

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 28 February 2022**b. Date Received:** 19 April 2022**c. Counsel:** None**2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:**

a. Applicant Requests: The current characterization of service for the period under review is under other than honorable conditions. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable and a narrative reason change.

b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant requests relief contending, at the time of the events leading to separation, they were very young and experiencing significant personal hardship following the recent loss of a parent to cancer. The applicant also faced financial and travel difficulties which interfered with attendance at scheduled drill weekends. After missing several drills, the unit presented the applicant with separation paperwork, advising a general (under honorable conditions) discharge could be issued, but provided no additional guidance, counseling, or assistance.

(1) Although the applicant desired to continue serving, they signed the paperwork without fully understanding alternative options or the long-term consequences of the action. Shortly thereafter, the applicant relocated and did not receive subsequent correspondence notifying them of the date and time of the separation hearing, which resulted in their absence and inability to present an explanation or mitigating circumstances. Prior to the final discharge determination, the applicant contacted the company via email expressing regret and requested to return to the unit; however, they were informed no corrective action could be taken. The applicant was later notified they had been separated with an under other than honorable conditions characterization of service and reduction in rank.

(2) The applicant seeks an upgrade to a general (under honorable conditions) characterization of service for two primary reasons. First, they assert their service was otherwise honorable, the applicant served with dedication, achieved the rank of Specialist, and their record was marred only by a brief lapse in judgement during a period of extreme personal difficulty. Second, the applicant seeks consideration for possible reenlistment. Since separation, the applicant has demonstrated integrity, responsibility, and commitment through continued achievement in a medical career, reflecting personal growth and rehabilitation.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 22 January 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge was inequitable because the applicant's length and quality of service outweighed the basis for separation due to unsatisfactory participation, warranting an upgrade in the characterization of service. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to General (Under Honorable Conditions). The Board voted to retain the narrative reason for separation and the re-entry code. 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: NIF / AR 135-178 / NIF / NA / Under Other than Honorable Conditions

b. Date of Discharge: 3 September 2008

c. Separation Facts: The case separation files were not properly stored in the Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR); therefore, the specific facts and circumstances surrounding separation, are unknown.

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: NIF

(2) Basis for Separation: NIF

(3) Recommended Characterization: NIF

(4) Legal Consultation Date: NIF

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NIF

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: NIF

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 22 November 2002 / 8 years (United States Army Reserve)

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / High School Diploma / NIF

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 /68W / 5 years, 9 months, 12 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: NIF

f. Awards and Decorations: None

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: NIF

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: NIF

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: None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Online Application.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: They have achieved many things in their medical career since then, demonstrating integrity and follow through on their commitments.

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 135-178 (Army National Guard and Reserve Enlisted Administrative Separations) sets forth the policies, standards, and procedures, to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Army National Guard and USAR enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons. The separation policies throughout the different Chapters in this regulation promote the readiness of the Army by providing an orderly means to judge the suitability of persons to serve on the basis of their conduct and their ability to meet required standards of duty performance and discipline. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, and convictions by civil authorities.

(1) The possible characterizations include an honorable, general (under honorable conditions), under other than honorable conditions, or uncharacterized if the Soldier is in entry-level status. However, the permissible range of characterization varies based on the reason for separation.

(2) The characterization is based upon the quality of the Soldier's service, including the reason for separation and determination in accordance with standards of acceptable personal conduct and performance of duty as found in the UCMJ, Army regulations, and the time-honored customs and traditions of the Army. The reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the discharge are considered on the issue of characterization.

(3) Army Regulation 635-200 (Enlisted Administrative Separations) 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

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 narrative reason change. A review of the record provides administrative irregularity in the proper retention of records, specifically, the AMHRR is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army Reserve. They served 5 years, 9 months, and 12 days of their 6-year contractual obligation.

(1) Although the specific facts and circumstances surrounding the applicant's separation are unknown, USAR discharge orders reflects they were discharged under the provisions of AR 135-178 with an under other than honorable conditions characterization of service, which imposed a reduction to the lowest enlisted grade.

