

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 25 January 2022**b. Date Received:** 1 February 2022**c. Counsel:** [REDACTED]**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 honorable.

b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant requests relief contending, in effect suffering from service-connected PTSD leading to alcohol abuse. The applicant contends the separation authority did not note any specific reasons for separation. The applicant contends the separation commander's report noted no record of any court-martial, other disciplinary action, or derogatory data against the applicant. The applicant contends not having any indication of misconduct or refusal of any mandated rehabilitation programs or treatments. The applicant contends being denied entry to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers because the characterization of service was not noted to be honorable.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 20 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, the circumstances surrounding the discharge (OBHI and PTSD diagnoses), 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, and the reentry code to RE-3. 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: Alcohol Rehabilitation Failure / AR 635-200, Chapter 9 / JPD / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 18 August 2020

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

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: Undated memorandum

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: 22 March 2019, the applicant was medically referred to SUDCC and completed the program on 16 September 2019. The applicant was considered a rehabilitation failure after being referred on 4 March 2020.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: The applicant did not clearly elect for or against representation on 17 June 2020.

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

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

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 2 January 2018 / 3 years, 16 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 25 / some college / 113

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 11B10, Infantryman / 2 years, 7 months, 17 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: AAM, NDSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: None

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Developmental Counseling Form, 9 March 2020, document an instance of the applicant receiving a FLAG for failing SUDCC.

(2) 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 9 with a narrative reason of Alcohol Rehabilitation Failure. The DD Form 214 was authenticated with the applicant's electronic signature. The applicant had no lost time.

(3) Enlisted Record Brief (ERB), 19 August 2020, reflects the applicant was flagged Involuntary Separation or Discharge (Field Initiated) (BA), 20 March 2020; Alcohol Abuse (Adverse Action) (VA), 9 March 2020; Army Combat Fitness Test Failure (JA), 27 January 2020. The applicant's ERB reflects having no combat or overseas service.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

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

(1) Applicant provided:

(a) Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 27 March 2020, indicates the applicant was diagnosed with Mild Alcohol Use Disorder. The applicant was not seen to have abnormal

cognition, perception, behavior, or impulsivity. The applicant was also deemed to have no safety precautions. The applicant was encouraged to attend follow-up appointments and to prohibit use of alcohol, as it might interfere with medication. The applicant was a medical referral to Substance Use Disorder Clinic Care (SUDCC) on 22 March 2019, due to concerns of drinking with medications. The applicant SUDCC outpatient treatment on 16 September 2019. The applicant was deemed as a rehab failure because AR 600-85 states "Soldiers with a subsequent alcohol or drug related incident of misconduct any time during a 12-month period following successful completion of the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) will be processed for separation as a separation under the provisions of Chapter 9, AR 635-200."

(b) VA disability Rating Letter, 15 September 2021, reflects the applicant was rated at a 70 percent for PTSD service connection with anxiety, insomnia, major depressive disorder, and substance abuse as secondary symptoms.

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for the Review of Discharge; Contention Narrative; TDS Info; Trial Defense Service Card; Case Separation File, Enlistment/Reenlistment Document Armed Forces of the United States; VA Rating Letter; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

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

c. Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Clarifying Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Requests by Veterans for Modification of their Discharge Due to Mental Health Conditions,

Sexual Assault, or Sexual Harassment), 25 August 2017 issued clarifying guidance for the Secretary of Defense Directive to DRBs and BCM/NRs when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharges due in whole or in part to mental health conditions, including PTSD; Traumatic Brain Injury; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Boards are to give liberal consideration to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part to those conditions or experiences. The guidance further describes evidence sources and criteria and requires Boards to consider the conditions or experiences presented in evidence as potential mitigation for misconduct that led to the discharge.

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

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

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

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

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

- RE-1 Applies to: Person completing his or her term of active service who is considered qualified to reenter the U.S. Army. Eligibility: Qualified for enlistment if all other criteria are met.

- RE-3 Applies to: Person who is not considered fully qualified for reentry or continuous service at time of separation, but disqualification is waiverable. Eligibility: Ineligible unless a waiver is granted.

▪ RE-4 Applies to: Person separated from last period of service with a nonwaiverable disqualification. This includes anyone with a DA imposed bar to reenlistment in effect at time of separation or separated for any reason (except length of service retirement) with 18 or more years active Federal service. Eligibility: Ineligible for enlistment.

g. Army Regulation 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations), provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.

(1) Chapter 3, Section II provides the authorized types of characterization of service or description of separation.

(a) Paragraph 3-5c, 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 9 outlines the procedures for discharging individuals because of alcohol or other drug abuse. A member who has been referred to the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) for alcohol or drug abuse may be separated because of inability or refusal to participate in, cooperate in, or successfully complete such a program if there is a lack of potential for continued Army service and rehabilitation efforts are no longer practical.

(a) Paragraph 9-4, stipulates the service of Soldiers discharged under this section will be characterized as honorable or under honorable conditions unless the Soldier is in entry-level status and an uncharacterized description of service is required.

