



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS
701 S. COURTHOUSE RD
ARLINGTON, VA 22204

[REDACTED]
Docket No. 10395-25
Ref: Signature date

From: Chairman, Board for Correction of Naval Records
To: Secretary of the Navy

Subj: REVIEW OF NAVAL RECORD OF [REDACTED], USNR,
XXX-XX-[REDACTED] (RET)

Ref: (a) 10 U.S.C. § 1552
(b) SECNAVINST 5420.193, Board for Correction of Naval Records, 19 November 1997

Encl: (1) DD Form 149, signed 10 September 2025 (with attachments)
(2) DD Form 214 (19810825 – 19811203)
(3) NAVCRUIT 1000/4, Officer Appointment Acceptance and Oath of Office,
4 December 1981
(4) DD Form 214 (19811204 – 19880630)
(5) NAVPERS 1611/1, Report on the Fitness of Officers (P1611-1/4989493)
(6) [REDACTED] CO Memo 1820 N221, subj: Retirement Order and Transfer
Authorization to Retired Reserve Status, 24 September 2001
(7) NPC Letter 1650 PERS-312/SA, 23 July 2025
(8) SECNAV Council of Review Boards Memo 1650 NDBDM, subj: Advisory Opinion
ICO [Petitioner], 6 February 2026
(9) BCNR Letter Docket No: NR20250010395, 12 February 2026

1. Pursuant to the provisions of reference (a), the Subject, hereinafter referred to as Petitioner, filed enclosure (1) with the Board for Correction of Naval Records, hereinafter referred to as the Board, requesting that his record be corrected to reflect his receipt of a Navy Achievement Medal (NAM).

2. A three-member panel of the Board convened in executive session to review Petitioner's allegations of error or injustice in accordance with its governing policies and procedures on 27 March 2026 and determined, contrary to the advice of the Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals (NDBDM), that the corrective action recommended in paragraph 6 below should be taken upon Petitioner's naval record to correct an error. Documentary material considered by the Board included the enclosures; relevant portions of Petitioner's naval record; and applicable statutes, regulations, and policies.

3. Factual Background. Following are the relevant facts of Petitioner's case based upon review of his naval record and/or the matters provided with his application:

a. Petitioner enlisted in the Navy and commenced a period of active duty service to attend [REDACTED] on 25 August 1981. See enclosure (2).

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b. Petitioner was appointed as an Ensign in the Navy upon completion of OCS on 4 December 1981. See enclosure (3). See enclosure (3).

c. On 30 June 1988, Petitioner was released from active duty upon his request in the grade of Lieutenant and transferred to the U.S. Navy Reserve (USNR). See enclosure (4).

d. Petitioner received a periodic fitness report (FITREP) for the reporting period 11 August 1991 to 31 October 1991 which reported that he was “[a]warded the [NAM] for professional achievement in the superior performance of his duties as Assistant Retention Officer at [REDACTED]”¹ See enclosure (5).

e. Petitioner was transferred to the Retired Reserve effective 1 October 2001. See enclosure (6).

f. By letter dated 23 July 2025, Navy Personnel Command (NPC) informed Petitioner that there was no evidence in his naval record or any Navy database supporting that he was awarded the NAM referenced in paragraph 3d above.² See enclosure (7).

4. Procedural Background.

a. Petitioner submitted an application to the Board in September 2025 requesting the corrective action described in paragraph 1 above.³ He asserted that he was surprised to learn from NPC that there was no evidence of the NAM in his naval record and offered the FITREP at enclosure (5) as evidence that it was actually awarded to him. See enclosure (1).

b. By memorandum dated 6 February 2026, the NDBDM President provided an advisory opinion (AO) for the Board’s consideration, recommending that Petitioner’s application be denied. Specifically, the NDBDM President opined that Petitioner’s claim was without merit, and that FITREP entries are insufficient evidence of the issuance of an award. He further asserted that the absence of the original or a certified copy of the award citation/certificate in Petitioner’s official record “is prima fascia [sic] evidence he was not presented the decoration.” See enclosure (8).

c. A copy of the AO referenced in paragraph 4b above was sent to Petitioner under cover of a letter dated 12 February 2026 at the address provided with his application for comment. See enclosure (9). Petitioner, however, did not provide a response.

5. Conclusions.⁴ Upon careful review and consideration of all the evidence of record, the Board found sufficient evidence of an error in Petitioner’s record warranting corrective action.

¹ [REDACTED] was a USNR fighter squadron stationed at [REDACTED] until its deactivation on 11 September 1994.

² This letter informed Petitioner that he could seek relief from the Board.

³ Petitioner signed his DD Form 149 on 10 September 2025, and it was received by the Board on 17 September 2025.

⁴ The Board’s conclusions were unanimous.