(2) The applicant contends, at the time of separation, they were very young and experiencing significant personal hardship following the recent loss of a parent to cancer, along with financial and travel difficulties which interfered with attendance at drill weekends. After missing several drills, the applicant was presented with separation paperwork and advised a general (under honorable conditions) discharge could be issued, but received no counseling, guidance, or explanation of alternative options. Although the applicant desired to continue serving, they signed the paperwork without fully understanding the consequences. The applicant subsequently relocated and did not receive notice of the separation hearing, resulting in their absence and inability to present mitigating circumstances. Prior to final action, the applicant contacted the unit expressing regret and requesting to return, but was informed no action could be taken, and was later notified of separation with an under other than honorable conditions characterization/loss of rank. The applicant seeks an upgrade to general (under honorable conditions), asserting their service was otherwise honorable, they achieved the rank of SPC, and the misconduct reflected a brief lapse in judgement during an exceptionally difficult period; since separation the applicant has demonstrated rehabilitation and integrity through continued success in a medical career and seeks consideration for possible reenlistment.

b. Army Regulation 135-178 sets forth the policies, standards, and procedures, to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Army National Guard and USAR enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons. The separation policies throughout the different Chapters in this regulation promote the readiness of the Army by providing an orderly means to judge the suitability of persons to serve on the basis of their conduct and their ability to meet required standards of duty performance and discipline. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, and convictions by civil authorities.

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? **No.** The applicant provided no documents or testimony of a condition or experience, that, when applying liberal consideration, could have excused or mitigated a discharge.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **N/A**

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **N/A**

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

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

(1) Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends, at the time of separation, they were very young and experiencing significant personal hardship following the recent loss of a parent to cancer, along with financial and travel difficulties which interfered with attendance at drill weekends. These circumstances, combined with the applicant's length and quality of service, contributed to the Board's determination that relief in the form of an upgrade was warranted.

(2) The applicant is contending, following the missed drills, the applicant was presented with separation paperwork and advised a general (under honorable conditions) discharge could be issued, but received no counseling, guidance, or explanation of alternative options. Although the applicant desired to continue serving, they signed the paperwork without fully understanding the consequences. The Board considered this contention and acknowledged the applicant's young age and significant personal hardship during the period of non-participation. These circumstances, combined with the applicant's length and quality of service, contributed to the Board's determination that relief in the form of an upgrade was warranted.

(3) The applicant contends, relocating and did not receive notice of the separation hearing, resulting in their absence and inability to present mitigating circumstances. Prior to final action, the applicant contacted the unit expressing regret and requesting to return, but was informed no action could be taken, and was later notified of separation with an under other than honorable conditions characterization/loss of rank. The Board considered this contention and reviewed the applicant's claim of not receiving notice of the separation hearing but found no evidence indicating that the process was improper or that the applicant was denied due process. However, the Board found that the applicant's overall service supported granting an upgrade.

(4) The applicant seeks relief, contending an upgrade to general (under honorable conditions), asserting their service was otherwise honorable, they achieved the rank of SPC, and the misconduct reflected a brief lapse in judgement during an exceptionally difficult period. The Board considered this contention and recognized the applicant's prior satisfactory service and attainment of the rank of SPC. The Board agreed that the applicant's overall service record supported upgrading the characterization to General (Under Honorable Conditions).

(5) The applicant is contending, since separation they have demonstrated rehabilitation and integrity through continued success in a medical career and seek consideration for possible reenlistment. The Board considered this contention and acknowledged the applicant's post-service achievements and pursuit of a medical career. While post-service conduct alone did not determine the outcome, it supported the Board's decision to grant an upgrade based on the applicant's length and quality of service.

c. The Board determined the discharge was inequitable because the applicant's length and quality of service outweighed the basis for separation due to unsatisfactory participation, warranting an upgrade in the characterization of service. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to General (Under Honorable Conditions). The Board voted to retain the narrative reason for separation and the re-entry

code. However, the applicant may still apply to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records. The applicant is responsible for satisfying the burden of proof and providing documents or other evidence sufficient to support the applicant's contention(s) that the discharge was improper or inequitable.

d. 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 upgrade the applicant's characterization of service to General (Under Honorable Conditions) because the applicant's length and quality of service outweighed the basis for separation due to unsatisfactory participation.

(3) The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code, determining that both remained proper and equitable.

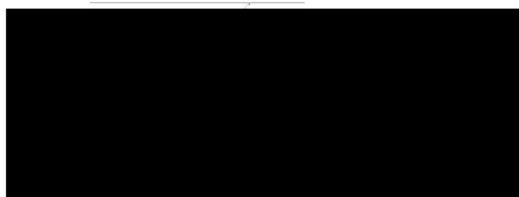
(4) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes**
- b. Change Characterization to: General, Under Honorable Conditions**
- c. Change Reason / SPD code to: No Change**
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change**
- e. Change Authority to: No Change**

Authenticating Official:

1/28/2026



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