

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. **Application Date:** 23 October 2023
- b. **Date Received:** 30 October 2023
- c. **Counsel:** None

2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:**a. Applicant's Requests and Issues:**

(1) The current characterization of service for the period under review is general (under honorable conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

(2) The applicant seeks relief stating they would like an opportunity to apply for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits and to improve their military records.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 18 September 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service outweighing the applicant's one-time DUI basis for separation. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a. Accordingly, the narrative reason for separation was changed to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), with a corresponding separation code of JKN. The Board voted and determined the reentry eligibility (RE) code was proper and equitable due to applicant's Behavioral Health (BH) diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of military service.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Misconduct (Serious Offense) / Army Regulation 635-200 / JKQ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 21 September 2020

c. Separation Facts:

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 2 September 2020

(2) **Basis for Separation:** physically controlled a vehicle while drunk

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

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** 2 September 2020

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 9 September 2020 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 5 June 2017 / 6 years, 31 weeks

- b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 18 / HS Graduate / 102
- c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-5 / 13B2O, Fire Support Specialist / 3 years, 3 months, 16 days
- d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- e. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** Korea (30 September 2018 – 10 June 2019)
- f. **Awards and Decorations:** AAM-2, AGCM, NDSM, GWTSM, KDSTM, NCOPDR, ASR, OSR
- g. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- h. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**

(1) A DA Form 2627 (Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)) dated 16 June 2020, reflects the applicant received nonjudicial punishment for on or about 8 May 2020, failed to obey a lawful general order, which was their duty to obey, to wit: Fort Bliss Stay Home, Work Safe Order, by wrongfully being outside their assigned barracks room after curfew, in violation of Article 92, UCMJ. Their punishment consisted of forfeiture of \$1,317.00 pay and extra duty and restriction for 14 days. The applicant elected not to appeal.

(2) A memorandum, Fort Bliss, subject: Law Enforcement Report – Final, dated 21 July 2020, reflects the applicant as the named subject with the offense of Driving Under the Influence – with personal injury, in violation of Article 113, on or about 15 May 2020. The Report Summary states the applicant was traveling 35 miles per hour in a 25 miles per hour zone and a traffic stop was initiated. The applicant had an odor of an unknown alcoholic beverage emitting from themselves, had lacerations to their ribs and was unable to perform Standardized Field Sobriety Tests. The applicant was apprehended. Toxicology Report resulted in a breath alcohol content of 0.175-percent.

(3) A DA Form 3822 (Report of Mental Status Evaluation) dated 28 August 2020, reflects the applicant has no duty limitations due to behavioral health issues and currently meets behavioral health medical retention standards. The applicant's Behavioral Health Diagnosis is shown as "Encounter for Other Administrative Examinations" and follow-up is recommended as already scheduled with behavioral health clinic.

(4) A memorandum, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, subject: Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 2 September 2020, the applicant's company commander notified the applicant of their intent to separate them under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, paragraph 14-12c, for physically controlled a vehicle while drunk. The company commander recommended the applicant's characterization of service as general (under honorable conditions). On the same day, the applicant acknowledged the basis for the separation and of the right available to them.

(5) The applicant's memorandum, subject: Election of Rights Regarding Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 2 September 2020, the applicant completed their election of rights signing they have been advised by consulting counsel of the basis for the contemplated action to

separate them Commission of a Serious Offense, and its effects; of the rights available to them; and of the effect of any action taken by them in waiving their rights. They understand they may expect to encounter substantial prejudice in civilian life if a general (under honorable conditions) discharge is issued to them and further understand that as the result of issuance of a discharge that is less than honorable, they may be ineligible for many or all benefits as a veteran under both Federal and State laws. They elected to waive consulting counsel and elected not to submit statements in their own behalf.

(6) A memorandum, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, subject: Commander's Report – Proposed Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 8 September 2020, the applicant's company commander submitted a request to separate them prior to their expiration term of service. The company commander states they do not consider it feasible or appropriate to accomplish other disposition as any further attempts to rehabilitate the Soldier will not succeed and will not produce a quality Soldier. The separation is in the best interest of both the U.S. Army and the Soldier.

(7) A memorandum, Headquarters, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, subject: Separation under Army Regulation 635-200, Paragraph 14-12c, Commission of a Serious Offense, [Applicant], dated 9 September 2020, the separation authority, having reviewed the separation packet of the applicant and after careful consideration of all matters, directed the applicant be separated from the Army prior to the expiration of their current term of service with characterization of service as General (Under Honorable Conditions). The separation authority states after reviewing the rehabilitative transfer requirements determined the requirements do not apply to this action.

