

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

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Application for Correction  
of Coast Guard Record of:

BCMR Docket  
No. 2000-138

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**FINAL DECISION**

████████ Chairman:

This is a proceeding under the provisions of section 1552 of title 10 and section 425 of title 14 of the United States Code. It was docketed on June 1, 2000, upon the BCMR's receipt of the applicant's complete request for correction.

This final decision, dated April 19, 2001, is signed by the three duly appointed members who were designated to serve as the Board in this case.

**RELIEF REQUESTED**

The applicant served in the active duty Coast Guard from December 7, 1987 to December 6, 1989, and in the Coast Guard Reserve from December 7, 1989, to December 6, 1991. He alleged that he "served for 4 years" in the Coast Guard and argued that he is therefore entitled to the good conduct medal and the National Defense Medal (emphasis in original).

The applicant also alleged that he never received his "official Honorable discharge papers" from the Coast Guard.

**AWARD ELIGIBILITY**

The Chief of the Office of Military Justice (OMJ) was asked by the Office of Military Personnel to assess the eligibility of the applicant for the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Medal.

OMJ said there are separate Good Conduct medals for the active-duty Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve. The active-duty Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal is awarded for three years of active duty continuous honorable service. The Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal is awarded to members of the Reserve who have "at least three consecutive satisfactory drilling years."

OMJ recommended that the applicant be denied the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal because he served only two years on active duty. OMJ also said that the applicant is ineligible for a Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal because he failed

to have three consecutive drilling years.

The National Defense Service Medal (NDSM) is awarded for active service at particular times of national defense need. (1950-1954; 1960-1974; and 1990-1995). OMJ recommended that the applicant be awarded the NDSM because he had a satisfactory drilling year in one of the national defense years, 1991.

### VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

On November 21, 2000, the Chief Counsel of the Coast Guard issued the Coast Guard's advisory opinion on this case. He recommended that the Board grant partial relief to the applicant.

The applicant asserted that he never received his "official honorable discharge papers" from the Coast Guard, but he made no effort to define that phrase. The Chief Counsel concluded that the applicant is referring to a DD-214, which provides a member with an official record of his period of service with an armed service.

According to the Chief Counsel, the applicant received a DD-214 after completion of his active duty period. He did not receive one after inactive service in the Reserve because he was not entitled to one for the period of his reserve service. The DD-214, for example, will not be issued to members "who are reservists released from active duty for training (ADT) less than 90 days."

The Chief Counsel said that the applicant has failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that he was eligible to receive the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal or the Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal.

An enlisted member is entitled to the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal or the Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal if he has completed three years of honorable service on an active or inactive basis. Article 9.A., Medal and Awards Manual. The applicant is not eligible for either because he only served two years of continuous active duty in the Coast Guard and two years in the inactive Coast Guard Reserve.

The applicant sought to add two years active-duty and two years inactive-duty together to result in four years Coast Guard service. The Chief Counsel said combinations of credits are not permitted by regulation. Article 5.B.1.h.(b) of the Medals and Awards Manual provides that "active duty time credited toward the award of the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal may not be credited toward the award of the Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal." See also Article 5.B.1.b.(a), Medals and Awards Manual.

The Chief Counsel came to a different conclusion with respect to the applicant's eligibility for the National Defense Medal. He recommended that that award be granted to the applicant. This award is made to any member of the armed services who served on active duty during a designated period (1950-1954; 1960-1974; and 1990-1995). The Chief Counsel recommended that the applicant be awarded the National

Defense Medal because he earned a satisfactory drilling year in the Reserve, between December 7, 1990 and December 6, 1991.

#### APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO COAST GUARD'S VIEWS

On November 27, 2000, the Board sent the applicant a copy of the views of the Coast Guard's views and invited him to respond with any comments.

No response was received by the Board.

#### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Board makes the following findings and conclusions on the basis of the submissions of the applicant and the Coast Guard, the applicant's military record, and applicable law:

1. The Board has jurisdiction of the case pursuant to section 1552 of title 10, United States Code. The application is timely.

2. The applicant received a DD-214 after he completed active duty in the Coast Guard. He was not, however, entitled to a DD-214 for the time period he served in the Reserve.

3. The applicant was not eligible for a Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal because he served only two years in the active duty Coast Guard and the prerequisite for this medal was three years active duty.

4. The Coast Guard did not commit an error or injustice in failing to grant the applicant a Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal, or a Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal.

5. The Coast Guard did commit an error in failing to award the applicant a National Defense Medal.

6. The applicant's two years on active duty and two years on inactive duty cannot be combined to give him four years of Coast Guard service and make him eligible for one of the good conduct medals. See Article 5.B.1.b.(b), Medals and Award Manual.

7. Accordingly, the applicant's request for correction should be granted in part and denied in part.

[ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

ORDER

The application of [REDACTED] USCG, for correction of his military record shall be corrected to show that he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal for his service in the Reserve in 1991. All other requests for relief by the applicant are denied.

