



Within the first two weeks of training, [she] cast herself in a negative light through her failure to follow simple instructions. She encountered academic difficulty early in the program of instruction that resulted in her assignment to the Supervised Individual Study Program (OISP). During her Mid-Performance Counseling on ██████████, [she] was ranked by her peers as ████████ of 14 lieutenants in her squad; she was ranked by her staff platoon commander in the bottom 20 percent of her platoon. Further, her staff platoon commander indicated her decision-making skills and billet performance were insufficient. To compound her initial missteps, [her] averages within each of the three functional areas of The Basic School - leadership, military skills, and academics—quickly fell toward the bottom of her company and well below company averages. As the program of instruction progressed, [her] difficulty in grasping the course curriculum resulted in additional unsatisfactory peer evaluations. During her first command evaluation, [she] was ranked by her peers as ████████ of 17 lieutenants in her squad; she was ranked by her staff platoon commander as ██████████ 51 Lieutenants in her platoon. Moreover, during her second command evaluation, [she] was ranked by her peers as ████████ of 51 lieutenants and by her staff platoon commander as ████████ of 51 lieutenants in her platoon. Throughout both command evaluations, [her] peers provided significantly negative feedback with respect to her performance. Her peer descriptors were consistently negative and her most prominent descriptors included apathetic, clueless, inattentive, inept, lackadaisical, lethargic, sleepy, uncommitted, and weak.

3. Despite those significant concerns, your overall performance met the minimum threshold to complete the basic TBS course of instruction with the exception that you failed your final land navigation exercise, which resulted in your assignment to remedial training. The events of that test ultimately formed the basis of your administrative separation. In his recommendation for your discharge for cause, the CO, TBS, elaborated that:

[her] integrity was found to be suspect after she was questioned in conjunction with a command investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding allegations of cheating during land navigation exercises. [Her] land navigation route card was scrutinized because one of her answers indicated she had relied upon an outdated land navigation matrix. During her interview with the Investigating Officer [IO], [she] first stated she found each of the objectives listed on her route card. The [IO] subsequently explained that one of the objectives she claimed to have found – the objective GF – was no longer in the training area. In fact, the objective GF [had been] located in the position in which [she] claimed to have found it until 23 June 2002, when it was changed to objective GG in conjunction with routine land navigation course maintenance. On ██████████ – the date on which [she] claimed to have found objective GF – the objective did not exist. [She] immediately changed her story and admitted her involvement in academic dishonesty.

4. You made a written statement to the IO on ██████████ in which you admitted to having shared answers with another lieutenant whom you encountered during your remedial land navigation exercise. You elaborated that he had passed but you had failed; however, although you knew him well enough to know that he had passed that day, you stated that you had not known him prior to the test, never got his name, and only remembered a basic description of him.

5. On ██████████, you were notified that you were recommended for separation due to substandard performance of duty and misconduct, or moral or professional dereliction based upon your failure to demonstrate acceptable qualities of leadership required of an officer in your grade, failure to satisfactorily complete the course of training you had been ordered to undergo, and commission of a military offense which could be punished by confinement of six months or more and any other misconduct which would require specific intent for conviction. This notification was based on the best interests of the service while you were in an entry-level officer status and recommended that you receive a discharge under honorable conditions. You were not entitled, by regulation, to request a hearing before a Board of Inquiry.

6. After consulting legal counsel, you acknowledged this notification and elected to submit a written statement in rebuttal to the notification. In your statement, you expressly denied involvement in a “land navigation scandal” such as creating, distributing, or having knowledge of an answer matrix. Rather, you admitted merely “to having a conversation with a Marine” and argued that your excellence as a leader and moral or professional prowess had never been in question, that you had dedicated 9 years of your life to Marine Corps service, and looked forward to retiring after a long career. Additionally, you requested that a characterization of Honorable.

7. In his recommendation for your discharge for misconduct, much of which was excerpted above, CO, TBS, acknowledged your rebuttal and thus elaborated on your struggles while attending TBS, further responded that you had initially attempted to conceal your participation, and found you unfit to be interested with the lives and interests of Marines due to your lack of integrity, judgment, and moral courage. As such, he recommended your discharge be characterized as General (Under Honorable Conditions) (GEN).

