

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 11 December 2023**b. Date Received:** 18 December 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 of their U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) character of service to honorable.

(2) The applicant seeks relief contending they believe they were erroneously discharged based on not following procedures. They were never warned or counseled. They called every time they were unable to make it to drill due to lower back problems (sciatica), which they have been awarded disability by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). They were not warned about their discharge, which should say Honorable and their bonus should not be recouped. They did not get an opportunity to be retrained and their Noncommissioned Evaluation Reports (NCOER) never stated bad attendance. They were told by retention NCO they could reenlist later and their bonus would not be recouped; however, that commander could not do that and not their recoupment is in collections.

b. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 25 February 2026, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service, to include combat service, the circumstances surrounding the discharge (PTSD diagnoses), and post-service accomplishments. Therefore, the Board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to Honorable. Please see **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more detail regarding the Board's decision. Board member names available upon request.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Unsatisfactory Participant / Army Regulation 135-178, Chapter 12 / NIF / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 9 March 2020

c. Separation Facts: The applicant's case separation file is void from their Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR). On 24 September 2024 the Army Review Boards Agency requested the applicant provide their discharge packet (case separation files), the applicant only provided their USAR discharge order.

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment: 8 April 2018 / Indefinite (USAR)

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 42 / HS Diploma / 118

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-6 / 91C3O, Utilities Equipment Repairer / 26 years, 5 months, 16 days [Note: 9 years USAR and 3 years Active Duty – Qualifying for Retirement]

d. Prior Service / Characterizations:

- Active Duty, 23 September 1993 – 22 September 1996 / Honorable
- USAR Control Group (Reinforcement), 23 September 1996 – 16 July 2008 / Honorable
- Army National Guard, 17 July 2008 – 22 April 2009 / Honorable

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: SWA (3 months, 27 days) / SWA (1 July 1994 – 30 November 1994)

f. Awards and Decorations: AAM-4, ASUA, AGCM, NDSM, SASM-BSS, ASR

g. Performance Ratings:

- 1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012 / Fully Capable
- 31 December 2012 – 30 December 2013 / Fully Capable
- 31 December 2013 – 30 December 2014 / NIF
- 31 December 2014 – 30 December 2015 / Fully Capable
- 31 December 2015 – 29 December 2016 / Highly Qualified
- 30 December 2016 – 29 December 2017 / NIF
- 30 December 2017 – 30 December 2018 / Qualified
- 31 December 2018 – 29 December 2019 / Fully Capable

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) Two DA Forms 2166-9-2 (NCOER) covering the periods 30 December 2017 through 29 December 2018 and 30 December 2018 through 29 December 2019, reflects the applicant was unavailable for signature.

(2) A Headquarters, 63rd Readiness Division (USAR), Orders 20-062-00021, dated 2 March 2020, reflects the applicant was discharged from the USAR, with a type of discharge of General (Under Honorable Conditions), effective 9 March 2020, with Separation under Army Regulation 135-178, chapter 12, Unsatisfactory Participation.

(3) A DA Form 5016 (Chronological Statement of Retirement Points) dated 14 November 2025, reflects –

- 15 July 2017 – 14 July 2018, the applicant has 28 Inactive Duty Points (equivalent to 14 days of unit drills) and 40 active duty points
- 15 July 2017 – 14 July 2018, the applicant has 2 Inactive Duty Points (equivalent to ½ day and 0 active duty points)
- 15 July 2017 – 14 July 2018, the applicant has 0 Inactive Duty Points and 0 active duty points

(4) A review of the applicant's Soldier Management Services – WEB Portal (SMS WEB) Retirement Points Detail reflects the applicant's last performance of inactive duty training was 20 October 2018.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: NIF

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

(1) Applicant provided: VA Rating Decision reflecting service connection for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with an evaluation of 50-percent.

(2) AMHRR Listed: None

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:

- DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Records under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552)
- Functional Capacity Certificate Form 507
- VA Decision Letter, with Rating Decision
- NCO Evaluation Report for the period covering 30 December 2018 – 29 December 2019
- USAR Discharge Order

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

f. Army Regulation 135-178 (Enlisted Administrative Separations), 12 January 2017, set policies, standards, and procedures to ensure the readiness and competency of the U.S. Army while providing for the orderly administrative separation of ARNG of the United States and USAR enlisted Soldiers for a variety of reasons.

(1) An honorable characterization 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. When a Soldier is discharged before expiration of the service obligation for a reason for which an honorable characterization is discretionary, the following considerations apply, to include –

(a) An honorable characterization may be awarded when disqualifying entries in the Soldier's military record are outweighed by subsequent honorable and faithful service over a greater period of time during the current term of service.

