



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. 9793-23

Ref: Signature Date

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Dear Petitioner:

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to Title 10, United States Code, Section 1552. 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 24 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). The Board also considered the advisory opinion (AO) furnished by a qualified mental health professional, dated 12 April 2024. Although you were afforded an opportunity to submit an AO rebuttal, you chose not to do so.

Regarding your request for a personal appearance, the Board determined that a personal appearance with or without counsel will not materially add to their understanding of the issue(s) involved. Therefore, the Board determined that a personal appearance was not necessary and considered your case based on the evidence of record.

You enlisted in the Navy and began a period of active duty on 27 June 1988. On 3 August 1990, you began a period of unauthorized absence (UA) which lasted six-days and resulted in you

missing ship's movement. On 8 August 1990, you received nonjudicial punishment (NJP) for the above misconduct.

On 4 August 1992, you began a second period of active duty after immediately reenlisting. On 10 August 1992, you began a second period of UA which lasted one-day.

On 27 June 1995, you began a third period of active duty after again immediately reenlisting. On 3 September 1996, you were apprehended by civil authorities and placed in confinement for 122 days. On 3 January 1997, you were discharged in absentia.

Unfortunately, the documents pertinent to your administrative separation are not in your official military personnel file (OMPF). Notwithstanding, the Board relies on a presumption of regularity to support the official actions of public officers and, in the absence of substantial evidence to the contrary, will presume that they have properly discharged their official duties. Your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214), reveals that you were separated from the Navy on 3 January 1997 with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) characterization of service, your narrative reason for separation is "Misconduct," your separation code is "JKB," and your reenlistment code is "RE-4." Your separation code is consistent with a discharge due to civil conviction.

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 contentions that: (a) you were not convicted by court martial, (b) you came back from the Gulf War and started to do things to seek attention, (c) you decided not to seek help for your behavioral related issues until it was too late, (d) you began having nightmares and sleepwalking after coming back from the Gulf War, (e) you made a mistake by getting into trouble with civil authorities (f) you are seeking a discharge upgrade with the intent to participate in post military societies and obtain benefits and assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). For purposes of clemency and equity consideration, the Board noted you did not provide supporting documentation describing post-service accomplishments or advocacy letters.

As part of the Board's review, the Board considered the AO. The AO stated in pertinent part:

There is no evidence that the Petitioner 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 no medical evidence in support of his claims. 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 AO concluded, "it is my clinical opinion there is insufficient evidence of a diagnosis of PTSD or another mental health concern 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 these potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined that your misconduct, as evidenced by your NJP and discharge for civil conviction, outweighed these mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and the likely negative impact it had on the good order and discipline of your unit. Further, the Board considered the likely discrediting effect your civilian misconduct had on the Navy. Finally, absent a material error or injustice, the Board declined to summarily upgrade a discharge solely for the purpose of facilitating veterans' benefits or enhancing educational or employment opportunities. Lastly, the Board concurred with the AO that there is insufficient evidence that your misconduct could be attributed to PTSD or a mental health condition. As explained in the AO, you provided no medical evidence in support of your claim.

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. 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. 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 the 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,

6/12/2024

