

, ex-FN, USN

CURRENT DISCHARGE AND APPLICANT'S REQUEST

Application Received: 20130530

Characterization of Service Received: (per DD 214) UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS

Narrative Reason for Discharge: (per DD 214) MISCONDUCT (DRUG ABUSE)

Authority for Discharge: (per DD 214) MILPERSMAN 1910-146 [DRUG ABUSE]

Applicant's Request: Characterization change to: GENERAL (UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS)

Narrative Reason change to: NONE REQUESTED

SUMMARY OF SERVICE**Prior Service:**

Inactive: USNR (DEP) 20110302 - 20110809 COG Active: NONE

Pre-Service Drug Waiver: NO

Period of Service Under Review:

Date of Current Enlistment: 20110810

Age at Enlistment: 20

Period of Enlistment: 4 Years NO Extension

Date of Discharge: 20130204

Highest Rank/Rate: FN

Length of Service: 01 Year(s) 05 Month(s) 26 Day(s)

Education Level: 13

AFQT: 54

Evaluation Marks: Performance: 3.5 (2)

Behavior: 3.0 (2)

OTA: 3.25

Awards and Decorations (per DD 214): Pistol MM GWOTSM MUC NDSM NAVY "E"

Periods of UA: 20121127 - 20121205, 9 days

Periods of CONF: NONE

NJP: NONE SCM: NONE SPCM: NONE CC: NONE Retention Warning Counseling: NONE

TYPES OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED/REVIEWED**Related to Military Service:**DD 214: Service/Medical Record: Other Records: **Related to Post-Service Period:**Employment: Finances: Education/Training: Health/Medical Records: Rehabilitation/Treatment: Criminal Records: Personal Documentation: Community Service: References: Department of VA letter: Other Documentation:

Additional Statements:

From Applicant: From/To Representation: From/To Congress member: **PERTINENT REGULATION/LAW**

A. The Naval Military Personnel Manual, (NAVPERS 15560C), Change 29, effective 10 November 2009 until Present, Article 1910-146, SEPARATION BY REASON OF MISCONDUCT - DRUG ABUSE.

B. Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5420.174D of 22 December 2004, Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB) Procedures and Standards, Part II, Para 211, Regularity of Government Affairs, Part V, Para 502, Propriety and Para 503, Equity.

Key: NFIR - Not found in record RESTR - Restriction NJP - Nonjudicial punishment SCM - Summary court-martial
 SPCM - Special court-martial FOP - Forfeiture of pay RIR - Reduction in rank EPD - Extra duties
 CONF - Confinement CC - Civilian conviction CCU - Correctional Custody Unit CBW - Confinement on bread and water

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD (NDRB)
DISCHARGE REVIEW DECISIONAL DOCUMENT

APPLICANT'S ISSUES

1. The Applicant seeks an upgrade to receive service benefits.
2. The Applicant seeks an upgrade to enhance employment opportunities.
3. The Applicant contends he became depressed and suicidal when denied a new job and new orders and made the decision to get out of the Navy to provide stability for his wife and newborn child.

DECISION

Date: 20131114 DOCUMENTARY REVIEW Location: WASHINGTON D.C. Representation: NONE

By a vote of 5-0 the Characterization shall remain **UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS**.
By a vote of 5-0 the Narrative Reason shall remain **MISCONDUCT (DRUG ABUSE)**.

DISCUSSION

The NDRB, under its responsibility to examine the propriety and equity of an Applicant's discharge, is authorized to change the character of service and the reason for discharge if such change is warranted. In reviewing discharges, the Board presumes regularity in the conduct of governmental affairs unless there is substantial credible evidence to rebut the presumption, to include evidence submitted by the Applicant. The Board did complete a thorough review of the circumstances that led to his discharge and the discharge process to ensure his discharge met the pertinent standards of equity and propriety. The Applicant's record of service included no NAVPERS 1070/613 (Page 13) warnings and no misconduct resulting in nonjudicial punishment or court-martial. Upon returning from a period of unauthorized absence, the Applicant tested positive for THC. Based on the violation of the Navy's zero-tolerance drug policy, processing for administrative separation is mandatory. When notified of administrative separation processing using the administrative board procedure, the Applicant waived his rights to consult with a qualified counsel, submit a written statement, and request an administrative board.

Issue 1: (Nondecisional) The Applicant seeks an upgrade to receive service benefits. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determines eligibility for post-service benefits, not the NDRB. There is no requirement or law that grants recharacterization solely on the issue of obtaining veterans benefits, and this issue does not serve to provide a foundation upon which the Board can grant relief.

Issue 2: (Nondecisional) The Applicant seeks an upgrade to enhance employment opportunities. The NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing employment or educational opportunities. Regulations limit the NDRB's review to a determination of the propriety and equity of the discharge.

Issue 3: (Decisional) (Propriety/Equity) **RELIEF NOT WARRANTED**. The Applicant contends he became depressed and suicidal when denied a new job and new orders and made the decision to get out of the Navy to provide stability for his wife and newborn child. It is not standard for an E-3 going into E-4 to receive new orders and pursue a suitable job as the Applicant contends. Even if he was denied a promised position, it does not excuse his wrongful use of a controlled substance. The NDRB recognizes that serving in the military is challenging. Most servicemembers, however, serve honorably and therefore earn their Honorable or General discharges. In fairness to those servicemembers, commanders and separation authorities are tasked to ensure that undeserving Sailors receive no higher characterization than is due. Even after reviewing the Applicant's medical and service records, the NDRB determined the Applicant's personal and professional challenges were not mitigating factors in his misconduct. Violation of the Navy's zero-tolerance drug policy is one such offense requiring mandatory processing for administrative separation regardless of grade, performance, or time in service. This usually results in an unfavorable characterization of discharge or, at a maximum, a punitive discharge and possible confinement if adjudicated and awarded as part of a sentence by a special or general court-martial. The command did not pursue a punitive discharge but opted instead for the more lenient administrative discharge. The NDRB determined his discharge was warranted, proper, and equitable. Relief denied.

