



DoD INSTRUCTION 1348.34

PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION UPON RETIREMENT FROM MILITARY SERVICE

Originating Component: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Effective: August 17, 2022

Releasability: Cleared for public release. Available on the Directives Division Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

Reissues and Cancels: DoD Instruction 1348.34, "Presidential Recognition on Retirement from Military Service," September 1, 2011

Incorporates and Cancels: Washington Headquarters Services Memorandum, "Revised DD Form 2542, APR 93, "Certificate of Appreciation for Service in the Armed Forces of the United States," April 1, 1993

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Purpose: In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02, this issuance establishes policy, assigns responsibility, and provides procedures for Presidential recognition on retirement from military service.

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SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

1.1. APPLICABILITY.

This issuance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

1.2. POLICY.

a. Certificate of Appreciation from the President of the United States for Service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The Department of Defense (DD) Form 2542, “Certificate of Appreciation for Service in the Armed Forces of the United States,” extends the President’s and the Nation’s appreciation to Service members retiring from a Military Service.

(1) The program whereby a DD Form 2542 is provided to Service members retiring from Military Service is continued at the discretion of the President. Upon a determination by the sitting President to continue the DD Form 2542 program, a DD Form 2542 bearing the President’s signature as Commander-in-Chief will be provided to personnel specified in Paragraph 3.1.

(2) A DD Form 2542 bearing the current President’s signature will **not** be provided to Service members whose official retirement date occurred during a previous President’s term in office.

(3) A DD Form 2542 bearing a previous President’s signature is considered obsolete upon the inauguration of a new President.

(a) During the 90-day period following the inauguration of the new President, the obsolete DD Form 2542 bearing the previous President’s signature may **only** be provided to Service members whose official retirement date occurred during the previous President’s term in office.

(b) Obsolete DD Form 2542s will be destroyed no later than 14 days following the 90 day period identified in Paragraph 1.2.a.(3)(a).

b. Letters of Appreciation from the President of the United States.

Letters of appreciation signed by the President provide additional appreciation to qualifying Service members retiring from a Military Service.

(1) DoD will request the White House provide letters of appreciation, signed by the President, for personnel specified in Paragraph 3.2.

(2) Such requests are only for qualifying Service members with an officially approved future retirement date or those whose official retirement date was within the previous 90 days.

(3) Only one such request per qualifying Service member or retiree is authorized.

1.3. INFORMATION COLLECTIONS.

In accordance with Volume 1 of DoD Manual 8910.01, the Presidential recognition request referred to in Paragraph 3.2. does not require licensing with a report control symbol.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness:

- a. Oversees compliance with this issuance.
- b. Upon the election of a new President, advises the President-elect's DoD Transition Team about the Presidential recognition program for Service members retiring from a Military Service and the need for a timely determination as to whether the President-elect plans to continue the program.
- c. Provides guidance to the DoD Components regarding the Presidential recognition program for Service members retiring from the Military Services.

2.2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS.

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs:

- a. Upon the election of a new President, advises the DoD Components that:
 - (1) The DD Form 2542 bearing the current President's signature becomes obsolete upon the inauguration of the President-elect.
 - (2) Obsolete DD Form 2542s are to be destroyed no later than 90 days following the inauguration of the President-elect.
 - (3) During the 90-day period following the inauguration of the new President, the obsolete DD Form 2542 bearing the previous President's signature may only be provided to Service members whose official retirement date was prior to the inauguration date.
- b. Upon the election of a new President and a determination by the new administration to continue the Presidential recognition program for Service members retiring from a Military Service, works with the White House Military Office and White House Presidential Correspondence Office to obtain:
 - (1) The new administration's revisions to the existing DD Form 2542.
 - (2) A high-resolution electronic version of the President's signature for use on the revised DD Form 2542.
 - (3) Authority for DoD to print and provide the revised DD Form 2542 with the new President's signature to eligible Service members.

