

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 22 March 2022**b. Date Received:** 28 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 and a narrative reason change.

b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant requests relief contending, in effect to have had a life-threatening event during training. The applicant was recently diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with the event being the root cause of the applicant's mental instability. While enlisted, the applicant was referred to mental health and sought care from a psychologist for PTSD and insomnia. The applicant was prescribed antipsychotic medications. The applicant's symptoms became worse. The applicant experienced dysphoria, causing suicidal tendencies. It was not until the applicant's first Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) appointment, the applicant discovered the applicant suffered an adverse reaction to the treatments provided. The applicant sought other methods of treatment. It was during this time the applicant had the drug-related offense which led to the discharge. The applicant believes PTSD, along with the mistreatment, led the applicant to make such an irresponsible and desperate decision to seek marijuana as a method of treatment. The applicant has had time to reflect on the situation and would like any opportunity to correct the remark on their DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty). The applicant's accomplishments include receiving drug treatment, a marriage and becoming a parent of three children, owning a business, and acquiring a position at the local VA. The applicant desires to continue their accomplishments by furthering their education to provide better professional assistance to the veterans the applicant has the pleasure of serving. Since joining the VA, the applicant has a newfound pride the applicant could not have had because of the way the applicant was discharged from the service. The applicant believes an upgrade may allow the applicant to continue treatment for PTSD. The applicant wants to strive rather than constantly feeling the applicant failed their battles and the individuals who respected the applicant during the applicant's time in service. The applicant further details the contentions in the self-authored statement submitted with the application.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 5 February 2026, the Board, by a 3-0 vote, granted the applicant's request upon determining the separation was inequitable. Based primarily on the medical adviser's opine, the Board granted the upgrade based on BH issues— Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS, PTSD and ADHD. With this upgrade, the Board directed the issue of a new DD-214, which changes the narrative reason for separation to 'Misconduct (Minor Infractions)' and the separation code to JKN and an upgrade in characterization to Honorable. Regarding the re-entry code, the Board did not recommend a change. 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 (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 19 April 2011

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 11 March 2011

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant wrongfully used marijuana and amphetamines.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: 15 March 2011

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 5 April 2011 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 24 February 2009 / 4 years, 17 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 18 / HS Graduate / 112

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-3 / 11B1O, Infantryman / 2 years, 1 month, 26 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: ASUA, NDSM, GWOTSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Electronic Copy of Specimen Custody Document – Drug Testing, 13 January 2011, indicates the applicant tested positive for THC 159 (marijuana) during an Inspection Random (IR) urinalysis testing conducted on 6 January 2011.

(2) Drug and Alcohol Management Information System (DAMIS) Background Check, 18 January 2011, reflects the applicant tested positive for amphetamine during an Inspection Random urinalysis testing conducted on 22 November 2010.

(3) Two Developmental Counseling Forms, 19 and 24 January 2011, document instances of the applicant testing positive on a unit urinalysis for methamphetamines and again for marijuana.

(4) Field Grade Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 25 January 2011, indicates the applicant was found to have wrongfully used marijuana and amphetamines between 22 October and 22 November 2010. The imposed punishment included a reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$733 pay per month for two months, along with 45 days of extra duty and restriction.

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:** Department of Veterans Affairs letter, 15 February 2022, reflects the applicant received a 70 percent disability rating for PTSD.

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** Irwin Army Hospital, Community Behavioral Health Services, Fort Riley, memorandum, subject: Mental Health Evaluation of [Applicant], 28 January 2011, indicates the applicant was psychiatrically cleared for Chapter 14-12c proceedings. The applicant demonstrated the ability to understand and participate in administrative proceedings, appreciated the difference between right and wrong, and met medical retention requirements. PTSD and mTBI screenings were conducted. The applicant was diagnosed with mood disorder per the Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Technology Application (ALHTA).

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for the Review of Discharge; self-authored statement; and VA letter.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant has received drug treatment, is married with three children, owns a business, and acquired a position at the local VA.

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 3-7a 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.

(c) Paragraph 3-9 states a separation will be described as entry-level with service uncharacterized if processing is initiated while a Soldier is in entry-level status.

(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 (2) terms abuse of illegal drugs as serious misconduct. It continues; however, by recognizing relevant facts may mitigate the nature of the offense. Therefore, a single drug abuse offense may be combined with one or more minor disciplinary infractions or incidents of other misconduct and processed for separation under paragraph 14-12a or 14-12b as appropriate.

(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 "JKK" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14, misconduct (drug abuse).

