

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

a. Application Date: 28 December 2021

b. Date Received: 5 January 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, they were diagnosed with PTSD by a civilian and a Military doctor. They notified and informed their unit that they were seeking mental health help, but their request for time to work through their issues was ignored and they were deemed a no-show. They were discharged, lost school benefits and had to repay their G.I. Bill. They served honorably, and they were promoted due to their merit and performance. They deserve to have an honorable discharge and all the benefits that were promised to them upon joining.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 17 October 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service, to include combat service, and the circumstances surrounding the discharge (diagnosis of PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)). Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable in accordance with AR 135-178. The Board determined the narrative reason for discharge and reentry code are 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: NIF / AR 135-178 / NIF / NIF / Under Honorable Conditions (General).

b. Date of Discharge: 23 July 2008

c. Separation Facts: The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) is void of the case separation file. However, the applicant provided the following document in support of their petition: Notification of Involuntary Separation Board IAW AR 135-178.

(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:** 21 June 2008

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** NIF

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 26 August 2002 / 8 years

b. **Date / Period of Reenlistment(s):** NIF

c. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 20 / NIF / NIF

d. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-5 / 74D10 00 Chemical Operations Specialist / 5 years, 10 months, 28 days.

e. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** NIF

f. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** NIF / Iraq; 20040407 – 20050206

g. **Awards and Decorations:** ASR, COA-2, ARCOM

h. **Performance Ratings:** NIF

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

(1) An Enlistment/ Reenlistment Document indicates that the applicant enlisted in the United States Army Reserve (USAR) for 8 years at the pay grade of E-1 on 26 August 2002.

(2) On 30 May 2006 the applicant received the Combat Action Badge for actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy.

(3) A DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release of Discharge from Active Duty) provides the period of service between 21 January 2003 – 13 June 2003 highlighting the following:

- Military Education: Chemical Operations Specialist
- Narrative Reason: Completion of Required Active Service
- Service Characterization: Honorable
- Total NET Active Service this Period: 4 months, 23 days
- Total Prior Inactive Service: 4 months, 16 days

(4) Orders 08-205-00001 indicates the applicant was discharged under the authority of AR 135-178, with a general, under honorable conditions characterization of service effective 23 July 2008.

j. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** NIF

k. **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:** Two Adult, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry mental health letters and 9 pages of Progress Notes.

(2) AMHRR provided: An Adult, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry mental health letter dated 21 October 2005.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: A DD Form 149 (Correction of Military Records) application, Two Diplomat of The American Board of Disability Analysts Adult, Child, and Adolescent Psychiatry letters, nine page of Progress Notes, four letter of recommendation, Department of The Army memorandum dated 22 May 2008, DD Form 214, Certificate of Achievement, Recommendation for Award document, Department of Veteran Affairs education benefits denial letter, Department of Treasury payment agreement letter, Department of Veteran Affairs Debt Management Center letter, and a Department of Veteran Affairs rating decision letter dated 15 July 2008.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None submitted in support of their application.

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

a. Section 1553, Title 10, United States Code (Review of Discharge or Dismissal) provides for the creation, composition, and scope of review conducted by a Discharge Review Board(s) within established governing standards. As amended by Sections 521 and 525 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, 10 USC 1553 provides specific guidance to the Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards when considering discharge upgrade requests by Veterans claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual trauma, intimate partner violence (IPV), or spousal abuse, as a basis for discharge review. The amended guidance provides that Boards will include, as a voting board member, a physician trained in mental health disorders, a clinical psychologist, or a psychiatrist when the discharge upgrade claim asserts a mental health condition, including PTSD, TBI, sexual trauma, IPV, or spousal abuse, as a basis for the discharge. Further, the guidance provides that Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards will develop and provide specialized training specific to sexual trauma, IPV, spousal abuse, as well as the various responses of individuals to trauma.

b. Office, Secretary of Defense memorandum (Supplemental Guidance to Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Discharge Upgrade Requests by Veterans Claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), 3 September 2014, directed the Service Discharge Review Boards (DRBs) and Service Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NRs) to carefully consider the revised PTSD criteria, detailed medical considerations and mitigating factors when taking action on applications from former service members administratively discharged UOTHC and who have been diagnosed with PTSD by a competent mental health professional representing a civilian healthcare provider in order to determine if it would be appropriate to upgrade the characterization of the applicant's service.

c. Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Clarifying Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Requests by Veterans for Modification of their Discharge Due to Mental Health Conditions, Sexual Assault, or Sexual Harassment), 25 August 2017 issued clarifying guidance for the Secretary of Defense Directive to DRBs and BCM/NRs when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharges due in whole or in part to mental health conditions, including PTSD; Traumatic Brain Injury; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Boards are to give liberal consideration to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part to those conditions or experiences. The guidance further describes evidence sources and criteria and requires Boards to consider the conditions or experiences presented in evidence as potential mitigation for misconduct that led to the discharge.

d. Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Regarding Equity, Injustice, or Clemency Determinations), 25 July 2018 issued guidance to Military DRBs and BCM/NRs regarding equity, injustice, or clemency determinations. Clemency generally refers to relief specifically granted from a criminal sentence. However, the guidance applies to more than clemency from a sentencing in a court-martial; it also applies to other corrections, including changes in a discharge, which may be warranted based on equity or relief from injustice.

(1) This guidance does not mandate relief but rather provides standards and principles to guide Boards in application of their equitable relief authority. In determining whether to grant relief on the basis of equity, injustice, or clemency grounds, DRBs shall consider the prospect for rehabilitation, external evidence, sworn testimony, policy changes, relative severity of misconduct, mental and behavioral health conditions, official governmental acknowledgement that a relevant error or injustice was committed, and uniformity of punishment.

(2) Changes to the narrative reason for discharge and/or an upgraded character of service granted solely on equity, injustice, or clemency grounds normally should not result in separation pay, retroactive promotions, and payment of past medical expenses or similar benefits that might have been received if the original discharge had been for the revised reason or had the upgraded service characterization.

e. Army Regulation 15-180 (Army Discharge Review Board), dated 25 September 2019, sets forth the policies and procedures under which the Army Discharge Review Board is authorized to review the character, reason, and authority of any Servicemember discharged from active military service within 15 years of the Servicemember's date of discharge. Additionally, it prescribes actions and composition of the Army Discharge Review Board under Public Law 95-126; Section 1553, Title 10 United States Code; and Department of Defense Directive 1332.41 and Instruction 1332.28.

f. Army Regulation 601-210, Regular Army, and Reserve Components Enlistment Program, governs eligibility criteria, policies, and procedures for enlistment and processing of persons into the Regular Army, the U.S. Army Reserve, and Army National Guard for enlistment per DODI 1304.26. It also prescribes the appointment, reassignment, management, and mobilization of Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets under the Simultaneous Membership Program. Chapter 4 provides the criteria and procedures for waiverable and nonwaiverable separations. Table 3-1, defines reentry eligibility (RE) codes:

(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 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.

h. 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

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 separation orders indicate the applicant received an under honorable conditions (general) characterization of service.

b. Based on the available evidence the applicant enlisted in the USAR at the age of 20 and advanced to the rank of Sergeant. They deployed to Iraq and received the combat action badge. On 22 May 2008 the applicant received notification of the Involuntary separation Board. A review of the record provides administrative error in the proper retention of records, specifically the AMHRR is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the applicant's discharge from the Army Reserve. Notwithstanding the lack of evidence, separation orders indicates that the applicant was discharge on 23 July 2008 with a general, under honorable conditions characterization of service.

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: PTSD, MDD.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found the applicant is 70 percent SC for PTSD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Unknown.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that without a basis for separation, the writer can make no decision regarding medical mitigation under liberal consideration. However, medical documentation suggests that the basis for separation was the applicant missing drills after returning from deployment. If this is indeed the basis for separation, then her misconduct would be mitigated by her diagnosis of PTSD given the association between PTSD and avoidant behavior.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** Based on liberally considering all the evidence before the Board, the ADRB determined that the condition outweighed the basis of separation.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None.

c. Response to Contention(s): None presented

d. The Board determined that the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service, to include combat, and the circumstances surrounding the discharge (PTSD, MDD). Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable in accordance with AR 135-178. The Board determined the narrative reason for discharge and reentry code are 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 applicant's petition, available records and any supporting documents included with the petition.

(2) The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's diagnosis of PTSD, length and quality of service, and combat service mitigating the basis of separation, missing drills. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable in accordance with AR 135-178. There will be no

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change to the narrative reason for separation or the reentry code.

(4) As there were no Reasons/SPD Codes/RE-codes listed on the applicant's discharge paperwork, due to being in the Army Reserves, no upgrade actions are required for these items.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD Code to: Not applicable
- d. Change RE Code to: Not applicable
- e. Change Authority to: AR 135-178

Authenticating Official:

10/25/2025



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