



How to Identify Military Veterans and Service Members

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- 1) **How to find out if someone is on active duty.** Usually it will come out right away that an individual is in the military. To verify they are in the military ask them for their military identification card. An example is provided below. They are now called the Common Access Card (CAC). The CAC, a "smart" card about the size of a credit card, is the standard identification for active-duty military personnel, Selected Reserve, DoD civilian employees, and eligible contractor personnel. It is also the principal card used to enable physical access to buildings and controlled spaces, and it provides access to defense computer networks and systems. The expiration date will help you determine whether the individual is currently on active duty.



Another way to determine whether someone is on active duty is to use the Defense Manpower Data Center's (DMDC) Military Verification Service. Provisions of the Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA) allow access to this information. The website is: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/scraHome.do> (a copy of the form is attached as Appendix A).

You will need the individuals full name, social security number and date of birth. When the check is performed you will be able to obtain written documentation that the individual is in the military and it will contain the Department of Defense seal and signature.

The result of the search is a Military Status Report (see Appendix B). This form can be submitted to the court as verification of current active military service.

* Please note that you may be able to verify that the individual is in the military without their social security number but in that case the Department of Defense cannot authoritatively assert that they are a member of the armed forces.

- 2) **How to find out where someone is serving on active duty.** It is also a good idea to find out where the service member's duty station is located. Each branch of the military has a locator service. The addresses are listed below. The locator service is free to immediate family members and government officials. Everyone else must pay a \$3.50 non-refundable

fee. Checks are to be made out to the U.S. Treasury. Information for the locator services is located at: <http://www.defense.gov/faq/pis/PC04MLTR.html>.

United States Army:

Due to security reasons, the Army has closed their World-Wide Locator Service to the general public. To access the Army locator, you now need an Army Knowledge Online account (that means you need to be a member of the Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserves, Army Retired member, or an Army Dependent).

Other requests to locate active duty Army members are handled on a case-by-case basis. Send your written requests to:

Commander
U.S. Army Enlisted Records & Evaluation Center
ATTN: Locator
8899 East 56th Street
Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN 46249-5301
1-866-771-6357

United States Navy:

Navy World Wide Locator
Navy Personnel Command
PERS 312F
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055-3120

United States Marine Corps:

Commandant of the Marine Corps
Headquarters, USMC
Code MMSB-10
Quantico, VA 22134-5030

United States Air Force:

HQ AFMPC/RMIQL
550 C Street, West, Suite 50
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4752

- 3) **How to determine whether an individual is a veteran.** The Veterans Sentencing Mitigation Statute (Minnesota Statute § 609.115, Subd 10) only says that the court has to inquire as to “whether the defendant is ... a veteran of the armed forces of the United States.” The term “veteran” means a citizen of the United States or a resident alien who has been separated under honorable conditions from any branch of the armed forces of the United States if (please note that an honorable discharge is not required under this statute):

- he or she has either served on active duty for 24 months of continuous active duty service, or
- has been disabled while serving on active duty, or
- has active service as a reservist.

In all cases, the United States Secretary of Defense must certify the active service and the honorable discharge of the veteran. This is normally done by submission of Department of Defense Form 214 (DD 214) – Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (see Appendix C).

** In 2009 the Minnesota Legislature created a new law in which Minnesota veterans may elect to have “Veteran” listed on their Minnesota driver’s license. Qualified veterans will need to provide a copy of their DD 214 for verification of their veteran status.*

- 4) **How to obtain a copy of a DD 214.** The Department of Defense Form 214 (DD 214) - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty is the document you will need to provide proof of military service. Upon release from active duty a veteran is given several copies of this form. A veteran uses this document throughout the rest of their life to gain access to veterans’ benefits. It can provide proof for the following:

- Proof of military service for employers, the VA, and the Social Security Administration
- Proof of service in a combat zone
- Proof of assignment to a particular unit or ship
- Identify and verify authorized awards and decorations
- Retirement benefits (if applicable)
- Government employment preferences
- Membership in veterans’ organizations

If the individual does not have a copy of their DD 214 you will need to obtain one for them. You can request a copy of the DD 214 from the National Personnel Records Center. The following website provides details for obtaining the DD 214: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/public/general-public.html>. There are specific procedures for assisting the veteran in obtaining the document. When making the request the following information is required:

