


**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS**

Application for Correction of
the Coast Guard Record of:

BCMR Docket No. 2025-070


Cadet (Former)

FINAL DECISION

This proceeding was conducted by the Board for Correction of Military Records of the Coast Guard (hereinafter “Board” or “BCMR”) under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. § 1552 and 14 U.S.C. § 2507. The Chair docketed the application on March 12, 2025, and assigned the case to a staff attorney to prepare the decision pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 52.61(c).

This final decision, dated October 30, 2025, is approved and signed by the three duly appointed members who were designated to serve as the Board in this case.

APPLICANT’S REQUEST AND ALLEGATIONS

The applicant, a former U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) Cadet, attended the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) as a SA (E-2) for one year prior to his entry into USCGA, and was issued a Certificate of Release from Active Duty (DD 214) reflecting his service. He subsequently entered USCGA, but was discharged from the Coast Guard before graduation and issued a separate DD 214 for his service as a Cadet. He claims that his service records from his time at NAPS are not contained within his records at the National Archives. He also claims that the DD 214 from his service as a USCGA Cadet inaccurately reflects his service from 1992-1994 instead of 1991-1994. He requests “to have [his] service records corrected and stored in all applicable repositories for such information.”

In support of his application, the applicant submitted copies of his two DD 214s, transcripts from the USCGA, his appointments to both NAPS and USCGA, an Honorable Discharge Certificate from the Coast Guard in 1991, and a letter the applicant sent to USCGA in 1998 requesting that his two periods of service into one DD 214.

SUMMARY OF THE RECORD

The applicant enlisted in the Coast Guard as a SA (E-2) on July 18, 1990 in order to attend NAPS in preparation for an appointment at USCGA. He completed this one-academic-year program on May 15, 1991, at which point he was honorably discharged from the Coast Guard and issued a DD 214.

The applicant was then appointed as a Cadet at USCGA. The record is inconsistent as to the date he began his active-duty service as a USCGA Cadet. A certificate of appointment signed by the Superintendent, USCGA, is dated May 13, 1991. The academic transcript provided by the applicant reflects a “Date Sworn In” as July 8, 1991. However, the subsequently-issued DD 214 for this period of service reflects a date of entry onto active duty of July 7, 1992.

The applicant appears, based on his transcript dated 1997, to have attended USCGA for three years from the fall of 1991 until the spring of 1994. His transcript also shows that he departed USCGA as a member of the class of 1996, but that he apparently did not graduate. The applicant’s letter from 1998 confirms that he did not graduate, and explains that he “reverted” during his third-class (sophomore) year, and therefore required to do a second third class year. This is consistent with his transcript, which shows that he departed after three years of study in 1994 with two years still remaining before his anticipated graduation in 1996. In short, it appears the applicant entered USCGA with the class of 1995, but became a member of the class of 1996 when he was required to repeat his third class year.

The applicant was discharged from the Coast Guard in 1994 without graduating from USCGA. He was issued a second DD 214 reflecting a period of service as a Cadet at USCGA from July 7, 1992 – May 16, 1994.

VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

In memoranda dated June 3, 2025, a Judge Advocate (JA) of the Coast Guard recommended that the Board deny the applicant’s requested relief in accordance with the recommendation of the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center (PSC). The Coast Guard argued that the Coast Guard had issued two DD 214s for two distinct periods of Coast Guard service and that the applicant’s service was “documented correctly.”

APPLICANT’S RESPONSE TO COAST GUARD’S VIEWS

On June 6, 2025, the Chair sent the applicant a copy of the Coast Guard’s views and invited him to respond within thirty days. As of the date of this Board hearing, no response has been received from the applicant.

APPLICABLE LAW AND POLICY

Under the Coast Guard’s current instruction for preparation and distribution of DD 214s, COMDTINST M1900.4E (April 2016), the “DD Form 214 provides an accurate and complete summation of active military personnel service. It is the authoritative source of personnel information for administrative purposes, and for making enlistment or reenlistment eligibility decisions.” Previous versions of the instruction – M1900.4, M1900.4A, M1900.4B, M1900.4C, and M1900.4D – include the same or similar language.

Per the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center’s related instruction, CGPSCINST 1900.1B (September 2018), “a DD-214 captures the current active duty period....”

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Board makes the following findings and conclusions based on the applicant’s military record and submissions, the Coast Guard’s submissions, and applicable law and policy:

1. The Board has jurisdiction concerning this matter pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 1552. The applicant has exhausted available administrative remedies, as required by 33 C.F.R. § 52.13(b), because there is no other currently available forum or procedure provided by the Coast Guard for correcting the alleged error or injustice that the applicant has not already pursued. The application is timely, as it was filed within three years of the applicant’s discovery of the alleged error or injustice, as required by 33 C.F.R. § 52.24(b).

