

DOCUMENTS TO COMPLETE YOUR PERSONAL JACKET WITH THE ASSOCIATION

To expedite assistance with claims for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits (usually based on death being caused by a condition incurred or worsened during active duty service), it is suggested that you consider having the following on file:

1. **PROOF OF MARRIAGE:** Public or church record of marriage. (Usually obtainable from the clerk of court of county in which marriage was performed.)
2. **DISSOLUTION OF PREVIOUS MARRIAGES:** Divorce decree, annulment or death certificate of any former husband or wife.
3. **INSURANCE CARRIED:** Names of companies, policy numbers, and names of beneficiaries. (If current information was on file, we would notify these companies and send forms for VA insurance, if applicable.)
4. **DD214:** Report of separation or transfer, (or NAVPERS 553, Notice of Separation from the U.S. Naval Service, if retirement occurred prior to 1 January 1950).
5. A copy of any VA disability rating notification showing your claim number and the condition for which rated.
6. A copy of your military Retiree Account Statement showing any Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage.
7. A copy of a recent (within 3 years) "The Statement" from the Social Security Administration (can be obtained by calling 1-800-772-1213).
8. **BIRTH RECORDS:** Public records of birth or baptismal records of:
 - (a) All children, including adopted and stepchildren, under 18 years of age, or 23 if attending school. Certified copies of adoption papers are required in the case of adopted children.
 - (b) Children incapable of self-support by reason of physical or mental defect, provided such defect was manifest prior to child's 18th birthday.
 - (c) Wife. Required for Social Security benefits and for insurance payable on an annuity basis.
 - (d) Member. Required for Social Security Benefits, and if parents qualify for compensation.

Note: In writing for a birth or death certificate, it is important to give complete information. State the following facts; if exact dates are unknown, give approximations:

- (a) Date and place of birth or death.

- (b) Full name of person.
- (c) Sex and race.
- (d) Parents' names (especially for birth certificates).

If a birth certificate has never been filed, the Vital Statistics office in the state of birth will give instructions for obtaining a "delayed birth certificate."

Births occurring outside the United States:

- (a) For all births that have been reported to US consuls in foreign countries, the Passport Division, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20524, will prepare, upon request, a letter setting forth those facts, or will issue a full photostat copy of the record.
- (b) For births not reported to US consuls overseas, application must be made to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20536. If the person concerned is judged to have citizenship status, a "Certificate of Citizenship" will be issued.

Marriage and birth records MUST bear the impression seal of the issuing office. If the church does not have an official seal, the custodian of the church records must make a sworn statement before a notary public as to the correctness of the copy. Birth records must show the child's name, date of birth and the names of the parents. If neither a public nor church record of birth is available, the following should be furnished:

- (a) Affidavit of the attending physician or midwife in attendance at birth.
- (b) Affidavits of two or more persons, preferably disinterested, who should state their ages, the name, date and place of birth of the person whose birth is being established and the names of the parents. They should give the reason for remembering the facts stated.
- (c) Copy of Bible or other record certified to by a Notary Public, who should state in what year the Bible or book was printed, whether the record bears any erasures or other marks of alteration and whether from the appearance of the writing he believes the entries to have been made at the time of birth.

The above documents may be retained in our office for safekeeping, as well as other important papers such as wills and insurance policies.

For information on obtaining birth, death and marriage certificates/documentation, you can go to the Centers for Disease Control web site, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm>, then select 'View/download PDF'. This web site contains the current information on what records may be available, with fees, addresses and phone numbers for these records. For expanded information on some states, go to www.cdc.gov and enter 'vital records' in the search area.

If you are not connected to the internet, you may contact us for this information at 1 (800) 628-6011, Option 4, and ask where you may obtain vital records (birth, death and marriage certificates).