



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS

701 S. COURTHOUSE RD

ARLINGTON, VA 22204

[REDACTED] Docket No. 3969-25

Ref: Signature Date

[REDACTED]

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 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 29 September 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, 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. Although you were provided an opportunity to respond to the AO, you chose not to do so.

You enlisted in the Marine Corps and commenced active duty on 25 February 1998. On 7 August 1998, your command was notified of your positive urinalysis for cocaine. On 14 August 1998, you were given a substance abuse evaluation and denied knowingly using a controlled substance. On 14 September 1998, you received non-judicial punishment (NJP) for unauthorized absence (UA) and wrongful use of cocaine. On 8 October 1998, you received NJP for underage drinking. Subsequently, you were notified of pending administrative separation processing with an Under Other Than Honorable conditions (OTH) discharge by reason of misconduct due to drug abuse. You waived your right to have your case heard by an administrative discharge board

and the separation authority directed your discharge with an OTH characterization of service. You were so discharged on 4 December 1998.

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 change your discharge characterization of service and your contentions that mental health concerns mitigate your misconduct and you were “partying, doing drugs, and drinking to take the pain from [your] parents’ divorce and [your] mother’s sudden absence away from [your] mind,” that you were severely depressed and your mother was “addicted to meth,” and you were “given some drugs” one weekend in [REDACTED]. For purposes of clemency and equity consideration, the Board considered the totality of your application; which consisted of your DD Form 149, your statement, advocacy letters, and the Department of Veterans Affairs decision letter you provided.

As part of the Board’s review process, a qualified mental health professional reviewed your contentions and the available records and issued an AO on 6 August 2025. The AO stated in pertinent part:

Petitioner contends he suffered from mental health conditions (PTSD) during military service, which may have contributed to the circumstances of his separation from service.

There is no evidence that the Petitioner was diagnosed with a mental health condition while in military service or that he suffered from any symptoms incurred by a mental health condition. The Petitioner did not submit any medical evidence in support of his claim. His personal statement is not sufficiently detailed to provide a nexus between any mental health condition and his in-service misconduct.

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

After thorough review, the Board concluded your potentially mitigating factors were insufficient to warrant relief. Specifically, the Board determined that your misconduct, as evidenced by your NJPs, outweighed these mitigating factors. In making this finding, the Board considered the seriousness of your misconduct and the fact it involved a drug 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 considered the likely negative impact your repeated misconduct had on the good order and discipline of your command.

Additionally, the Board concurred with the AO and determined that there is insufficient evidence of a mental health condition that existed in service and insufficient evidence to attribute your misconduct to a mental health condition. The Board applied liberal consideration to your claim that you suffered from a mental health condition, and to the effect that this condition may have had upon the conduct for which you were discharged in accordance with the Hagel and Kurta

Memos. Applying such liberal consideration, the Board found insufficient evidence of a diagnosis of mental health condition that may be attributed to military service. This conclusion is supported by the AO and the fact you provided no medical evidence. Additionally, even applying liberal consideration, the Board found insufficient evidence to conclude that the misconduct for which you were discharged was excused or mitigated by your mental health condition. In this regard, the Board simply had insufficient information available upon which to make such a conclusion. 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.

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 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,

12/8/2025

[REDACTED]
Executive Director

Signed by: [REDACTED]