

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. **Application Date:** 18 June 2022
- b. **Date Received:** 9 September 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. The applicant also requests change in the narrative reason for separation.

Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant requests relief contending, in effect the event leading to discharge from the Army was an isolated incident. The applicant contends the applicant suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The applicant contends good service, including combat deployments. The applicant contends family issues influenced their behavior and ultimately led to their discharge.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 24 March 2026, and by a 3-0 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 (PTSD diagnoses). 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:** 4 August 2017

c. **Separation Facts:** The applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) is void of the case separation file.

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** NIF

(2) **Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: NIF

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** NIF

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** NIF

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

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

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

- a. **Date / Period of Reenlistment Under Review:** 11 December 2012 / 6 years
 - b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 29 / HS Graduate / 105
 - c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-6 / 15W3O, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operator / 12 years, 6 months, 8 days
 - d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** RA, 27 January 2005 – 2 July 2007 / HD
RA, 3 July 2007 – 10 December 2012 / HD
 - e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA, Iraq (13 August 2006 – 13 November 2007, 15 October 2009 – 24 July 2010); Afghanistan (25 January 2013 – 1 July 2013)
 - f. **Awards and Decorations:** ACM-CS, ICM-3CS, ARCOM-4, AAM-2, MUC-2, AGCM-4, NDSM, GWOTSM, NCOPDR, ASR, OSR-2, NATOM
 - g. **Performance Ratings:** 1 January 2012 – 31 May 2014 / “1” Successful
1 June 2014 – 22 September 2015 / “2” Successful
23 September 2015 – 21 September 2016 / Highly Qualified
 - h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**
 - (1) Enlisted Record Brief (ERB), 7 August 2017, reflects the applicant was flagged for Involuntary Separation or Discharge (Field Initiated) (BA), effective 23 June 2017, and was ineligible for reenlistment due to Pending Separation (9V). The applicant was reduced from E-6 to E-5 effective 22 March 2017.
 - (2) Orders 213-0502, 1 August 2017, indicate the applicant was reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and scheduled for discharge from the Regular Army on 4 August 2017.
 - i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None
 - j. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):** The following documents have been provided to the ARBA Medical Advisor, if applicable. See “**Board Discussion and Determination**” for Medical Advisor Details.
 - (1) **Applicant provided:** None
 - (2) **AMHRR Listed:** None
- 5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** Application for the Review of Discharge; AGCM (4th) orders; AAM Certificate; Recommendation for Award (BSM); (8) NCO Evaluation Report.
- 6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted in support of 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 non-waiverable 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.

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.

(d) 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 14-2c, prescribes Commanders will not take action prescribed in this chapter instead of disciplinary action solely to spare an individual who may have committed serious misconduct from the harsher penalties that may be imposed under the UCMJ.

(b) 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.

(c) Paragraph 14-12c, prescribes a 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 Manual for Courts-Martial.

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

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

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's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR) is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events leading to the discharge from the Army. The applicant's AMHRR includes a 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 14, paragraph 14-12c, by reason of Misconduct (Serious Offense), with a characterization of service of General (Under Honorable Conditions).

c. The applicant contends the Army should change the narrative reason for the discharge. Under Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12c of AR 635-200, the Army separated the applicant with an "general (under honorable conditions)" discharge. Army Regulations designate "Misconduct

(Serious Offense)," as the narrative reason for discharge under this provision and assign the separation code "JKQ." 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.

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

e. The applicant contends good service, including combat tours. The Board evaluated the applicant's service accomplishments and overall quality of service in accordance with DODI 1332.28.

f. The applicant contends family issues influenced their behavior and ultimately led to their discharge. The applicant provided no supporting evidence beyond their statement. The AMHRR contains no indication the applicant sought assistance before engaging in the misconduct, which resulted in the separation action under review.

g. The applicant contends the applicant was dealing with issues related to PTSD which led to their discharge. The applicant did not submit evidence other than their statement to support the contention the discharge resulted from any medical condition. The applicant's AMHRR includes no documentation of a PTSD diagnosis. The AMHRR is void of evidence the applicant underwent a mental status evaluation (MSE). The ARBA sent a letter to the applicant at the address in the application on 12 January 2023 requesting documentation to support a PTSD diagnosis but received no response from the applicant.

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

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The applicant was 100% SC with 100% SC for PTSD.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board applied liberal consideration and opined that the applicant's misconduct was directly related to other behavioral health conditions including PTSD. While in service, the applicant received MH therapy, MH medication management, SUDCC treatment, and inpatient psychiatric care. They were diagnosed with GAD, Panic Disorder, PTSD, Depressive Disorder, and Alcohol Dependence. After service, they were 100% SC with 100% SC for PTSD by the VA. As PTSD secondary to combat trauma predated the misconduct and given the nexus between PTSD, avoidance, using substances as a form of self-medication, the misconduct is medically mitigated when applying liberal consideration.

(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 PTSD outweighed the applicants drug abuse.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends the applicant was dealing with issues related to PTSD which led to their discharge. 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 drug use offense. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends the event leading to 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 illegal substance abuse offense.

(3) The applicant contends good service, including combat tours. The Board considered this contention during proceedings and weighted it along with the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse offense.

(4) The applicant contends family issues influenced their behavior and ultimately led to their discharge. 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 illegal substance abuse offense.

d. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on medical/BH mitigation for the Basis of Separation. The Board voted to upgrade due to this medical mitigation and the applicant's length, combat experience and quality of service. The Board determined no upgrade was warranted for the reentry code as it was proper and equitable.

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 misconduct of drug abuse. 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.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

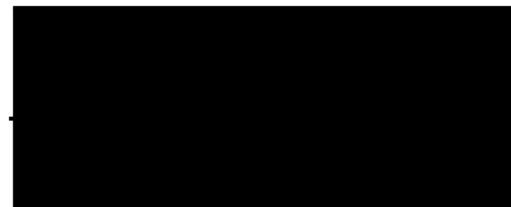
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10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- 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: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

3/24/2026



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