

DD Form 214: Understanding the Military Separation Paper



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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DD Form 214, Discharge Papers and Separation Documents

A **Report of Separation** is generally issued when a service member performs *active duty or at least 90 consecutive days of active duty training or retired, resigns or term of enlistment is at an end.*

The Report of Separation contains information normally needed to verify military service for benefits, retirement, employment and membership in veterans' organizations. Information shown on the Report of Separation may include the service member's:

- ❖ Date and place of entry into active duty
- ❖ Home address at time of entry
- ❖ Date and place of release from active duty
- ❖ Home address after separation
- ❖ Last duty assignment and rank
- ❖ Military job specialty
 - Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)
- ❖ Military education
- ❖ Decorations, medals, badges, citations and campaign awards received
- ❖ Total creditable service
- ❖ Foreign service credited
- ❖ Separation information (date and type of separation, character of service, authority and reason for separation and separation and reenlistment eligibility codes)

The report of separation form issued in most recent years known as the **DD-214**, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

If you have never been in the military, it may be a little confusing as to how to read a **DD-214**. These are actually not very hard to read, and can be instrumental in a veteran's opportunities associated with it.

Copies of DD-214

Service members are given the option of accepting the edited, unedited or both copies upon separation. The **National Personnel Records Center** is the government agency tasked with replacing lost and destroyed [DD-214s](#) upon request from a veteran.

Requested copies are mailed from the **Military Personnel Records Center**.

The most important copy of the **DD 214** for the individual is the "**Member 4**" copy. **It is the standard form needed to obtain benefits such as GI Bill or government employment priority.**

The "**Service 2**" copy contains information as to the nature and type of discharge, and the re-enlistment code. This code is used to determine whether or not the service member can go back into the service.

For unemployment benefits, veterans affairs benefits, as well as for several other services, the "**Member's Copy 4**" is usually needed.

An identical copy to the "Service 2", the "Member 4", is provided directly to the service member upon release from active duty.

The military **will not** provide a replacement "**Member's Copy 4**" (it is the service member's personal copy) and any request for a **replacement is always honored by providing a "Service 2" copy.**

Corrections

The DD Form 215 ("Correction to DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty") is used to correct errors or additions to a DD Form 214 discovered after the original had been delivered and/or distribution had been made. It is distributed in the same manner as the DD Form 214.

DD-214 stands for Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty.

This job aid will make reading and understanding the **DD-214** a little easier by providing an explanation for each box.

Box 1: is for the full name of the service member

Box 2: the department, component and branch assigned to

Box 3: social security number of the veteran

Box 4 A-B: for grade, rate or rank and pay grade

Box 5: date of birth

Box 6: date of obligation termination

Boxes 7- 9: Time in service information

Box 10: information on service member group life insurance coverage (if applicable)

Box 11: lists all the primary specialties the service member held while in the service and time spent on those specialties.

Box 12: time accrued by type of service

Boxes 13 - 14: : list all the awards, decorations, and education the service member received while in active duty

Box 15: This information is **optional**

Box 16: shows leave accrued

Box 17: ensures adequate dental care for service member before separation

Box 18: explanation for separation

Box 19A-B: Service member post separation mailing address, and the name and contact information of nearest relative

Box 20: this box will determine if the member had a copy sent to the Director of Veteran Affairs in his or hers state or region

A: this box determines if the member requested to have a copy sent to the Central Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington DC

Box 21 A: Service member signature

B: date

Box 22 A: Official Authorized to sign; it must include their name typed, grade, title and their signature

B: date

FYI: make sure to check the two signatures in boxes 21A & 22A to ensure the form is official

