



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS

701 S. COURTHOUSE RD

ARLINGTON, VA 22204

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Docket No. 6001-25
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 December 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) provided by a qualified mental health professional on 29 September 2025. Although you were provided with an opportunity to comment on the AO, you chose not to do so.

The Board determined that your personal appearance, with or without counsel, would not materially add to their understanding of the issues involved. Therefore, the Board determined that a personal appearance was not necessary and considered your case based on the evidence of record.

You entered a period of active duty with the Navy on 25 January 1995. On 2 February 1996, you were formerly counseled on being in an unauthorized absence (UA) status for 10 hours and 30 minutes. On 26 February 1996, you received non-judicial punishment for disrespect toward a petty officer, writing bad checks, intention to desert, absence from appointed place of duty, failure to obey a direct order, and making false official statements. On 20 April 1996, a drug and alcohol abuse report noted you tested positive for cocaine and were not drug dependent.

Unfortunately, all 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 18 April 1996, with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) characterization of service, narrative reason for separation of "Misconduct-Drug Abuse," separation code of "HKK," and reentry code of "RE-4." Your separation code is consistent with a drug abuse discharge.

The Board carefully considered all potentially mitigating factors to determine whether the interest of justice warrants 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 issues during military service due to childhood trauma, trauma and mental health issues incurred during Boot Camp, and traumatizing events from your job. You assert you turned to alcohol and drugs to cope with your mental health issues and you have volunteered at the local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the past 17 years. For purposes of clemency and equity consideration, the Board considered the totality of your application; which included your DD Form 149 and the evidence you provided in support of it.

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 the Petitioner was diagnosed with a mental health condition or that he suffered from any symptoms incurred by a mental health condition while in service. The Petitioner submitted post-service evidence of a diagnosis of PTSD; however, the letter submitted lacks sufficient detail to provide a nexus between any mental health condition and his in-service misconduct. Furthermore, some of his misconduct (writing checks with insufficient funds, making false official statements) are not synonymous with typical behaviors expected to have been caused by PTSD. 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) may aid in rendering an alternate opinion.

The AO concluded, "it is my clinical opinion there is insufficient evidence of a mental health condition (PTSD) that existed in service. There is insufficient evidence to attribute his misconduct to a PTSD or any other 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 NJP and drug abuse, 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 found that your conduct showed a

complete disregard for military authority and regulations. The Board observed your conduct was sufficiently pervasive and serious to negatively affect the good order and discipline of your command.

The Board also concurred with the AO that there is insufficient evidence to attribute your misconduct to a mental health condition (PTSD). 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 your medical evidence is temporally remote to your service. 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 and recognized the same concerns raised in the AO. 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. Moreover, even if the Board assumed that your misconduct was somehow attributable to any mental health conditions, the Board unequivocally concluded that the severity of your serious misconduct more than outweighed the potential mitigation offered by any mental health conditions.

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,

1/15/2026

