



**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: 2472-22

Ref: Signature Date

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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.

Although your initial application was not filed in a timely manner, the Board found it in the interest of justice to waive the statute of limitations and consider your application on its merits. A three-member panel of the Board, sitting in executive session, considered your reconsideration application on 22 April 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 the 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 July 2018 guidance from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness regarding equity, injustice or clemency determinations (Wilkie Memo).

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 enlisted in the Navy and commenced active duty on 14 July 1993. Your enlistment physical on 1 April 1993 and self-reported medical history both noted no psychiatric or neurologic issues or symptoms. You admitted pre-service marijuana use on your enlistment application.

On 20 July 1994, you reported for duty on board the █. On 27 October 1994, you received non-judicial punishment (NJP) for both the wrongful use of a controlled substance and the wrongful introduction of a controlled substance onto a naval vessel. You did not appeal your NJP.

On 27 October 1994, your command notified you of administrative separation proceedings by reason of misconduct due to the commission of a serious offense. You expressly waived your rights to consult with counsel, submit written rebuttal statements, and to request a hearing before an administrative separation board. In the interim, your separation physical examination, on 31 October 1994, did not indicate any psychiatric or neurologic conditions or symptoms. Ultimately, on 30 November 1994, you were separated from the Navy for misconduct with an other than honorable (OTH) discharge characterization and assigned an RE-4 reentry code.

The Board carefully considered all potentially mitigating factors to determine whether the interests of justice warrant relief in your case in accordance with the Wilkie Memo. These included, but were not limited to your sole contention that the VA determined your military service was honorable for VA purposes and was not a bar to VA benefits. However, given the totality of the circumstances, the Board determined that your request does not merit relief.

The Board did not believe that your record was otherwise so meritorious as to deserve a discharge upgrade. The Board concluded that significant negative aspects of your conduct and/or performance greatly outweighed any positive aspects of your military record. The Board determined that illegal drug use by a Sailor is contrary to Navy core values, renders such Sailors unfit for duty, and poses an unnecessary risk to the safety of their fellow Sailors. The Board noted that, although one's service is generally characterized at the time of discharge based on performance and conduct throughout the entire enlistment, the conduct or performance of duty reflected by only a single incident of misconduct may provide the underlying basis for discharge characterization. The Board determined that characterization under OTH conditions is generally warranted for misconduct and is appropriate when the basis for separation is the commission of an act or acts constituting a significant departure from the conduct expected of a Sailor. The Board determined that the record clearly reflected your misconduct was intentional, willful, and indicated you were unfit for further service. The Board also noted that the evidence of record did not demonstrate that you were not mentally responsible for your conduct or that you should not otherwise be held accountable for your actions.

The Board noted that there is no provision of federal law or in Navy/Marine Corps regulations that allows for a discharge to be automatically upgraded after a specified number of months or years. Moreover, absent a material error or injustice, the Board generally will not summarily upgrade a discharge solely for the purpose of facilitating VA benefits, or enhancing educational or employment opportunities. Additionally, the Board noted that VA eligibility determinations for health care, disability compensation, and other VA-administered benefits are for internal VA purposes only. Such VA eligibility determinations, disability ratings, and/or discharge classifications are not binding on the Department of the Navy and have no bearing on previous active duty service discharge characterizations.

Lastly, the Board noted that marijuana use in any form is still against Department of Defense regulations and not permitted for recreational use while serving in the military. The Board carefully considered any matters submitted regarding your character, post-service conduct and accomplishments, however, even in light of the Wilkie Memo and reviewing the record

holistically, the Board still concluded that given the totality of the circumstances your request does not merit relief. Accordingly, the Board determined there was no impropriety or inequity in your discharge, and the Board concluded that your serious misconduct clearly merited your receipt of an OTH, and that such discharge was in accordance with all Department of the Navy directives and policy at the time of your discharge.

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,

5/1/2022

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Executive Director

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