

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]

- a. **Application Date:** 27 September 2023
- b. **Date Received:** 5 October 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 requests an upgrade to Honorable and a narrative reason change.

b. The applicant seeks relief contending, they have learned and have reflected on their actions, since being out of the service, having realized their mistake was childish and foolish. Since then, they have made better decisions and became a Firefighter for their city, as well having received their EMT (Emergency Medicine Technician) license to continue their efforts of helping the community. Currently, they are enrolled in school at their local university in efforts to go to Nursing School. They have always had a goal to do something bigger than themselves and upgrading their discharge, will help them accomplish the many goals they have set for themselves.

c. **Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 11 September 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the Board determined the original discharge was inequitable and found the applicant's diagnosed behavioral health disorder mitigated the circumstances surrounding the initial separation stemming from a 2018 DUI incident (.127% BAC). 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, the narrative reason for separation to Misconduct (Minor Infractions), with a corresponding separation code of JKN. The Board determined the reentry code is proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

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 (Drug Abuse) / AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2) / JKK / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. **Date of Discharge:** 16 July 2020

c. Separation Facts:

(1) **Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** NIF

(2) **Basis for Separation:** On 4 March 2018, the applicant was driving while under the influence (DUI) and was involved in a two vehicle traffic crash, with a .127% blood alcohol content (BAC).

(3) **Recommended Characterization:** NIF

(4) **Legal Consultation Date:** NIF

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

(6) **Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** NIF

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 4 June 2019 / 3 years, 2 weeks (first reenlistment)

b. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 24 / High School Diploma / 95

c. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-4 (SPC) / 91D10 Tactical Power Generation Specialist / 1 year, 1 month, 13 days

d. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** Army National Guard (ARNG) / 25 January 2017 – 3 June 2019 / Honorable

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

f. Awards and Decorations:

- National Defense Service Medal
- Global on Terrorism Service Medal
- Army Service Ribbon
- Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon

g. **Performance Ratings:** NA

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) On 4 June 2019, the applicant enlisted in the Regular Army (RA) for 3 years and 2 weeks as a specialist, SPC (E-4), with 2 years, 4 months, and 9 days of prior inactive and active service (Army National Guard). The Enlisted Record Brief provides on 5 June 2020, they were flagged, Suspend Favorable Personnel Actions (FLAG), for field-initiated involuntary separation (BA). A City Police Department Narrative, dated 4 March 2018, provides an officer was dispatched to a two vehicle traffic crash and upon the officer's arrival, they made contact with the applicant, who showed signs of impairment. Through further investigation, the applicant was found to be operating their vehicle while impaired and registered a BAC (blood alcohol content) of .127%. The applicant was arrested and later booked at the prison.

(2) On 7 February 2019, the Senior Pretrial Officer, wrote two letters which documented the completion of the applicant's Pretrial Diversion Program, which is a first-time offender program designed to intervene in the normal judicial process to divert first offenders from the City Court System, with the benefit of case dismissal and therefore, the case against the applicant was dismissed and closed.

(3) On 6 May 2019, a self-authored statement provides they were arrested in March 2018 for DUI. They were at the bar with a couple of friends and had a couple of drinks. When it was time to go home, they thought they were good enough to drive and upon returning to their friend's apartment, the applicant fell asleep behind the wheel and hit a person in front of them. Gladly no one was hurt and their car was not damaged badly. The applicant called the cops because of the wreck and was subject to a field test to determine if they were under the

influence, in which they passed; however, the officer had to do a breathalyzer, which the applicant agreed to and they blew over the legal limit at the station. The charges were dismissed following the completion of their pretrial diversion program. The applicant has learned from the mistakes they have made in the past and does not want the mistakes to define who they are as a person. They desire to do right with their life and knows active duty will be the right career path for them, like their family, and desires to serve their country.

(4) Although not in the record, on 5 June 2020, they received nonjudicial punishment (NJP) and as a result was reduced to private, PVT (E-1).

(5) On 9 July 2020, their separation orders were issued. A properly constituted DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflects that the applicant was discharged accordingly on 16 July 2020, with 3 years, 5 months, and 22 days of total active and inactive service. Although they were unable to provide their electronic signature, the applicant has completed their first full term of service.

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

j. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):** None

(1) **Applicant provided:** None

(2) **AMHRR Listed:** None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for the Review of Discharge; Fire Fighter I Certificate; Emergency Medical Technician Certificate

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant is a Firefighter for their city and a licensed EMT to continue their efforts of helping the community and currently, enrolled in school at their local university pursuing Nursing School.

