

1. Applicant's Name: [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 8 March 2025**b. Date Received:** 8 April 2025**c. Counsel:** None**2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:**

a. Applicant Requests: 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. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s): The applicant requests relief contending, in effect, an upgrade of discharge status from general (under honorable conditions) to honorable to accurately reflect service record and post-discharge conduct. The applicant further seeks removal or correction of the characterization "Drug Rehabilitation Failure" if deemed appropriate. The applicant asserts the discharge failed to account for significant personal hardships experienced during the period of service. The applicant requests full access to VA benefits and military-related opportunities associated with an honorable discharge.

c. Board Type and Decision: In a records review conducted on 19 December 2025, and by a 3-0 vote, the Board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's length and quality of service, and the circumstances surrounding the discharge (depression and other BH conditions). 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, Chapter 15, and the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code to JFF. The Board determined the reentry code is proper and equitable and voted not to change it. Please see **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more detail regarding the Board's decision. Board member names are available upon request.

3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:

a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization: Drug Rehabilitation Failure / AR 635-200, Chapter 9 / JPC / RE-4 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

b. Date of Discharge: 27 July 2022

c. Separation Facts:

(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate: 12 May 2022

(2) Basis for Separation: The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant was Command Referred to the Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care (SUDCC) and enrolled in the program on 15 November 2021. Then, on 28 January 2022, the applicant was deemed a rehabilitation failure due to having a subsequent drug, related incident at any time during the 12-month period following successful completion.

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

(4) Legal Consultation Date: On 2 June 2022, the applicant waived legal counsel.

(5) Administrative Separation Board: NA

(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization: 27 June 2022 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

4. SERVICE DETAILS:

a. Date / Period of Enlistment Under Review: 24 January 2017 / 5 years, 32 weeks

b. Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score: 19 / High School Graduate / 95

c. Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service: E-5 / 25B2O, IT Specialist / 5 years, 6 months, 4 days

d. Prior Service / Characterizations: None

e. Overseas Service / Combat Service: Hawaii, SWA / Kuwait (28 July 2018 – 30 April 2019)

f. Awards and Decorations: ARCOM, AAM, AGCM, NDSM, GWOTEM, NCOPDR, ASR, OSR

g. Performance Ratings: 1 May 2020 – 28 August 2020 / Highly Qualified
29 August 2020 – 12 November 2021 / Not Qualified

h. Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:

(1) FG Record of Proceedings under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice, 20 January 2022, indicates the applicant was found to have wrongfully used Delta 9, Tetrahydrocannabinol between 15 August and 15 September 2021. Between 3 November and 3 December 2021, wrongfully used Delta 9, Tetrahydrocannabinol. The imposed punishment included a reduction to E-4, forfeiture of \$1,356 (suspended), along with 45 days of extra duty and oral reprimand.

(2) Developmental Counseling Forms document initiation of flag; notification of positive urinalysis test results and mandatory attendance in the Alcohol and drug program.

i. Lost Time / Mode of Return: None

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: None

(2) AMHRR Listed: Report of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 28 January 2022, indicates the applicant was cleared for any administrative actions the command deemed appropriate. The applicant demonstrated the ability to understand and participate in administrative proceedings.

5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE: Application for Correction of Military Record; three letters of support; two certification certificates; medical records.

6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The applicant completed a Cisco Network Associate Certification.

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. 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; Section 1553, Title 10 United States Code; and Department of Defense Directive 1332.41 and Instruction 1332.28.

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-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 635-200 (Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations), provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.

(1) Chapter 3, Section II provides the authorized types of characterization of service or description of separation.

(a) Paragraph 3-7a states 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.

(b) Paragraph 3-7b states 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.

(2) Chapter 9 outlines the procedures for discharging individuals because of alcohol or other drug abuse. A member who has been referred to the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) for alcohol or drug abuse may be separated because of inability or refusal to participate in, cooperate in, or successfully complete such a program if there is a lack of potential for continued Army service and rehabilitation efforts are no longer practical.

(a) Paragraph 9-4, stipulates the service of Soldiers discharged under this section will be characterized as honorable or under honorable conditions unless the Soldier is in entry-level status and an uncharacterized description of service is required.

(b) An honorable discharge is mandated in any case in which the Government initially introduces into the final discharge process limited use evidence as defined by AR 600-85.

(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. If Secretarial Authority is granted normally correct the record to show the following:

- Separation Authority: Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 15
- Separation Code: JFF
- Reenlistment Code: RE1
- Narrative Reason for Separation: Secretarial Plenary Authority
- Character of Service: Honorable

h. 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 "JPC" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 9, for drug rehabilitation failure.

