

SAR Medals and Certificates for Military Service

The SAR has two medals that may be given in conjunction with military service: the **War Service Medal** and the **Military Service Medal**. There are two ways to obtain one of these medals and an accompanying certificate: through a Chapter or State Society or through the NSSAR Veterans Recognition Committee (VRC).

What is the difference between the two medals?

The certificate accompanying the War Service Medal states that the member has been awarded the War Service Medal *in grateful recognition for service in the Armed Forces during an armed conflict*. The certificate accompanying the Military Service Medal states that the member has been awarded the Military Service Medal *in grateful recognition for service in the United States Armed Forces*.

The medals and criteria for award are stated in the SAR Handbook, Volume V. Both medals are listed as #4 in precedence. They are rated the same precedence because as a veteran, one mostly had no choice as to where he would be assigned. Many could potentially have been placed in harm's way but were not. Those who were probably received a campaign medal. Depending on your documentation and the campaign medal received, that might make the SAR member eligible for the SAR War Service Medal.

How does an SAR member who is a Veteran get one of the Medals through their State Society or Chapter?

To obtain a medal, "**Proof of Service**," as shown in military documentation or in the form of a redacted copy of the member's discharge, typically a Form DD-214, must be presented to the Chapter or State Society, depending on presenting authority required by the State Society, before one of the two medals can be purchased. Such proof must show that the Compatriot served, or is serving, honorably in: (1) the armed forces of the United States, (2) the military forces of a country allied with the United States, or (3) a United Nations Peace Keeping Force.

If the State Society or the Chapter determines that the Veteran has provided sufficient "proof," the Chapter or State is then authorized to purchase the medal, with accompanying certificate, for which the Veteran qualifies. The Chapter or State may also then authorize the SAR member to purchase the appropriate medal, as, in some cases, the cost of the medal/certificate cannot be afforded by the Chapter or State. Chapters and States are responsible for preparation and printing of certificates accompanying both medals.

The medal can be engraved for an additional \$10. A certificate presentation folder can be added for an additional \$1.50. The certificates for both medals have a place where the President of the Chapter or State is to sign. Certificates cost \$4.00 each and the certificate can be calligraphed for an additional \$4.00. Shipping is an extra cost. These options are available when purchasing through SAR Merchandise. Pricing shown is as of 12/01/2018.

How does one obtaining a certificate and authorization to purchase a medal through the SAR Veterans Recognition Committee?

The goal of the SAR VRC is to provide recognition to SAR veterans by awarding **Certificates of Patriotism**. Please note that these are **NOT** the certificates that accompany the two medals mentioned above. Requests for Certificates of Patriotism, when approved, allow enrollment in various **SAR Veterans Corps** approved by President Generals, **as well as provide authorization to the State, Chapter, or Individual Member to purchase the War Service Medal or Military Service Medal**.

There are six different **SAR Veterans Corps**: World War II; Korean Service; Vietnam War; Southwest Asia; Special (or Selected) Operations; and, Military Service. Within all but the World War II Veterans Corps there

are a varying number of Certificates of Patriotism depending on the Operation or Expedition in which the Veteran participated. The listing of the number of Certificates is expanded if there is also a Purple Heart or the second certificate issued, in which case an Oakleaf Cluster designation is used. The Certificates are signed by the current President General and show the Veterans Corps and the Certificate Number within that Corps. The VRC also attempts to include a picture of the Military Award that proved the eligibility of the Certificate and the Veterans Corps.

The VRC tailors the Certificates of Patriotism to the SAR Veteran being recognized and the wording on each Certificate is designed around the SAR Veterans Corps of which the Veteran will be a member. As an example; an SAR member who will be part of the Southwest Asia Veterans Corps might have a Certificate that states – “and is honored with this Certificate of Patriotism for standing ready to defend the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic. As a Veteran, he is authorized by the SAR to wear the War Service Medal with Iraq Bar in grateful recognition for his service to country during Operation Iraqi Freedom.” On the Certificate is a picture of his Iraq Campaign Medal and the SAR War Service Medal. Another example is that of an SAR member who will be part of the Vietnam War Veterans Corps. The Certificate may state – “and is honored with this Certificate of Patriotism for standing ready to defend the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic. As a Veteran, he is authorized by the SAR to wear the War Service Medal with Vietnam Bar in grateful recognition for his service to country during the Vietnam War.” On the Certificate are pictures of the Vietnam Service Medal and the SAR War Service Medal.

How does a Veteran start the process to get a Certificate of Patriotism through the Veterans Recognition Committee?

The SAR Veteran, with the assistance of their Chapter President, State Society President, or their respective Designee must complete and submit the “NSSAR Veterans Multi-Corps Recognition Form (Recognition Form),” found on the SAR website at <https://www.sar.org> under Members > SAR Committees > Veterans Recognition Committee. The endorsement of the Chapter President, State Society President, or their respective Designee is required. This endorsement is to certify that the Compatriot is a member in good standing, and that the Chapter or State Society will present the Certificate when it is received from NSSAR.

Instructions for Chapter President or his designee

The Recognition Form is not designed to be printed. Every field / box for data entry has instructions. When placing the mouse over most of the “text” data entry fields, a feature called a “tooltip” will display as a window/popup to give additional instructions concerning what should be entered in that field. Once this Form is completed and saved on your computer, use “Click to Email” to facilitate the sending of the Form and accompanying documentation to the NSSAR Veterans Recognition Committee Chairman. If necessary, the Form/documentation can be sent as an email attachment manually to VetCorps@sar.org. The Form will become part of the permanent record at NSSAR, discussed below.

What documentation is required to be sent with the Veterans Multi-Corps Recognition Form?

