
DD Form 214: Issue upon Retirement/Separation from the Reserve Component

ROA urges Congress to direct all members retiring from the reserve component to receive a DD Form 214 or, if already retired, upon request by the service member, family or legally recognized entity.

ROA urges Congress to direct DoD to establish an e-DD Form 214 that is automatically populated from the military personnel system for servicemembers to access when needed; eliminating the need for an “issued” DD Form 214.

With the global demand not abating for Reserve Component (Reserves and National Guard) members, more and more citizen warriors are called to duty to fill personnel gaps for active duty forces. Since the Active and Reserve Components are treated equally in terms of the “Total Force” concept, it is important that all members, past and present, be treated equally with the DD 214. This, however, is not the case when for issuing a DD 214 to RC servicemembers.

Currently not all Reserve Component members receive a DD 214 or National Guard Bureau (NGB) Form 22 when they are separated, discharged, or retire from military service. This is a problem for RC members because the VA and other federal and state government agencies normally require veterans to provide a copy of one of these forms to qualify for veteran benefits.

Complicating this issue was the fire in 1973 at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in Overland, Missouri that destroyed 80%, or 16-18 million files, of the official military personnel records. The NPRC is the federal custodian of military service records for U.S. military service members and where servicemembers would go to get a copy of their DD 214.

According to VA Pamphlet 26-7, “There is no one form used by the Reserves or National Guard that is similar to a DD Form 214,” that meets “Proof of Service Requirements” (Chapter 2).

Military personnel systems are sophisticated to the point that an electronic DD Form 214 could be updated every time the personnel system updates corresponding service data to include, medals, promotions, specialties, orders, etc. This approach would also benefit the active duty.

By streamlining the DD Form 214 service statement for Reserve Component members, all current and former service members will receive credit for their honorable service to our nation.

Proposed Change Title 10 U.S. Code § 1168:

Discharge or release from active duty: limitations

- (a) A member of an armed force may not be discharged or released from active duty **or active status**
- (b) until his discharge certificate or certificate of release from active duty **or active status**, respectively, and his final pay or a substantial part of that pay, are ready for delivery to him or his next of kin or legal representative. (b) This section does not prevent the immediate transfer of a member to a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs for necessary hospital care.

Supported by *DD Form 214 Issued upon Separation from the Reserve Component*, ROA Resolution No. 17-04.