



**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: 6506-22

Ref: Signature date

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Dear Petitioner:

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to Title 10, United States Code, Section 1552. 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 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 application on 24 October 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, 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).

Regarding your request for a personal appearance, the Board determined that a personal appearance with or without counsel will not materially add to their understanding of the issue(s) 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 Marine Corps and began a period of active duty on 3 June 1976. On 31 January 1977, you began a period of unauthorized absence (UA) which lasted 25 days and resulted in nonjudicial punishment (NJP) on 7 March 1977. Between 8 March 1977 and 6 August 1977, you had two periods of UA totaling 156 days and resulting in your apprehension by civil authorities. On 12 October 1977, you were convicted by special court martial (SPCM) for the two period of UA. You were sentenced to a Bad Conduct Discharge (BCD), reduction to the rank of E-1, and confinement at hard labor. On 9 February 1978, your SPCM sentence was approved. On 6 July 1978, you were discharged with BCD by reason of conviction by SPCM.

On the same date, you were issue a Report of Separation from Active Duty (DD Form 214) which incorrectly reflects your character of service as Other Than Honorable vice BCD.

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 for a discharge upgrade and contentions that you decided to go UA as a result of family hardship, your request for a hardship discharge was denied, and that your wife threatened you with taking your kids away and never letting you see them again. For purposes of clemency consideration, the Board noted you did submitted five character letters of support but no supporting documentation describing post-service accomplishments.

Based upon this review, the Board concluded these potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined that your misconduct, as evidenced by your NJP and SPCM, outweighed these mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and the likely negative impact it had on the good order and discipline of your unit. The Board also 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. Additionally, absent a material error or injustice, the Board declined to summarily upgrade a discharge solely for the purpose of facilitating veterans' benefits, or enhancing educational or employment opportunities. Finally, the Board found no error or injustice with your SPCM conviction and determined that you were properly awarded a BCD based on the severity of your misconduct. As a result, the Board concluded your conduct constituted a significant departure from that expected of a Sailor and continues to warrant a BCD characterization. Even in light of the Wilkie Memo and reviewing the record holistically, 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 that your request does not merit relief.

You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon the 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,

11/3/2022

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Executive Director  
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