


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

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Application for the Correction of  
the Coast Guard Record of:

**BCMR Docket No. 2024-189**

  
RD3 (former)

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**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 September 10, 2024, and this decision of the Board was prepared pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 52.61(c).

This final decision, dated August 13, 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 Radarman, Third Class (RD3/E-4), who was honorably discharged from the Coast Guard on September 6, 1968, has asked the Board to correct his DD Form 214 (Certificate of Discharge or Release from Active Duty) (hereinafter "DD 214") to show that he received certain medals and other awards. Specifically, he requested that his DD 214 reflect the following:

- Combat Action Ribbon;
- Navy Unit Commendation with two stars;
- Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation with two stars;
- National Defense Service Medal;
- Vietnam Campaign Medal with 4 stars;
- Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon;
- Vietnamese Gallantry Cross Medal with Palm;
- Vietnamese Civil Action Ribbon with Palm;
- Vietnamese Service Medal; and
- Cold War Medal/Ribbon/Certificate.

The applicant requested that he be sent all of the medals and ribbons with the appropriate clasps for presentation, and that he be issued an “updated original” of his DD 214. The applicant explained that although he was discharged many years ago, many of the awards in question had been issued after his discharge, and he had only recently found out about them.

In support of his requests, the applicant submitted a copy of his DD 214 and a printout on his own letterhead listing awards and medals earned by those serving on the Coast Guard Cutter (CGC) Androscoggin during its Vietnam deployment from 1967 to 1968.

### SUMMARY OF THE RECORD

The applicant served on active duty in the Coast Guard from November 10, 1964, to September 6, 1968.

The available portions of the applicant’s personnel records show he completed approximately two years and one month of sea duty aboard the CGC Androscoggin, with the period from December 18, 1967, to July 16, 1968, being in Southeast Asia in the waters of Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

The applicant’s DD 214 shows that he received the following medals during his enlistment:

- Good Conduct Medal;
- Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze star;
- National Defense Service Medal; and
- Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal ribbon bar with device (60-).

### VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

In memoranda prepared in March and April 2025, the Coast Guard recommended that the Board grant partial relief in this case. Upon its own review of available records, the Coast Guard determined that the applicant was eligible for the Navy Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation with two stars, the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and the Vietnamese Civil Action Ribbon with Palm.

With respect to the Vietnam Service Medal, the Coast Guard stated that while this medal was listed on the applicant’s DD 214 with one bronze star, it should be updated to denote four bronze stars for participation in four separate campaigns.

Regarding the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Coast Guard asserted that there were no records listing the CGC Androscoggin as a recipient, and so relief should be denied.

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<sup>1</sup> The CGC Androscoggin, a 255-foot High Endurance Cutter, was assigned to Coast Guard Squadron Three in Vietnam from December 4, 1967, to August 4, 1968, during which it participated in combat operations. See <https://www.history.uscg.mil/Browse-byTopic/Assets/Water/All/Article/2150538/androscoggin-1946-wpgwhec-68/> (accessed August 6, 2025). During this period, Squadron Three was under the operational control of the U.S. Navy. See “USCG in Vietnam Chronology,” *Coast Guard History Program*, Coast Guard Historian’s Office, p.1.

Regarding the Cold War Certificate, the Coast Guard stated that this award is managed by the U.S. Army, and the applicant should be encouraged to submit an application to the appropriate Army authority.

Finally, the Coast Guard noted that the National Defense Service Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with the 1960 device were already reflected on the applicant's DD 214. As such, the Coast Guard asserted that relief was not warranted with respect to these awards.

### **APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD**

On April 25, 2024, the Board sent the applicant a copy of the Coast Guard's submission and invited him to submit a response within 30 days. The applicant did not submit a response.

### **APPLICABLE LAW AND REGULATIONS**

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

The controlling Coast Guard policy is contained in Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual, COMDTINST M1650.25E (August 2016) (hereinafter "Awards Manual").

Per Awards Manual § 2.A.16, the Coast Guard Combat Action Ribbon was authorized by the Commandant in July 2008 and is retroactive to May 1, 1975. Prior to that date, per Enclosure (2) of the Awards Manual, the Navy Combat Action Ribbon was awarded based on participation in various operations, including "Southeast Asia – 01 March 1961 to 15 August 1973." Eligible Units include CGC Androscoggin from February 29, 1968, to March 1, 1968.

