



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON DC 20370-5100

CRS
Docket No: 5605-01
30 July 2001

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, Section 1552.

A three-member panel of the Board for Correction of Naval Records, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 24 July 2001. 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, your naval record and applicable statutes, regulations and policies.

After careful and conscientious consideration of the entire record, the Board found that the evidence submitted was insufficient to establish the existence of probable material error or injustice.

The Board found that you enlisted in the Marine Corps on 1 April 1969 at age 18. The record reflects that you received nonjudicial punishment and were convicted by a summary court-martial. The offenses included unauthorized absences totalling more than 14 days and breaking restriction.

On 1 December 1970 you submitted a written request for an undesirable discharge in order to avoid trial by court-martial for an unauthorized absence of 228 days. Prior to submitting this request you conferred with a qualified military lawyer at which time you were advised of your rights and warned of the probable adverse consequences of accepting such a discharge. Your request was granted and, as a result of this action, you were spared the stigma of a court-martial conviction and the potential penalties of a punitive discharge and confinement at hard labor. You received an undesirable discharge on 21 December 1970.

In its review of your application the Board carefully weighed all

potentially mitigating factors, such as your youth and immaturity and the contention that you were told that the discharge would be upgraded after six months. However, the Board found that these factors were not sufficient to warrant recharacterization of your discharge given your request for discharge to avoid trial for an unauthorized absence of more than seven months. The Board also noted that you had prior disciplinary actions. The Board believed that considerable clemency was extended to you when your request to avoid trial by court-martial was approved since, by this action, you escaped the possibility of confinement at hard labor and a punitive discharge. Further, the Board concluded that you received the benefit of your bargain when your request for discharge was granted and should not be permitted to change it now. In this regard, no law or military regulation provides for upgrading a discharge based solely on the passage of time. Accordingly, your application has been denied. The names and votes of the members of the panel will be furnished upon request.

It is regretted that the circumstances of your case are such that favorable action cannot be taken. You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon submission of new and material evidence or other matter not previously 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,

W. DEAN PFEIFFER
Executive Director