DD Form 214

CAUTION: NOT TO BE USED FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES		THIS IS AN IMPORTANT RECORD. SAFEGUARD IT.		ANY ALTERATIONS IN SHADED AREAS RENDER FORM VOID	
CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE OR DISCHARGE FROM ACTIVE DUTY This Report Contains Information Subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, As Amended.					
1. NAME (Last, First, Middle) S		2. DEPARTMENT, COMPONENT AND BRANCH		3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
4a. GRADE, RATE OR RANK	b. PAY GRADE	5. DATE OF BIRTH (YYYYMMDD)	6. RESERVE OBLIGATION TERMINATION DATE (YYYYMMDD)		
7a. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE DUTY		b. HOME OF RECORD AT TIME OF ENTRY (City and state, or complete address if known)			
8a. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND A			b. STATION WHERE SEPARATED		
9. COMMAND TO WHICH TRANSFERRED				10. SGLI COVERAGE <input type="checkbox"/> NONE AMOUNT: \$	
11. PRIMARY SPECIALTY (List number, title and years and months in specialty. List additional specialty numbers and titles involving periods of one or more years.) M		12. RECORD OF SERVICE		YEAR(S)	MONTH(S)
		a. DATE ENTERED AD THIS PERIOD			
		b. SEPARATION DATE THIS PERIOD			
		c. NET ACTIVE SERVICE THIS PERIOD			
		d. TOTAL PRIOR ACTIVE SERVICE			
		e. TOTAL PRIOR INACTIVE SERVICE			
		f. FOREIGN SERVICE			
		g. SEA SERVICE			
		h. INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING			
i. EFFECTIVE DATE OF PAY GRADE					
13. DECORATIONS, MEDALS, BADGES, CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS AWARDED OR AUTHORIZED (All periods of service)		14. MILITARY EDUCATION (Course title, number of weeks, and month and year completed) P			
15a. COMMISSIONED THROUGH SERVICE ACADEMY			YES	NO	
b. COMMISSIONED THROUGH ROTC SCHOLARSHIP (10 USC Sec. 2107a)			YES	NO	
c. ENLISTED UNDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (10 USC Chap. 109) (If Yes, years of commitment,)			YES	NO	
16. DAYS ACCRUED LEAVE PAID	17. MEMBER WAS PROVIDED COMPLETE DENTAL EXAMINATION AND ALL APPROPRIATE DENTAL SERVICES AND TREATMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS PRIOR TO SEPARATION			YES	NO
18. REMARKS L The information contained herein is subject to computer matching within the Department of Defense or with any other affected Federal or non-Federal agency for verification purposes and to determine eligibility for, and/or continued compliance with, the requirements of a Federal benefit program.					
19a. MAILING ADDRESS AFTER SEPARATION (Include ZIP Code)			b. NEAREST RELATIVE (Name and address, include ZIP Code) E		
20. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 5 BE SENT TO (Specify state/locality) OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS				YES	NO
a. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 3 BE SENT TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (WASHINGTON, DC)				YES	NO
21a. MEMBER SIGNATURE	b. DATE (YYYYMMDD)	22a. OFFICIAL AUTHORIZED TO SIGN (Typed name, grade, title, signature)		b. DATE (YYYYMMDD)	

DD FORM 214, AUG 2009

PREVIOUS EDITION IS OBSOLETE

MEMBER - 1

How to spot a **FAKE DD-214**:

- ❖ Read the entire DD-214 to look for misspellings. Misspellings are one sign of a fraudulent document.
- ❖ Match the "[Term of Service](#)" with the decorations, medals, badges and education earned. For example, if the troop was ranger qualified but has no education, such as a ranger school and advanced infantry class, this is probably a fake document.
- ❖ Ask the person listed for his discharge reason. Make sure the reason is the same as the one listed on the DD-214. If it is a male, for example, and his discharge code is JGA, this is a fake document, because JGA is a code for pregnancy. Or use the resources at hand such as the Department of Veterans' Services: [Department of Veterans](#)
- ❖ Look over the form for different fonts. The DD-214 should have one consistent font. Some fraudsters white out legitimate information from a real DD-214, then re-enter fake information but fail to match the font exactly.
- ❖ The military will not provide a replacement "Member's Copy 4" (it is the service member's personal copy) and **any request for a replacement is always honored by providing a "Service 2" copy.**
- ❖ As a last recourse seek written permission from the veteran to request his/her DD-214 from the Government. The letter must include the full name, service number, date and place of birth, dates of services, branch of service and social security number. Mail the letter with **Form 180 "Request Pertaining to Military Records"** to: **the National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138, or fax it to 314-801-9195.**

The center will send the **DD-214** directly to you. Please be aware this process can take months or you may contact the Department of Veteran's Services for assistance.

FYI:

The **DD Form 214/215** is prepared in eight copies and distributed as follows:

- Copy 1 – Service Member
- Copy 2 – Service Personnel File
- Copy 3 – United States Department of Veterans Affairs
- Copy 4 – Member (if initialed in Block 30)
- Copy 5 – United States Department of Labor
- Copy 6 – State Director of Veteran Affairs

Copy 7 & 8 – Distributed in accordance with Military Service Department directions.

Resources:

<http://www.massvetsadvisor.org/>

[Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services](#)

CPoppe@MassMail.State.MA.US

Michael.Howard@MassMail.State.MA.US

http://www.dd214.us/reference/SPN_Codes.pdf

<http://www.military.com/>

<http://www.army.mil>

Special Thanks to:

Pauline Christopher

Pauline.Christopher@massmail.state.ma.us

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Maria D. Gonzalez

Maria.D.Gonzalez@State.MA.US

Office of Access & Opportunity

Frederick Goode, III

Commonwealth Diversity Fellows Program

Class of 2012

Michael Howard

Michael.Howard@Massmail.state.ma.us

Massachusetts State Police

Cheryl Poppe

CPoppe@MassMail.State.MA.US

Department of Veterans Services