


DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

Application for the Correction of
the Coast Guard Record of:

BCMR Docket No. 2024-182


SN (former)

FINAL DECISION

This proceeding was conducted according to the provisions of 10 U.S.C. § 1552 and 14 U.S.C. § 2507. The Chair docketed the case after receiving the applicant's completed application on August 28, 2024, and this decision of the Board was prepared pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 52.61(c).

This final decision, dated June XX, 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 Electronics Technician, second class (ET2) who was discharged in 1967, asked the Board to correct his to correct his DD 214¹ to show that he received the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon, Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Sea Service Commemorative Ribbon.² He alleged that he is eligible to receive the Restricted Duty Ribbon and the Sea Service Commemorative Ribbon because he served aboard the USCG Lightship Nantucket. He alleged that he is eligible for the Overseas Service Ribbon because he served at the Long Range Aid to Navigation Station (LORSTA) in Hokkaido, Japan. The applicant stated that over the past couple of years, these medals have been added to the list of medals and awards and

¹ The DD Form 214 provides the member and the service with a concise record of a period of service with the Armed Forces at the time of the member's separation, discharge or change in military status (reserve/active duty). In addition, the form is an authoritative source of information for both governmental agencies and the Armed Forces for purposes of employment, benefit and reenlistment eligibility, respectively. The DD Form 214 is issued to members who change their military status among active duty, reserve, or retired components or are separated/discharged from the Coast Guard to a civilian status. COMDTINST M1900.4D.

² The Board presumes that the applicant is referring to the Sea Service Ribbon, because the medals and awards manual does not include a Sea Service Commemorative Ribbon.

argued that at least one of them is retroactive. He stated that although he might not wear them on a uniform again, he “would like [my] records to reflect the right to do so.”

In support of his application to the Board, the applicant submitted a copy of his DD 214 (summarized below) and a copy of his assignment sheet listing the places he served during his nearly four years of service in the Coast Guard.

The applicant stated that he discovered the alleged errors in his record on September 29, 2020, and argued that the Board should waive the three-year statute of limitations and consider his request because “completeness of records and honor of service.”

SUMMARY OF THE RECORD

The applicant served on active duty in the Coast Guard from June 4, 1963, to June 2, 1967. His service abstract shows that he served aboard the Lightship Nantucket (WLV-534)³ from, April 1, 1964 to January 19, 1966, and was assigned to LORSTA Hokkaido from March 22, 1966 to April 23, 1967.

The applicant’s DD 214 shows that he received an honorable discharge on June 2, 1967, and received the following medals during his enlistment:

National Defense Service Medal
Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal

VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

On May 8, 2025, a judge advocate (JA) of the Coast Guard submitted an advisory opinion in which he recommended that the Board grant partial relief in this case. In doing so, he adopted the findings and analysis provided in a memorandum prepared by the Personnel Service Center (PSC).

PSC recommended that the Board grant partial relief because the applicant is eligible to receive two of three medals that he asked for. PSC argued that he is eligible to receive the Sea Service Ribbon because he served on the Lightship Nantucket for 1 year, 9 months, and 19 days, and is eligible to receive the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon because he served at LORSTA Hokkaido from March 22, 1966 to March 24, 1967. PSC noted that Enclosure (18) to the Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual lists this station as eligible for the Restricted Duty Ribbon.

PSC recommended that the applicant’s request for the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon be denied, arguing that the Medals manual states that the Restricted Duty Ribbon and the Overseas Service Ribbon cannot be awarded for the same period of service.

³ The United States lightship Nantucket is a National Historic Landmark lightship that served at the Lightship Nantucket position. She is 148 ft long, has a beam of 32 ft, and a 16 ft draft. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_lightship_Nantucket_\(LV-112\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_lightship_Nantucket_(LV-112)) (Last visited on June 5, 2025).

APPLICABLE LAW AND REGULATIONS

COMDTINST M1900.4D contains the Commandant's instructions for completing the DD 214, and Chapter 1.D.2 provides that it must be accurate as of the date of separation. Chapter 1.E of the instruction states that the DD 214 should show "all decorations, medals, badges, commendations, citations, and campaign ribbons awarded or authorized for all periods of service."

Chapter 5.A.19 of the Awards Manual states that the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon is awarded to active and inactive duty members of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve or non-Coast Guard personnel who, under temporary or permanent assignment, satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 months cumulative sea duty. For the purposes of the award, sea duty is defined as duty performed aboard any commissioned Coast Guard cutter 65 feet or more in length.

