

How to Read a DD Form 214 Block by Block

The DD Form 214 is broken down into blocks. Each one requires a specific piece of information, starting with the first block for the service member's full legal name and ending with Block #30, indicating whether or not the service member has requested the full, unredacted "Member 4" copy of the DD Form 214.

There are other variations on this form, but most users will need the Member 4 copy when submitting benefits claims and other paperwork.

What follows is a block-by-block explanation of the DD Form 214 from Block 1 to Block 30.

1. Name: The full legal name of the veteran.

2. Department, component and branch: This block includes whether the member was active, Guard or Reserve, as well as the branch or branches of service served in.

3. Social Security number: ex. 123-45-6789

4a. Grade, rate or rank: Grade or rank held at close-out date of DD Form 214. This data should not be confused with the primary specialty (the military job of the veteran), which is found in Block 11. Grade, rate or rank in this case refers to the service member's rank (Airman, sergeant, staff sergeant, chief master sergeant, etc.).

4b. Pay grade: Military pay grades are the equivalent numerical rating for the grade in 4a. A staff sergeant's pay grade is E-5, which means the pay grade is an enlisted one (hence the "E") and "staff sergeant" is the rank.

5. Date of birth: ex. 1960/09/01

6. Reserve obligation termination date: Most new recruits sign up for an eight-year obligation. Not all of those eight years must be spent on active duty, but when the veteran's DD-214 shows a Reserve obligation code of "00000000," it means the veteran has met the full eight-year requirement.

7a. Place of entry into active duty: The place of acceptance in the current enlistment, commission or appointment of an active service member or for a service member, when enlisted, commissioned or appointed for immediate active duty (address on their AD orders).

7b. Home of record at time of entry: Hometown city and state upon entry to military service.

8a. Last duty assignment and major command: Shows where the final duty station was located and what jurisdiction it falls under.

8b. Station where separated: Military installation where the separation documents were prepared for retirement or separation from the military.

9. Command to which transferred: Where applicable, ex. U.S. Army Control Group, St. Louis, MO

10. SGLI coverage amount: Where applicable, ex. \$400,000 or an "X" in the none box.

11. Primary specialty: These codes are service-specific and reflect the veteran's branch of service. The codes identify the military member's career field and skill level where reported. Coding will also differ with officer and enlisted personnel, ex. Army: 13A Field Artillery (commissioned officer).

12 (a-i). Record of Service:

- 12a: Active Duty (EAD) for the last period of time the DD Form 214 is published, of continuous active duty, current tour or date ordered into EAD.
- 12b: Date when separation from AD is effective.
- 12c: Years, months and days of service between the dates shown in 12b and 12a, less time lost.
- 12d: Total of all active military service before the current period of continuous active service.
- 12e: Total of all inactive service –e.g., Guard and Reserve components not on active duty orders, delayed enlistment program (DEP) prior to 1985, Reserve Officer Training corps (ROTC) time between commissioning and day before EAD, disenrolled ROTC up to EAD, disenrolled academy from the time placed in leave without -ay (LWOP).
- 12f: Total foreign service during continuous active military service for the period of time the DD Form 214 is published.
- 12g: Time assigned to a ship during the current period of continuous active service.
- 12h: Date entered active duty for the last period of time the DD Form 214 is published.
- 12i: Effective date of active-duty grade held at separation (item 4b).

Note: c, d, and e are used to help calculate total military service. For example, f. Foreign Service: 10 months, 13 days (time spent overseas for purposes of this DD214)

g. Sea Service: Sample shows N/A – could be applicable to Navy and USMC service

h. Effective date of pay grade: Person attained current rank as of 7/17/1997

13. Decorations, medals, badges, citations and campaign ribbons awarded or authorized: Decorations, unit awards, badges and service awards for all periods of service up to the effective date of the DD Form 214.

14. Military education: Military professional education and formal in-service training courses such as NCO School, the Community College of the Air Force, senior non-commissioned officer training, basic military training, etc.

