

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

a. Application Date: October 25, 2021

b. Date Received: November 01, 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, they experienced the loss of a family member and was not supported by their unit during this time. They became isolated, struggled with depression, and felt discriminated against by their chain of command. The applicant acknowledged turning to marijuana a coping mechanism, which led to their only failed urinalysis. They emphasized this was out of character, as they had not been a troublemaker. Since discharge, the applicant has remained sober and seeks an upgrade to improve their character of service outside of the Army.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 05 November 2025, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed to 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. Please see **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more detail regarding the Board's decision. Board member names are available upon request.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Misconduct (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 26 March 2021

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 23 February 2021

(2) Basis for Separation: On or between 30 March and 29 April 2020, the applicant wrongfully used marijuana.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 3 March 2020 / The applicant waived counsel.

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 10 March 2020 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 20 February 2018 / 6 years, 23 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 23 / High School Diploma / 106

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 14T1O Patriot Operator/Maintainer / 3 years, 1 month, 26 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Korea / None

f. Awards and Decorations: AAM, NDSM, GWTSM, KDSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: On 28 April 2020, in a memorandum for record, the company commander ordered the applicant to submit a probable cause urinalysis due to the applicant's urine sample had been tampered with, as it was cold to the touch. When asked about the sample by a sergeant, the applicant replied they took Percocet (illegal use) over the weekend and it may have been still in their system. The company commander consulted with the battalion judge advocate who concurred with the recommendation for a probable cause urinalysis.

(1) The Enlisted Record Brief provides the applicant was flagged (Suspend Favorable Personnel Actions (FLAG)) on 9 June 2020, for drug abuse adverse action (UA). The same day, the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) Manager, informed the command of the applicant's positive urinalysis for illegal use of amphetamine and provided the required actions such as to refer the Soldier to the Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care (SUDCC) for an evaluation/assessment within five duty days, initiating a FLAG, and to comply with administrative guidance under AR 635-200.

(2) On 12 August 2020, the applicant received nonjudicial punishment (NJP) for wrongful use of marijuana on or between 20 March and 29 April 2020, in violation of Article 112, UCMJ. Their punishment imposed a reduction to private (E-1), forfeiture of \$866.00 pay, and extra duty and restriction for 45 days.

(3) A self-authored personal statement, undated, provides the applicant made a one-time mistake of smoking marijuana while struggling with depression and family issues. They sought help through behavioral health and the SUDCC (Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care) program, which taught them coping strategies and opened their eyes to the importance of seeking support. The applicant accepts responsibility for their actions, commits to never repeating the mistake, and aspired to use their future role as an Army leader to reduce the stigma of behavioral health, support their Soldiers, and to build a successful career to make their family proud.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s): The following documents have been provided to the ARBA Medical Advisor, if applicable. See "Board Discussion and Determination" for Medical Advisor Details.

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) AMHRR provided: Between 4 November 2020 and 5 January 2021, the applicant completed their separation examinations. A mental status evaluation indicates the BH provider psychiatrically cleared them for administrative proceedings with diagnoses of cannabis abuse with other specified problems related psychosocial circumstances and recommended them to follow-up with the SUDCC clinic. Additionally, the BH provider noted a Traumatic Brain Injury diagnosed in 2019, in which the applicant did not seek treatment or had loss of consciousness. Medically, they were qualified for separation with no diagnoses or recommendations listed.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Two Applications for the Review of Discharge; Application for Correction of Military Record; Veterans Affairs Service Letter; VA Rating Decision

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant has remained sober and seeks to improve their character of service outside of the Army.

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

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. Army Regulation 600-85 (Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)) provided a comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control policies, procedures, and responsibilities for Soldiers for ASAP services. 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. All Soldiers who are identified as drug abusers, without exception, will be referred to the ASAP counseling center for screening; be considered for disciplinary action under the UCMJ, as appropriate; and be processed for administrative separation in accordance with Army Regulation 635-200.

(1) 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. ASAP participation is mandatory for all Soldiers who are command referred. Failure to attend a mandatory counseling session may constitute a violation of Article 86 (Absence Without Leave) of the UCMJ.

(2) Alcohol and/or other drug abusers, and in some cases dependent alcohol users, may be enrolled in the ASAP when such enrollment is clinically recommended. Soldiers who fail to participate adequately in, or to respond successfully to, rehabilitation will be processed for administrative separation and not be provided another opportunity for rehabilitation except

under the most extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Clinical Director in consultation with the unit commander.

(3) Alcohol and/or other drug abusers, and in some cases dependent alcohol users, may be enrolled in the ASAP when such enrollment is clinically recommended. Soldiers who fail to participate adequately in, or to respond successfully to, rehabilitation will be processed for administrative separation and not be provided another opportunity for rehabilitation except under the most extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Clinical Director in consultation with the unit commander.

(4) All Soldiers who are identified as drug abusers, without exception, will be referred to the ASAP counseling center for screening; be considered for disciplinary action under the UCMJ, as appropriate; and be processed for administrative separation in accordance with Army Regulation 635-200.

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:

(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 waiverable. Eligibility: Ineligible unless a waiver is granted.

(3) 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.

(c) An under other-than-honorable-conditions discharge is an administrative separation from the Service under conditions other than honorable and it may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, security reasons, or in lieu of trial by court martial based on certain circumstances or patterns of behavior or acts or omissions that constitute a significant departure from the conduct expected of Soldiers in the Army.

(d) A Bad Conduct discharge will only be given to a Soldier pursuant to an approved sentence of general or special court-martial. Enlisted service members and officers with less than six years of service are eligible for a Bad Conduct Discharge. Behaviors such as drug abuse, assault, theft, insubordination, and other actions that violate military law may be punished with a BCD.