Per Awards Manual Enclosure (6), the Navy Unit Commendation was awarded to the CGC Androscoggin for three separate service periods: December 17 to December 31, 1967; February 14 to March 6, 1968; and March 14 to March 31, 1968. The Awards Manual also incorporates the criteria specified in SECNAVINST 1650.1 (series), the Navy's policy regarding issuance of awards. Tab 2 of SECNAVINST 1650.1 (series) provides that each Navy Unit Commendation after the first is denoted by a bronze star on the ribbon.

Awards Manual § 3.B.5. provides that the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded for conduct that was meritorious but that did not meet the criteria for a Navy Unit Commendation.

Per Awards Manual § 5.A.19., the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon is awarded to members who complete a minimum of 12 months of cumulative sea duty on a Coast Guard cutter 65 feet or more in length.

Awards Manual Enclosure (16) indicates that the Vietnam Service Medal was awarded to members serving on the CGC Androscoggin between December 17, 1967, and July 16, 1968. The award was issued with one bronze star, with an additional star awarded for each subsequent campaign. The campaigns included:

- V - 01 June 1967 to 29 January 1968 - Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase III
- VI - 30 January 1968 to 01 April 1968 - TET Counteroffensive
- VII - 02 April 1968 to 30 June 1968 - Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase IV
- VIII - 01 July 1968 to 01 November 1968 - Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase V

Also per Awards Manual Enclosure (16), the Gallantry Cross Medal Unit Citation with Palm was issued to Naval Forces Vietnam and all subordinate units serving from February 8, 1962, to March 28, 1973. In addition, the Civil Actions Medal First Class Color with Palm was issued to all such units serving from January 1, 1965, and March 28, 1973.

### 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, but the Board may excuse the untimeliness of an application if it is in the interest of justice to do so.<sup>2</sup> The applicant was discharged in 1968 and did not apply to the Board until 2022. He has explained, however, that some of the medals and other awards in question were not authorized until after he was discharged, and he only became aware of them recently. In addition, as discussed below, the Board has determined that the applicant was awarded or is eligible for certain awards not reflected on his DD 214. Under these circumstances, the Board has determined that the interests of justice warrant a waiver of the statute of limitations in this case.

3. Upon its independent review of the record and Coast Guard policies, the Board concurs with the Coast Guard's recommendation to grant partial relief in this case.

4. 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.<sup>3</sup> Absent evidence to the contrary, the Board

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<sup>2</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 1552(b); 33 C.F.R. § 52.22.

<sup>3</sup> 33 C.F.R. § 52.24(b).

presumes that Coast Guard officials and other Government employees have carried out their duties “correctly, lawfully, and in good faith.”<sup>4</sup>

5. The Board initially notes that the applicant’s receipt of the National Defense Service Medal and Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 device are already reflected on his DD 214. Thus, the application is moot with respect to these awards and will not be addressed by the Board.<sup>5</sup>

6. The Board makes the following findings with respect to the remaining medals and awards requested by the applicant:

- a. Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon. The applicant served aboard a 255-foot high endurance cutter and accumulated more than 12 months of sea duty. Accordingly, pursuant to Awards Manual § 5.A.19., the applicant is eligible for the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon.
- b. Navy Unit Commendation. Per the Awards Manual, Enclosure (6), the Navy Unit Commendation was awarded to the CGC Androscoggin for service from December 17 to December 31, 1967, February 14 to March 6, 1968, and March 14 to March 31, 1968. The applicant served on the cutter during all three periods. Thus, his records should reflect the Navy Unit Commendation with two bronze stars.
- c. Navy Combat Action Ribbon. Per the Awards Manual, Enclosure (2), members serving on the CGC Androscoggin between February 29, 1968, and March 1, 1968, were awarded the Combat Action Ribbon. Because this pre-dates the retroactivity of the Coast Guard’s Combat Action Ribbon to May 1975, the applicant’s records should reflect an award of the Navy Combat Action Ribbon.
- d. Vietnam Service Medal. The applicant’s DD 214 reflects a Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze star. Per the Coast Guard Historian’s Office, however, the CGC Androscoggin was stationed in Vietnam from December 1967 to at least mid-July 1968. Pursuant to Enclosure (16) of the Awards Manual, this period spans four eligible campaigns (V, VI, VII, and VIII). Because the award was issued with one bronze star for the first campaign, and an additional star for each subsequent campaign, the applicant’s records should reflect the award of the Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze stars.

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<sup>4</sup> *Arens v. United States*, 969 F.2d 1034, 1037 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *Sanders v. United States*, 594 F.2d 804, 813 (Ct. Cl. 1979).

