



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: 3900-22
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 you did not file your application in a timely manner, the statute of limitations was waived in accordance with the 25 August 2017 guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (Kurta Memo). A three-member panel of the Board, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 7 September 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 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 an advisory opinion (AO) from a qualified mental health professional dated 13 July 2022. Although you were provided an opportunity to comment on the AO, you chose not to 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 entered active duty with the Marine Corps on 16 February 1999. On 16 December 1999, a special court-martial (SPCM) convicted you of three specifications of unauthorized absence (UA) totaling 75 days, disrespectful in language toward a non-commissioned officer (NCO), and two specifications of disobeying a lawful order. You were sentenced to reduction to E-1, confinement for 75 days, and a Bad Conduct Discharge (BCD). After the BCD was approved at all levels of review, on 10 January 2003, you were so discharged.

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 desire to upgrade your discharge and contentions that you were suffering from undiagnosed PTSD from childhood abuse that was exacerbated by your military service. 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 13 July 2022. The AO stated in pertinent part:

There is no evidence that he was diagnosed with a mental health condition in military service, or that he exhibited any psychological symptoms or behavioral changes indicative of a diagnosable mental health condition. Throughout his disciplinary processing, there were no concerns raised of a mental health condition that would have warranted a referral for evaluation. He has provided no medical evidence in support of his claims. Unfortunately, his personal statement is not sufficiently detailed to establish clinical symptoms or provide a nexus with his misconduct. Additional records (e.g., 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 there is insufficient evidence of a diagnosis of PTSD that may be attributed to military service. There is insufficient evidence his misconduct could be attributed to PTSD."

Based upon this review, the Board concluded these potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined your misconduct, as evidenced by your SPCM conviction, outweighed the potential mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct, the fact it included a lengthy period of unauthorized absence (UA), and that showed a complete disregard for military authority and regulations. Further, the Board also noted that there is no evidence in your record, and you submitted none, to support the allegation you were suffering from undiagnosed PTSD from childhood abuse. Therefore, the Board concurred with the AO that there is insufficient evidence that your misconduct could be attributed to PTSD. As a result, the Board concluded your conduct constituted a significant departure from that expected of a Marine and continues to warrant a BCD. 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 your case. 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, _____

9/13/2022

[REDACTED]

Executive Director

[REDACTED]