

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 26 April 2022**b. Date Received:** 31 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, misconduct was tied to an undiagnosed and worsening bipolar disorder that led to a suicide attempt and hospitalization. The applicant previously served with distinction as an honor graduate in basic training, a top student at AIT, and a promoted soldier praised by leadership until mental health symptoms developed beyond the applicant's control and attempts to seek help resulted in ostracism. The applicant contends the current characterization does not reflect the circumstances surrounding the diagnosis, the command's acknowledgment of mistreatment, or the applicant's continued treatment through the VA, where the applicant was later found 100 percent permanently and totally disabled.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 05 February 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's circumstances surrounding the discharge (Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS, Depressive Disorder NOS, Episodic Mood Disorders, Alcohol Abuse – Episodic, and Adjustment Disorder with mixed Emotional Features). 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: 29 April 2010**c. Separation Facts:**

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 22 April 2010

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant was AWOL from 20 November 2009 until 22 March 2010.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: On 22 April 2010, the applicant waived legal counsel.

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 23 April 2010 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 5 August 2008 / 3 years, 19 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 27 / GED / 123

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-3 / 13B1O, Cannon Crewmember / 1 year, 4 months, 23 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Three Personnel Action forms indicate the applicant's duty status changed as follows:

(a) From Present for Duty (PDY) to Absent Without Leave (AWOL), effective 20 November 2009

(b) From AWOL to Dropped From Rolls (DFR), effective 20 December 2009;

(c) From Dropped From Rolls (DFR) to Present for Duty (PDY), effective 22 March 2010.

(2) Field Grade Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 31 March 2010, indicates the applicant was found to on or about 20 November 2009 without authority be absent from the unit and remain so absent until on or about 22 March 2010. The imposed punishment included a reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$724 pay per month for two months, along with 45 days of extra duty and restriction.

(3) Two Developmental Counseling Forms document instances of the applicant returning from AWOL and debt avoidance.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: 4 months, 1 day (AWOL, 20 November 2009 – 21 March 2010)

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: Board of Veterans' Appeals docket number 12-07 258, 5 July 2016, reflects the applicant met the criteria for 100 percent service-connected disability rating for bipolar disorder. The entitlement of total disability rating due to service-connected disability .

(2) AMHRR Listed:

(a) Psychiatric Evaluation on an undated form reflects the applicant was cleared psychiatrically cleared for any administrative action deemed appropriate by the command. The applicant was screened for PTSD and mTBI.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for the Review of Discharge; Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; Board of Veterans Appeals docket; VA Summary of Benefits letter.

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 their 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.

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 3-7a 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.

(b) 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, prescribes commission of a serious offense. Commission of a serious military or civil 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 MCM.

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 "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 applicant was discharged on 29 April 2010 with a general (under honorable conditions) characterization of service for being AWOL from 20 November 2009 until 22 March 2010. The action was based on AR 635-200, 14-12C.

c. The applicant contends misconduct was tied to an undiagnosed and worsening bipolar disorder which led to a suicide attempt and hospitalization. The applicant provided VA Board of Appeals letter which described the applicant's change in rating for bipolar disorder. The applicant's rating was raised to 100 percent total and permanent. The record shows the applicant underwent a mental status evaluation (MSE) which indicates the applicant was mentally responsible and was able to recognize right from wrong. The separation authority considered the MSE.

d. The applicant contends previously serving with distinction as an honor graduate in basic training, a top student at AIT, and a promoted soldier praised by leadership until mental health symptoms developed beyond the applicant's control and attempts to seek help resulted in

ostracism. The Board evaluated the applicant's service accomplishments and overall quality of service in accordance with DODI 1332.28.

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, Anxiety Disorder NOS, Depressive Disorder NOS, Episodic Mood Disorder, Bipolar Disorder.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board found that the applicant was diagnosed in service with the following BH conditions: Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS, Depressive Disorder NOS, and Episodic Mood Disorder. In addition, the applicant is 100% service connected by the VA for Bipolar Disorder.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board applied liberal consideration and opined that there is evidence of BH conditions that mitigate the basis of separation. The applicant was diagnosed in service with the following BH conditions: Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS, Depressive Disorder NOS, Episodic Mood Disorders, Alcohol Abuse – Episodic, and Adjustment Disorder With Mixed Emotional Features. In addition, they are 100% service connected by the VA for Bipolar Disorder. The medical record shows the AWOL was related to their BH symptoms, with a medical note showing the applicant was concerned with deploying due to their mood instability and went home to family. Given the nexus between Bipolar Disorder and avoidance, the applicant's misconduct of AWOL is mitigated by their BH condition.

(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 BH Conditions outweighed the listed basis of AWOL.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends previously serving with distinction as an honor graduate in basic training, a top student at AIT, and a promoted soldier praised by leadership until mental health symptoms developed beyond the applicant's control and attempts to seek help resulted in ostracism. The misconduct was tied to an undiagnosed and worsening bipolar disorder which led to a suicide attempt and hospitalization. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that it was valid due to the applicant's BH Diagnoses outweighed the applicant's AWOL offense. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

d. The Board determined: After review of all available information, the medical advisor opined there is evidence of BH conditions that mitigates the basis of separation. The applicant was diagnosed in service with the following BH conditions: Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS, Depressive Disorder NOS, Episodic Mood Disorders, Alcohol Abuse – Episodic, and Adjustment Disorder with mixed Emotional Features. In addition, they are 100% service connected by the VA for Bipolar Disorder. While the Soldier did not have length, quality, combat

or post-service accomplishments, the Board voted unanimously to upgrade the discharge to based solely on medical mitigation.

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 BH Diagnoses outweighed the applicant's AWOL offense. 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.

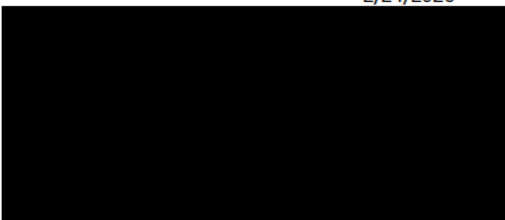
(4) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

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: No Change**

Authenticating Official:

2/24/2026



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