2. When considering allegations of error and injustice, the Board begins its analysis by presuming that the disputed information in the applicant’s military record is correct as it appears in the military record, and the applicant bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the disputed information is erroneous or unjust.¹ Absent evidence to the contrary, the Board presumes that Coast Guard officials and other Government employees have carried out their duties “correctly, lawfully, and in good faith.”²

3. An application to the Board must be filed within three years after the applicant discovers the alleged error or injustice. The applicant received the records at issue in this case in 1994 and had identified potential errors within his record by 1998. He did not apply to this Board until September 16, 2024. However, because a cursory review of the application shows that relief is warranted, the Board excuses the applicant’s untimeliness in the interest of justice.

¹ 33 C.F.R. § 52.24(b).

² *Arens v. United States*, 969 F.2d 1034, 1037 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *Sanders v. United States*, 594 F.2d 804, 813 (Ct. Cl. 1979).

4. The Board first addresses the applicant's request that the records of his service at NAPS be stored in "applicable repositories for such information." This is not a request for correction of a Coast Guard record on the basis of error or injustice. The Coast Guard also does not address what documents exist within the applicant's record in their advisory opinion (AO). However, the AO also does not dispute the accuracy of the three documents provided by the applicant: the NAPS certificate of appointment, the Honorable Discharge Certificate, and the DD 214 reflecting a period of service from July 18, 1990 – May 15, 1991. In fact, the AO clearly states that this DD 214 correctly documents the applicant's service during this period. Therefore, the Coast Guard will place these three documents into the applicant's Coast Guard service record, consistent with existing Coast Guard regulations and policies.

5. The applicant next requests that the period of service on his second DD 214 (from 1994) be corrected to reflect the entirety of the time he served as a Cadet at USCGA. The Coast Guard's AO made a conclusory assertion that this DD 214 was also accurate, and further asserted that combining the two periods of service would be improper and inconsistent with Coast Guard policy. However, that is not the relief the applicant asked for. He asserts that the entry onto active duty reflected in Block 12.a. of his 1994 DD 214 is incorrect. The AO does not attempt to explain the obvious discrepancy between the records presented by the applicant. The USCGA certificate of appointment and USCGA transcript clearly show that the applicant began his studies in the fall of 1991, and was discharged in the summer of 1994. The Block 12.a. date of July 7, 1992 is inconsistent with both of those records.

6. To resolve this discrepancy, the Board first takes notice of the standard practice of admitting Cadets to the USCGA immediately following their successful completion of NAPS and receipt of a USCGA appointment. The Coast Guard states in the AO that the 1991 DD 214 was correct, meaning that the applicant was discharged after completing the one-year NAPS program and securing a USCGA appointment in May of 1991. Additionally, the Coast Guard does not dispute the accuracy of the applicant's transcript, showing a July 8, 1991 swearing-in, and completed course work in the fall 1991 and spring 1992 semesters. The Board finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the applicant began his period of active duty service at USCGA on July 8, 1991, which is the swear-in date listed on his transcript. Block 12.a. will be corrected to reflect that date. As a result, Block 12.b must also be corrected to show 2 years, 10 months, and 9 days of active service.

7. The Board further finds that Block 12.d. of the 1994 DD 214 also contains error. This section, entitled "Total Prior Active Service," should reflect the 9 months and 28 days of active-duty service the applicant performed at NAPS, as reflected in his 1991 DD 214. It appears that when the applicant separated from USCGA as third-class (sophomore)

Cadet and a member of the class of 1996, the preparer of his DD 214 erroneously assumed the applicant had entered USCGA from civilian life with no prior service in the summer of 1992, as the majority of the class of 1996 had likely done. However, the applicant had been “reverted” to the class of 1996 from the class of 1995, and had served nearly 10 months on active duty at NAPS. Therefore, his DD 214 should have reflected active duty service from 1991-1994, with an additional 9 months and 28 days of prior service.

8. The applicant’s request for relief is therefore granted on the basis of error, with the additional correction of Block 12.d.

(ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE)

ORDER

The application of former Cadet [REDACTED] is granted.

The Coast Guard will place the applicant's DD 214 (effective May 15, 1991), Naval Academy Preparatory School Appointment Certificate (dated May 28, 1990), and Honorable Discharge Certificate (Dated May 15, 1991) into his Coast Guard military record.

The Coast Guard will correct the applicant's DD 214 (dated May 16, 1994) as follows:

Block 12.a	91	07	08
Block 12.b	02	10	09
Block 12.d	00	09	28

The Coast Guard will effect the above correction by issuance of either a DD 215 or a new DD 214, consistent with Coast Guard policy and regulation.

October 30, 2025