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 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations), set policies, standards, and procedures to ensure the readiness and competency of the force while providing for the orderly administrative separation of Soldiers for a variety of reasons. Readiness is promoted by maintaining high standards of conduct and performance.

(1) Chapter 3 provides 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.

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

(2) 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 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.

(3) 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 "JKK" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Misconduct (Drug Abuse).

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:

(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)) provided a comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse prevention and control policies, procedures, and responsibilities for Soldiers for ASAP services. 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. All Soldiers who are identified as drug abusers, without exception, will be referred to the ASAP counseling center for screening; be considered for disciplinary action under the UCMJ, as appropriate; and be processed for administrative separation in accordance with Army Regulation 635-200.

(1) 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. ASAP participation is mandatory for all Soldiers who are command referred. Failure to attend a mandatory counseling session may constitute a violation of Article 86 (Absence Without Leave) of the UCMJ.

(2) Alcohol and/or other drug abusers, and in some cases dependent alcohol users, may be enrolled in the ASAP when such enrollment is clinically recommended. Soldiers who fail to participate adequately in, or to respond successfully to, rehabilitation will be processed for administrative separation and not be provided another opportunity for rehabilitation except under the most extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Clinical Director in consultation with the unit commander.

(3) Alcohol and/or other drug abusers, and in some cases dependent alcohol users, may be enrolled in the ASAP when such enrollment is clinically recommended. Soldiers who fail to participate adequately in, or to respond successfully to, rehabilitation will be processed for administrative separation and not be provided another opportunity for rehabilitation except under the most extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Clinical Director in consultation with the unit commander.

(4) All Soldiers who are identified as drug abusers, without exception, will be referred to the ASAP counseling center for screening; be considered for disciplinary action under the UCMJ, as appropriate; and be processed for administrative separation in accordance with Army Regulation 635-200.

h. Manual for Courts-Martial (2016 Edition), United States, states 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 orders and discipline in the Armed Forces. Article 111 (drunken driving) states in the subparagraph, the maximum punishment consists of a bad conduct discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for five years.

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 and a narrative reason change. A review of the records provides there was administrative irregularity in the proper retention of official military records, specifically, the referral to ASAP [a two-part mandatory clinical assessment, required within 5 days following the incident], the separation package, and separation examinations as required by this separation chapter.

b. The available evidence provides the applicant reenlisted in the RA as a SPC, with 2 years, 4 months, and 9 days of prior inactive/active service (Army National Guard). They served one year prior to the misconduct which led to their involuntary separation. In March 2018, they were involved in a two-vehicle traffic crash and upon the officer's arrival, they detected the applicant's impairment. After further investigation, it was determined the applicant's BAC was .127%. Although not in the record, they received nonjudicial punishment (NJP) and as a result was reduced to PVT. Notwithstanding the missing records, a properly constituted DD Form 214 identified that the applicant was discharged under the provisions of AR 635-200, Chapter 14-12c (2), Misconduct (Drug Abuse), with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) characterization of service. They were unable to provide their signature and has completed their first full term of service. They served 1 year, 1 month, and 13 days of their 3 year-2 week contractual obligation.

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 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: 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 and is service connected by the VA for PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder. Service connection establishes that the PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder existed during military service.

(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 and is service connected by the VA for PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder. Given the nexus between PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder, and using substances for self-medication, the drug abuse (i.e., positive UA for cocaine) 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 applicant's diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder outweighed the basis of separation.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s): The applicant seeks relief contending, they have learned and have reflected on their actions, since being out of the service, having realized their mistake was childish and foolish. Since then, they have made better decisions and became a Firefighter for their city, as well having received their EMT (Emergency Medicine Technician) license to continue their efforts of helping the community. Currently, they are enrolled in school at their local university in efforts to go to Nursing School. They have always had a goal to do something bigger than themselves and upgrading their discharge, will help them accomplish the many goals they have set for themselves. The Board considered this contention and determined that the applicant's behavioral health conditions, Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, and Major Depressive Disorder, mitigated the misconduct, and that their post-service accomplishments further supported an upgrade to Honorable.

d. The Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's OBH Disorder outweighed the Drug abuse basis of separation. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade to the characterization of service to Honorable and 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 RE Code was proper and equitable and voted not to change it.

e. Rationale for Decision:

(1) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable, after liberal consideration of all evidence, the applicant's diagnoses of Adjustment Disorder, PTSD, and Major Depressive Disorder outweighed using substances for self-medication.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's reason for discharge Minor Misconduct with accompanying SPD code of JKN, under the same pretexts.

(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

AR20230014925

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: 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**

Authenticating Official:

10/20/2025



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