

1. Applicant's Name:

- a. **Application Date:** 31 May 2023
- b. **Date Received:** 5 June 2023
- c. **Counsel:** None

2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:

a. **Applicant's Requests and Issues:** The current characterization of service for the period under review is general (under honorable conditions). The applicant through their representative, requests an upgrade to honorable.

b. The applicant through their representative seeks relief contending, in effect, the applicant's recovery should not withhold their character of service from being changed from general (under honorable conditions) to honorable.

c. **Board Type and Decision:** In a telephonic personal appearance hearing conducted on 1 April 2024, and by a 3-2 vote, the Board denied the request upon finding the separation was both proper and equitable.

Please see Section 10 of this document for more detail regarding the Board's decision.

(Board member names available upon request)

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. **Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization:** Misconduct (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 2 December 2015

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:** NA

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 5 November 2015 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 23 September 2014 / 3 years and 22 weeks

- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 18 / High School Graduate / 88
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-2 / 13D10, Field Artillery Automation / 1 year, 2 months, and 10 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** None
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** NDSM, GWTSM, ASR
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**

(1) Orders 317-0017, dated 13 November 2015, shows the applicant was to be reassigned to the U.S. Army Transition Point and discharged on 2 December 2015 from the Regular Army.

(2) The applicant's DD Form 214, shows the applicant had not completed the first full term of service. The applicant was discharged on 2 December 2015 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. The applicant was reduced from E-2 to E-1 effective 23 June 2015.

(3) The applicant's Enlisted Record Brief, dated 3 December 2015, shows the applicant was flagged for involuntary separation/field initiated (BA), effective 13 October 2015; was ineligible for reenlistment due to pending separation (9V). The Assignment Eligibility Availability (AEA) code shows AEA code "L" which has no assignment restrictions.

i. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None

j. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):**

(1) **Applicant provided:** None

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

The ARBA's medical advisor reviewed DoD and VA medical records.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:

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. 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 600-85 (The Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)) provides comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control policies, procedures, and responsibilities for Soldiers of all components, Army civilian corps members, and other personnel eligible for ASAP services. Paragraph 7-9 (Command responsibilities for referring Soldiers) states:

(1) When Soldiers are identified as probable alcohol or other drug abusers the unit commander or designated representative must -

- Coordinate with law enforcement about whether the commander or designated representative should conduct the initial interview of the alcohol or drug abuser
- When the unit commander believes the Limited Use Policy applies, the unit commander should consult with the Alcohol Drug Control Officer and supporting legal advisor and then the unit commander may explain the Limited Use Policy, if applicable to the particular circumstances
- If law enforcement does not initiate an investigation, the commander may wish to investigate suspected misconduct through a commander's inquiry, AR 15-6 investigation, or other appropriate method after consulting with the legal advisor

(2) The unit commander will refer individuals suspected or identified as alcohol and/or other drugs abusers, including those identified through drug testing (except those determined to be legitimate medical use by the medical review officer) and/or blood alcohol tests, to the ASAP counseling center for screening. Soldiers impaired by alcohol as described in paragraph 3-2 of this regulation while on duty will be referred to the ASAP counseling center for the initial evaluation.

(3) Positive drug test results for illicit use and law enforcement citations for alcohol and other drug abuse are identification sources that require mandatory referral to the ASAP counseling staff. Commanders must refer Soldiers who receive such drug test results or legal citations within 5 duty days of receipt of the notification.

e. Army Regulation 635-200 provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.

(1) Paragraph 2-2 (Notice), stated commanders were to notify the Soldier in writing of the following:

(a) Provide the basis of the proposed separation, including the circumstances upon which the action was based, and a reference to the applicable regulatory separation provision.

