

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 6 April 2022**b. Date Received:** 6 April 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, to have had two Soldiers who were the applicant's best friends and coworkers. The Soldiers both committed suicide. The applicant was emotional and began drinking the pain away. The applicant held up the Army Values and continued to do their best to serve the country. The applicant began drinking excessively and experimenting with different drugs. This was during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and the applicant was in shambles. In August 2020, the applicant failed the urinalysis, testing positive for marijuana. The applicant was enrolled in Substance use Disorder Clinical Care (SUDCC) and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depression through therapy. The applicant requests a discharge upgrade because the applicant was not themselves and the alcohol, drugs, combined with PTSD took charge of their life and career. The applicant requests to be allowed to put their challenges in the past and be proud of the time they served honorably.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 12 February 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board granted the request upon finding the separation was inequitable. The Board, based on the applicant's length and quality of service, and the circumstances surrounding the discharge OBHI diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder, PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder, determined the narrative reason for the applicant's separation is now inequitable. Therefore, the Board directed the issue of a new DD Form 214 changing the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), and the separation code to JKN. The Board determined the characterization of service was inequitable and voted to change it to Honorable. 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: 26 August 2021**c. Separation Facts:****(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: 17 October 2017 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / HS Graduate / 105

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-4 / 74D10, Chemical Operations Specialist / 3 years, 10 months, 20 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Alaska / None

f. Awards and Decorations: AAM, AGCM, NDSM, ASR, OSR

g. Performance Ratings: NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Installation Management Command, U.S. Element, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Orders 223-0172, 11 August 2021, indicate the applicant was reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and scheduled for discharge from the Regular Army on 26 August 2021.

(2) The applicant's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) indicates the applicant had not completed the first full term of service. The applicant was discharged under the authority of AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12c(2), with a narrative reason of Misconduct (Drug Abuse). The DD Form 214 was authenticated with the applicant's electronic signature.

(3) Enlisted Record Brief (ERB), 27 August 2021, reflects the applicant was flagged for Involuntary Separation or Discharge (Field Initiated) (BA), effective 22 December 2020, and was ineligible for reenlistment due to Pending Separation (9V). The applicant was reduced from E-4 to E-3 effective 17 February 2021.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

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

(1) Applicant provided:

(a) Medical Record, between 5 September 1998 to 8 June 2021, reflects the applicant had active problems of PTSD, chronic, reported on 25 March 2021, and major depressive

disorder (MDD), single episode, moderate, reported on 7 January 2021. The applicant had inactive problems of other specified problems related to psychosocial circumstances, and adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood, both reported on 24 September 2020.

(b) Physical Profile, 29 April 2021, reflects the applicant had medical conditions limiting their duties: depressive disorder, shoulder injury pain, and lower back injury pain. The applicant was nondeployable because of decreased mission capability from behavioral health condition.

(c) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical record, 26 April 2022, reflects the applicant had active problems, including chronic PTSD.

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for the Review of Discharge; MEDDAC-AK Medical Record; Physical Profile Record; and VA medical records.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None submitted with the application.

7. STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCE(S):

a. Section 1553, Title 10, United States Code (Review of Discharge or Dismissal) provides for the creation, composition, and scope of review conducted by a Discharge Review Board(s) within established governing standards. As amended by Sections 521 and 525 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, 10 USC 1553 provides specific guidance to the Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards when considering discharge upgrade requests by Veterans claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual trauma, intimate partner violence (IPV), or spousal abuse, as a basis for discharge review. The amended guidance provides that Boards will include, as a voting board member, a physician trained in mental health disorders, a clinical psychologist, or a psychiatrist when the discharge upgrade claim asserts a mental health condition, including PTSD, TBI, sexual trauma, IPV, or spousal abuse, as a basis for the discharge. Further, the guidance provides that Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards will develop and provide specialized training specific to sexual trauma, IPV, spousal abuse, as well as the various responses of individuals to trauma.

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

c. Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Clarifying Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Requests by Veterans for Modification of their Discharge Due to Mental Health Conditions, Sexual Assault, or Sexual Harassment), 25 August 2017 issued clarifying guidance for the Secretary of Defense Directive to DRBs and BCM/NRs when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharges due in whole or in part to mental health conditions, including

PTSD; Traumatic Brain Injury; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Boards are to give liberal consideration to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part to those conditions or experiences. The guidance further describes evidence sources and criteria and requires Boards to consider the conditions or experiences presented in evidence as potential mitigation for misconduct that led to the discharge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- RE-4 Applies to: Person separated from last period of service with a nonwaiverable disqualification. This includes anyone with a DA imposed bar to reenlistment in effect at time of

separation or separated for any reason (except length of service retirement) with 18 or more years active Federal service. Eligibility: Ineligible for enlistment.

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

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) 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. 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 properly constituted DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), which was authenticated by the applicant's electronic signature. The applicant's DD Form 214 indicates the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14, paragraph 14-12c (2), by reason of Misconduct (Drug Abuse), with a characterization of service of general (under honorable conditions). However, the applicant provided a statement, indicating the applicant failed a urinalysis test, testing positive for marijuana.

c. The applicant contends:

(1) The applicant's PTSD and depression affected behavior, which led to the discharge. The applicant provided medical documents, reflecting the applicant was diagnosed with chronic PTSD, MDD, other specified problems related to psychosocial circumstances, and adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood. The applicant's AMHRR is void of a mental status evaluation.

(2) The applicant provided good service and upheld the Army Values. 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, PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder.

(2) 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, PTSD, and Major Depressive Disorder and is 70% service connected by the VA for PTSD.

(3) 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 mitigating BH conditions. The applicant was diagnosed in service with an Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, and Major Depressive Disorder and is 70% service connected by the VA for PTSD. Given the nexus between PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder, and using substances for self-medication, the drug abuse (i.e., positive UA for marijuana) that led to the separation is mitigated.

(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 condition or experience outweigh the basis of separation.

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

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends PTSD and depression affected behavior, which led to the discharge. The Board determined that this contention was valid and voted to upgrade the characterization of service due to Adjustment Disorder, PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder.

(2) The applicant contends good service and upheld the Army Values. The Board determined that this contention was valid and voted to upgrade the characterization of service and narrative reason code.

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, overseas 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 OBHI diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder, PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder mitigated the applicant's misconduct of one-time marijuana use.

(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

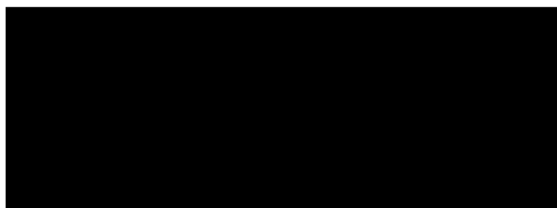
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10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214: 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: AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a

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