(8) A DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflects the applicant was discharged on 21 September 2020, with 3 years, 3 months, and 16 days of net active service this period. The DD Form 214 shows in:

- item 18 (Remarks) – MEMBER HAS NOT COMPLETED FIRST FULL TERM OF SERVICE
- item 24 (Character of Service) – General (Under Honorable Conditions)
- item 25 (Separation Authority) – Army Regulation 635-200
- item 26 (Separation Code) – JKQ
- item 27 (Reentry Code) – 3
- item 28 (Narrative Reason for Separation) – Misconduct, (Serious Offense)

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

j. Behavioral Health Condition(s):

(1) Applicant provided: None

(2) AMHRR Listed: Report of Mental Status Evaluation as described above in paragraph 3h(3).

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:

- DD Form 293 Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States)
- 3rd Party Reference
- five VA Forms 21-4138 (Statement in Support of Claim)

- DD Form 370 (Request for Reference)

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: none submitted with application.

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

a. Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1553, (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, Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 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 (DoD) 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; Title 10 U.S. Code; Section 1553 and DoD Directive 1332.41 and DoD Instruction 1332.28.

d. Army Regulation 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations) prescribes policies and standards to ensure the readiness and competency of the force while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Soldiers for a variety of reasons. It prescribes the policies, procedures, authority for separation of Soldiers, and the general provisions governing the separation of Soldiers before ETS or fulfillment of active duty obligation to meet the needs of the Army and its Soldiers.

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) A Under Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge is an administrative separation from the Service under conditions other than honorable. It may be issued for misconduct, fraudulent entry, security reasons, or in lieu of trial by court-martial.

(4) Chapter 14 (Separation for Misconduct) establishes policy and prescribes procedures for separating personnel for misconduct because of minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, commission of a serious offense, conviction by civil authorities, desertion, and absence 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 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. Paragraph 14-12c (Commission of a Service Offense), stated a Soldier is subject to action per this section for commission of a serious military or civilian 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.

(5) Chapter 15 (Secretarial Plenary Authority), currently in effect, 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.

e. 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 14-12c, misconduct (serious offense).

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 DoD Instruction 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:

(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 waiverable. Eligibility: Ineligible unless a waiver is granted.

(3) 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 600-85 (Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)) governs the program and identifies Army policy on alcohol and other drug abuse, and responsibilities. The ASAP is a command program that emphasizes readiness and personal responsibility. The ultimate decision regarding separation or retention of abusers is the responsibility of the Soldier's chain of command. Abuse of alcohol or the use of illicit drugs by military personnel is inconsistent with Army values and the standards of performance, discipline, and readiness necessary to accomplish the Army's mission. Unit commanders must intervene early and refer all Soldiers suspected or identified as alcohol and/or drug abusers to the ASAP. The unit commander should recommend enrollment based on the Soldier's potential for continued military service in terms of professional skills, behavior, and potential for advancement.

h. Manual for Courts-Martial, United States (2019 Edition) stated, military law consists of the statutes governing the military establishment and regulations issued thereunder, the constitutional powers of the President and regulations issued thereunder, and the inherent authority of military commanders. Military law includes jurisdiction exercised by courts-martial and the jurisdiction exercised by commanders with respect to nonjudicial punishment. The purpose of military law is to promote justice, to assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the Armed Forces. Appendix 12 (Maximum Punishment Chart) Manual for Courts-Martial shows the maximum punishments include punitive discharge for violating Article 113 (Drunken or Reckless Operation of a Vehicle).

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S):

a. The Army Discharge Review Board considers applications for upgrade as instructed by DoD Instruction 1332.28.

b. A review of the available evidence provides the applicant was the named subject in a Law Enforcement Report for driving under the influence with personal injury, received notification of separation for Commission of a Serious Offense, and was involuntarily separated. The DD Form 214, signed by the applicant, provides the applicant was discharged with a character of service of general (under honorable conditions) for misconduct (serious offense) rather than a discharge under other than honorable conditions, which is normally considered appropriate. They completed 3 years, 3 months, and 16 days of their 6-year, 31-week contractual enlistment obligation. The applicant has not completed their first full term of service.

c. Chapter 14 establishes policy and prescribes procedures for separation members for misconduct. Specific categories include minor disciplinary infractions, a pattern of misconduct, commission of a serious offense and convictions by civil authorities. Action will be taken to separate a member for misconduct when it is clearly established that rehabilitation is impracticable or is unlikely to succeed. 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.

d. Published DoD 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. 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. Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends they would like an opportunity to apply for VA education benefits and to improve their military records. 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.

c. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service outweighing the applicant's one-time DUI basis for separation. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable and changed the separation authority to AR 635-200, paragraph 14-12a. Accordingly, the narrative reason for separation was changed to Misconduct (Minor Infractions),

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with a corresponding separation code of JKN. The Board voted and determined the reentry eligibility (RE) code was proper and equitable due to applicant's BH diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of military service. However, the applicant may request a personal appearance hearing to address further 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.

d. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's length and quality of service outweighed the applicant's one-time DUI basis for separation. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

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

(3) The RE code will not change due to applicant's BH diagnosis warranting consideration prior to reentry of military service.

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:

1/16/2025



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