

46 Reserved

47 Reserved

48 Veterans' Preference

481 Requirement

The Postal Service applies veterans' preference as required by Titles 5 and 39 U.S.C. and 5 Code of Federal Regulations for certain employment purposes, including appointment. Applicants claiming preference provide dates of active duty service and claim 5- or 10-point preference when applying for a vacancy. The applicant is responsible for providing proof of entitlement to the preference claimed. If supporting documentation is not received with the application, human resources notifies the eligible of the discrepancy. Supporting documentation must be presented not later than the time when the selecting official considers the applicant's application. If the eligible indicates that the preference claimed was a mistake or has changed, human resources cancels and, if necessary, reissues the Hiring List and adjusts the eligible's position.

No selection can be made from the Hiring List until the adjudication process has been completed for all applicants who claim veterans' preference points.

482 Authority to Adjudicate Veterans' Preference

Veterans' preference points can make the difference in whether or not an applicant receives employment consideration; therefore, verifying entitlement to claimed preference is essential to providing fair and equitable treatment. This process is known as *adjudication*.

Most veterans' preference claims are adjudicated by the district Human Resources office (or a designee). Human resources personnel confirm these determinations when they audit Hiring Lists. Cases involving preference as the spouse or mother of a veteran must be referred to the Office of Organizational Effectiveness at Headquarters for adjudication.

483 Kinds of Veterans' Preference

483.1 Five-Point Preference

For 5-point preference purposes, an individual must have been discharged or released from active duty service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions (see [232.3h](#)) and have served in one of the following situations:

- a. During a war.
- b. During the period April 28, 1952, through July 1, 1955.
- c. For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976.

- d. During the Gulf War from August 2, 1990, through January 2, 1992.
- e. For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending August 31, 2010.
- f. In a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized. Any Armed Forces Campaign or Expeditionary Medal qualifies for preference.

A campaign medal holder or Gulf War veteran who originally enlisted after September 7, 1980, (or began active duty on or after October 14, 1982, and has not previously completed 24 months of continuous active duty) must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty. The 24-month service requirement does not apply to 10-point preference eligibles separated for disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, or to veterans separated for hardship or other reasons under 10 U.S.C. 1171 or 1173.

Note: Effective October 1, 1980, the term *preference eligible* does not include, for most employment purposes, retired members of the Armed Forces, unless (a) they are disabled veterans, or (b) they retired below the rank of major or its equivalent. However, these veterans are still preference eligibles for adverse action purposes. Active duty for training or inactive duty by National Guard or Reserve soldiers does not qualify as active duty for preference.

483.2 **Ten-Point Preference**

483.21 **Disabled Veterans**

A veteran discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces at any time, may be assigned 10-point preference, provided the veteran meets the criteria in one of the following categories:

- a. *Compensable disability preference (CP)* — Has a compensable service-connected disability that is at least 10 percent but less than 30 percent.
- b. *Compensable 30 percent preference (CPS)* — Has a compensable service-connected disability that is 30 percent or more.
- c. *Disability preference (XP)* — (1) has received a Purple Heart, or (2) has a current service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs, but does not qualify as a CP or CPS.

483.22 **Ten-Point Derived Preference (XP)**

Spouses, widows, widowers, or mothers of veterans are eligible for 10 points as described in [483.221](#), [483.222](#), and [483.223](#). This type of preference is *derived preference* because it is based on service of a veteran who is not able to use the preference through unemployment or death.

483.221 Spouses of Disabled Veterans

The spouse of an Armed Forces' veteran on whose service a claim is based, is eligible for 10-point veterans' preference provided both of the following criteria are met:

- a. The veteran served on active duty in the Armed Forces at any time and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions.
- b. The veteran has a service-connected disability and is disqualified for a federal position along the general lines of his or her usual occupation. Such a disqualification may be presumed when the veteran is unemployed, provided one of the following criteria is met:
 - (1) Has been rated by appropriate military or Department of Veterans Affairs authorities to be 100 percent disabled or unemployable.
 - (2) Has retired, been separated, or resigned from a civil service position on the basis of a disability that is service-connected in origin.
 - (3) Has attempted to obtain a civil service position or other position along the lines of his or her usual occupation and has failed to qualify because of a service-connected disability.

483.222 Widows or Widowers of Veterans

The widow or widower of a veteran who received a discharge under honorable conditions, was not divorced from the veteran, and has not remarried is eligible for 10-point veterans' preference provided one of the following criteria is met:

- a. The veteran served during a war or during the period April 28, 1952, through July 1, 1955, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized.
- b. The veteran died while on active duty that included service described in [483.222a](#) above, under conditions that would not have been the basis for other than an honorable or general discharge.

If the widow or widower remarries and the remarriage is annulled, the former widow or widower may apply for restoration of preference. Evidence of divorce of the widow or widower is not a basis to restore widow or widower preference, since the act of remarriage, rather than a remarried state, terminates eligibility for preference. Thus, widow or widower preference can only be restored if the act of marriage is annulled.

483.223 Mothers of Veterans

Mothers of veterans are eligible for 10-point preference under the conditions described below.

