

## Some Vets Denied Burial Honors

Some military veterans have not received full burial honors because they do not have their discharge documents when they died. Since 1950 the discharge form has been called DD Form 214. That document went by other names prior to 1950, but they all serve the same purpose. When a veteran dies, the family provides a copy of DD Form 214 or equivalent discharge documentation to the funeral home which uses it to arrange for an official U.S. flag, honor guard, grave marker and burial in a national cemetery, according to the veteran's service level and last wishes. But, problems can arise with veterans who do not have copies of their discharge certificates available at the time of death. For more information on obtaining a discharge form, contact your county's veterans services officer. Learn more about requesting a replacement of your [DD 214 Discharge Documents](#) and other military records.

### Replacing Military Records

Have you lost important military records and don't know how to replace them? Learn what to do if you lose your discharge, separation, or other papers.

If discharge or separation papers are lost, duplicate copies may be obtained by contacting the:

National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records  
9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO  
63132- 5100

Specify that a duplicate separation document or discharge is needed. The veteran's full name should be printed or typed so that it can be read clearly, but the request must also contain the signature of the veteran or the signature of the next of kin, if the veteran is deceased. Include branch of service, service number or Social Security number and exact or approximate dates and years of service. Use Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining To Military Records," available from our site (see instructions below), VA offices or at the VA forms web site (<http://www.va.gov/vaforms>). It is not necessary to request a duplicate copy of a veteran's discharge or separation papers solely for the purpose of filing a claim for VA benefits.

### Standard Form 180 and Replacing Records

Fortunately, the paperwork involved in requesting records replacement is relatively simple. The process is as follows:

First, get a copy of [Standard Form 180](#), Request For Military Records. It is not necessary to request a duplicate copy of a veteran's discharge or separation papers solely for the purpose of filing a claim for VA benefits. Remember to either type or print on the form. Fill in the individual's name, social security number, and date and place of

birth in section 1, blocks 1 through 4.

Provide the dates of service in the applicable spaces in section 1, block 5.

Indicate whether or not the individual is deceased in section 1, block 6.

Indicate whether or not the person retired from the military in section 1, block 7.

In section 2, indicate which medals need to be replaced.

Record a return address and then sign section 3. Only the service member, guardian, or next of kin may sign this form.

If possible, include a copy of the discharge or separation document, WDAGO Form 53-55 or DD Form 214.

Mail the completed form and supplementary documents to the appropriate address, as detailed on the back of SF 180.

The National Archives and Records Administration receives many requests, and a response may take six months or more. If complete information about the veteran's service is furnished on the application, VA will obtain verification of service from the National Personnel Records Center or the service department concerned. In a medical emergency, information from a veteran's records may be obtained by phoning the appropriate service:

Marine Corps, Navy, or Coast Guard, 314-538-4141.

Army, 314-538-4261

Air Force, 314- 538-4243