

MARINE CORPS SEPARATION AND RETIREMENT MANUAL

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION CONCERNING THE REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES
OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS (BCNR)
AND THE NAVAL DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD (NDRB)

D001. The Board for Correction of Naval Records (BCNR), consisting of not less than three members, was established pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1552, and considers all applications properly before it for the purpose of determining the existence of an error or an injustice, and to make appropriate recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy. Application may be made by the member or former member, or such other persons as the board determines to be competent for such purpose. The Board for Correction of Naval Records, unlike the Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB), may review discharges awarded by a general court-martial. Other types of cases reviewed by the board include, but are not limited to: those involving requests for physical disability retirement; the cancellation of a physical disability discharge, and substituting, in lieu thereof, retirement for disability; an increase in the percentage of physical disability; the removal of derogatory material from an official record; the review of nonjudicial punishment; and the restoration of rank, grade, or rating. Also, this board will review the case of a person who is in a Reserve component and who contends that the release from active duty should have been honorable, rather than general (under honorable conditions)

The law requires that application be filed with the Board for Correction of Naval Records within three years of the date of the discovery of the error or injustice. However, the board is authorized to excuse the fact that the application was filed at a later date, if it finds it to be in the interest of justice to consider the application. The board is empowered to deny an application without a hearing, if it determines that there is insufficient evidence to indicate the existence of probable material error or injustice to the applicant.

No application will be considered by the board until the applicant has exhausted all other effective administrative remedies afforded by existing law or regulations, and such other legal remedies as the board shall determine are practical and appropriately available to the applicant.

An application to the board for the correction of a record shall not operate as a stay of any proceedings being taken with respect to the person involved. The board will consider the applicant's case on the basis of all the material before it, including but not limited to: the application for correction filed by the applicant, any documentary evidence filed in support of such applications, any brief submitted by or in behalf of the applicant, and all available pertinent records in the Department of the Navy. The applicant's service record is but one of the records which may be considered by the board.

In cases other than denied applications, the record of proceedings of the board will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Navy, who will direct such actions as determined to be appropriate.

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In connection with review of executed discharges by the Board for Correction of Naval Records, there is no law or regulation which provides that an unfavorable discharge may be changed to a more favorable discharge solely because of the expiration of a period of time after discharge during which the respondent's behavior has been exemplary. To permit relief, an error or injustice must be found to have existed during the period of the enlistment in question and the respondent's good conduct after discharge, in and of itself, is not sufficient to warrant changing an unfavorable discharge to a more favorable type of discharge.

Applications for review and explanatory matter may be obtained by writing the Board for Correction of Naval Records, Department of the Navy, Washington, DC 20370-5100.

D002. The Naval Discharge Review Board (NDRB), consisting of five members, was established pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1553, to review, on its own motion; or upon the request of any former member of the Navy or Marine Corps; or in the case of a deceased member of the Navy or Marine Corps, upon the request of the surviving spouse, next of kin, or legal representative, or if incompetent by the member's guardian; the type and nature of final discharge to determine whether or not, under reasonable standards of naval law and discipline, the type and nature of the discharge should be changed, corrected, or modified, and if so, to decide what modification should be made. The board may also issue a new discharge in accordance with the facts presented to it.

The NDRB may review all final separations from the naval service, irrespective of the manner evidenced or brought about, except a discharge awarded by a general court-martial, or a discharge executed more than 15 years before date of review application. Such review is based on all available records of the Department of the Navy pertaining to the former member and such evidence as may be presented or obtained by the board.

NDRB has no authority to revoke any discharge; nor to reinstate any person in the military service subsequent to discharge; nor to recall any person to active duty; nor to waive prior disqualifying discharges to permit enlistment in the naval service or any other branch of the Armed Forces; nor to cancel enlistment contracts; nor to change the reason for discharge from or to physical disability; nor to determine eligibility for veterans benefits. Relevant and material facts germane to the former member concerned found by a general or special court-martial, or by a court of inquiry or board of investigation where the former member was in the status of a defendant or an interested party, as approved by the reviewing authorities, shall be accepted by the board as established facts in the absence of manifest error or unusual circumstances clearly justifying a different conclusion. Relevant and material facts stated in a specification to which the former member concerned pleaded guilty before a general or special court-martial, or where, upon being confronted by such a specification, the former member elected to request discharge for the good of the service, shall be accepted by the board as

established facts in the absence of manifest error or unusual circumstances clearly justifying a different conclusion, or unless the former member shall

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show to the board's satisfaction, or it shall otherwise appear, that arbitrary or coercive action was taken against the member at the time, which action was not apparent to the reviewing authority from the face of the record.

The evidence before the board which may be considered in connection with a particular discharge document will normally be restricted to that which is relevant and material to the former member's particular term of Marine Corps service or during that term of Marine Corps service, or at the time of separation.

To warrant a change, correction, or modification of the original document evidencing separation from the Marine Corps, the former member concerned must show to the satisfaction of the board, or it must otherwise satisfactorily appear, that the original document was improperly or inequitably issued under standards of naval law and discipline existing at the time of the former member's original separation, or under such standards differing therefrom in the former member's favor which subsequent to separation, were made expressly retroactive to separations of the type and character had by the former member.

In connection with review of executed discharges by the NDRB, there is no law or regulation which provides that an unfavorable discharge may be changed to a more favorable discharge solely because of the expiration of a period of time after discharge during which the respondent's behavior has been exemplary. To permit relief, an error or injustice must be found to have existed during the period of the enlistment in question and the respondent's good conduct after discharge, in and of itself, is not sufficient to warrant changing an unfavorable discharge.

Applications for review and general information may be obtained by writing to the Naval Discharge Review Board, 801 North Randolph Street, Arlington, VA 22203-1989.

D003. Statement of the Individual

I have been advised of the purpose and procedure for making application to the Board for Correction of Naval Records and the Naval Discharge Review Board.

I have also been advised that a discharge under other than honorable conditions resulting from a period of continuous unauthorized absence of 180 days or more, is a conditional bar to benefits administered by the Veterans Administration notwithstanding any action by the Naval Discharge Review Board.

Witness

Signature