



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

[REDACTED]  
Docket No. 11143-25  
Ref: Signature Date

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Petitioner:

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to Title 10, United States Code, Section 1552. 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 Board waived the statute of limitation in the interest of justice. A three-member panel of the Board, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 20 March 2026. 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 the 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 Navy and Marine Corps Awards Manual (SECNAV M-1650.1). The Board also considered the advisory opinion (AO) of the Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals (NDBDM). Although you were afforded an opportunity to submit a rebuttal, you chose not to do so.

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

The following is the relevant factual background of your case based upon review of your naval record and/or the matters provided with your application:

1. You enlisted in the Navy and began a period of active duty on 11 September 1974.
2. For the period 4 December 1974 to 28 March 1975, you received a performance evaluation while attending your service school, located in [REDACTED].
3. [REDACTED] participated in a Western Pacific deployment off the coast of [REDACTED] from March 1975 to April of 1975.

4. On 5 May 1975, you reported to the ██████████ for duty. Your performance record reflects that, on 31 July 1995, when routine performance marks would have been issued, you were not issued trait marks due to having been aboard the ██████████ for fewer than 90 days. To have been received marks at that time, you would have to have reported on or prior to 3 May 1975.

5. On 18 December 1976, you were honorably discharged with your only documented service award being the National Defense Service Medal (NDSM).

6. You previously applied to the Board seeking award of the Vietnam Service Medal (VSM) for your service aboard the ██████████. However, on 16 January 2025, you were referred to Commander, Navy Personnel Command, PERS-31, due to not having exhausted administrative remedies regarding your request for correction of your awards.

7. On 28 September 2025, PERS-312 responded unfavorably to your award request, noting that they found no evidence to support that the ██████████ earned the VSM while you were aboard.

In your application to this Board, you express a desire for your discharge character of service be upgraded and contend that:

1. You reported onboard ██████████ in January 1975 and deployed off the coast of Vietnam.

2. You are eligible for the VSM based on your service onboard ██████████ while she was deployed in support of Vietnam combat support operations during March and April 1975.

3. You worked in the Combat Information Center controlling aircraft in Vietnam.

In support of application, you provided a witness statement from a shipmate who served aboard the ██████████ with you and publicly accessible information regarding the ██████████ deployment schedule relative to the Vietnam War.

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

Because your application involves a request for the VSM, the Board considered the AO from the NDBDM. The AO stated in pertinent part:

The VSM was “awarded to all members of the Armed Forces of the United States, serving at any time between 4 July 1965 and 28 March 1973, in the area defined under the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) for Vietnam.” The AFEM area is identical to the later-designated Vietnam combat zone.

The Petitioner’s claim that he served aboard ██████████ from Jan 1975 to Apr 1975 is contradicted by multiple documents within his OMPF. For example, there is a Report of Enlisted Performance Evaluation from the Operations Specialist “A” School in ██████████ covering the period 4 Dec 1974 to 28 Mar 1975.

Several other documents substantiate he did not detach from [REDACTED] until 28 Mar 1975. Some documents indicate he reported aboard [REDACTED] on 5 May 1975. He apparently remained assigned to [REDACTED] until his discharge on 18 Dec 1976.

[REDACTED] did not qualify for the VSM or any other military award from May 1975 to 18 Dec 1976. [REDACTED] was last awarded the VSM from 5 to 20 Dec 1972. Therefore, the Petitioner does not merit the VSM for his service aboard [REDACTED].

Regardless of the exact date of his reporting aboard [REDACTED] in 1975, the Petitioner would not merit the VSM. The window of eligibility for the VSM ended on 28 Mar 1973.

The AO concluded, "We concluded the Petitioner is not entitled to the VSM and found no evidence of material error or injustice. Therefore, we recommend BCNR deny relief. Were BCNR to grant relief in this case by authorizing the VSM, such action would be inconsistent with the criteria and standards applied to all other Service Members."

After thorough review of all available documentation, the Board found insufficient evidence that you were onboard the [REDACTED] in April 1975. Since the [REDACTED] eligibility for the AFEM ended at the end of April 1975, the Board concurred with the AO that your service aboard the [REDACTED] was not eligible AFEM. Further, since the window for the VSM closed on 28 March 1973, the concurred with the AO that you were also not eligible for the VSM.

Accordingly, given the totality of available evidence of record, the Board determined that your request does not merit relief.

Notwithstanding the Board's decision in this case, it extended its deepest gratitude for your selfless and faithful service to this nation.

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,

4/8/2026

[REDACTED]