing, the discharge paperwork unexpectedly reflected a general discharge. The applicant was not informed of this change and was directed to complete actions without understanding the consequences. The applicant contends since leaving the military, the applicant has been formally diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and PTSD, and believes the discharge was handled improperly.

c. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 11 December 2025, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the circumstances surrounding the discharge (Adjustment Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, PTSD diagnoses). Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason/SPD code and RE code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them. 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:** Unsatisfactory Performance / AR 635-200, Chapter 13 / JHJ / 3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 1 January 2021

c. **Separation Facts:**

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 2 December 2020

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant refused to satisfactorily perform all duties associated with being a Radiology Specialist. In particular, the applicant declined to perform radiology procedures when there was

a presence of blood and/or exposed flesh in which the applicant claimed as an aversion. This deficiency hindered the department's capabilities to maintain 24-hour operations as the applicant was unable to be relied upon and furthermore comprised the overall mission and patient safety.

(3) Recommended Characterization: Honorable

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 2 December 2020

(5) Administrative Separation Board: N/A

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: NIF / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 31 October 2018 / 6 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / HS Graduate / 109

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-3 / 68P1O, Radiology Specialist / 2 years, 2 months, 1 day

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, GWOTSM, AFSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: N/A

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Company Grade Article 15, 9 April 2020, for on or about 10 March 2020 and 11 March 2020, failing to go at the time prescribed the appointed place of duty. The applicant's punishment included reduction to E-2, forfeiture of \$453 pay (suspended), 14 days extra duty and 14 days restriction.

(2) Memorandum for Record, 12 November 2020, shows the applicant refused to perform duties as a technologist in the operating room on multiple occasions, and the applicant claimed an aversion to blood and was unable to conduct the necessary tasks to fulfill the applicant's responsibilities, which meant the applicant was unable to perform the applicant's duties to standard and counseled several times as such.

(3) Developmental Counseling Form, 18 November 2020, reflects the applicant was counseled by the company 1SG for demonstrating a pattern of refusing to perform duties in the D_D_E_ Army Medical Center operating room. The applicant stated the applicant had an aversion to the sight of blood and the smell of flesh caused the applicant to pass out. The commander referred the applicant for a command directed mental evaluation on 7 August 2020, and the results found no evidence to support the applicant's claim, and the applicant was found fit for duty.

(4) On 2 December 2020, the company commander initiated action to separate the applicant under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 13, for unsatisfactory performance, and recommended the applicant's service be characterized as honorable.

(5) Memorandum, subject: Separation Under AR 635-200, Chapter 13, Unsatisfactory Performance, **4 December 2020**, the separation authority directed the applicant be separated from the Army with an honorable characterization of service.

(6) Memorandum, subject: Separation Under AR 635-200, Chapter 13, Unsatisfactory Performance, **undated**, the separation authority directed the applicant be separated with a general (under honorable conditions) characterization of service.

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:**

(a) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Rating Decision, 27 July 2021, shows a decision on entitlement to compensation for PTSD (also claimed as mental health condition, depression, and anxiety) was deferred.

(b) Letter from Cornerstone Counseling Center, 29 October 2021, shows the applicant was under the care of a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) for outpatient mental health services since February 2021, and treated for PTSD, anxiety, and depression. The LPC states the applicant has made some improvement, but the applicant continues to struggle with these conditions that can negatively impact the applicant's ability to function at full capacity from day to day.

(2) **AMHRR provided:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Online DD Form 293; VA Rating Decision, Letter, Cornerstone Counseling Center

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 3-7a 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.

(b) Paragraph 3-7b states a General discharge is a separation from the Army under honorable conditions and is issued to a Soldier whose military record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge.

(2) Chapter 13 contains the policy and outlines the procedures for separating individuals for unsatisfactory performance, and provides, in pertinent part, commanders will separate a member under this Chapter when, in the commander's judgment, the member will not develop sufficiently to participate satisfactorily in further training and/or become a satisfactory Soldier. Paragraph 13-8 stipulates the service of Soldiers separated because of unsatisfactory performance will be characterized as honorable or under honorable conditions as warranted by their military records.

(3) Chapter 15 provides explicitly for separation under the prerogative of the Secretary of the Army. Secretarial plenary separation authority is exercised sparingly and seldom delegated. Ordinarily, it is used when no other provision of this regulation applies, and early separation is clearly in the Army's best interest. Separations under this paragraph are effective only if approved in writing by the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary's approved designee as announced in updated memoranda. Secretarial separation authority is normally exercised on a case-by-case basis. If Secretarial Authority is granted normally correct the record to show the following:

- Separation Authority: Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 15
- Separation Code: JFF
- Reenlistment Code: RE1
- Narrative Reason for Separation: Secretarial Plenary Authority
- Character of Service: Honorable

h. Army Regulation 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes), provides the specific authorities (regulatory or directive), reasons for separating Soldiers from active duty, and the SPD codes to be entered on the DD Form 214. It identifies the SPD code of "JHJ" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 13, unsatisfactory performance.