- Full name of veteran
- Social security number
- Military service number (if applicable)
- Branch of service

- 5) **How to read a DD 214.** A Department of Defense Form 214 (DD 214) Report of Separation from the Armed Services of the United States is generally issued when a service member performs active duty or at least 90 consecutive days of active duty training. Information

shown on the DD 214 may include the service member's: (See Appendix C for a sample DD 214)

- Date and place of entry into active duty (Block 7.a)
- Home address at time of entry (Block 7.b)
- Date and place of release from active duty (Block 8.b)
- Home address after separation (Block 19.a)
- Last duty assignment (Block 8.a) and rank (Block 4.b)
- Military job specialty (Block 11)
- Military education (Block 14)
- Decorations, medals, badges, citations, and campaign awards (Block 13)
- Total creditable service (Block 12)
- Foreign service credited (Block 12.f)
- Separation information (type of separation, character of service, authority and reason for separation, separation and reenlistment eligibility codes) (Blocks 23 & 24)

The report of separation form issued in most recent years is the DD Form 214. Before January 1, 1950, several similar forms were used by the military services, including the WD AGO 53, WD AGO 55, WD AGO 53-55, NAVPERS 553, NAVMC 78PD, and the NAVCG 553.

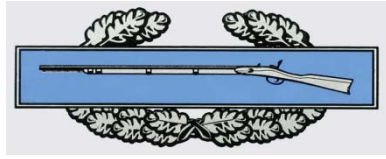
There are generally five types of discharges. They are as follows:

- Honorable
- General (under honorable conditions)
- Other than honorable
- Bad conduct discharge
- Dishonorable

Normally veterans' benefits and disability will depend on the type of discharge received. You will need to consult with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or one of the resources listed in Section 8 below to determine eligibility.

- 6) **How to determine whether a veteran is a combat veteran.** The most common way to determine whether a veteran has served in a combat zone is to look at Section 13 of the DD 214 – “Decorations, Medals, Badges, Citations and Campaign Ribbons Awarded or Authorized.” If a veteran has participated in direct combat the following medals or badges should be listed:

- Army: Combat Infantryman Badge – for infantryman



Combat Action Badge – for non-infantry



Combat Medical Badge



- Navy: Combat Action Ribbon



- Marine Corps: Combat Action Ribbon



- Air Force – Combat Action Medal (authorized as of March 15, 2007)



- Coast Guard: Combat Action Ribbon



You can determine where they participated in combat operations by looking in Section 18 of the DD 214. This section should say that they “served in a designated imminent danger pay area.” It should also indicate where they served (e.g. Service in Afghanistan from [date] to [date]). You can also look at the campaign medals such as the Iraq or Afghanistan Campaign medals for current conflict veterans. Please note that for women veterans determining whether or not they were in combat can be problematic because of the Combat Exclusion Law (women). While the exclusion has now been repealed it is still problematic to

determine if a women was in combat. (The sample provided in Appendix C shows that this veteran is a combat veteran of the war in Afghanistan)

7) **How to connect a veteran with the Department of Veteran Affairs.** If you have a veteran that comes through your door and you find out that they are currently not receiving health care (mental or physical) or disability benefits from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs there are several places you can contact. Below is a list of agencies and organizations:

- Vet Center. Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach to all veterans (you do not need to be qualified for VA benefits) who served in combat or who have been a victim of military sexual trauma regardless of combat. The Vet Center website is <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>.
- OEF/OIF Veterans. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs operates a special program for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Program. The OEF/OIF website is: <http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>. These programs are staffed around the country. They provide assistance in connecting veterans with a variety of benefits and services including, education benefits, health care, disability benefits and suicide prevention. (See Appendix E for an informational brochure)
- County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs). Each county in each State has at least one CVSO. They are also an excellent resource in obtaining benefits and services for a veteran. The website <http://nacvso.org/>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). With advancing technology the VA has built a very robust and valuable website. The website is located at: <http://www.va.gov/>. Veterans can now apply on-line for just about any type of benefit or service that is available to them. It is advisable, however, to contact one of the agencies listed above for detailed and assistance in successfully obtaining those benefits or services.
- Additional websites for veterans and service members:
 - Military OneSource
(<http://www.militaryonesource.com/home.aspx?MRole=&Branch=&Component=>)
 - State Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program
 - Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (<http://iava.org/>)
 - American Legion (<http://www.legion.org/>)
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars (<http://www.vfw.org/>)
 - Disable American Veterans (<http://www.dav.org/>)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR


John D. Baker is a partner at Baker Williams Law Firm in Minnesota where he represents veterans, service members and first responders in Minnesota and throughout the country. He is a consultant on military and legal issues to attorneys and the media throughout the United States. John chaired the initiative to start Veterans Courts in Minnesota and was named a Minnesota Attorney of the Year in 2010 for this work. He is an instructor with the Upper Midwest Community Policing Institute, teaching law enforcement nationwide about de-escalation tactics when dealing with veterans in crisis. He has two sons in the military.

John retired from the United States Marine Corps as a Gunnery Sergeant after serving twenty-two years in various infantry, artillery and administrative capacities in numerous locations within the United States and around the world. He graduated magna cum laude from Saint Cloud State University and is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law.



Appendix A – Sample Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA) Military Verification Form

[50 USC Appx. §§501 et seq. as amended]

The services provided on this site are FREE



Welcome to the Official
**Servicemembers Civil
Relief Act (SCRA) Website**



Home

Single Record Request

Multiple Record Requests

User's Guide

FAQs

News

My Account

Single Record Request

Use this page to request a Certificate verifying Active Duty Status for an individual on a specified date.

*** Indicates a required field**

* SSN

* Repeat SSN

* Birth Date

MM/DD/YYYY(e.g., 09/16/2012)

SSN
OR
Birth Date
Required

* Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

* Active Duty Status

Date

MM/DD/YYYY(Default will be today's date
e.g., 10/13/2014)

Clear

Submit

Tips & Notes

- Without a Social Security Number, DMDC cannot authoritatively assert that this is the same individual that your query refers to. Name and date of birth alone do not uniquely identify an individual.
- Check your data entry before submitting it.
- Response may take up to 15 seconds after clicking "Submit".

Resources

Download Adobe Reader

Unexpected results?

Appendix B – Sample Military Status Report



Status Report Pursuant to Servicemembers Civil Relief Act

Last Name: QUICKFirst Name: ALEXANDER

Middle Name:

Active Duty Status As Of: Oct-13-2014

On Active Duty On Active Duty Status Date			
Active Duty Start Date	Active Duty End Date	Status	Service Component
Apr-20-2005	Still Serving	Yes	Naval Active Duty
This response reflects the individual's active duty status based on the Active Duty Status Date			

Left Active Duty Within 287 Days of Active Duty Status Date			
Active Duty Start Date	Active Duty End Date	Status	Service Component
N/A	N/A	No	N/A
This response reflects whether the individual left active duty status within 287 days preceding the Active Duty Status Date			

The Member or Member Unit Was Notified of a Future Call-Up to Active Duty on Active Duty Status Date			
Order Notification Start Date	Order Notification End Date	Status	Service Component
N/A	N/A	No	N/A
This response reflects whether the individual or member unit has received early notification to report to active duty			

Upon searching the databases of the Department of Defense Manpower Data Center, based on the information that you provided, the above is the status of the individual on the active duty status date as to all branches of the Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, NOAA, Public Health, and Coast Guard). This status includes information on a Servicemember or Member unit receiving notification of the orders to report to Active Duty. HOWEVER, WITHOUT A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MANPOWER DATA CENTER CANNOT AUTHORITATIVELY ASSERT THAT THIS IS THE SAME INDIVIDUAL THAT YOUR QUERY REFERS TO. NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH ALONE DO NOT UNIQUELY IDENTIFY AN INDIVIDUAL.

