



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON DC 20370-5100

WMP

Docket No: 4844-02
7 November 2002



This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to the provisions of Title 10 of the United States Code section 1552.

A three-member panel of the Board for Correction of Naval Records, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 6 November 2002. Your allegations of error and injustice were reviewed in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures applicable to the proceedings of this Board. Documentary material considered by the Board consisted of your application, together with all material submitted in support thereof, your naval record and applicable statutes, regulations and policies.

After careful and conscientious consideration of the entire record, the Board found that the evidence submitted was insufficient to establish the existence of probable material error or injustice.

The Board found that you enlisted in the Marine Corps on 15 February 1967 for three years at age 19. Your record reflects that you served in Vietnam from 12 August 1967 to 2 February 1968 and participated in operations at Khe Sahn. During this period of service you were awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnamese Campaign Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Your record further reflects you were an unauthorized absentee from 12 November 1968 to 4 April 1969, a period of 143 days; and 10 April to 5 August 1969, a period of 125 days. You were placed in confinement pending return to your unit from 5 to 11 August 1969.

On 9 September 1969 you submitted a request for an undesirable discharge for the good of the service in lieu of trial by court-martial for the two foregoing periods of unauthorized absence totaling 268 days. Prior to submitting this request you conferred with a qualified military lawyer and were advised of your rights and warned of the probable adverse consequences of accepting such a discharge. On 30 September 1969 your request for discharge was approved by the discharge authority. As a result of such action, you were spared the stigma of a court-martial conviction and the potential penalties of a punitive discharge and confinement at hard labor. You received the undesirable discharge on 8 October 1969.

In its review of your application the Board carefully weighed all potentially mitigating factors such as your youth and immaturity, combat service, and your current medical condition. However, the Board found that notwithstanding your Vietnam service, your misconduct of two periods of unauthorized absence totaling 268 days clearly warranted an undesirable discharge. The Board also believed that considerable clemency was extended to you when your request for discharge to avoid trial by court-martial was approved since, by this action, you escaped the possibility of confinement at hard labor and a punitive discharge. Further, the Board concluded that you received the benefit of your bargain with the Marine Corps when your request for discharge was granted and you should not be permitted to change it now. Accordingly, your application has been denied. The names and votes of the members of the panel will be furnished upon request.

It is regretted that the circumstances of your case are such that favorable action cannot be taken. You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon submission of new and material evidence or other matter not previously considered by the Board. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that a presumption of regularity attaches to all official records. Consequently, when applying for a correction of an official naval record, the burden is on the applicant to demonstrate the existence of probable material error or injustice.

Sincerely,

W. DEAN PFEIFFER
Executive Director