

Retiree Corner:

Important Documents (Part 2 of 2)

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Military Retiree Assistance Office

Whether it's applying for Social Security benefits or assisting a family to apply for survivor benefits, certain documents are required to provide as evidence of eligibility for a claim. In almost every case, either an original or a certified copy is required by the agency to which the claim is submitted. Plain photocopies are not accepted by any agency except possibly the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), but only when the DFAS letter specifies that photocopies are acceptable.

Two of the most important documents for retirees are the birth certificate and the DD Form 214. In the case of the birth certificate for those born in the U.S., it can be ordered from the County Clerk where the retiree was born. DD Form 214, as well as all military service records and medical records can be ordered from the National Personnel Records Center, ATTN: Military Records, 7200 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 73132-5100. My recommendation is to request two copies of the retirement DD Form 214.

Other important records include marriage certificate for each marriage, as well as divorce decrees or spouse's death certificate for each previous marriage. For family members, a birth certificate (or Family Register if born in Korea) and for spouse any proof of previous marriage and termination of the previous marriage. For those born in Korea, these would normally be recorded in the Family Register.

All original documents except Family Register should be copied (minimum five copies). Provide the originals and copies to the U.S. Embassy to have certified copies made.