


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

Application for the Correction of
the Coast Guard Record of:

BCMR Docket No. 2024-219


LCDR (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 May 15, 2024, and this decision of the Board was prepared pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 52.61(c).

This final decision, dated September 11, 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 Lieutenant Commander (LCDR O-4) in the Coast Guard Reserves, requests that he be awarded the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal and the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon for overseas service performed during two consecutive and continuous periods of active-duty service. The first period was from September 16, 1968 to January 23, 1969, during which he served as an enlisted member. The second period was from January 24, 1969 to November 22, 1971, during which he served as a commissioned officer.

Regarding the Good Conduct Medal, the applicant stated he had at least three years of honorable and faithful active duty service. Regarding the Overseas Service Ribbon, applicant claims he is entitled as a result of "overseas service at USCG Loran Station Batan and USCG Loran Station Iwo Jima."

SUMMARY OF THE RECORD

The applicant enlisted in the September 16, 1968. He soon offered a commission, and was released from active duty to be appointed as an ensign after serving 4 months and 11 days in an enlisted status on January 23, 1969.

During the applicant's commissioned service, his record indicates that he completed more than one year (total) of overseas service about LORAN stations Batan and Iwo Jima between 1970 and 1971.

The applicant was honorably discharged from active duty on November 22, 1971.

VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

A Judge Advocate (JA) of the Coast Guard on April 9, 2025 prepared a memorandum dated April 9, 2025 wherein he recommended the board grant alternate relief, in accordance with the recommendation of the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center.

The Coast Guard agreed that the applicant's service aboard LORAN stations Batan and Iwo Jima qualify him for an additional award. However, it argued that applicant qualified for the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon, which is higher in precedence than the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon. The Coast Guard disagreed that the applicant was entitled to a Good Conduct Medal. Service as an officer does not count toward the time in service requirements for this award, and the applicant's discharge did not fall under applicable exceptions to the four-year continuous service requirement for the award.

APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD

On April 24, 2025, 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 § 1.D.2 provides that the DD 214 must be accurate as of the date of separation. Section 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."

Eligibility criteria for various awards (including historical awards) is provided in the *Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual*, COMDTINST M1650.25E (August 2016) (hereinafter "*Awards Manual*").

Per *Awards Manual* § 5.A.20, the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon is "[a]warded to Coast Guard personnel who have completed a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) tour of duty at a shore unit listed in enclosure (18)." Both LORSTAs Batan and Iwo Jima are listed in the enclosure.

Per *Awards Manual* § 5.A.21., the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon is awarded to "members who complete a tour of duty of at least 12 months at an overseas shore based duty station

or on-board a Cutter permanently assigned to an overseas area.” Additionally, personnel who “receive or are eligible to receive the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon or an award for similar service from another branch of the Armed Forces are not eligible to receive the Coast Guard Overseas Service Ribbon for the same period.”

Table 1-1 of the *Awards Manual* shows the Restricted Duty Ribbon as higher in the order of precedence than the Overseas Service Ribbon.

Per *Awards Manual* § 5.A.1.a., the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal is awarded for “satisfactory service which is defined as proficiency in rating, sobriety, obedience, industry, courage, and neatness throughout such period of service.” *Awards Manual* Enclosure (11) details the award’s requirements for various service periods. In relevant part, for the period from November 1, 1963, to December 31, 1979, four years of active duty under honorable conditions with marks of 3.0 or higher were required. This requirement was waived for “persons serving in their first enlistment who meet the requirements for a Good Conduct Medal, except for 3 months or less of completing a 4-year period of continuous active duty” for certain early discharges. *Awards Manual* § 5.A.1.a.(1) provides that “[o]nly enlisted service counts toward the required service for initial and subsequent awards of the Good Conduct Medal.”

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. The applicant declined a hearing before the Board and requested that his application be decided based on the evidence and record.

3. An application is untimely if not submitted to the Board within three years after the applicant discovered the alleged error or injustice underlying the application, but the Board may excuse untimeliness if it is in the interests of justice to do so.¹ The applicant separated from this period of active Coast Guard duty in 1971 and did not apply to the Board until 2024. He offers no explanation for the delay of more than fifty years in making his application. However, a cursory review of his records shows that they contain error, and the Coast Guard concurred in granting at least partial relief. After consideration of these circumstances, the Board finds that waiver of the statute of limitations will serve the interests of justice 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

¹ 10 U.S.C. § 1552(b); 33 C.F.R. § 52.22.

that the disputed information is erroneous or unjust.² 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.”³

5. The Board concurs with the Coast Guard’s recommendations in this case. The applicant’s record does not show – nor does he allege – that he served more than about four months as an enlisted Coast Guardsmen on active duty. Although he did serve a total of more than four years, the bulk of that time was as a commissioned officer. Service as an officer does not qualify for award of the Good Conduct Medal, and the applicant’s enlisted time alone does not qualify for the award, either by the rule or any of its exceptions.

6. The Board also concurs with the Coast Guard’s recommendation to award the applicant the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon. The applicant’s record of qualifying service is clear. While the Board notes that the applicant’s request is only for the lower Overseas Service Ribbon, we attribute that to his lack of knowledge of the specific requirements for each Coast Guard award. We presume that he would prefer the higher award, but the applicant is invited to request a technical correction to our order if this is not the case.

[ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE]

² 33 C.F.R. § 52.24(b).

³ *Arens v. United States*, 969 F.2d 1034, 1037 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *Sanders v. United States*, 594 F.2d 804, 813 (Ct. Cl. 1979).

ORDER

The application of former LCDR [REDACTED] is granted in part and denied in part.

The Coast Guard shall correct the applicant's records to reflect receipt of the Coast Guard Restricted Duty Ribbon.

The request related to the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal is denied.

September 11, 2025

