

**1. Applicant's Name:**

- a. **Application Date:** 26 October 2023
- b. **Date Received:** 26 October 2023
- c. **Counsel:** None

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

a. **Applicant's Requests and Issues:** The current characterization of service for period under review is under honorable conditions (general). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable and a narrative reason change.

The applicant states in effect, they did not take into consideration that they were and still are suffering from PTSD, and the person they were considered of doing the misconduct to was intentionally sabotaging their military career.

b. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 20 November 2024, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board denied the request upon finding the separation was both proper and equitable.

*Please see Section 9 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 (Serious Offense) / AR 635-200 / JKQ / RE-3 / Under Honorable Conditions (General).

b. **Date of Discharge:** 19 June 2019

c. **Separation Facts:**

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 3 April 2019

(2) **Basis for Separation:** On 6 May 2018 the applicant physically assaulted their spouse by pushing, twisting their arm behind their back, and choking them with a seat belt and communicating threats toward them.

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** UOTHC

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** Waived 8 April 2019.

(5) **Administrative Separation Board:** Waived, 8 April 2019.

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 23 May 2019 / General, under honorable conditions.

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 23 January 2017 / 3 years, 23 weeks.

**b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 19 / High School Diploma / 90

**c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 / 88M10 Motor Transport Operator / 2 years, 4 months, 27 days.

**d. Prior Service / Characterizations:** None.

**e. Overseas Service / Combat Service:** Alaska / None.

**f. Awards and Decorations:** NDSM, GWTSM, ASR

**g. Performance Ratings:** N/A

**h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**

(1) A Law Enforcement Report dated 17 September 2018 provides on 6 May 2018 the applicant was involved in verbal altercation which turned physical when they wrapped the seat belt around their spouse's neck, pulled their hair and later grabbed their arm and pushed it up behind their back. On 8 May 2018 the applicant admitted to the offenses.

(2) A Report of Mental Status Evaluation document dated 12 December 2018, provides that the applicant received a risk assessment that cleared them for administrative separation. Additionally, they received a separation medical examination.

(3) A memorandum, 539th Transportation Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Fort Wainwright, Alaska subject: separation under AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c, commission of a serious offense dated 3 April 2019 provides the applicants immediate commander notified them of their intent to separate them for Commission of a Serious Offense. The commander recommended an under other than honorable conditions characterization of service. The applicant acknowledged the commander's notification and basis for separation, their available rights.

(4) On 8 April 2019 the applicant requested a conditional waiver, they voluntarily waived consideration of their case by an administrative separation board contingent upon receiving a General, under honorable conditions characterization of service.

(5) A Commander's Report dated 8 April 2019 provides the applicant received a Non Judicial Punishment on 1 March 2018.

(6) On 7 May 2019 the chain of command endorsed and concurred with the commander's UOTHC discharge recommendation. On 23 May 2019 the appropriate authority approved the conditional waiver; under the provisions of AR 635-200 and directed a General, under honorable conditions characterization of service.

(7) A DD Form 214 shows on 19 June 2019 the applicant was discharged accordingly, they completed total active service of 2 years, 4 months, and 27 days.

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

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

**(1) Applicant provided:** Did not provide any medical documentation to support their diagnosis.

**(2) AMHRR Listed:** None.

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** An online DD Form 293 (Record Review) application.

**6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted in support of their 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), dated 25 September 2019, 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 635-200 provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel provides the authorized types of characterization of service or description of separation.

**(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)** 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.

**(4)** Except as otherwise indicated in this regulation, commanders must make maximum use of counseling and rehabilitation before determining that a Soldier has no potential for further useful service and, therefore, should be separated. In this regard, commanders will ensure that adequate counseling and rehabilitative measures are taken before initiating separation proceedings for the following reasons. Rehabilitative requirements are not required for individuals separated under Chapter 14-12c.

- Involuntary separation due to parenthood
- Personality disorder
- Other designated physical or mental conditions
- Entry-level performance and conduct
- Unsatisfactory performance
- Minor disciplinary infractions or a pattern of misconduct
- Failure to meet body fat standards

(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. 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. A soldier subject to this discharge under this regulation will be considered and processed for discharge even though he/she has filed an appeal or has stated his/her intention to do so. Paragraph 14-12c, states 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.

(6) 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.

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 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 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

**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 DD Form 214 provides that the applicant received a General (under honorable conditions) characterization of service, rather than an under other than honorable conditions (UOTCH) discharge which is normally considered appropriate for a soldier discharged for serious misconduct.

b. Based on available evidence the applicant enlisted in the army at the age 19, they were involved in a verbal altercation with their spouse on 6 May 2018 after their spouse took their cellular device while they were driving. The applicant wrapped a seatbelt around their spouse's neck to retrieve their cellular device. The applicant made it back to their barracks room along with their spouse, while there the applicant stated they were not moving into an apartment with their spouse at which the applicant's spouse grabbed their car keys, the applicant twisted their spouses arm up behind their back to retrieve their keys, all while communicating verbal threats. The applicant's spouse recorded the verbal threats, and when investigated the applicant admitted to the offenses. They were subsequently processed for administrative separation.

c. The applicant was notified of the intent to separate them for serious misconduct and acknowledged they understood the basis for separation under the provisions AR 635-200, CH 14-12c. The applicant submitted a conditional waiver, waiving the administrative separation board upon receiving a GD. The appropriate authority approved their conditional waiver, and a DD Form 214 shows they were discharged with an under honorable conditions (general) characterization of service on 19 June 2019.

d. Chapter 14 establishes policy and prescribes procedures for members being separated 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.

e. 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. 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: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), self-asserted PTSD.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor found applicant was involved in IPV incidents while on active duty.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **No.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that there are no

mitigating BH conditions. Record review indicates that the applicant has not been diagnosed by the military or the VA with any DSM-5 BH condition. Applicant was noted to have IPV. On 6 May 2018, the applicant physically assaulted the spouse by pushing, twisting the spouses arm behind their back, choking the spouse with a seatbelt and communicating threats towards the spouse. Record review indicates the applicant also reported to FAP that the spouse hit the applicant on the head with applicant's cell phone during this incident. While liberal consideration was applied, given that the applicant was the offender as well as the victim of IPV, no mitigation is forthcoming due to the fact that the severity of the applicant's abuse towards the spouse as the offender far outweighs any mitigation applicant may have received under liberal consideration for being the victim of IPV.

**(4)** Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **No.** Based on liberally considering all the evidence before the Board, the ADRB determined that the self-asserted PTSD did not outweigh the basis of separation (domestic assault).

**b.** Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends they were suffering from PTSD. The Board considered this contention and determined the applicant does not have sufficient documentation to support the applicant was diagnosed with PTSD during military service. Ultimately, the Board determined the applicant was properly and equitably discharged.

**c.** 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.

**d.** 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 applicant's asserted PTSD did not excuse or mitigate the offense of domestic assault. The discharge 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. Therefore, the applicant's General (Under Honorable Conditions) discharge was proper and equitable as the applicant's misconduct fell below that level of meritorious service warranted for an upgrade to Honorable discharge.

**(2)** The Board voted not to change the applicant's reason for discharge or accompanying SPD code under the same rationale, as 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.

# ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE

AR20230014814

## 10. 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:

2/13/2025

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