Summary: After a thorough review of the available evidence, to include the Applicant's summary of service, service record entries and discharge process, the Board found the discharge was proper and equitable. Therefore, the awarded characterization of service shall remain UNDER OTHER THAN HONORABLE CONDITIONS and the narrative reason for separation shall remain MISCONDUCT (DRUG ABUSE). The Applicant remains eligible for a personal appearance hearing for a period of fifteen years from the date of his discharge. The Applicant is directed to the Addendum for additional information.

ADDENDUM: Information for the Applicant

Complaint Procedures: If you believe the decision in your case is unclear, not responsive to the issues you raised, or does not otherwise comport with the decisional document requirements of DoD Instruction 1332.28, you may submit a complaint in accordance with Enclosure (5) of that Instruction to the Joint Service Review Activity, OUSD (P&R) PI-LP, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-4000. You should read Enclosure (5) of the Instruction before submitting such a complaint. The complaint procedure does not permit a challenge of the merits of the decision; it is designed solely to ensure that the decisional documents meet applicable requirements for clarity and responsiveness. You may view DoD Instruction 1332.28 and other Decisional Documents by going online at "<http://Boards.law.af.mil>."

Additional Reviews: After a document review has been conducted, former members are eligible for a personal appearance hearing, provided the application is received at the NDRB within 15 years of the Applicant's date of discharge. The Applicant can provide documentation to support any claims of post-service accomplishments or any additional evidence related to this discharge. Representation at a personal appearance hearing is recommended but not required. There are veterans organizations such as the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans that are willing to provide guidance to former service members in their efforts to obtain a discharge upgrade. If a former member has been discharged for more than 15 years, has already been granted a personal appearance hearing or has otherwise exhausted their opportunities before the NDRB, the Applicant may petition the Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR), 701 South Courthouse Road, Suite 1001, Arlington, VA 22204-2490 for further review.

Service Benefits: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determines eligibility for post-service benefits, not the NDRB. There is no requirement or law that grants recharacterization solely on the issue of obtaining veterans benefits and this issue does not serve to provide a foundation upon which the Board can grant relief.

Employment/Educational Opportunities: The NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing employment or educational opportunities. Regulations limit the NDRB's review to a determination of the propriety and equity of the discharge.

Reenlistment/RE-code: Since the NDRB has no jurisdiction over reenlistment, reentry, or reinstatement into the Navy, Marine Corps, or any other of the Armed Forces, the NDRB is not authorized to change a reenlistment code. Only the BCNR can make changes to reenlistment codes. Additionally, the NDRB has no authority to upgrade a discharge for the sole purpose of enhancing reenlistment opportunities. An unfavorable "RE" code is, in itself, not a bar to reenlistment. A request for a waiver can be submitted during the processing of a formal application for reenlistment through a recruiter.

Medical Conditions and Misconduct: DoD disability regulations do not preclude a disciplinary separation. Appropriate regulations stipulate that separations for misconduct take precedence over potential separations for other reasons. Whenever a member is being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board, and is processed subsequently for an administrative involuntary separation or is referred to a court martial for misconduct, the disability evaluation is suspended pending the outcome of the non-disability proceedings. If the action includes either a punitive or administrative discharge for misconduct or for any basis wherein an Other Than Honorable discharge is authorized, the medical board report is filed in the member's terminated health record. Additionally, the NDRB does not have the authority to change a narrative reason for separation to one indicating a medical disability or other medical related reasons. Only the BCNR can grant this type of narrative reason change.

Automatic Upgrades - There is no law or regulation that provides for an unfavorable discharge to be upgraded based solely on the passage of time or good conduct subsequent to leaving naval service.

Post-Service Conduct: The NDRB is authorized to consider post-service factors in the recharacterization of a discharge. Outstanding post-service conduct, to the extent such matters provide a basis for a more thorough understanding of the Applicant's performance and conduct during the period of service under review, is considered during Board reviews. Documentation to support a post-service conduct upgrade includes, but is not limited to: a verifiable continuous employment record; marriage and children's birth certificates (if applicable); character witness statements; documentation of community or church service; certification of non-involvement with civil authorities; evidence of financial stability or letters of good standing from banks, credit card companies, or other financial institutions; attendance at or completion of higher education (official transcripts); and documentation of a drug-free lifestyle. The Applicant is advised that completion of these items alone does not guarantee the upgrade of an unfavorable discharge, as each discharge is reviewed by the Board on a case-by-case basis to determine if post-service accomplishments help demonstrate in-service misconduct was an aberration and not indicative of the member's overall character.

Issues Concerning Bad-Conduct Discharges (BCD): Because relevant and material facts stated in a court-martial specification are presumed by the NDRB to be established facts, issues relating to the Applicant's innocence of charges for which he was found guilty cannot form a basis for relief. With respect to a discharge adjudged by a special court-martial, the action of the NDRB is restricted to upgrades based on clemency. Clemency is an act of leniency that reduces the severity of the punishment imposed. The NDRB does not have the jurisdictional authority to review a discharge or dismissal resulting from a general court-martial.

Board Membership: The names and votes of the members of the NDRB Board are recorded on the original of this document and may be obtained from the service records by writing to:

Secretary of the Navy Council of Review Boards
Attn: Naval Discharge Review Board
720 Kennon Street SE Rm 309
Washington Navy Yard DC 20374-5023