(e) A Dishonorable discharge is the most severe type of discharge and will be given to a Soldier pursuant only to an approved sentence of general or special court-martial. The appellate review must be completed and affirmed sentence ordered duly executed. Behaviors such as fraud, desertion, treason, espionage, sexual Assault, and murder and other actions may be punished with a dishonorable discharge.

(f) An uncharacterized separation will be described as entry-level with service uncharacterized if processing is initiated while a Soldier is in entry-level status. Unless the DCS, G-1, on a case-by-case basis, determines that characterization of service as honorable is clearly warranted by the presence of unusual circumstances involving personal conduct and performance of duty. This characterization is authorized when the Soldier is separated by reason of selected changes in service obligation, convenience of the Government, and Secretarial plenary authority. A Soldier is in an entry-level status (ELS) if the Soldier has not completed more than 180 days of creditable continuous active duty prior to the initiation of separation action.

(2) Chapter 14 (Separation for Misconduct) established policy and prescribed procedures for separating members for misconduct. 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. A pattern of misconduct consisting of one of the following – discreditable involvement with civil or military authorities, or discreditable conduct and conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline including conduct violating the accepted standards of personal conduct found in the UCMJ, Army regulations, the civil law, and time-honored customs and traditions of the Army. Paragraph 14-12c (2) terms abuse of illegal drugs as serious misconduct. It continues; however, by recognizing relevant facts may mitigate the nature of the offense. Therefore, a single drug abuse offense may be combined with one or more minor disciplinary infractions or incidents of other misconduct and processed for separation under paragraph 14-12a or 14-12b as appropriate.

(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, it will 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 “JKK” as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Misconduct (Drug Abuse).

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S): Standard of Review. The Army Discharge Review Board considers applications for upgrade as instructed by Department of Defense Instruction 1332.28.

a. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable and a separation code change. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

(1) An authenticated DD Form 214 provides the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) for misconduct (drug abuse) with a general (under honorable conditions) characterization of service. They received NJP in August 2020 for wrongful use of marijuana and as a result, was reduced to private. The applicant waived counsel and provided a statement on their behalf. They served 3 years, 1 month, and 26 days of 6-year contractual obligation.

(2) The applicant requests relief contending, they experienced the loss of a family member and was not supported by their unit during this time. They became isolated, struggled with depression, and felt discriminated against by their chain of command. The applicant acknowledged turning to marijuana a coping mechanism, which led to their only failed urinalysis. They emphasized this was out of character, as they had not been a troublemaker. Since discharge, the applicant has remained sober and seeks an upgrade to improve their character of service outside of the Army.

(3) The applicant completed their separation examinations. A mental status evaluation provides they were psychiatrically cleared for administrative proceedings with diagnoses of cannabis abuse and other specified problems related psychosocial circumstances. The BH provider recommended them to follow-up with the SUDCC clinic and noted a Traumatic Brain Injury diagnosed in 2019, in which the applicant did not seek treatment or had loss of consciousness. Medically, they were qualified for separation with no diagnoses or recommendations listed.

b. 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 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.

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: Adjustment Disorder with depressed mood; Chronic Adjustment Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found the applicant initiated BH services while in service and was diagnosed with an Adjustment Disorder.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **No.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that there are no mitigating BH conditions. The applicant was diagnosed with an Adjustment Disorder after being referred for a substance abuse evaluation, and they reported symptoms of depression secondary to a change in job duties and stressors associated with family. While substance abuse can be a natural sequela to mental health conditions associated with trauma exposure, there is insufficient evidence of any service-related traumatic experience that would substantiate medical mitigation.

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

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

c. Response to Contention(s): The applicant requests relief contending, they experienced the loss of a family member and was not supported by their unit during this time. They became isolated, struggled with depression, and felt discriminated against by their chain of command. The applicant acknowledged turning to marijuana as a coping mechanism, which led to their only failed urinalysis. They emphasized this was out of character, as they had not been a troublemaker. Since discharge, the applicant has remained sober and seeks an upgrade to improve their character of service outside of the Army. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length, quality of service, and post-service accomplishments. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief.

d. The Board determined: The Board carefully considered the applicant's request, supporting documents, evidence in the records, a medical review, and published Department of Defense guidance for liberal consideration of discharge upgrade requests. The Board considered the applicant's statement, record of service, the frequency and nature of misconduct, and the reason for separation. The Board found sufficient evidence of in-service mitigating factors (Length, Quality) and concurred that although there is no medical mitigation to

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apply the applicant's quality of service and post service accomplishments outweighed the one-time drug use. Based on a preponderance of evidence, the Board determined that the character of service the applicant received upon separation was inequitable and warranted an upgrade.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) Published Department of Defense guidance indicates the guidance is not intended to interfere or impede on the Board's statutory independence. The Board determines the relative weight of the action that was the basis for the discharge and whether it supports relief or not. In reaching its determination, the Board considers the application, available records and any supporting documents included with the application.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable. The Board found sufficient evidence of in-service mitigating factors (Length, Quality) and concurred that although there is no medical mitigation to apply the applicant's quality of service and post service accomplishments outweighed the one-time drug use.

(3) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) under the same pretexts, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JKN.

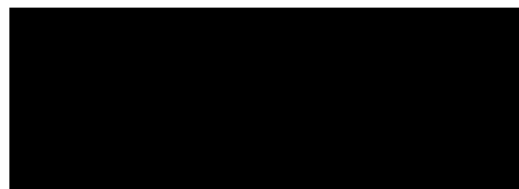
(4) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / 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: AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a**

Authenticating Official:

3/22/2026



Legend:

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

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

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

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

