



Reserve Component DD214

Issue: There is no capstone document that summarizes both Reserve Component (RC) and Active Component (AC) service. The current process disregards transitions across the continuum of service between AC and RC through a Servicemembers career. The lack of a DD214 inhibits RC Servicemembers from claiming earned benefits and proving the full scope of their military service. Additionally, when an RC member does receive a DD214 upon completion of active service, it often does not include cumulative service. This makes it difficult for RC members to maximize their earned benefits.

Background: RC Servicemembers do not receive a DD214 unless they are on active duty orders for more than 90 consecutive days.¹ Without a DD214 being provided when an RC member serves less than 90 days they cannot prove eligibility for federal Veteran benefits such as the G.I. Bill, Veteran's preference for federal employment, and military funeral benefits. According to DODI 1336.01, Reserve Component Servicemembers only receive a DD214 when:

- Separated from a period of active duty for training, full-time training duty, or active duty for special work when they have served 90 days or more.
- When required by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned for shorter periods.
- Upon separation for cause or for physical disability regardless of the length of time served on active duty.
- When ordered to active duty for a contingency operation regardless of the number of days served on active duty.

The VA website instructs servicemembers that the DD214 or "any other documents you think are necessary" must be presented to prove eligibility for various benefits. For example, Post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits² in Title 38 requires 30 days of active duty service to qualify for this benefits.³ However, RC servicemembers do not receive a DD214 unless they are on active duty orders for more than 90 consecutive days or for a contingency operation. RC Servicemembers are often placed on assignments lasting less than 90 consecutive days. Complicating the process further, National Guardsmen can transfer states, known as Interstate Transfer (IST), over the course of their career, but the records don't always follow. Critical service-related documentation often remains in the issuing state. Human error and a convoluted personnel system can cause orders to be incorrectly documented or not documented at all. Making matters worse, servicemembers are often unaware that the onus is on them to maintain personal records of all orders. The result of the current, disaggregated personnel system results in many servicemembers receiving only a portion of their earned benefits.

Solution: Include a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2021 that requires the Secretary of Defense to complete the following:

- Modify the title of the DD Form 214 to Certificate or Release or Discharge from Active Duty or Active Status.
- Issue a DD214 upon separation or discharge from a Reserve Component similar to exit from the Active Duty. This document should reflect all AC and RC service for the Servicemember.

¹ DoDI 1336.01, Enclosure 3, Paragraph 2(d)

² [VA Website Definition](#)

³ 38 C.F.R. § 21.9520(b)