8. Via naval letter dated ██████████, the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), recommended that you be discharged under honorable conditions in the best interest of the Marine Corps due to substandard performance and misconduct. CMC found that “the sole obstacle preventing [your] graduation from TBS was passing remedial land navigation. Knowing this, [you] compromised [your] integrity when [you] chose to exchange answers with a fellow lieutenant. However, he recommended that your narrative reason for separation reflect “Secretarial Authority.” This recommendation was approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASN M&RA) on ██████████. You were so discharged on ██████████.

After careful review, the Board reached the following conclusions and denied your application for relief.

The Board initially concluded you were appropriately processed for administrative separation based on your misconduct. While the Board carefully considered your contention for mitigation, the Board noted you did not deny committing the misconduct. Therefore, the Board determined the presumption of regularity applies to the finding that you committed the misconduct that formed the basis of your administrative separation and no error exists with your GEN characterization of service.

The Board also considered the totality of the circumstances to determine whether equitable relief was warranted in the interests of justice in accordance with the Wilkie Memo. In this regard, the Board considered, amongst other factors, your contentions, the totality of your service, the non-

violent nature of your misconduct, the negative effect your discharge has had on your life, your post-service record of accomplishments, the character references you provided for review, and the passage of time since your discharge.

The Board found that the mitigating factors were not nearly sufficient to justify any equitable relief. Specifically, the Board found that the severity of your misconduct far outweighed all of the mitigating factors combined. In particular, the Board determined that characterization under other than conditions is generally warranted for serious misconduct and is appropriate when the basis for separation is the commission of an act or acts constituting a significant departure from the conduct expected of a Marine Corps officer. The Board found that you not only admitted to conversing with another lieutenant regarding answers to your land navigation exercise but then repeatedly attempted to minimize your integrity violation. Your self-serving actions constituted a profound breach of Marine Corps core values that fully merited separation with a characterization of service less than fully honorable. The Board found that you did not have a minor lapse in judgment but committed a deliberate act of academic dishonesty and compounded it with your initial attempt to deceive the IO during a formal investigation. The Board observed that you only recanted your denial when confronted with undeniable evidence that your supposed answer for your land navigation box no longer existed in that grid location at the time you entered it. Of equal concern is your persistent effort in your official rebuttal to your separation in 2009 to minimize this serious offense by framing it as merely “having a conversation” with someone you claim not to be able to identify despite exchanging answers. The Board noted, even in your current petition, you take no responsibility or remorse for your actions; rather, you focus entirely on the impact your actions have had on your career progression. This refusal to accept full responsibility for your significant integrity violation demonstrated to the Board a continued lack of moral courage and character. To the extent that you had served nine years as an enlisted Marine with significantly above average performance and conduct prior to accepting a commission, the Board found the stark contrast between your exemplary enlisted service and your failure to adhere to the highest ethical standards when faced with professional adversity particularly troubling. The Board observed that, when finally faced with difficulty or the potential of not succeeding, you readily chose to compromise your integrity; now, you continue to demonstrate a fundamental failure to internalize the responsibility inherent in your actions.

Whereas you contend that your discharge characterization is an injustice because it hampers your ability to secure executive positions within federal service, the Board noted that the purpose of an upgraded characterization of service is not to facilitate post-service career opportunities, but to serve as an accurate reflection of a Marine’s conduct and performance of duty. In their opinion, upgrading your characterization of service would create an unwarranted and inaccurate assessment of your period of service as a commissioned officer that could potentially undermine the integrity of the Department of the Navy’s personnel system.

Ultimately, the Board found that the professional consequences you now face are not an injustice; they are the direct and foreseeable result of your own actions. The Board concluded that it is neither improper nor inequitable that a former enlisted member who, upon obtaining a commission as an officer of Marines, chose to compromise your integrity when confronted with a difficult challenge, might still be required to account for a past finding of moral and professional dereliction in seeking a position within the highest levels of executive leadership or in a position of high public trust. Ultimately, the Board concluded the favorable factors you provided for consideration were 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 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 is attached 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,

2/25/2026