(b) The Soldier will be advised of:

(c) The Soldier will be further advised of the following rights:

- whether the proposed separation could result in discharge, release from active duty to a Reserve Component, or release from custody and control of the Army
- the least favorable characterization of service or description of separation he/she could receive
- the type of discharge and character of service recommended by the initiating commander and that the intermediate commander(s) may recommend a less favorable type of discharge and characterization of service than that recommended by the initiating commander

(d) Further advise the soldier of the following rights:

- consult with military or civilian counsel at their own expense
- submit statements in their own behalf
- obtain copies of documents that will be sent to the separation authority supporting the proposed separation
- to a hearing before an administrative separation board under section III of this chapter if they had 6 or more years of total active and Reserve service on the date of initiation of recommendation for separation
- waive their rights

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) An under other than honorable conditions discharge is an administrative separation from the Service under conditions other than honorable and it may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, security reasons, or in lieu of trial by court martial based on certain circumstances or patterns of behavior or acts or omissions that constitute a significant departure from the conduct expected of Soldiers in the Army.

(5) 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.

(6) 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.

(7) 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.

(8) 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.

f. 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).

g. 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 waivable and nonwaivable separations. Table 3-1, defines reentry eligibility (RE) codes:

(1) 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.

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

(3) RE-4 Applies to: Person separated from last period of service with a nonwaivable 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.

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S): 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 AMHRR, the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The applicant's AMHRR is void of the specific facts and circumstances concerning the events which led to the discharge from the Army. The applicant's AMHRR does contain 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 shows after serving 1 year, 2 months, and 10 days the applicant was discharged on 2 December 2015 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).

c. The applicant through their representative contends, in effect, the applicant's recovery should not withhold their character of service from being changed from general (under honorable conditions) to honorable. Each case is decided on its own merits when an applicant submits a DD Form 293 requesting a change in discharge. Changes may be warranted if the Board determines the characterization of service or the reasons for discharge, or both were improper or inequitable.

d. Published Department of Defense guidance indicates that the guidance is not intended to interfere or impede on the Board's statutory independence. The Board will determine the relative weight of the action that led to the discharge and whether it supports relief or not. In reaching its determination, the Board shall consider the applicant's petition, available records and/or submitted documents in support of the petition.

9. DOCUMENTS / TESTIMONY PRESENTED DURING PERSONAL APPEARANCE: In addition to the evidence in the record, the Board carefully considered the additional document(s) and testimony presented by the applicant at the personal appearance hearing.

- a. **The applicant submitted the following additional document(s):** None
- b. **The applicant presented the following additional contention(s):** None
- c. **Counsel / Witness(es) / Observer(s):** None

10. 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 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: None

c. Response to Contention: The applicant through their representative contends, in effect, the applicant's recovery should not withhold their character of service from being changed from general (under honorable conditions) to honorable. The Board liberally considered this contention and the totality of the applicant's record and determined that a discharge upgrade is not warranted based on the seriousness of the applicant's misconduct.

d. The Board determined that the discharge is, at this time, proper and equitable, in light of the current evidence of record. However, the applicant may request a personal appearance hearing to address the issues before the Board. The applicant is responsible for satisfying the burden of proof and providing documents or other evidence sufficient to support the applicant's contention(s) that the discharge was improper or inequitable.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted not to change the applicant's characterization of service because, despite applying liberal consideration of all the evidence before the Board, the Board determined that the applicant did not have a BH diagnoses that could excuse or mitigate the offense-Drug Abuse. The Board members carefully considered the applicant's request, supporting documents and available evidence in the records. However, the applicant failed to provide information in reference to the discharge and failed to prove the current discharge warranted an upgrade.

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The board concurred the current discharge is appropriate and was consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the regulation, was within the discretion of the separation authority, and the applicant was provided full administrative due process.

(2) The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code under the same pretexts, and the reason the applicant was discharged was both proper and equitable.

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

11. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. **Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order:** No
- b. **Change Characterization to:** No change
- c. **Change Reason / SPD code to:** No change
- d. **Change RE Code to:** No change
- e. **Change Authority to:** No change

Authenticating Official:

5/7/2024

X

Presiding Officer, COL, U.S. ARMY
Army Discharge Review Board

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

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