As with medals obtained through Chapters or State Societies, to obtain a Certificate of Patriotism “**Proof of Service**,” in the form of military documentation or a redacted copy of the member's discharge, typically a Form DD-214, must be sent to the VRC before a Certificate can be prepared and issued. A copy of the DD-214 is not required but if submitted, for privacy concerns it is important to redact (ensor or obscure part of the text) certain information before being sent with the Recognition Form. Information that should be redacted includes the Social Security Number, Service Number, and Selective Service Number. After being redacted, the DD-214 (or other redacted documentation) should be scanned into a .PDF or .JPG file.

For use as Proof of Service, in lieu of the DD-214, “military documentation” includes Citation Accompanying an Award, Discharge Letter, Honorable Discharge Certificate, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active

Duty, Separation Qualification Record, Commission Letter, Special Orders, Officer Record Brief, Memorandums, and Supplemental Evaluation Sheets.

What the VRC needs in order to prepare an accurate Certificate is Name, Branch of Service (USA, USMC, USN, USAF, USCG), Grade, Rate or Rank, Pay Grade, "Record of Service" that shows the time served when on Active Duty, Character of Service (must state "Honorable"), and Decorations, Medals, and Badges received. Using this information, typically contained on the DD-214, the VRC can verify the proper Veterans Corps and the Certificate or Certificates that can be printed.

Additional information may be needed

Unfortunately, a DD-214 does not state why Awards were made, only that one was made. For example, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal was awarded for at least seven (7) different Operations. The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, and the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal are awarded for participation in any military campaign of the United States for which no other service medal is authorized. Expeditionary Medals have been awarded for at least 45 designated military campaigns. If the Proof of Service documentation submitted or the DD-214 shows that the Veteran received either of both the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and/or any of the other Expeditionary Medals named above, then the VRC needs the assistance of the SAR Veteran in conveying what associated Operation the Veteran was involved with that earned him the Award.

Veterans Recognition Committee procedures upon receiving the Veterans Multi-Corps Recognition Form

The VRC must verify that all of the necessary information has been received and determine which Veterans Corps Certificate(s) should be printed. Usually only one Certificate is printed but there have been cases where the Compatriot qualifies for two, three or even more Certificates and is a member of more than one SAR Veterans Corps. Having a redacted copy of the DD-214 greatly aids in determining the qualifying Veterans Corps and the Certificate or Certificates that should be printed. Once the Certificate has been printed, the VRC will notify via email the Officer or Designee who endorsed the Form to let them know that the Certificate(s) have been printed. If the Officer or Designee who endorsed the Recognition Form does not receive an email with this information in a few days, please email VetCorps@sar.org with an inquiry. Please allow sufficient time for printing, notification, and mailing.

The VRC strives for accuracy in assigning SAR members to the proper Corps and in recognizing all of the Certificates of Patriotism the member is eligible to receive. Of 52 new Certificates in a recent month, 19 or 36.54% were not printed as submitted on the Recognition Form -- four Compatriots applied for the wrong War Service Veterans Corps, seven Certificates were printed for Service that the Compatriot failed to apply for, two Compatriots applied for Korean War Veterans Corps but never served in Korea, and six Compatriots applied for the Vietnam War Veterans Corps but never served in Vietnam. All Compatriots, State Society Officers and Chapter Officers are urged to be diligent in completing and verifying the Recognition Form to avoid the embarrassment of improper military or war service claims.

Permanent Record at NSSAR

All Certificates and scanned copies of any documentation associated with each Certificate are sent monthly to NSSAR for a permanent record. The documentation includes the member's Recognition Form, DD-214 (if submitted), a copy of the printed Certificate, and any other military documents that were included with the Form or the DD-214. The documentation is sent in one .PDF file per SAR member with the Veteran's NSSAR National Number as the file name.

Saving military service related documents was started in 1996 by then Historian General Bruce Baird Butler (PG, 2000-2001). The SAR then used a document called the "Compatriot's Military Service Record Form."

This form is available for Chapter and State use and can be found on the SAR website under Members > Forms and Manuals. (See paragraph above entitled “How does an SAR member who is a Veteran get one of the Medals through their State Society or Chapter?") Upon receipt of this form at NSSAR, member records are annotated to reflect “Military Service.” To date, there are over 5,000 records, with both the old and new Forms, of SAR Veterans at NSSAR. Over 95% of these have a copy of the Veteran’s DD-214. It was believed that this information would become an important adjunct to the Society’s record, especially for genealogical research.

Final NSSAR and State Society procedures

NSSAR sends the Certificates to the State Society Officer who normally receives New Member Certificates. It is the responsibility of the State Society Officer receiving the Veterans Recognition Certificates to make sure that the Certificates are sent on to the Chapter for presentation to the SAR member.

Although Chapters and States in their own right, after verification of “Proof of Service,” may authorize the purchase of the War Service and Military Service Medals, the issuance of the Certificate of Patriotism through the VRC also constitutes authorization for a Chapter, State, or the Individual Member to purchase the Military Service Medal or War Service Medal with Devices, and for the Chapter or State to then award the medal.

As noted earlier, these military service related medals may be purchased by the Chapter, State, or the Individual member. When ordering either of the two medals online from SAR Merchandise, a box must be checked that "I am eligible to purchase and the recipient is eligible to wear the medal."

Listing of SAR Veterans Corps members by Corps membership

The Veterans Recognition Committee has a goal of updating quarterly the listing of SAR members who belong to the various Corps. The listing is available on the SAR website at <https://www.sar.org> under Members > SAR Committees > Veterans Recognition Committee.

Note that SAR Veterans who have not received a Certificate of Patriotism from the Veterans Recognition Committee are not listed.