

**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. 2025-022**

  
SN (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 November 13, 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 Seaman (SN/E-3) discharged from the Coast Guard on March 4, 1966, has asked the Board to update his records to reflect his receipt of the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal, Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon, and National Defense Service Medal.

Regarding the Good Conduct Medal, the applicant stated he had at least three years of honorable and faithful service and was recommended for reenlistment. Regarding the National Defense Service Medal, he stated that he honorably served between January 1962 and 1966. Regarding the Sea Service Ribbon, he stated that he had one year and three days of sea service.

In support of his requests, the applicant submitted a copy of his DD Form 214, documenting his release from active duty with an Honorable characterization of service.

**SUMMARY OF THE RECORD**

The applicant enlisted in the Coast Guard on March 7, 1962.

On August 17, 1962, the applicant received nonjudicial punishment (NJP) for violation of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) Article 92(3) (Dereliction of Duty).<sup>1</sup> The NJP was based on the applicant's "failure to make impression of time detector clock" at midnight two days prior at the lifeboat station lookout tower where he was stationed. The applicant was awarded extra duties for three days, not to exceed two hours per day.

On November 18, 1963, the applicant received NJP for a violation of UCMJ Article 86 (Absence Without Leave) for unexcused absence for approximately five hours on November 12, 1963. He was awarded eight days of restriction to the limits of the Coast Guard base where he was stationed.

A review of the applicant's performance marks shows that he received higher than a 3.0 in all categories (Proficiency, Leadership, and Conduct) throughout his service.

The applicant was released from active duty and transferred to the Coast Guard Reserve on March 4, 1966. His DD 214 reflects just under four years of active duty service, including one year and three days of sea duty. The characterization of service was Honorable, and the applicant was recommended for reenlistment. Box 26 (Decorations, Medals, Badges, Commendations, Citations, and Campaign Ribbons) contains no entries. Box 32 (Remarks) includes a notation of "Good Conduct Award period commenced on 12 November 1963." A separate Form CG-3309 (Record of Discharge, Release from Active Duty, or Death) includes a notation in the Remarks section that the "Good Conduct Award period commenced on 18 November 1963."

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

In memoranda prepared in April and May 2025, the Coast Guard recommended that the Board grant partial relief in this case. Upon its own review of the available records and relevant policies, the Coast Guard determined that the applicant was eligible for the National Defense Service Medal and Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon. With respect to the Good Conduct Medal, however, the Coast Guard contended that the applicant's August 1962 and November 1963 NJPs had reset his "Good Conduct eligibility." As such, the Coast Guard argued that whether the applicant's eligibility reset on November 12 or November 18, 1963, he did not have three years of satisfactory time before or after that date, as required by the relevant policy.

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

On May 12, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 15 of the UCMJ provides commanding officers the authority to impose NJP – also referred to as Captain's Mast – without resorting to the judicial forum of a court-martial. See *Military Justice Manual*, COMDTINST M5810.1H (July 2021) § 2.A.1.

### 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.4.a.(1), the National Defense Service Medal is awarded for "Honorable active service as a member of the Armed Forces for any period (inclusive) ... from 1 January 1961 to 14 August 1974...."

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.

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, 1960, to October 31, 1963, the award required three years of continuous active duty under honorable conditions with Proficiency, Leadership, and Conduct marks of 3.0 or higher. 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. For both periods, no NJP was permitted. In this regard, *Awards Manual* § 5.A.1.a.(2)(c) provides that "[w]hen an infraction of discipline results in non-judicial punishment, a new [good conduct eligibility] period will commence the day following the date non-judicial punishment is awarded."

### 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.<sup>2</sup> The applicant separated from the Coast Guard in 1966 and did not apply to the Board until 2024. He indicated on his application form that he discovered the errors in question in June 2024, but he provided no further explanation. As discussed below, however, the Board has determined that the applicant's records do contain error. In addition, the Board observes that per *Awards Manual* Enclosure (1), the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon was not authorized by the Commandant until March 3, 1984. Moreover, the Coast Guard has recommended that untimeliness be waived, and partial relief be granted in this case. 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 that the disputed information is erroneous or unjust.<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>4</sup>

5. The Board concurs with the Coast Guard's recommendations in this case. Because the applicant served honorably between January 1, 1961, and August 14, 1974, he is eligible for the National Defense Service Medal pursuant to *Awards Manual* § 5.A.4.a.(1). Because he had more than 12 months of cumulative sea duty, he is eligible for the Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon pursuant to § 5.A.19.a.

6. Regarding the Good Conduct Medal, the Board initially finds it somewhat unclear whether the applicant's service fell within a period when the award required three years of satisfactory service or four. That is, *Awards Manual* Enclosure (11) would appear to suggest that because the applicant's service "expired" after November 1, 1963, four years were required. The applicant's service began during the period before that date, however, when only three years were required, and the Coast Guard analysis in its recommendation to the Board used the three-year requirement.

7. In any case, the applicant received NJPs in August 1962 and November 1963, which reset the clock for his eligibility for the Good Conduct Medal. Although the applicant's marks were at or above 3.0 in all categories throughout his service, the periods between his March 1962 entry and his first NJP in August 1962, and between his last NJP in November 1963 and his March 1966 separation, were each less than three years. As such, whether the three- or four-year requirement is used, the applicant did not meet the criteria to receive the award.

8. In summary, the Board finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the applicant is eligible for the National Defense Service Medal and Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon, but not the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal.

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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).

<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).

(ORDER AND SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE)

**ORDER**

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

The Coast Guard shall correct the applicant's records to reflect receipt of the National Defense Service Medal and Coast Guard Sea Service Ribbon.

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

August 13, 2025

