



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS
701 S. COURTHOUSE ROAD, SUITE 1001
ARLINGTON, VA 22204-2490

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Docket No. 9619-23
Ref: Signature Date

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Dear █

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to Section 1552 of Title 10, United States Code. After careful and conscientious consideration of relevant portions of your naval record and your application, the Board for Correction of Naval Records (Board) found the evidence submitted insufficient to establish the existence of probable material error or injustice. Consequently, your application has been denied.

Although you did not file your application in a timely manner, the statute of limitation was waived in accordance with the 25 August 2017 guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (Kurta Memo). A three-member panel of the Board, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 15 May 2024. The names and votes of the panel members will be furnished upon request. Your allegations of error and injustice were reviewed in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures applicable to the proceedings of the Board. Documentary material considered by the Board consisted of your application together with all material submitted in support thereof, relevant portions of your naval record, applicable statutes, regulations, and policies, to include the Kurta Memo, the 3 September 2014 guidance from the Secretary of Defense regarding discharge upgrade requests by Veterans claiming post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)/mental health condition (MHC) (Hagel Memo), and the 25 July 2018 guidance from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness regarding equity, injustice, or clemency determinations (Wilkie Memo). In addition, the Board considered an advisory opinion (AO) from a qualified mental health professional. Although you were provided an opportunity to respond to the AO, you chose not to do so.

The Board determined that your personal appearance, with or without counsel, would not materially add to their understanding of the issues involved. Therefore, the Board determined that a personal appearance was not necessary and considered your case based on the evidence of record.

During the enlistment process you acknowledged the requirement to participate in 48 scheduled drills and not less than 14 days of annual training per year for eight years upon completion of

initial active duty training. On 8 November 1991, you enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR) and began active duty for training (ACDUTRA) on 25 August 1992. You completed ACDUTRA, on 20 November 1992, and were transferred to the USMCR. Subsequently, you had 44 unexcused absences and were warned that you must regain satisfactory status. After you failed to do so, you were notified for separation for Unsatisfactory Participation in the Ready Reserve. You did not acknowledge receipt of the notification of separation that was sent by certified return mail receipt on 22 March 1997, 25 July 1997, and 4 August 1997. After waiving your rights by not returning your acknowledgement in a timely manner, the Commanding Officer (CO) made his recommendation to the Separation Authority (SA) that you be discharged with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) characterization of service. On 18 November 1997, the SA accepted the recommendation and directed you be discharged.

The Board carefully considered all potentially mitigating factors to determine whether the interests of justice warrant relief in your case in accordance with the Kurta, Hagel, and Wilkie Memos. These included, but were not limited to, your desire for a discharge upgrade and contention that you were diagnosed with PTSD, depression, and bipolar disorder, and these were a contributing factor for your inability to attend drill. For purposes of clemency and equity consideration, the Board noted you did not provide supporting documentation describing post-service accomplishments or advocacy letters but you did provide a personal statement and medical documents.

As part of the Board review process, the BCNR Physician Advisor who is a licensed clinical psychologist (Ph.D.), reviewed your contentions and the available records and issued an AO dated 9 April 2024. The Ph.D. stated in pertinent part:

There is no evidence that he was diagnosed with a mental health condition in military service, or that he exhibited any psychological symptoms or behavioral changes indicative of a diagnosable mental health condition. He has provided evidence of diagnoses of PTSD and other mental health concerns that are temporally remote to his military service and appear unrelated. Unfortunately, his personal statement is not sufficiently detailed to establish clinical symptoms in service or provide a nexus with his misconduct. Additional records (e.g., post-service mental health records describing the Petitioner's diagnosis, symptoms, and their specific link to his misconduct) may aid in rendering an alternate opinion.

The Ph.D. concluded, "it is my clinical opinion there is insufficient evidence of a diagnosis of PTSD or another mental health condition that may be attributed to military service. There is insufficient evidence to attribute his misconduct to PTSD or another mental health condition."

After thorough review, the Board concluded that your potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined that your misconduct, as evidenced by your unexcused absences from drills, outweighed these mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and found that your conduct showed a complete disregard for military authority and regulations. The Board also considered that you failed to fulfill your contractual obligation to the Marine Corps. Further, the Board concurred with the AO and determined there is insufficient evidence to attribute your

misconduct to PTSD or another mental health condition. As explained in the AO, available records are not sufficiently detailed to establish clinical symptoms in service or provide a nexus with your misconduct. Finally, the Board concluded that your discharge was proper and equitable under standards of law and discipline and that the discharge accurately reflects your conduct during your period of service, which was terminated by your separation with an OTH.

As a result, the Board concluded your conduct constituted a significant departure from that expected of a service member and continues to warrant an OTH characterization. While the Board carefully considered the evidence you submitted in mitigation, even in light of the Kurta, Hagel, and Wilkie Memos and reviewing the record liberally and holistically, the Board did not find evidence of an error or injustice that warrants granting you the relief you requested or granting relief as a matter of clemency or equity. Ultimately, the Board concluded the mitigation evidence you provided was insufficient to outweigh the seriousness of your misconduct. Accordingly, given the totality of the circumstances, the Board determined that your request does not merit relief.

You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon submission of new matters, which will require you to complete and submit a new DD Form 149. New matters are those not previously presented to or 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, _____

5/23/2024