2.3. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments:

- a. Ensure compliance with this issuance within their respective department.
- b. Ensure, following the inauguration of a new President, that DD Form 2542s bearing the previous President's signature in the possession of their respective Military Department are deemed to be obsolete and are destroyed no later than 90 days after the inauguration date.
- c. Ensure, during the 90-day period following the date that a new President is inaugurated into office, that the obsolete DD Form 2542 bearing the previous President's signature is **only** provided to qualifying retirees whose official retirement date occurred during the previous President's term in office.
- d. May approve exceptions to the requirement in Paragraph 3.2.c. to submit requests for letters of appreciation from the President of the United States not later than 90 days after the Service member's retirement date. Each such exception submission must include a justification as to why the White House should consider acting on the delayed request. Such an approved exception, merely means that the request will be submitted to the Presidential Administration for consideration, it is not a presumption that the Presidential Administration will act on the request.

2.4. SECRETARY OF THE ARMY.

In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.3, the Secretary of the Army:

- a. Updates and stocks the DD Form 2542 for all of DoD.
- b. Ensures that the form number or version number does not appear on the front of the DD Form 2542.
- c. Establishes and publishes instructions for the other Military Departments to order the DD Form 2542 from the Army, to include providing said instructions to the DoD Forms Management Office, Directives Division, Executive Services Directorate, Washington Headquarters Services, for publication on the DoD Forms Website:
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/forms/>.
- d. Establishes procedures for the other Military Departments to reimburse the Army for the cost of the number of DD Form 2542s ordered.
- e. Destroys stocks of obsolete DD Form 2542s no later than 90 days following the date a new President of the United States is inaugurated into office.

SECTION 3: PROCEDURES

3.1. DD FORM 2542, “CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES.”

a. The DD Form 2542, bearing the signature of the President of the United States as Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces, extends the President’s and the Nation’s appreciation to Service members retiring from a Military Service.

b. A DD Form 2542 bearing the member’s name, grade, and Military Service will be provided to:

(1) Each Service member retiring from military service after serving 20 or more years and attaining eligibility to receive regular or non-regular retired pay.

(2) Members of the Reserve Components upon their transfer to the Retired Reserve.

(3) Other members retiring from military service, as determined by the Secretary concerned (e.g., those medically retired from military service due to combat injuries).

c. If practicable, the DD Form 2542 will be presented to the Service member at the time of their retirement from their Military Service.

d. The DD Form 2542 expresses gratitude to the individual for military service. It is not intended to have any legal effect on entitlements or benefits. Accordingly, a copy of the DD Form 2542, or a notation that the Service member received it, will not be included in the Service member’s permanent military record.

e. Only one DD Form 2542 is provided for each qualifying Service member. Requests for an additional DD Form 2542 are not authorized.

3.2. REQUESTS FOR LETTERS OF APPRECIATION FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

a. In addition to the DD Form 2542, the respective Military Department White House Liaison Office will request a letter of appreciation signed by the President of the United States for the following personnel upon their retirement from a Military Service:

(1) Members retiring with 30 or more years of creditable military service for retired pay purposes.

(a) Reserve Component members must have served 30 years of creditable service for retired pay purposes.

(b) Members with combined service in the Active and Reserve Components must have 30 years of creditable service for retired pay purposes.

(2) The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Military Service Chiefs, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

(3) The Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the senior enlisted member of each Military Service.

(4) Medal of Honor recipients, including those medically retired from military service.

(5) Prisoner of War Medal recipients, including those medically retired from military service.

(6) Purple Heart Medal recipients who are medically retired from military service due to the wounds or injuries that qualified them for award of the Purple Heart Medal.

b. The Military Departments' respective White House Liaison Office will submit requests for letters of appreciation, through the DoD Executive Secretary, in accordance with the procedures provided at: <https://prhome.defense.gov/M-RA/Inside-M-RA/MPP/OEPM/>

c. Requests for Presidential letters of appreciation upon retirement should be submitted 90 days in advance of the Service member's retirement date or retirement ceremony (whichever comes first), but not later than 90 days after the Service member's retirement date. A request submitted more than 90 days after retirement date is subject to the current Presidential Administration's enforcement guidelines regarding late submissions.

d. In cases where a new President-elect is pending inauguration, requests for Presidential letters of appreciation will not be forwarded to the White House during the period prior to inauguration, unless the outgoing administration specifically requests that they continue to be submitted.

GLOSSARY

G.1. ACRONYMS.

| ACRONYM | MEANING |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| DD | Department of Defense (form) |

REFERENCES

DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)),” June 23, 2008

DoD Manual 8910.01, Volume 1, “DoD Information Collections Manual: Procedures for DoD Internal Information Collections,” June 30, 2014, as amended