



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. 2900-23
Ref: Signature Date

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Dear ■

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 limitation 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 6 December 2023. 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 the advisory opinion (AO) furnished by a qualified mental health professional. Although you were afforded an opportunity to submit an AO rebuttal, 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 enlisted in the Navy and began a period of active duty on 9 May 1989. You subsequently completed this enlistment with an Honorable characterization of service on 29 July 1993 and

immediately reenlisted. On 23 August 1994, you received non-judicial punishment (NJP) for dereliction of duty. Additionally, you were formally counseled concerning deficiencies in your performance and conduct. You were advised that any further deficiencies in your performance and/or conduct may result in disciplinary action and in processing for administrative separation. On 22 September 1994, you received a second NJP for disrespect to a commissioned officer.

On 30 September 1994, you were notified that you were being recommended for administrative discharge from the Navy by reason of misconduct due to commission of a serious offense. You elected your procedural right to consult with military counsel. After consulting with counsel, you waived your right to present your case to an administrative discharge board. The commanding officer forwarded your administrative separation package to the separation authority (SA) recommending your administrative discharge from the Navy with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) characterization of service. The SA approved the recommendation for administrative discharge and directed your OTH discharge from the Navy by reason of misconduct due to commission of a serious offense. On 16 January 1995, 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 Kurta, Hagel, and Wilkie Memos. These included, but were not limited to, your desire to change your discharge character of service and contentions that: (1) your discharge status should be upgraded because during your service you were an overall good Sailor, (2) you were going through a mental hardship due to being away from your only child at the time your enlistment was to end and this caused you a lot of mental anguish, (3) you did not receive any assistance in dealing with your mental health, (4) you believe that your mental health issues affected your decisions that were made during your second tour, (5) due to your immaturity at the time you did not handle a lot of things the right way which you believe would have ended with a different outcome, and (6) you currently have PTSD and mental health issues that have impacted your everyday life, including your previous and current relationships. For purposes of clemency and equity consideration, the Board noted you provided a personal statement and health care documents but no 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 18 October 2023. The AO noted in pertinent part:

There is no evidence that the Petitioner was diagnosed with a mental health condition or suffered from PTSD while in military service, or that he exhibited any psychological symptoms or behavioral changes indicative of a diagnosable mental health condition. 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, "it is my considered clinical opinion there is insufficient evidence of a mental health condition that may be attributed to military service. There is insufficient evidence that his misconduct could be attributed to a mental health condition."

After thorough review, the Board concluded your potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined that your misconduct, as evidenced by your NJPs, outweighed these mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and concluded your misconduct showed a complete disregard for military authority and regulations. The Board also considered the likely negative impact your conduct had on the good order and discipline of your command. Further, the Board concurred with the AO that there is insufficient evidence of a mental health condition that may be attributed to military service, and there is insufficient evidence that your misconduct could be attributed to a mental health condition. As the AO explained, your personal statement is not sufficiently detailed to establish clinical symptoms or provide a nexus with your misconduct. There is no evidence that you were diagnosed with a mental health condition, suffered from PTSD while in military service, or that you exhibited any psychological symptoms or behavioral changes indicative of a diagnosable mental health condition. Therefore, the Board determined that the evidence of record did not demonstrate that you were not mentally responsible for your conduct or that you should otherwise not be held accountable for your actions. As a result, the Board concluded your conduct constituted a significant departure from that expected of a service member and continues to warrant an OTH characterization. While the Board carefully considered the evidence you submitted in mitigation, even in light of the Kurta, Hagel, and Wilkie Memos and reviewing the record liberally and holistically, the Board did not find evidence of an error or injustice that warrants granting you the relief you requested or granting relief as a matter of clemency or equity. Ultimately, the Board concluded the mitigation evidence you provided was insufficient to outweigh the seriousness of your misconduct. Accordingly, given the totality of the circumstances, the Board determined your request does not merit relief.

In reviewing your record, the Board believes that you may be eligible for veterans' benefits which accrued during your prior period of Honorable service. However, your eligibility is a matter under the cognizance of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In this regard, you should contact the nearest VA office concerning your rights, specifically, whether you are eligible for benefits based on your prior period of Honorable service.

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,

12/18/2023

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