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 narrative reason change. 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 and narrative reason change. The applicant was separated under the provisions of AR 635-200, chapter 13, with a general (under honorable conditions) discharge. The narrative reason specified by Army Regulations for a discharge under this paragraph is "Unsatisfactory Performance," and the separation code is "JHJ." Army Regulation 635-8 (Separation Processing and Documents) governs preparation of the DD Form 214, and dictates entry of the narrative reason for separation, entered in block 28 and separation code, entered in block 26 of the form, will be as listed in tables 2-2 or 2-3 of AR 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes). The regulation stipulates no deviation is authorized. There is no provision for any other reason to be entered under this regulation.

c. The applicant contends while serving as a Radiology Specialist, significant mental health challenges, including visions, nightmares, anxiety, depression, and PTSD, began to interfere with the applicant's ability to perform duties in the operating room. At the time, all of these conditions were undiagnosed. When the applicant reported these issues to the first-line supervisor, the applicant was instructed to complete multiple counseling forms, which were documented over various dates as part of the discharge process. The applicant's AMHRR is void of a mental health diagnosis. The applicant was command referred for a mental evaluation on 7 August 2020, and the results found no evidence to support the applicant's claim and found the applicant fit for duty.

d. The applicant contends that the applicant was informed by the 1SG, company commander, and a legal representative, who spoke with the battalion commander, that the discharge would be classified as honorable. However, on the applicant's final day of out-processing, the discharge paperwork unexpectedly reflected a general discharge. The applicant was not informed of this change and was directed to complete actions without understanding the consequences. The applicant was notified by the company commander that separation action was being initiated for unsatisfactory performance and the commander was recommending the applicant's service be characterized as honorable. On 4 December 2020, a memorandum shows the separation authority directed the applicant be separated from the Army with an honorable discharge. An undated memorandum reflects the separation authority directed the applicant be separated from service with a general (under honorable conditions) characterization of service.

e. The applicant contends since leaving the military, the applicant has been formally diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and PTSD, and believes the discharge was handled improperly. The applicant provides a VA Disability Rating Decision that shows the applicant's request for service-connected disability for PTSD (also claimed as mental health condition, depression, and anxiety) was deferred. The applicant also provides a letter from an LPC, showing the applicant is being treated for PTSD, anxiety and depression.

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: Adjustment Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, PTSD.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found that the applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder and is service connected by the VA for PTSD that existed prior to military service and was exacerbated by 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 there is evidence of BH conditions that mitigate the basis of separation. The applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder. In addition, the applicant is 70% service connected for PTSD that originated in childhood due to extensive verbal, physical, and sexual abuse as well as exposure to the murders of an uncle and a best friend. The VA determined that the applicant's PTSD was exacerbated by military service leading to the service connection. The applicant's service connected PTSD mitigates the basis of separation because there is clear evidence in the active-duty medical record that the applicant's PTSD directly contributed to his inability to successfully complete his duties when in the presence of blood and/or exposed flesh since this circumstance would trigger PTSD symptoms subsequently leading to avoidance.

(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: N/A

c. Response to Contentions:

(1) The applicant contends while serving as a Radiology Specialist, significant mental health challenges, including visions, nightmares, anxiety, depression, and PTSD, began to interfere with the applicant's ability to perform duties in the operating room. At the time, all of these conditions were undiagnosed. When the applicant reported these issues to the first-line supervisor, the applicant was instructed to complete multiple counseling forms, which were documented over various dates as part of the discharge process. The Board acknowledged this contention during proceedings.

(2) The applicant contends that the applicant was informed by the 1SG, company commander, and a legal representative, who spoke with the battalion commander, that the discharge would be classified as honorable. However, on the applicant's final day of out-processing, the discharge paperwork unexpectedly reflected a general discharge. The applicant was not informed of this change and was directed to complete actions without understanding the consequences. The Board considered this contention but found insufficient evidence in the applicant's AMHRR or applicant-provided evidence to show that the command acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner, other than the applicant's contention.

(3) The applicant contends since leaving the military, the applicant has been formally diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and PTSD, and believes the discharge was handled improperly. The Board determined this contention valid.

d. The Board determined that the characterization of service was inequitable based on the circumstances surrounding the discharge (Adjustment Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, PTSD diagnoses). Accordingly, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable. The Board determined the narrative reason/SPD code and RE code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them.

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 determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's PTSD outweighed the applicant's basis of separation. 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 Board determined the Narrative Reason for separation and RE Code were proper and equitable and voted not to change them.

(3) The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code as the reason the applicant was discharged was both proper and equitable.

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

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: No Change
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change
- a. Change Authority to:

Authenticating Official:

12/16/2025



Signed by: USA

Legend:

AWOL – Absent Without Leave
AMHRR – Army Military Human
Resource Record
BCD – Bad Conduct Discharge
BH – Behavioral Health
CG – Company Grade Article 15
CID – Criminal Investigation
Division
ELS – Entry Level Status
FG – Field Grade Article 15
FTR – Failure to Report

GD – General Discharge
HS – High School
HD – Honorable Discharge
IADT – Initial Active-Duty
Training
MP – Military Police
MST – Military Sexual Trauma
N/A – Not applicable
NCO – Noncommissioned Officer
NIF – Not in File
NOS – Not Otherwise Specified

OAD – Ordered to Active Duty
OBH (I) – Other Behavioral
Health (Issues)
OMPF – Official Military
Personnel File
PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress
Disorder
RE – Re-entry
SCM – Summary Court Martial
SPCM – Special Court Martial

SPD – Separation Program
Designator
TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury
UNC – Uncharacterized
Discharge
UOTHC – Under Other Than
Honorable Conditions
VA – Department of Veterans
Affairs