8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S): Standard of Review. 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. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The evidence of the Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) reflects, the applicant was Command Referred to the Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care (SUDCC) and enrolled in the program on 15 November 2021. Then, on 28 January 2022, the applicant was deemed a rehabilitation failure due to having a subsequent drug, related incident at any time during the 12-month period following successful completion.

c. The applicant contends the Army should change the narrative reason for the discharge. The applicant was separated under Chapter 9, AR 635-200 provisions with a general (under honorable conditions) discharge. The narrative reason specified by Army Regulations for a discharge under this paragraph is "drug rehabilitation failure," and the separation code is "JPC." Army Regulation 635-8 (Separation Processing and Documents) governs the preparation of the DD Form 214 and dictates the entry of the narrative reason for separation, entered in block 28, and separation code, entered in block 26 of the form, will be as listed in tables 2-2 or 2-3 of AR 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes). The regulation stipulates no deviation is authorized. There is no provision for entry of any other reason under this regulation.

d. The applicant contends suffering from PTSD. The applicant did not submit any evidence, other than the applicant's statement, to support the contention. The AMHRR includes a Report

of Mental Status Evaluation (MSE), 28 January 2022, indicating the applicant was cleared for any administrative actions the command deemed appropriate. The applicant demonstrated the ability to understand and participate in administrative proceedings. The separation authority considered the mental status evaluation.

e. The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge would allow veterans' and educational benefits through the GI Bill. Eligibility for veteran's benefits including educational benefits under the Post-9/11 or Montgomery GI Bill, does not fall within the purview of the Army Discharge Review Board. Accordingly, the applicant should contact a local Department of Veterans Affairs office for further assistance.

f. The applicant contends the discharge failed to account for significant personal hardships experienced during the period of service. The AMHRR does not indicate or provide evidence of arbitrary or capricious actions by the command.

g. The third-party statements provided with the application reflect the applicant's exceptional professionalism and commitment to duty. The applicant's work ethic, and ability to lead under pressure, and willingness to support fellow Soldiers. The Board evaluated the applicant's service accomplishments and overall quality of service in accordance with DODI 1332.28.

h. The applicant completed a Cisco Network Associate Certification. The Army Discharge Review Board has the authority to consider post-service factors when reviewing discharge recharacterization requests. However, no law or regulation permits upgrading an unfavorable discharge solely due to time passed or good conduct in civilian life. The Board evaluates each case individually to determine whether post-service achievements indicate previous in-service misconduct was an anomaly rather than a reflection of the applicant's overall character.

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: Bereavement, PTSD, Cannabis Use

(2) Did the condition exist or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** Bereavement, Cannabis Use, service trauma

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that although the applicant was reluctant to fully disclose distress and symptoms in-service, documentation highlights worsening depression complicated by psychosocial stressors. Given symptoms existed prior to the misconduct and nexus between depression and substance use, the drug use 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 condition or experience outweighed the basis of separation.

b. Prior Decisions Cited: None

c. Response to Contention(s):

(1) The applicant contends suffering from PTSD and significant personal hardships experienced during the period of service that led to the applicant's drug use and subsequent rehabilitation failure. The Board liberally considered this contention and determined that it was valid due to the applicant's length, quality of service and behavior health issues outweighing the applicant's rehabilitation failure. Therefore, a discharge upgrade is warranted.

(2) The applicant contends an upgrade of the discharge would allow veterans' and educational benefits through the GI Bill. 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.

(3) Post service the applicant provided third-party statements which reflect the applicant's exceptional professionalism and commitment to duty. They also obtained their Cisco Network Associate Certification. 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 length, quality of service and behavior health issues outweighing the applicant's rehabilitation failure.

d. 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 concurred with the conclusion of the medical advising official that the applicant's medical diagnosis (Bereavement and PTSD) mitigates the basis of separation (Rehabilitation Failure) and warrants a change to the character and narrative reason for separation. The Board voted to retain the reentry code based on the medical diagnosis.

e. 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 bereavement and PTSD mitigates the basis of separation (Rehabilitation Failure). Thus, the prior characterization is no longer appropriate.

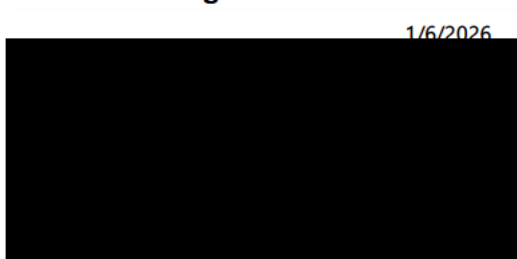
(3) The Board voted to change the reason for discharge to Secretarial Authority, under the same pretexts, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JFF.

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

10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:

- a. Issue a New DD-214 / Separation Order: Yes.
- b. Change Characterization to: Honorable
- c. Change Reason / SPD code to: Secretarial Authority / JFF
- d. Change RE Code to: No Change
- e. Change Authority to: AR 635-200, Chapter 15

Authenticating Official:



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
 FTR – Failure to Report

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