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a. The Board found sufficient evidence to conclude that Petitioner was awarded the NAM in 1991 to recognize the “superior performance of his duties as Assistant Retention Officer at [REDACTED]” Petitioner’s FITREP for the reporting period 11 August 1991 to 31 October 1991 explicitly states that Petitioner was “[a]warded the [NAM] for professional achievement in the superior performance of his duties as Assistant Retention Officer at [REDACTED].” His Reporting Senior made this statement unequivocally – he didn’t suggest that Petitioner’s performance warranted the NAM; he stated that he was awarded the NAM. He was also in a position to know what he stated in this regard. In accordance with reference (b), his words on this official document are entitled to the presumption of regularity in the absence of significant evidence to the contrary, and the Board could imagine no reason why he would make such a statement without a factual basis. As such, the Board found sufficient evidence to conclude that Petitioner was, in fact, awarded the NAM in 1991, and that its absence from Petitioner’s record constitutes an error warranting corrective action.

b. The Board did not find the NDBDM opinion to the contrary to be persuasive for the following reasons:

(1) The NDBDM mischaracterized the nature of Petitioner’s request to the Board. Petitioner did not request that the Board award him a NAM based upon the content of enclosure (5); rather, he requested that the Board correct his record to reflect receipt of the award evidenced by enclosure (5). As such, the NDBDM overstated its case by asserting that granting relief in this case would “be inconsistent with the criteria and standards applied to all other Service Members.” The criteria for any Service member to have their naval record corrected by this Board is the existence of an error or injustice, and Petitioner satisfied that criteria. Petitioner is not seeking to be issued an award that he didn’t earn; he is only asking to have his record accurately reflect those that he did receive, and that corrective action is well within the authority of this Board.

(2) The NDBDM overstated the reliability of the Navy’s master awards database and completeness of naval records, especially in the case of USNR members. Its opinion in this regard is not consistent with the Board’s experience with the official records of such members. The Board certainly did not find the absence of any record of this award in Petitioner’s record as “prima facie” evidence that he did not receive the award, as the NDBDM asserted. Rather, it found the absence of any documentation for this award in Petitioner’s naval record to be confirmation that the records of members of the USNR are often incomplete. This Board would have no reason to exist if error like this one did not occur.

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(3) The Board found no merit to the NDBDM's claim that "it defies rational explanation" that Petitioner would not sooner have noted the absence of the NAM from his record. In this regard, the Board found that the NDBDM assumed deceit where it did not exist based upon questionable assumptions of rational behavior. The NDBDM's assumption in this regard might have had merit if Petitioner received the NAM and continued serving in the Regular Navy. However, he was a USNR officer who performed his duties on a part-time basis with a civilian career to worry about. Contrary to the NDBDM's belief, the Board found it quite reasonable to believe that Petitioner would not have noticed the absence of the NAM from his record until recently – he literally would have no reason to question its absence. His credible surprise upon learning that his record contained no evidence of the NAM in question merely confirmed for the Board that this was not something that had previously crossed his mind.

(4) While the NDBDM is correct that the Navy master awards database and official records are entitled to the presumption of regularity, so too is the FITREP which reported that Petitioner received the NAM in 1991. Both cannot be afforded the same presumption. The Board found the latter to be more credible in this regard because it provided an affirmative statement made close in time to the event in question with no bias or reason for deception, while the former tends only to prove a negative. In this regard, the FITREP provides the significant evidence necessary to overcome the presumption of regularity that would otherwise apply to the Navy's awards database and Petitioner's official record.

(5) Finally, the Board found the NDBDM AO to lack credibility because it was simply wrong in stating that the DON "cannot recreate and re-issue the award, nor can the award be entered into his service record ... without being presented with the original, or certified copy thereof, of the NAM certificate presented to the Petitioner." This corrective action is well within the broad authority of the Board to change naval records in any way it deems necessary to correct errors or remove injustices in naval records.

6. Recommendations. Based upon its conclusions as discussed in paragraph 5 above, the Board recommends that the following corrective action be taken upon Petitioner's naval record:

a. That Petitioner's naval record be corrected where and as necessary to reflect that he was awarded a NAM in 1991. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the insertion in Petitioner's official record of an Administrative Remark documenting his authority to wear the NAM; creation of a correcting the Navy Department Award Web Service database to reflect issuance of the award; and the insertion into Petitioner's record of a NAM certificate. In this regard, NPC shall recreate a NAM certificate consistent with the information contained in enclosure (5) regarding this award.

b. That Petitioner be personally issued the NAM certificate referenced in paragraph 6a above, along with the NAM.

c. That a copy of this record of proceedings be filed in Petitioner's naval record.

d. That no further corrective action be taken upon Petitioner's naval record.

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7. It is certified that a quorum was present at the Board's review and deliberations, and that the foregoing is a true and complete record of the Board's proceedings in the above titled matter.

8. The foregoing action of the Board is submitted for your review and action in accordance with Section 6e(1)(a) of Enclosure (1) to reference (b).

4/14/2026

[REDACTED]

Executive Director

ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS) DECISION:

____ Board Recommendation Approved (Full Relief – I concur with the Board's conclusions and therefore direct the corrective action recommended in paragraph 6 above.)

X Board Recommendation Disapproved (Deny Relief – I do not concur with the Board's conclusions. Specifically, I agree with the NDBDM AO and find insufficient evidence to conclude that Petitioner is entitled to wear the NAM. Accordingly, I direct that no corrective action be taken upon Petitioner's naval record.)

[REDACTED]

Assistant General Counsel (M&RA)