Chapter 5.A.20 of the Manual states that the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon may be awarded to Coast Guard personnel who have completed a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) tour of duty at a shore unit listed in enclosure (18). Units established at or in support of contingency operations are ineligible; similarly, units eligible for campaign or expeditionary medals are excluded. Coast Guard personnel are not eligible to receive this ribbon are not eligible to receive the Overseas Service Ribbon for the same period. Enclosure (18) to the Manual shows that LORSTA Hokkaido is eligible for the ribbon. Paragraph d states that the ribbon may be awarded retroactively.

Chapter 5.A.21 of the Manual states that the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon was established and approved on October 28, 2009. It states that the award is available to active-duty members of the Coast Guard on a permanent assignment and who successfully complete a tour of duty of at least 12 months at an overseas shore-based duty station or aboard a cutter permanently assigned to an overseas area. It states that overseas is defined as duty outside the United States, and that U.S. territories at shore-based commands and Coast Guard Cutters permanently assigned to an overseas area are eligible assignments for this award. Overseas is defined as duty outside the United States.

APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

On May 28, 2025, the BCMR sent the applicant a copy of the Coast Guard's recommendation and invited him to submit a response. The applicant responded on June 2, 2025, and agreed with the Coast Guard's recommendations

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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

1. The Board has jurisdiction over this matter under 10 U.S.C. § 1552(a) because the applicant is requesting correction of an alleged error or injustice in his Coast Guard military record. The Board finds that he has exhausted his 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.

2. An application to the Board must be filed within three years after the applicant discovers the alleged error or injustice.⁴ The applicant was discharged in 1967 and did not explain when he discovered the alleged errors nor did he explain why he waited more than 53 years to submit his application. To determine whether his application is timely, the Board must decide what the preponderance of the evidence shows about his discovery of the alleged error.⁵

3. The preponderance of the evidence shows that his application is untimely because nothing prevented the applicant from discovering the alleged errors shortly after his discharge. However, the Coast Guard and the Board have identified errors in his record that should be corrected, so the Board will waive the statute of limitations.

4. The applicant asked that his record be corrected to show that he received three medals for his overseas service. 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 his record, and the applicant bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the disputed information is erroneous or unjust.⁶ 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."⁷

5. The Board finds that the applicant is eligible to receive the Restricted Duty Ribbon because he served at LORSTA Hokkaido from March 22, 1966 to March 24, 1967, and Enclosure (18) to the Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual lists this station as eligible for the Restricted Duty Ribbon.

6. The Board finds that the applicant is not eligible to receive the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon. His record shows that he served at a LORSTA in Japan, but Chapter 5.A.21 of the Medals and Awards Manual states that the Overseas Service Ribbon and the Restricted Duty Ribbon cannot be awarded for the same period of service. As noted in Finding No. 5 above, the Board is already correcting his record to show that he received the Restricted Duty Ribbon and there is nothing in his record to show that he served another period of overseas service for which he could earn the ribbon.

7. The Board finds that the applicant is eligible to receive the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon. The record shows that he served aboard a 148 foot long lightship and accumulated more than 12 months of sea duty, and the awards manual states that the ribbon is awarded to members who satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 months cumulative sea duty aboard any commissioned Coast Guard cutter 65 feet or more in length.

⁴ 10 U.S.C. § 1552(b) and 33 C.F.R. § 52.22.

⁵ *Wielkoszewski v. Harvey*, 398 F.Supp.2d 102, 109 (D.D.C. 2005) ("The Court recognizes that *McFarlane* counsels that the date of discovery should be the actual date, and not the date at which a hypothetical "reasonable person" would have discovered the error or injustice. *McFarlane v. Sec'y of the Air Force*, 867 F.Supp. 405, 412 (E.D.Va.1994). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the actual date of discovery is whenever a plaintiff says it is.")

⁶ 33 C.F.R. § 52.24(b).

⁷ *Arens v. United States*, 969 F.2d 1034, 1037 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *Sanders v. United States*, 594 F.2d 804, 813 (Ct. Cl. 1979).

8. The applicant has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that his DD 214 is missing two medals that he is eligible to receive. Accordingly, the Board should order the Coast Guard to issue him a DD 215⁸ correcting his DD 214 to show that he received the Sea Service Ribbon and the Restricted Duty Ribbon. All other requests should be denied.

[ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE]

⁸ A DD 215 is used to correct or add information to a DD 214.

ORDER

The application of former ET2 [REDACTED], USCG, for correction of his military record is granted in part. The Coast Guard shall prepare and send him a DD 215 correcting his record to show that he earned the Restricted Duty Ribbon for his service at LORSTA Hokkaido from March 22, 1966 to April 23, 1967 and the Sea Service Ribbon for his service about the Lightship Nantucket from April 1, 1964 to January 19, 1966. All other requests are denied.

June 26, 2025