Mary M. Snavely-Dixon

Mary M. Snavely-Dixon, Director
Department of Defense - Manpower Data Center
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 04 E25
Arlington, VA 22350

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

1. NAME (Last, First, Middle)		2. DEPARTMENT, COMPONENT AND BRANCH		3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
[REDACTED]		ARMY/RA		[REDACTED]	
4a. GRADE, RATE OR RANK	b. PAY GRADE	5. DATE OF BIRTH (YYYYMMDD)	6. RESERVE OBLIGATION TERMINATION DATE (YYYYMMDD)		
PV1	E01	[REDACTED]	00000000		
7a. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE DUTY		b. HOME OF RECORD AT TIME OF ENTRY (City and state, or complete address if known)			
PT SNELLING, MINNESOTA		1520 CHARLTON ST WEST ST PAUL, MINNESOTA 55108-0000			
8a. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND			b. STATION WHERE SEPARATED		
0001AR RECCE TRP R FC			FORT LEWIS, WA 98433-5000		
9. COMMAND TO WHICH TRANSFERRED			10. SGLI COVERAGE		
N/A			[] NONE AMOUNT: \$400,000.00		
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.)		12. RECORD OF SERVICE		YEAR(S)	MONTH(S)
19D10 D3 CAVALRY SCOUT - 3 YRS 3 MOS//NOTHING FOLLOWS		a. DATE ENTERED AD THIS PERIOD		2003	09
		b. SEPARATION DATE THIS PERIOD		2007	06
		c. NET ACTIVE SERVICE THIS PERIOD		0003	08
		d. TOTAL PRIOR ACTIVE SERVICE		0000	00
		e. TOTAL PRIOR INACTIVE SERVICE		0000	00
		f. FOREIGN SERVICE		0000	05
		g. SEA SERVICE		0000	00
		h. EFFECTIVE DATE OF PAY GRADE		2007	03
				20	
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)			
ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL//ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL//ARMY GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL//NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL//GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM SERVICE MEDAL//IRAQ CAMPAIGN MEDAL//ARMY SERVICE RIBBON//COMBAT ACTION BADGE//NOTHING FOLLOWS		BRADLEY FIGHTING VEHICLE OPERATOR/MAINTAINER CRS, 2 WEEKS, 2003//NOTHING FOLLOWS			
15a. MEMBER CONTRIBUTED TO POST-VIETNAM ERA VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM		YES		X	NO
b. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR EQUIVALENT		X		YES	NO
16. DAYS ACCRUED LEAVE PAID 21	17. MEMBER WAS PROVIDED COMPLETE DENTAL EXAMINATION AND ALL APPROPRIATE DENTAL SERVICES AND TREATMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS PRIOR TO SEPARATION		YES NO		
			X		
18. REMARKS					
CONTINUOUS HONORABLE ACTIVE SERVICE: 20030916-20051123//IMMEDIATE REENLISTMENTS THIS PERIOD -- 20051124-20070604//SELECTIVE REENLISTMENT BONUS PAID: \$10597.50, 20051124//SERVED IN A DESIGNATED IMMINENT DANGER PAY AREA//SERVICE IN IRAQ 20050921-20060305//MEMBER HAS COMPLETED FIRST FULL TERM OF SERVICE//OVERSEAS SERVICE BAR (1)//NOTHING FOLLOWS					
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)			
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]			
20. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 6 BE SENT TO		MN		DIRECTOR OF VETERANS AFFAIRS	
		X		YES NO	
21. SIGNATURE OF MEMBER BEING SEPARATED		22. OFFICIAL AUTHORIZED TO SIGN (Typed name, grade, title and signature)			
[Signature]		DORLISE S HARRIS, GS09, CHIEF TRANSITION CENTER			

SPECIAL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (For use by authorized agencies only)			
23. TYPE OF SEPARATION		24. CHARACTER OF SERVICE (Include upgrades)	
DISCHARGE		UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS (GENERAL)	
25. SEPARATION AUTHORITY		26. SEPARATION CODE	
AR 635-200, PARA 14-12C		JKQ	
27. REENTRY CODE		3	
28. NARRATIVE REASON FOR SEPARATION			
MISCONDUCT, (SERIOUS OFFENSE)			
29. DATES OF TIME LOST DURING THIS PERIOD (YYYYMMDD)		30. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 4 (Initials)	
NONE			

DD FORM 214-AUTOMATED, FEB 2000

PREVIOUS EDITION IS OBSOLETE.
GENERATED BY TRANSPROC

MEMBER - 4