15. Commission/enlistment: Indicating whether the veteran was commissioned through a service academy, ROTC scholarship or loan repayment program.

16. Days accrued leave paid: Indicating the veteran was or was not paid for unused military leave. "0" indicates zero or negative balance.

17. Dental block: Indicates whether the veteran was offered a separation examination and treatment completed within 90 days of separation, retirement or release. This is also known as a final-out dental exam.

18. Remarks: This section contains a variety of information about various aspects of service, including whether danger pay was received, use of the delayed enlistment [rogram, whether the veteran is entitled to certain pay or allowances upon separation, etc.

19a. Mailing address after separation: Where the veteran wants all future correspondence to be sent after leaving the military. This must be a permanent address or a permanent address of someone who will forward mail to the member.

19b. Nearest relative: The nearest relative block is meant as a backup for correspondence, in case the service member's address becomes invalid. An entry of "not provided" may be entered if no other address is available or provided. The information is solely for the purpose of mailing a DD Form 214 and has no impact on benefits or entitlements.

20. Member requests Copy 6 be sent to: This block designates the state Office of Veterans Affairs the veteran wishes documentation forwarded to.

21a-b. Member signature and date: Signature and date blocks for official purposes. This block will be auto populated with "Member not available for signature" for all DD Forms 214 that are signed with a common access card by the certifying official.

22a-b. Official authorized to sign and date: Signature and date blocks for official purposes.

Note: Sections 23-30, "[Character of Discharge](#)," can only be found on long form or undeleted copies of the DD214. Service 2 copy and Member 4 copy are the long-form copies.

23. Type of Separation: Discharge, administrative separation or other types are listed here.

24. [Character of service](#): Types of military discharges (e.g.. honorable, dishonorable, etc.)

25. Separation authority: This block is used to quote the regulations justifying the separation.

26. [Separation code](#): Used in conjunction with Blocks 23, 24 and 28 for internal use only. See the [separation codes](#) and [separation program numbers](#) that have been previously released.

27. [Re-entry code](#): Enlisted eligibility for re-entry to military service. See the [re-enlistment codes](#) for each branch of service.

28. Narrative reason for separation: This block offers a brief explanation for the reasons leaving military service. Can include parenthood, retirement, education, hardship, etc.

29. Dates of time lost during this period: Any lost-time issues are listed here, including any period of being absent without leave (AWOL).

30. Member requests Copy 4: A block indicating the veteran's request to receive the Member 4 version of 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)		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		b. STATION WHERE SEPARATED	
9. COMMAND TO WHICH TRANSFERRED			10. SGLI COVERAGE AMOUNT: \$ <input type="checkbox"/> NONE
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.) A		12. RECORD OF SERVICE	
		a. DATE ENTERED AD THIS PERIOD	YEAR(S) MONTH(S) DAY(S)
		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 same)		14. MILITARY EDUCATION (Course title, number of weeks, and month and year completed)	
M			
15a. COMMISSIONED THROUGH SERVICE ACADEMY		YES	NO
b. COMMISSIONED THROUGH ROTC SCHOLARSHIP (10 USC Sec. 2107b)		YES	NO
c. ENLISTED UNDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (10 USC Chap. 109) (If Yes, year 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			
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)	
20. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 6 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
21.a. MEMBER SIGNATURE	b. DATE (YYYYMMDD)	22.a. OFFICIAL AUTHORIZED TO SIGN (Typed name, grade, title, signature)	b. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
		E	

SPECIAL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (For use by authorized agencies only)			
23. TYPE OF SEPARATION		24. CHARACTER OF SERVICE (Include upgrades)	
25. SEPARATION AUTHORITY		26. SEPARATION CODE	27. REENTRY CODE
28. NARRATIVE REASON FOR SEPARATION			
29. DATES OF TIME LOST DURING THIS PERIOD (YYYYMMDD)			30. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 4 (Initials)