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. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The available evidence shows the applicant's immediate commander-initiated separation because the applicant wrongfully used marijuana and amphetamines. The immediate and intermediate commanders recommended separation with a general (under honorable conditions) character of service. The separation authority approved the recommendation.

c. The applicant contends:

(1) The applicant's PTSD and medical mistreatment affected behavior, which led to the discharge, and the VA granted the applicant disability. The applicant provided a letter from VA reflecting the applicant is receiving 70 percent disability for PTSD. The applicant's AMHRR shows the applicant underwent a mental status evaluation (MSE) 28 January 2011, which indicates the applicant was able to recognize right from wrong. The applicant was screened for PTSD and TBI. The applicant was diagnosed with mood disorder. The separation authority considered the MSE. The AMHRR does not indicate or provide evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

(2) The Army should change the narrative reason for the discharge. Under Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12c (2), of AR 635-200, the Army separated the applicant with an "general (under honorable conditions)" discharge. Army Regulations designate "Misconduct (Drug or Alcohol Abuse)," as the narrative reason for discharge under this provision and assign the separation code "JKK." Army Regulation 635-8 (Separation Processing and Documents) governs how officials prepare the DD Form 214. This regulation mandates that block 28 must list the narrative reason for separation, and block 26 must show the corresponding separation code, both as specified in tables 2-2 or 2-3 of AR 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes). The regulation prohibits any deviation and does not allow officials to enter any other reason.

(3) The applicant has received drug treatment, is married with three children, owns a business, and acquired a position at the local VA. The applicant contends obtaining employment and contributing to the community through volunteer work. The Army Discharge Review Board has the authority to consider post-service factors when reviewing discharge recharacterization requests. However, no law or regulation permits upgrading an unfavorable discharge solely due to time passed or good conduct in civilian life. The Board evaluates each case individually to determine whether post-service achievements indicate previous in-service misconduct was an anomaly rather than a reflection of the applicant's overall character.

(4) An upgraded discharge would grant access to veterans' benefits. Eligibility for veteran's benefits does not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local Department of Veterans Affairs office for further assistance.

9. BOARD DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION:

a. As directed by the 2017 memo signed by A.M. Kurta, the board considered the following factors:

(5) 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, PTSD.

(6) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found that the applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and Anxiety Disorder NOS and is service connected by the VA for PTSD.

(7) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor 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 an Adjustment Disorder and Anxiety Disorder NOS and is 70% service connected by the VA for PTSD. Given the nexus between Anxiety Disorder NOS, PTSD, and using substances for self-medication, the wrongful use of marijuana and amphetamines that led to the separation is mitigated.

(8) 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 or experience outweighed the basis of separation.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: **N/A**

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends PTSD and medical mistreatment affected behavior, which led to the discharge, and the VA granted the applicant disability. The Board recognizes and appreciates the applicant's service, considered this contention during board proceedings along with the totality of the applicant's service record, and determined that the applicant's behavioral diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS and PTSD, outweighed the applicant's marijuana and amphetamine use and relief was warranted.

(2) The applicant contends the Army should change the narrative reason for the discharge. The Board considered this contention and determined that relief was warranted based on the applicant's behavioral diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder NOS and PTSD, outweighed the applicant's marijuana and amphetamine use.

(3) The applicant contends receiving drug treatment, being married with three children, owning a business, and acquiring a position at the local VA. 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 Anxiety Disorder NOS and PTSD outweighing the applicant's illegal substance abuse offenses

(4) The applicant contends an upgraded discharge would grant access to veterans' benefits. The Board considered this contention and determined that eligibility for Veteran's benefits, to include educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill, healthcare or VA loans, do not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs for further assistance. In addition, the Board does not grant relief solely to enable these benefits or to gain employment or enhance employment opportunities barring some other impropriety or inequity to outweigh the misconduct.

d. The Board determined: The applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and Anxiety Disorder NOS and is 70% service connected by the VA for PTSD. Given the nexus between Anxiety Disorder NOS, PTSD, and using substances for self-medication, the wrongful use of marijuana and amphetamines that led to the separation is mitigated. While the applicant didn't have length, quality or combat, the Board determined the medical mitigation was sufficient to approve the upgrade.

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) In Board deliberations, the medical advisor opined there is evidence of BH conditions that mitigate the basis of separation. The applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder and Anxiety Disorder NOS and is 70% service connected by the VA for PTSD. Given the nexus between Anxiety Disorder NOS, PTSD and using substance for self-medication, the wrongful use of marijuana and amphetamines that lead to the separation is mitigated. While the applicant didn't have length, quality or combat, the Board determined the medical mitigation was sufficient to approve the upgrade to HD/JKN/no change by a unanimous vote.

(3) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Misconduct (Minor Infractions) under the same pretexts, thus the current reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JKN.

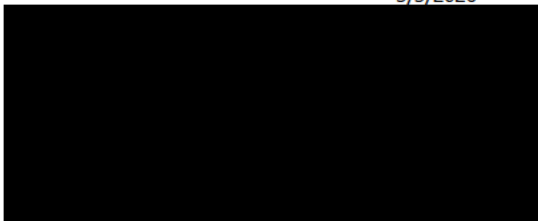
(4) The RE code will not change, as the current code is consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214: 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:

3/3/2026



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