

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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## California Veteran Reintegration Program Fact Sheet DD 214 and Military Records

Veterans or their next of kin who need assistance in obtaining service records, a DD 214, or replacement awards and medals must formally request them through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). The NPRC is the records custodian for most discharged and retired members of all branches of service. The fastest way to obtain a copy is through their website, at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/>. Expect a two to three week wait to receive requested records.

Records can also be requested by mailing or faxing a Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records to:

The National Personnel Records Center  
1 Archives Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63138  
(314) 801-9195 (F)

The SF-180 is also available at [CalVet District Offices](#) or at the local [County Veterans Service Office](#). The form may also be obtained by fax from the NPRC by calling (301) 837-0990. Follow the directions given and request document number 2255.

Records requests must contain certain basic information, including:

- The veteran's complete name used while in service;
- Service number;
- Social security number;
- Branch of service;
- Dates of service;
- Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).

If the veteran's records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, the following information must also be included:

- Place of discharge;
- Last unit of assignment;
- Place of entry into the service, if known.

All requests must be signed and dated by the veteran or next-of-kin.

HONORING CALIFORNIA'S VETERANS

## **CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS**

Regardless of military status, veterans who feel there is an error or injustice in their military personnel records can apply for a correction through their service's Board for the Correction of Military Records. These requests must be filed within three years of discovery of the error or injustice. This process may not be used to request an upgrade of a veteran's discharge; that is discussed in the following section.

Any person with military records, or his or her heirs or legal representative, may apply to the appropriate service's Board for the Correction of Military Records. The Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard have separate boards. The Navy operates the board for both Navy personnel and members of the United States Marine Corps.

Applying for a correction to military records is a simple process; however, it is highly recommend that the services of your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) be used. Veterans who choose to do it for themselves must use DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record, attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case, sign item 16, and mail the completed form to the appropriate address on the back side of the form.

The Board will correct the military records only if it can be proven that the veteran was the victim of error or injustice by providing evidence, such as signed statements from the veteran and other witnesses, or copies of records that support the case. The Board will not contact witnesses; but will review their signed statements if submitted with a veteran's request.

## **APPLYING FOR REVIEW OF DISCHARGE**

Veterans must make their application for discharge upgrade within 15 years of discharge. If the veteran's discharge is older than 15 years, the veteran must apply for a change to military records using the process detailed in the previous section. The County Veterans Service Office is available to help veterans through this process; however, if veterans choose to do these themselves, they must use a DD Form 293, Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States. The DD Form 293 is available online or from most DoD installations.

Attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case, sign item 9 of the form, and mail the completed form to the appropriate address on the back side of the form. The Board will upgrade the discharge only if the veteran can prove that your discharge is inequitable or improper by providing evidence, such as signed statements from the veteran and other witnesses or copies of records that support the case. It is not enough to provide the names of witnesses. The Board will not contact witnesses to obtain statements. The veteran should contact witnesses to get their signed statements to submit with their request.

A veteran's personal statement is important. It should be written clearly and concisely in section 8 of DD Form 293. Carefully read the instructions on the back of the form concerning issues. Explain what happened and why it is improper or inequitable.