

**1. Applicant's Name:** [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 7 March 2022**b. Date Received:** 7 March 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 general (under honorable conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

**b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s):** The applicant requests relief contending, in effect, the current discharge characterization diminishes the applicant's character and inaccurately describes the applicant's service. Until the incident which caused the discharge, the applicant had no infractions, exceeded in all their tasks and duties, excelled in physical training, marksmanship and exhibited a high level of proficiency in their job. The applicant maintained a level of commitment and service to the Army throughout the entire process, even through adversity and continued to serve honorably, exemplifying all the Army values. The applicant believes their hard work and efforts were disregarded. The applicant understands standards are in place and must be upheld, and the applicant accepts their responsibility. As the applicant continues to move forward and progress in their career and life and does not want to be wrongly represented.

**c. Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 26 January 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service, and post-service accomplishments. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed 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 (Serious Offense) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c / JKQ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**b. Date of Discharge:** 19 April 2018

**c. Separation Facts:** The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) is void of the case separation file. However, the applicant provided documents which are described below in 3c (1) through (6).

**(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 8 March 2018

**(2) Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: For Commission of a Serious Offense. On or about 17 July 2017, the applicant was found with approximately 4.1 grams of Marijuana in their vehicle.

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

**(4) Legal Consultation Date:** 20 March 2018

**(5) Administrative Separation Board:** NA

**(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 3 April 2018 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

**a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review:** 4 August 2014 / 4 years

**b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 18 / High School Graduate / 104

**c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 / 25U1O, Signal Support System Specialist / 3 years, 8 months, 16 days

**d. Prior Service / Characterizations:** None

**e. Overseas Service / Combat Service:** None

**f. Awards and Decorations:** AAM-2, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR

**g. Performance Ratings:** NA

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

**(1)** The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) indicates the applicant had not completed the first full term of service. The applicant was discharged under the authority of AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12c, with a narrative reason of Misconduct (Serious Offense). The DD Form 214 was authenticated with the applicant's electronic signature.

**(2)** Enlisted Record Brief (ERB), 20 April 2018, reflects the applicant was flagged for Law Enforcement Investigation (MA), effective 3 August 2017 and Involuntary Separation or Discharge (Field Initiated) (BA), effective 14 December 2017, and was ineligible for reenlistment due to pending separation (9V).

**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 Listed:** None

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Online Application; two third-party letters; separation packet.

**6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted with 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. Multiple Department of Defense Policy Guidance Memoranda published between 2014 and 2018. The documents are commonly referred to by the signatory authorities' last names (2014 Secretary of Defense Guidance [Hagel memo], 2016 Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Carson memo], 2017 Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Kurta memo], and 2018 Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Wilkie memo].

(1) Individually and collectively, these documents provide further clarification to the Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharge due to mental health conditions, including PTSD; TBI; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Liberal consideration will be given to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part on matters relating to mental health conditions, including PTSD; TBI; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Special consideration will be given to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determinations that document a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment potentially contributed to the circumstances resulting in a less than honorable discharge characterization. Special consideration will also be given in cases where a civilian provider confers diagnoses of a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment if the case records contain narratives supporting symptomatology at the time of service or when any other evidence which may reasonably indicate that a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment existed at the time of discharge might have mitigated the misconduct that caused a discharge of lesser characterization.

(2) Conditions documented in the service record that can reasonably be determined to have existed at the time of discharge will be considered to have existed at the time of discharge. In cases in which a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment may be reasonably determined to have existed at the time of discharge, those conditions will be considered potential mitigating factors in the misconduct that caused the characterization of service in question. All Boards will exercise caution in weighing evidence of mitigation in cases in which serious misconduct precipitated a discharge with a less than Honorable characterization of service. Potentially mitigating evidence of the existence of undiagnosed combat related PTSD, PTSD-related conditions due to TBI or sexual assault/harassment as causative factors in the misconduct resulting in discharge will be carefully weighed against the severity of the misconduct. PTSD is not a likely cause of premeditated misconduct. Caution shall be exercised in weighing evidence of mitigation in all cases of misconduct by carefully considering the likely causal relationship of symptoms to the misconduct.

**c.** Army Regulation 15-180 (Army Discharge Review Board), sets forth the policies and procedures under which the Army Discharge Review Board is authorized to review the character, reason, and authority of any Servicemember discharged from active military service within 15 years of the Servicemember's date of discharge. Additionally, it prescribes actions and composition of the Army Discharge Review Board under Public Law 95-126; Section 1553, Title 10 United States Code; and Department of Defense Directive 1332.41 and Instruction 1332.28.

**d.** 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.

**e.** 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 3-5c, provides the reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the separation, will be considered on the issue of characterization. As a general matter, characterization will be based upon a pattern of behavior other than an isolated incident. There are circumstances, however, in which the conduct or performance of duty reflected by a single incident provides the basis for characterization.

**(b)** 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.

**(c)** 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 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) Paragraph 14-3, prescribes 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.

(b) 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.

(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

f. 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 "JKQ" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 12c, misconduct (serious offense).

**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 available evidence reflects the applicant was notified of the intent to discharge them from the U.S. Army for Commission of a Serious Offense. The applicant was found with approximately 4.1 grams of Marijuana in their vehicle. The applicant requested consulting counsel and representation by military counsel and was involuntarily discharged from the U.S. Army. The DD Form 214 provides the applicant was discharged with a character of service of general (under honorable conditions) for commission of a serious offense.

c. The applicant contends good service. The current character of service inaccurately describes the applicant's service. The applicant exceeded in all their tasks and duties, excelled in physical training, marksmanship and exhibited a high level of proficiency in their job. The Board evaluated the applicant's service accomplishments and overall quality of service in accordance with DODI 1332.28.

d. The applicant contends the event leading to the discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. Army Regulation 635-200, paragraph 3-5, state certain circumstances allow a single act of conduct or duty performance to serve as the basis for service characterization.

e. The third-party statements provided with the application reflect the applicant's hard work and good character while serving in the Army.

f. The applicant contends an upgraded discharge would improve employment prospects. The Board does not grant relief to secure or enhance job opportunities

**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 Board's Medical Advisor reviewed DoD and VA medical records and found no mitigating BH diagnoses on the applicant. 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

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends good service. The current character of service inaccurately describes the applicant's service. The applicant exceeded in all their tasks and duties, excelled in physical training, marksmanship and exhibited a high level of proficiency in their job. The third-party statements provided with the application reflect the applicant's hard work and good character while serving in the Army. The Board considered this contention and granted and upgrade based upon the applicant's length and quality of service outweighing a single drug use.

(2) The applicant contends the event leading to the discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. The Board considered this contention and granted an upgrade as the applicant's post service accomplishments show the drug use was an isolated incident.

(3) The applicant contends an upgraded discharge would improve employment prospects. The Board considered this contention but does not grant relief to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities.

d. The Board determined: After applying liberal consideration, the Board determined the Basis of Separation (BoS) was inequitable, too harsh, and granted relief in the form of an upgrade to for a one-time use of drugs. The Board considered all available documents and determined that due to length of 3 years, 8 months, quality service as well as good performance made the discharge seem excessive for a one-time use. The Board voted unanimously, 3-0, for the upgrade

e. Rationale for Decision:

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(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 because the applicant's length and quality of service as well as post service accomplishments outweigh the one-time use of drugs. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

(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 change to Re 3.

**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: Re 3
- 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