(b) It is a pattern of behavior and not an isolated instance which should be considered the governing factor in determining the character of service.

(c) Unless otherwise ineligible, a Soldier may receive an honorable characterization of service if he or she has, during his or her current enlistment, or any extension thereof, received a personal decoration.

(2) A General discharge is if a Soldier's service has been honest and faithful, it is appropriate to characterize that service as under honorable conditions. Characterization of service as general (under honorable conditions) is warranted when significant negative aspect of the Soldier's conduct or performance of duty outweighs positive aspects of the Soldier's military record.

(3) An Under Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge, service may but is not required to be characterized as under other than honorable conditions only when discharge is for misconduct, fraudulent entry, homosexual conduct, unsatisfactory participation, or security reasons. The Adjutant General will direct reduction in grade to private/E-1 when the Soldier is discharged under other than honorable conditions.

g. Army Regulation 135-180 (Retirement for Non-Regular Service) dated 1 August 1987, implemented statutory authorities governing the granting of retired pay to Soldiers and former Reserve components Soldiers. Paragraph 2-10 (Computation of Service) stated one point for each authorized participation in drills or periods of instruction which conform to the requirements prescribed by the Secretary of the Army.

h. 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 Expiration Term of Service or fulfillment of active duty obligation to meet the needs of the Army and its Soldiers. Chapter 15 (Secretarial Plenary Authority) 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.

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 an administrative irregularity in the proper retention of records, specifically the AMHRR is void of the case files for approved separation from the USAR. Notwithstanding the absence of records, their discharge order from the USAR provides the applicant was discharged with a character of service of Under Other Than Honorable Conditions under the provisions of Army Regulation 135-178. They completed 5 years, 10 months, 18 days Reserve Component service; however, they did not complete their 8-year enlistment obligation.

c. 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 diagnosis: PTSD.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** PTSD

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board applied liberal consideration and opined that given the trauma occurred prior to the misconduct, nexus between trauma and avoidance, and possibility the applicant's absence was actually trauma related with hesitancy to divulge PTSD to ARBA, the basis 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 PTSD outweighed the basis of separation (Unsatisfactory Participation).

b. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends they believe they were erroneously discharged based on not following procedures. They were never warned or counseled. They called every time they were unable to make it to drill due to lower back problems (sciatica), which they have been awarded disability by the VA. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's unsatisfactory participation.

(2) The applicant contends they were not warned about their discharge, which should say Honorable and their bonus should not be recouped. They did not get an opportunity to be retrained and their NCOERs never stated bad attendance. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's unsatisfactory participation.

(3) The applicant contends they were told by retention NCO they could reenlist later, and their bonus would not be recouped; however, that commander could not do that and not their recoupment is in collections. The Board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighing the applicant's unsatisfactory participation.

c. The Board determined: The Board carefully considered the applicant's request, supporting documents, evidence in the records, a medical review, and published Department of Defense guidance for liberal consideration of discharge upgrade requests. The board determined the basis for the applicant's separation was unsatisfactory participation. The Board concurred with the conclusion of the medical advising official that the applicant's medical diagnosis (PTSD) mitigates the basis of separation (unsatisfactory participation) and warrants an upgrade to the applicant's characterization of service.

ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD CASE REPORT AND DIRECTIVE**AR20240001507****b. Rationale for Decision:**

(1) Published Department of Defense guidance indicates the guidance is not intended to interfere or impede on the Board's statutory independence. The Board determines the relative weight of the action that was the basis for the discharge and whether it supports relief or not. In reaching its determination, the Board considers the application, available records and any supporting documents included with the application.

(2) The Board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because the applicant's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder outweighed the applicant's unsatisfactory participation. Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

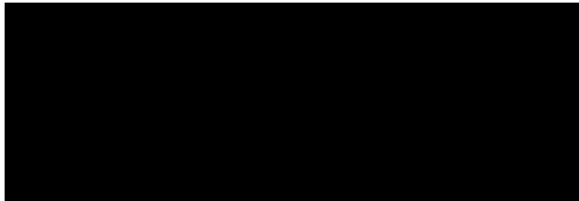
a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes

b. Change Characterization to: Honorable

c. Change Authority to: No Change

Authenticating Official:

2/27/2026

**Legend:**

AWOL – Absent Without Leave
AMHRR – Army Military Human
Resource Record
BCD – Bad Conduct Discharge
BH – Behavioral Health
CG – Company Grade Article 15
CID – Criminal Investigation
Division
ELS – Entry Level Status
FG – Field Grade Article 15

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
UOTH – Under Other Than
Honorable Conditions
VA – Department of Veterans
Affairs