



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. 10056-24
Ref: Signature Date

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Dear Petitioner:

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 limitations 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 16 April 2025. 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 this 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, and 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 an advisory opinion (AO) from a qualified mental health professional; dated 24 February 2025. Although you were provided with an opportunity to comment on the AO, you chose not to do so.

You entered active duty with the Marine Corps on 19 July 1996. On 9 February 1998, you received non-judicial punishment (NJP) for being in an unauthorized absence (UA) status for three days and disobeying a lawful order from a senior non-commissioned officer (NCO). On 21 October 1998, you received NJP for UA and disobeying a lawful order to muster for duty. You were counseled and warned that further misconduct could result in administrative separation processing. On 7 June 1999, you were counseled on establishing a pattern of misconduct and your lackadaisical attitude toward your military responsibilities. On 9 June 1999, you received

NJP for being in UA status for two days. On 9 December 1999, a summary court-martial (SCM) convicted you of UA that lasted 24 days. Consequently, you were notified of pending administrative separation action by reason of misconduct due to a pattern of misconduct. After you elected to waive your rights, your commanding officer (CO) forwarded your package to the separation authority (SA) recommending your discharge with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) characterization of service. The SA approved the CO's recommendation and you were so discharged on 5 May 2000.

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 to upgrade your discharge and contentions that you incurred mental health concerns during military service due to personal and military stressors, you Sergeant told you to remain in a UA status for 29 days than turn yourself into military authorities, and you were punished upon your return. For purposes of clemency and equity consideration, the Board considered the evidence you provided in support of your application.

As part of the Board's review, a qualified mental health professional reviewed your request and provided the Board with an AO. The mental health professional stated in pertinent part:

There is no evidence that the Petitioner was diagnosed with a mental health condition during his military service, or that he exhibited any psychological symptoms or behavioral changes indicative of a mental health condition. He has provided no medical evidence in support of his claim. His statement is not sufficiently detailed to provide a nexus between his misconduct and a mental health condition. Additional records (e.g., active duty medical records, post-service mental health records describing the Petitioner's diagnosis, symptoms, and their specific link to his separation) would aid in rendering an alternate opinion.

The AO concluded, "it is my clinical opinion that there is insufficient evidence of a mental health condition that occurred in service. There is insufficient evidence to attribute his misconduct to a mental health condition."

After thorough review, the Board concluded these potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined your misconduct, as evidenced by your NJPs and SCM, outweighed the potential 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 observed you were given multiple opportunities to correct your conduct deficiencies and chose to continue to commit misconduct; which led to your OTH discharge. Your conduct not only showed a pattern of misconduct but was sufficiently pervasive and serious to negatively affect the good order and discipline of your command. The Board also concurred with AO that there is insufficient evidence to attribute your misconduct to a mental health condition. As pointed out in the AO, there is no evidence you were diagnosed with a mental health condition while in military service or that you exhibited any psychological symptoms or behavioral changes indicative of a diagnosable mental health condition. Additionally, you provided no medical evidence in support of your claim and your

statement is not sufficiently detailed to provide a nexus between your misconduct and a mental health condition. Therefore, the Board determined that the evidence of record did not demonstrate that you were not mentally responsible for your conduct or that you should not be held accountable for your actions. Finally, the Board noted you provided no evidence, other than your statement, to substantiate your contention that you were authorized to remain in an UA status for 29 days.

As a result, the Board determined that there was no impropriety or inequity in your discharge and concluded that your misconduct and disregard for good order and discipline clearly merited your discharge. While the Board carefully considered the evidence you provided in mitigation, even in light of the Wilkie Memo and reviewing the record 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 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,

4/28/2025

