

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

---

Application for Correction of  
the Coast Guard Record of:

**BCMR Docket No. 2024-221**

██████████ ██████████  
BM3 (former)

---

**FINAL DECISION**

This proceeding was conducted according to the provisions of 10 U.S.C. § 1552. The Chair docketed the case after receiving the completed application on September 13, 2024, and assigned it to an attorney to prepare the decision for the Board pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 52.61(c).

This final decision dated July 31, 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 is a former BM3 (E-4) who served for just over four years on active duty, and was discharged honorably on October 7, 1994. The applicant, while assigned to the USCGC Tamaroa in 1991, was involved in search and rescue operations during a severe winter storm. He was awarded a Coast Guard Unit Commendation and an Air Force Achievement Medal. He asserts that several years later in 2002, members of the crew of USCGC Tamaroa were invited to a ceremony in Washington, D.C., where they were presented the Gold Lifesaving Medal for their actions during this storm. He further asserts that he was “overlooked” from this ceremony, and is unsure whether any attempts were made to locate him. He asks the Board to correct his record to reflect the award of the Gold Lifesaving Medal.

**SUMMARY OF THE RECORD**

The applicant enlisted in the Coast Guard on July 30, 1990. He was subsequently assigned to USCGC Tamaroa, where he served during 1991 when the events relevant to this application occurred.

During October and November of 1991, a severe winter storm hit the northeastern United States, and the Tamaroa was called on to conduct search and rescue operations in extremely dangerous conditions. The Tamaroa and its crew were awarded the Coast Guard Unit Commendation, and the applicant was awarded an Air Force Achievement Medal.

The applicant was assigned to the USCGC Mellon sometime between November 1991 and March 1992, and was discharged honorably on October 7, 1994.

Although not appearing in the applicant's record, the Coast Guard confirmed that the Captain of USCGC Tamaroa submitted a recommendation for 18 former crew members for the Coast Guard medal for their actions in 1991. The applicant's name was not included on this list.

### **VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD**

On February 24, 2025, a Judge Advocate (JA) for the Coast Guard submitted an advisory opinion in which he recommended that the Board deny relief in this case and adopted the findings and analysis provided in a memorandum on February 18, 2025, prepared by the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center (PSC).

The JA concurred with the PSC evaluation of the applicant's request. PSC confirmed that there had been an action in 2002 to either grant or upgrade 18 members of USCGC Tamaroa for the Coast Guard Medal, 17 of whom were approved. They further assert that the applicant's request for the Gold Lifesaving Medal would be inconsistent with normal Coast Guard practice because it is typically not awarded for acts performed while on active Coast Guard duty. They also assert that the application is untimely.

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

On March 3, 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**

1. 33 C.F.R. § 52.21(c) sets forth the requirements for docketing and processing applications to the Board. In particular, applications are complete when they include a "specific allegation of error or injustice, accompanied by substantial evidence or information in support of such allegation." 33 C.F.R. § 52.21(c)(1).

2. 33 C.F.R. § 52.22 sets forth timeliness requirements for applications to this Board:

An application for correction of a record must be filed within three years after the Applicant discovered or reasonably should have discovered the alleged error or injustice. If an application is untimely, the applicant shall set forth reasons in the application why it is in the interest of justice for the Board to consider the application. An untimely application shall be denied unless the Board finds that sufficient evidence has been presented to warrant a finding that it would be in the interest of justice to excuse the failure to file timely.

3. Commandant Instruction (COMDTINST) M1650.25E, "Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual," establishes policies, procedures, and standards governing the military medals and awards for all Coast Guard personnel. It establishes the Commandant of the Coast

Guard as the approval authority for both the Coast Guard Medal and the Gold Lifesaving Award. It also establishes the Coast Guard Board of Awards, which reviews all recommendations for awards requiring the Commandant's approval.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Board makes the following findings and conclusions on the basis of the applicant's 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 the applicant 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. The applicant claims he did not learn of the action to upgrade or confer awards in 2002 until 2021. While the applicant does not indicate when in 2021 he learned of the alleged error, the Board will consider his application timely.

3. The record in this case is straightforward. The applicant served on USCGC Tamaroa in 1991 during a severe winter storm. His record reflects this service, and he was awarded a Coast Guard Unit Commendation and an Air Force Achievement Medal. In 2002, the Captain of the Tamaroa recommended 18 former crewmembers for the award of the Coast Guard Medal, of whom 17 received the medal. The applicant was not recommended for the award, and the record before the Board contains nothing that provides context or explanation as to why he was not so recommended.<sup>1</sup>

4. While the Advisory Opinion included some discussion of the standards for awarding the Gold Lifesaving Medal, it is not necessary to address this in depth. The Commandant of the Coast Guard is the approval authority for both the Coast Guard Medal and the Gold Lifesaving Award, and this authority has not been delegated. The applicant has produced no evidence that the Commandant took any action to approve either award for the applicant, and none appears elsewhere in the record. While it is possible that his name was inadvertently left off of the list in 2002, it is also possible that he was considered and not recommended. Nothing in the record indicates any intent by the Coast Guard to recommend or approve all members of the Tamaroa's crew for the Coast Guard medal, or the applicant specifically. This Board's charge is to correct military records in cases of error or injustice, not to confer awards upon applicants when no official with that authority has done so or expressed an intent to do so, and no entitlement otherwise exists in law or regulation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Advisory Opinion states that "[t]here is explanation on the record for the omission." However, it also states that "it cannot be ascertained if this act by the CO was intentional or not . . . ." After review of the entire opinion and the record, it appears that the first statement was a typographical error, since no explanation for the omission appears in the record.

5. As the applicant has produced no evidence of error or injustice in his Coast Guard record, his request for relief is denied.

**(ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE)**

ORDER

The application of BM3 (former) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] USCG, for award of the Gold Lifesaving Medal is denied.

July 31, 2025

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]