

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

a. **Application Date:** 30 September 2021

b. **Date Received:** 13 July 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 under other than honorable conditions. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

b. **Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s):** The applicant requests relief contending, in effect, having endured various hardships during childhood until age of 17, including mental abuse, homelessness, working at a young age, and becoming pregnant at 15. The applicant earned a general education diploma (GED) and enrolled in college. At 18, the applicant studied for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and passed on the first attempt. A recruiter informed the applicant, the applicant would have to give up their parental rights if enlisted in the Regular Army; therefore, the applicant enlisted in the Reserve. The applicants aimed to receive the GI Bill and to become an officer. The applicant was assigned to Fort Sill for basic training, which was an adjustment for the Soldiers there because of the applicant's gender. The drill sergeants harassed and bullied the applicant and other Soldiers but the applicant was able to handle the situation. The applicant helped fellow Soldiers who faced bullying and struggled with physical training. The applicant excelled and advanced to Fort Gordon for advanced individual training (AIT). After graduating from AIT, the applicant's friends had a celebration party. The applicant received orders to train with the applicant's unit while simultaneously receiving orders to return to Fort Gordon because the unit was preparing for deployment. After the training, which involved going to the field, the command administered a random drug test for all the Soldiers. The applicant proceeded to Fort Gordon in accordance with the orders. While at Fort Gordon, the applicant received a letter at home stating the applicant failed the drug test. The letter instructed the applicant to complete the attached documents within 30 days. The applicant's unit sergeant instructed the applicant to wait before signing the documents. The applicant sought legal advice but the legal representative told the applicant to follow the chain of command's advice because the applicant was in the Reserve and legal was unable to assist the applicant. The applicant's new first sergeant mentioned inquiring about the applicant's promotion to sergeant. A few weeks later, the applicant was called into the first sergeant's office to sign a counseling statement, demoting the applicant to E-1 and sending the applicant home. The applicant did not know what was happening. The first sergeant told the applicant to go home and wait for further instructions. The applicant went home and called the first sergeant for information. The first sergeant would not speak with the applicant. The person who answered the phone instructed the applicant to sign the paperwork and return the documents. A few days later the applicant received an electronic mail (email) indicating the applicant had been discharged. The applicant did not receive a DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty). The applicant appealed the decision, but it was denied. 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 18 December 2025, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of clemency and an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214. The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable and directed the

issue of a new DD Form 214 changing characterization to Honorable and change authority to: AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a. Please see **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more detail regarding the Board's decision. Board member names are available upon request.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: NIF / AR 135-178 / NIF / NIF / NIF / Under Other Than Honorable Conditions

b. Date of Discharge: 7 May 2011

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: 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 Enlistment Under Review: 22 October 2009 / 8 years

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / Some College / NIF

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 25Q1O, Multichannel Transmission Systems Operator-Maintainer / 1 year, 6 months, 17 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: IADT, 1 January 2010 – 4 August 2010 / HD
(Concurrent Service)

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: None

f. Awards and Decorations: NDSM, ASR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record: Headquarters, 81st Regional Support Command, Fort Jackson, Orders 11-122-00042, 2 May 2011, indicate the applicant was reduced to Private E-1, effective 2 May 2011, and scheduled for discharge from the Army Reserve on 7 May 2011.

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: Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; Application for the Review of Discharge; two self-authored statements; awards and training certificates; Personnel Action form; discharge orders; and six character references.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant volunteered in the community and supported family and friends to have better lives.

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. Multiple Department of Defense Policy Guidance Memoranda published between 2014 and 2018. The documents are commonly referred to by the signatory authorities' last names (2014 Secretary of Defense Guidance [Hagel memo], 2016 Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Carson memo], 2017 Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Kurta memo], and 2018 Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [Wilkie memo].

(1) Individually and collectively, these documents provide further clarification to the Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharge due to mental health conditions, including PTSD; TBI; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Liberal consideration will be given to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part on matters relating to mental health conditions, including PTSD; TBI; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Special consideration will be given to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determinations that document a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment potentially contributed to the circumstances resulting in a less than honorable discharge characterization. Special consideration will also be given in cases where a civilian provider confers diagnoses of a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment if the case records contain narratives supporting symptomatology at the time of service or when any other evidence which may reasonably indicate that a mental health

condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment existed at the time of discharge might have mitigated the misconduct that caused a discharge of lesser characterization.

