



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS
701 S. COURTHOUSE ROAD, SUITE 1001
ARLINGTON, VA 22204-2490

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Docket No: 1609-22
5004-21
Ref: Signature Date



Dear Petitioner:

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to Section 1552 of Title 10, United States Code. After careful and conscientious consideration of relevant portions of your naval record and your application, the Board for Correction of Naval Records (Board) found the evidence submitted insufficient to establish the existence of probable material error or injustice. Consequently, your application has been denied.

Because your application was submitted with new evidence not previously considered, the Board found it in the interest of justice to review your application. A three-member panel of the Board, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 29 June 2022. The names and votes of the panel members will be furnished upon request. 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, relevant portions of your naval record, and applicable statutes, regulations, and policies, to include the 25 August 2017 guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (Kurta Memo), the 3 September 2014 guidance from the Secretary of Defense regarding discharge upgrade requests by Veterans claiming post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hagel Memo), and the 25 July 2018 guidance from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness regarding equity, injustice, or clemency determinations (Wilkie Memo). The Board also considered the advisory opinion (AO) furnished by a qualified mental health professional dated 16 May 2022, which was previously provided to you. Although you were afforded an opportunity to submit an AO rebuttal, you did not do so.

The Board determined that your personal appearance, with or without counsel, would not materially add to their understanding of the issues involved. Therefore, the Board determined that a personal appearance was not necessary and considered your case based on the evidence of record.

You previously applied to this Board for an upgrade to your characterization of service and were denied on 20 August 2021.

In reviewing your application, the Board considered the totality of the circumstances to determine whether relief is appropriate today in the interests of justice in accordance with guidance provided by the Wilkie Memo. Accordingly, the Board carefully considered all potentially mitigating factors; these included, but were not limited to, our desire to upgrade your discharge character of service and contentions that you were diagnosed with PTSD after being involved in a car accident where a fellow service member was killed and you were hospitalized. For purposes of clemency consideration, the Board noted you did not provide supporting documentation describing post-service accomplishments, or advocacy letters.

As part of the Board's review, a qualified mental health professional reviewed your request and provided the Board with an AO on 16 May 2022. The AO stated in pertinent part:

Petitioner's OMPF did not contain evidence of a diagnosis of a mental health condition. Unfortunately, Petitioner did not provide clarifying information about his PTSD (i.e., symptoms experienced, how they interfered with his ability to perform his duties). The lack of clarifying information made available did not provide enough markers to establish an onset and development of mental health symptoms or identify a nexus with his misconduct. Additional records (i.e., post-service mental health records describing the Petitioner's diagnosis, symptoms, and their specific link to his misconduct) would aid in rendering an alternate opinion.

The AO concluded, "[b]ased on the available evidence, it is my considered clinical opinion, that there is insufficient evidence to establish if Petitioner's PTSD can be attributed to military service, if his post-service mental health condition can be attributed to military service, or if his in-service misconduct/behavior can be attributed to PTSD or other mental health condition."

Based upon this review, the Board concluded that your potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined your misconduct as evidenced by your SPCM conviction, outweighed these mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and the fact it included a drug offense. The Board further concluded that the discharge was proper and equitable under standards of law and discipline, and that the discharge accurately reflects your conduct during your period of service, which was terminated by your BCD. Finally, the Board concurred with the AO and determined that there is insufficient evidence to establish that your in service misconduct/behavior can be attributed to PTSD or other mental health condition. As a result, the Board determined your conduct constituted a significant departure from that expected of a Sailor and continues to warrant a BCD characterization. After applying liberal consideration, the Board did not find evidence of an error or injustice that warrants upgrading your characterization of service or granting clemency in the form of an upgraded characterization of service. Accordingly, given the totality of the circumstances, the Board determined your request does not merit relief.

You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon submission of new matters, which will require you to complete and submit a new DD Form 149. New matters are those not previously presented to or 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,

7/12/2022

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Executive Director

Signed by: █