



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON DC 20370-5100

CRS
Docket No: 611-99
5 July 2000

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, Section 1552.

A three-member panel of the Board for Correction of Naval Records, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 28 June 2000. Your allegations of error and injustice were reviewed in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures applicable to the proceedings of this Board. Documentary material considered by the Board consisted of your application, together with all material submitted in support thereof, your naval record and applicable statutes, regulations and policies.

After careful and conscientious consideration of the entire record, the Board found that the evidence submitted was insufficient to establish the existence of probable material error or injustice.

The Board found that you enlisted in the Marine Corps on 17 September 1968 at age 17. The record reflects that you received six nonjudicial punishments and were convicted by a summary court-martial and a special court-martial. The offenses included unauthorized absences totalling 24 days, stealing a tape deck with ten tapes, dereliction of duty, disobedience of a lawful order, and swinging your fists at a noncommissioned officer.

Your military record shows that on 30 July 1971 you submitted a written request for an undesirable discharge in order to avoid trial by court-martial for two periods of unauthorized absence totalling 44 days. Your record also shows that prior to submitting this request you conferred with a qualified military lawyer at which time you were advised of your rights and warned of the probable adverse consequences of accepting such a discharge. The Board found that your request was granted and, as a result of this action, you were spared the stigma of a court-martial conviction and the potential penalties of a punitive discharge and confinement at hard labor. You received an

undesirable discharge on 28 September 1971.

On 20 September 1977 the Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB) changed the characterization of the discharge to general under the provisions of the Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP). However, on 9 August 1978 NDRB declined to confirm the general discharge under its uniform discharge review standards, thus denying you veterans' benefits.

In its review of your application the Board carefully weighed all potentially mitigating factors, such as your youth and immaturity. However, these factors were not sufficient to warrant further recharacterization of your discharge or confirmation of the general discharge given your request for discharge to avoid trial for unauthorized absences totalling more than a month, and your eight earlier disciplinary actions. The Board believed that considerable clemency was extended to you when your request to avoid trial by court-martial was approved since, by this action, you escaped the possibility of confinement at hard labor and a punitive discharge. Further, the Board concluded that you received the benefit of your bargain when your request for discharge was granted and should not be permitted to change it now. Additionally, the Board believed that the relief granted by the NDRB in accordance with the provisions of the SDRP is sufficient in your case. Accordingly, your application has been denied. The names and votes of the members of the panel will be furnished upon request.

It is regretted that the circumstances of your case are such that favorable action cannot be taken. You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon submission of new and material evidence or other matter not previously considered by the Board. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that a presumption of regularity attaches to all official records. Consequently, when applying for a correction of an official naval record, the burden is on the applicant to demonstrate the existence of probable material error or injustice.

Sincerely,

W. DEAN PFEIFFER
Executive Director