<sup>5</sup> The Board briefly notes that on his application form, the applicant listed the “Vietnam Campaign Medal with 4 Stars.” A review of the relevant policy, however, indicates that the medal in question was issued with a device based on a member’s service in either the first or second period of the Vietnam War. The policy contains no suggestion, nor has the applicant provided evidence, that stars are authorized for this award. See Awards Manual § 6.A.2.

- e. Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. Per the Awards Manual, Enclosure (16), the Vietnam Gallantry Cross Medal Unit Citation with Palm was awarded to Naval Forces Vietnam and all subordinate units with service from February 8, 1962, to March 28, 1973. The applicant served during this period in Squadron Three, a combat unit under the authority of the U.S. Navy. As such, the award should be reflected in his records.
- f. Vietnamese Civil Action Ribbon with Palm. Per the Awards Manual, Enclosure (16), the Civil Actions Medal First Class Color with Palm was issued for service from January 1, 1965, and March 28, 1973. The applicant had qualifying service, and so the award should be reflected in his records.
- g. Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation. The Awards Manual does not indicate, and the applicant has not provided evidence, indicating that the CGC Androscoggin was awarded the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation. This is consistent with Awards Manual § 3.B.5., which indicates the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded to units for conduct that was meritorious but that was not sufficient to justify the award of the Navy Unit Commendation. Because the applicant's unit *did* receive the latter award, it follows that the unit would not have also been awarded the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation for the same period of service. Accordingly, the request for the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation will be denied.
- h. Cold War Medal/Ribbon/Certificate. There is no indication of a Cold War-related award in the Coast Guard's Awards Manual. It appears likely that the applicant is referring to a certificate administered by the U.S. Army. Section 1084 of the 1998 National Defense Authorization Act required the Secretary of Defense to prepare a certificate recognizing Cold War service of all qualifying members of the Armed Forces and provide the certificate to such members and civilian personnel upon request. The Coast Guard provided information on applying for this certificate via the Army Human Resources Command in its advisory opinion in response to the application. Application instructions are also available online.<sup>6</sup> Because Coast Guard policy does not include provisions for this award, the applicant's request that it be reflected in his Coast Guard records will be denied.

7. In addition to corrections to his DD 214, the applicant has requested that the awards, medals, and ribbons he serve be sent to him. The Coast Guard will be directed to provide the awards to the applicant to the extent possible and consistent with policy. To the extent the applicant must take additional actions – such as submission of Standard Form 180 (Request Pertaining to Military Records) to the Coast Guard Personnel Services Center or the National Archives and Records Administration – the Coast Guard will be directed to provide the applicant guidance.

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Cold%20War%20Recognition%20Certificate%20Program%20Overview> (accessed August 6, 2025).

8. The applicant has requested an “updated original” of his DD 214, while the Coast Guard has recommended issuance of a DD Form 215 (Correction to DD Form 214) (hereinafter “DD 215”). According to a Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) issued in February 2022, corrections to a DD 214 should be made by reissuing the DD 214 in all cases beginning in February 2025.<sup>7</sup> A DD 215 may be issued in lieu of reissuance of a DD 214 only for DD 214s that were never issued electronically.<sup>8</sup> It is unclear to the Board based on the current record whether the applicant’s DD 214 has been or can be issued electronically. Accordingly, the Board will direct the Coast Guard to correct the DD 214 in accordance with policy.

**[ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE]**

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<sup>7</sup> DoDI 1336.01 §§ 3.2.a.(4)(c); 3.2.c.(3)(a).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

**ORDER**

The application of former RD3 [REDACTED] for correction of his military record is granted in part and denied in part. The Coast Guard shall correct the applicant's records to reflect that he received the following awards – in addition to those currently reflected on the DD 214 – during his Coast Guard service:

- Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon;
- Navy Unit Commendation with two bronze stars;
- Navy Combat Action Ribbon;
- Vietnam Service Medal with four stars;
- Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm; and
- Vietnam Civil Action Ribbon First Class Color with Palm.

If in accord with policy, the Coast Guard shall correct the DD 214 by reissuing a DD 214. In the alternative, the Coast Guard may issue a DD 215.

The applicant's requests for the National Defense Service Medal and Vietnam Campaign Medal are denied as moot.

The applicant's request for the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation is denied.

The applicant's request for the Cold War Certificate is denied. The applicant is encouraged to apply to the appropriate U.S. Army authority as discussed above.

August 13, 2025