(2) Conditions documented in the service record that can reasonably be determined to have existed at the time of discharge will be considered to have existed at the time of discharge. In cases in which a mental health condition, including PTSD; TBI; or sexual assault/harassment may be reasonably determined to have existed at the time of discharge, those conditions will be considered potential mitigating factors in the misconduct that caused the characterization of service in question. All Boards will exercise caution in weighing evidence of mitigation in cases in which serious misconduct precipitated a discharge with a less than Honorable characterization of service. Potentially mitigating evidence of the existence of undiagnosed combat related PTSD, PTSD-related conditions due to TBI or sexual assault/harassment as causative factors in the misconduct resulting in discharge will be carefully weighed against the severity of the misconduct. PTSD is not a likely cause of premeditated misconduct. Caution shall be exercised in weighing evidence of mitigation in all cases of misconduct by carefully considering the likely causal relationship of symptoms to the misconduct.

c. 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.

d. Army Regulation 135-178 (Enlisted Administrative Separations) prescribes the policies, standards, and procedures to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Army National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS) and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons. Readiness is promoted by maintaining high standards of conduct and performance. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, and commission of a serious offense, to include abuse of illegal drugs, and convictions by civil authorities.

(1) Chapter 2 provides general guidance, which applies when referenced under the reasons for separation in this regulation. Further guidance is set forth under the specific reasons for separation in chapters 4 through 15.

(a) Paragraph 2-7 prescribes possible characterizations of service include an honorable, general (under honorable conditions), under other than honorable conditions, or uncharacterized if the Soldier is in entry-level status. However, the permissible range of characterization varies based on the reason for separation.

(b) Paragraph 2-8, prescribes the characterization is based upon the quality of the Soldier's service, including the reason for separation, and determined in accordance with standards of acceptable personal conduct and performance of duty as found in the UCMJ, Army regulations, and the time-honored customs and traditions of the Army. The reasons for separation, including the specific circumstances that form the basis for the discharge are considered on the issue of characterization.

(c) Paragraph 2-9a prescribes an honorable characterization 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.

(d) Paragraph 2-9b, prescribes, if a Soldier's service has been honest and faithful, it is appropriate to characterize that service as general (under honorable conditions). Characterization of service as general (under honorable conditions) is warranted when significant negative aspects of the Soldier's conduct or performance of duty outweigh positive aspects of the Soldier's military record.

(e) Paragraph 2-9c, prescribes the service may be characterized as under other than honorable conditions only when discharge is for misconduct, fraudulent entry, unsatisfactory participation, or security reasons, and under other circumstances.

(2) Chapter 13 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 memorandums. Secretarial separation authority is normally exercised on a case-by-case basis.

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 Reserve. The applicant's AMHRR includes a properly constituted discharge order: Orders 11-122-00042, 2 May 2011. The orders indicate the applicant's discharge was under AR 135-178 provisions, with a characterization of service of under other than honorable conditions. The applicant provided a statement indicating the applicant tested positive on a random drug test; however, the applicant did not provide any evidence other than the applicant's statement.

c. The applicant contends:

(1) The applicant was harassed by members of the unit while in initial entry training. However, the applicant provided no supporting evidence beyond their statement.

(2) The applicant was misinformed during the discharge proceedings. The AMHRR does not indicate or provide evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

(3) The applicant provided good service. The applicant provided third party statements to support the contention. The Board evaluated the applicant's service accomplishments and overall quality of service in accordance with DODI 1332.28.

(4) The applicant volunteered for the community and supported family and friends to obtain better lives. 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.

(5) The third-party statements provided with the application speak highly of the applicant. They all recognize the applicant's good military service and/or good conduct after leaving the Army Reserve.

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? **No.** The Board's Medical Advisor, a voting member, reviewed DoD and VA medical records and found no mitigating BH diagnoses on the applicant. The applicant provided no documents or testimony of a condition or experience, that, when applying liberal consideration, could have excused or mitigated a discharge.

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **N/A**

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **N/A**

(4) Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **N/A**

b. Prior Decisions Cited:

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends harassment by members of the unit while in initial entry training. The Board considered this contention and concluded that there is insufficient evidence in the applicant's official record or in the materials submitted by the applicant to support the assertion that the applicant experienced harassment during initial entry training.

(2) The applicant contends being misinformed during the discharge proceedings. The Board considered this contention but found insufficient evidence in the applicant's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) or in the evidence provided by the applicant to substantiate the claim that the command acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner, beyond the applicant's assertion.

(3) The applicant contends good service. The applicant contends volunteering for the community and supporting family and friends to obtain better lives. The Board acknowledges and values the applicant's dedication to service, taking this contention into account during its deliberations. Following careful consideration, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of clemency, upgrading the characterization of service to Honorable.

d. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length of service outweighed the applicant's illegal substance abuse. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of clemency and an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214. Change Authority to AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

AR20220009389

a. 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.

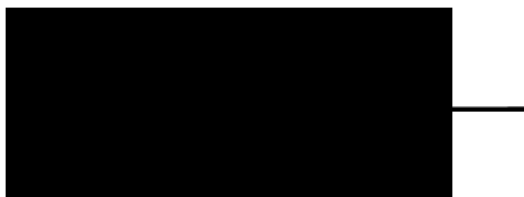
(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable and directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing characterization to Honorable and change authority to: AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a.

5. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Authority to: AR 135-178, Paragraph 11-1a.

Authenticating Official:

2/3/2026



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
UOTHC – Under Other Than
Honorable Conditions
VA – Department of Veterans
Affairs