(b) An honorable discharge is mandated in any case in which the Government initially introduces into the final discharge process limited use evidence as defined by AR 600-85.

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

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

h. Army Regulation 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes), provides the specific authorities (regulatory or directive), reasons for separating Soldiers from active duty, and the SPD codes to be entered on the DD Form 214. It identifies the SPD code of "JPD" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 9, for alcohol rehabilitation failure.

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 applicant was notified of intent to separate on an undated memorandum and was recommended a general (under honorable conditions). The reasons for separation for separation were 22 March 2019, the applicant was command referred to SUDCC and completed the program on 16 September 2019. The applicant was considered a rehabilitation failure after being command referred on 4 March 2020. The applicant was given an election of rights memorandum. The applicant did not clearly indicate desire for counsel. The applicant underwent an MSE on 27 March 2020 and was diagnosed with Mild Alcohol Use Disorder. The separation authority considered the MSE and directed a General (Under Honorable Conditions) discharge on an undated memorandum. The applicant's DD Form 214 reflects the applicant's discharge date as 18 August 2020.

c. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR) includes partial facts and circumstances concerning the events leading to the discharge from the Army. However, the applicant provided several documents related to the separation proceedings. The applicant's AMHRR includes a properly constituted DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), which was authenticated by the applicant's electronic signature. The applicant's DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 9, by reason of Alcohol Rehabilitation Failure, with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions).

d. The applicant contends the event leading discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. The applicant's AMHRR is void of any misconduct history. The applicant contends having no alcohol incident or misconduct before the discharge. The applicant submitted their case separation file containing a Developmental Counseling, 9 March 2020, for failing SUDCC but there was no other paperwork containing misconduct. 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 applicant contends suffering from service-connected PTSD leading to alcohol abuse. The applicant provided a Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 27 March 2020, indicating the applicant was diagnosed with Mild Alcohol Use Disorder. The applicant was not seen to have abnormal cognition, perception, behavior, or impulsivity. The applicant was also deemed to have no safety precautions. The applicant was encouraged to attend follow-up appointments and to prohibit use of alcohol, as it might interfere with medication. The applicant was a medical referral to Substance Use Disorder Clinic Care (SUDCC) on 22 March 2019, due to concerns of drinking with medications. The applicant SUDCC outpatient treatment on 16 September 2019. The applicant was deemed as a rehab failure because AR 600-85 states "Soldiers with a subsequent alcohol or drug related incident of misconduct any time during a 12-month period following successful completion of the Army Substance Abuse Program

(ASAP) will be processed for separation as a separation under the provisions of Chapter 9, AR 635-200." The applicant also provided a VA disability Rating Letter, 15 September 2021, reflecting the applicant was rated at a 70 percent for PTSD service connection with anxiety, insomnia, major depressive disorder, and substance abuse as secondary symptoms. The applicant's AMHRR is void of a mental status evaluation.

f. The applicant contends an upgrade would improve employment prospects. The applicant contends the general (under honorable conditions) discharge effected their chances in joining an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union. 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? **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 applicant is 70 percent SC for PTSD and was diagnosed during service with MDD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that a review of the records reflects the applicant has BH conditions that mitigates their misconduct as outlined in the BoS. They are 50 percent SC for PTSD and were diagnosed in service with MDD. The applicant asserts they began to self-medicate with alcohol to address BH symptoms after learning their intimate partner committed suicide, and records in the EMR sufficiently supports this assertion. Given the nexus between the applicant's BH conditions and the use of substance to self-medicate, misconduct characterized by continued alcohol use, resulting in being deemed a rehabilitation failure, is mitigated and upgrade based on medical mitigation is supported.

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor opine, the Board determined that the applicant's PTSD and MDD outweighed the applicant's alcohol rehab failure discharge.

b. Prior Decisions Cited:

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends suffering from service-connected PTSD leading to alcohol abuse. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that it was valid due to the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's alcohol rehabilitation failure. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends the event leading discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's alcohol rehabilitation failure.

(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: In a unanimous vote 3-0, the Board approved an upgrade to Honorable Discharge/JKN/RE3 based on medical mitigation for a BH condition that existed in service; Kurta 4 applies. 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 concurred with the conclusion of the medical advising official that the applicant has behavior health conditions—50 percent service connected for PTSD—which mitigates the basis of separation, which the Board determined to be alcohol rehabilitation failure and warrants a change to the character and narrative reason for separation. Based on a preponderance of evidence, the Board determined that the reason for the applicant's separation was inequitable, and the condition outweighed the misconduct.

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 because the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's alcohol rehabilitation failure. 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.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

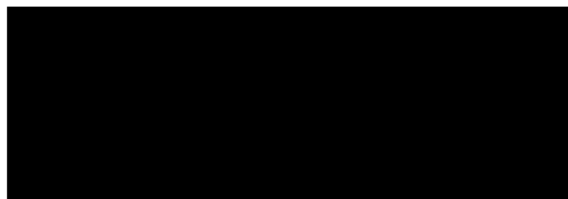
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10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- 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: Re3
- 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