



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

██████████
Docket No. 11245-24
Ref: Signature Date

████████████████████
████████████████████
████████████████████

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 14 May 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 25 March 2025. Although you were provided an opportunity to comment on the AO, you chose not to do so.

You entered active duty with the Navy on 16 October 1995. As part of your enlistment processing, you admitted to preservice drug abuse. On 22 November 1996, you were counseled on your failure to meet Naval physical readiness standards. On 8 January 1999, you received non-judicial punishment (NJP) for wrongful use of methamphetamine. Consequently, you were notified of pending administrative separation action by reason of misconduct due to drug abuse. After you elected to waive your rights, your commanding officer (CO) forwarded your package to the separation authority (SA) recommending your discharge with a General (Under Honorable

Conditions) (GEN) characterization of service. The SA approved the CO's recommendation, and you were so discharged on 1 February 1999.

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 PTSD/mental health issues during military service resulting from injuries sustained while on active duty, your drug use resulted from becoming addicted to pain medication while recovering, you were awarded several medals while on active duty, and you graduated six in your class from "C" school. 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 AO stated in pertinent part:

There is no evidence that Petitioner was diagnosed with a mental health condition in military service. Temporally remote to his military service, he has received service connection for PTSD. Unfortunately, available records are not sufficiently detailed to attribute his misconduct solely to self-medication of undiagnosed mental health symptoms, given his pre-service substance use history. 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 that there is post-service evidence from the VA of a diagnosis of PTSD that may be attributed to military service. There is insufficient evidence to attribute his misconduct solely to PTSD."

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 NJP, outweighed the potential mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and the fact it involved a drug related offense. The Board determined that illegal drug use by a service member is contrary to military core values and policy, renders such members unfit for duty, and poses an unnecessary risk to the safety of their fellow service members. The Board also concurred with the AO that there is insufficient evidence to attribute your misconduct solely to PTSD or a mental health condition. As explained in the AO, it is difficult to attribute your misconduct solely to self-medication of undiagnosed mental health symptoms, given your pre-service substance use history. 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 considered that you already received a large measure of clemency from the Navy when they assigned you a GEN characterization of service for a drug offense that normally merits an Other Than Honorable characterization.

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 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 mitigated 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,

5/29/2025