- a. *Mother of a deceased veteran.* The mother of a veteran who died under honorable conditions while on active duty during a war or during the period April 28, 1952, through July 1, 1955, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized; and
 - (1) She is or was married to the father of the veteran; and
 - (2) She lives with her totally and permanently disabled husband (either the veteran's father or her husband through remarriage); or

- (3) She is widowed, divorced, or separated from the veteran's father and has not remarried; or
 - (4) She remarried but is widowed, divorced, or legally separated from her husband when she claims preference.
- b. *Mother of a disabled veteran.* The mother of a living disabled veteran if the veteran was separated with an honorable or general discharge from active duty performed at any time and is permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected injury or illness, the mother is or was married to the father of the veteran, and meets one of the following criteria:
- (1) Lives with her totally and permanently disabled husband (either the veteran's father or her husband through remarriage).
 - (2) Is widowed, divorced, or separated from the veteran's father and has not remarried.
 - (3) Has remarried, but is widowed, divorced, or legally separated from her husband when she claims preference.

484 **Proof of Preference Claimed**

The applicant is responsible for providing the necessary proof of entitlement to claimed veterans' preference. Proof is requested at the time of application. To promote the efficient processing of employment applications, veterans' preference (a) is adjudicated at the very beginning of the screening process when possible, and (b) must be reviewed and adjudicated no later than the time of selection.

Applicants who fail to provide proof of entitlement at time of application must not be disqualified. Claimed veterans' preference points will be deducted if the claim cannot be adjudicated favorably by the time of selection.

484.1 **Review of Documents**

Adjudication of preference requires a review and comparison of the following:

- a. PS Form 2591, *Application for Employment*.
- b. DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty*, or other official documents issued by the branch of service
- c. Standard Form (SF) 15, *Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference*, and supporting documents.
- d. Letters or certificates from the Department of Veterans Affairs and statements or retirement orders issued by a branch of the Armed Forces to substantiate entitlement to the preference claimed.

Note: Applicants who claim veterans' preference status involving a veteran's disability are not asked to provide information related to the nature of the disability.

484.2 **Proof for 5-Point Preference Claims**

Veterans claiming 5-point preference must provide proof of required service and a discharge under honorable conditions (see [232.3h](#)). (See [485](#) for adjudicating 5-point veterans' preference.)

484.3 Proof for 10-Point Preference Claims

Eligibles claiming 10-point preference provide proof by completing SF 15 and attaching the supporting documents described on the form. (See [486](#) for adjudicating claims for 10-point veterans' preference.)

485 Adjudicating Claims for 5-Point Preference**485.1 Verifying Entitlement**

The veteran must present a copy of the appropriate DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty*, showing length and character of service. All applicants who have been separated from active duty in the Armed Forces should be able to produce a DD Form 214 or other official documents issued by the branch of service as verification of eligibility for the preference claimed.

The adjudicator verifies entitlement for 5-point preference by reviewing the DD Form 214 or other official documents. The adjudicator determines whether the veteran meets the criteria in [483.1](#), and either approves or denies the claim for 5 points. If the claim is denied, the 5 points are taken away, but the applicant remains eligible for consideration for the announced vacancy. Applicants claiming veterans' preference who are still on active duty will be granted 5-point preference if their applications show that they have the required military service, such as service in a war, campaign, or expedition.

485.2 Campaign or Expeditionary Medal

When a campaign or expeditionary medal is required, a veteran's DD Form 214 showing the award of an Armed Forces Campaign or Expeditionary Medal is acceptable proof. The DD Form 214 does not have to show the name of the theater or country of service for which that medal was awarded. However, the Armed Forces Service Medal is not qualifying for veterans' preference. (A complete list of campaigns and expeditions is provided in [Exhibit 485](#), which comes from the VetGuide on the Web site of the Office of Personnel Management.)

Exhibit 485

Wars, Campaigns, and Expeditions of the Armed Forces That Qualify for Veteran's Preference*War Service Creditable for Veterans' Preference:*

In the absence of statutory definition for war and campaign or expedition, OPM considers to be wars only those armed conflicts for which a declaration of war was issued by Congress. The title 38, U.S.C., definition of period of war, which is used in determining benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, includes the Vietnam Era and other armed conflicts. That title 38 definition is not applicable for civil service purposes.

Thus the last war for which active duty is qualifying for veterans' preference is World War II. The inclusive dates for World War II service are December 7, 1941, through April 28, 1952.

Noncombat operations that are not qualifying for veterans' preference:

Many medals are awarded for noncombat operations. These medals are not a basis for preference and include the following:

- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal for service from September 11, 2001, to date to be determined.
- The Medal of Merit for meritorious service in World War II.
- The Medal of Freedom for meritorious achievements or meritorious service to the United States on or after December 7, 1941, in the war against an enemy outside the continental limits of the United States.
- The Antarctica Service Medal for participating in a scientific, direct support, or exploratory operation on the Antarctic Continent.
- The National Defense Service Medal for honorable service between June 27, 1950, and July 27, 1954, or January 1, 1961, and August 14, 1974; or for the period between August 2, 1990, and November 30, 1995.
- The Armed Forces Service Medal for participation in a United States military operation deemed to be a significant activity for which there was no threat of encounter of foreign armed opposition or imminent threat of hostile action.
- The Armed Forces Reserve Medal for 10 years of honorable service in a Reserve component; or active duty service in a Reserve component on or after August 1, 1990; or volunteer service for active duty on or after August 1, 1990.

Military Operations Since 1937 for Which a Campaign or Expeditionary Medal Has Been Awarded, Except for Operations Occurring During a Declared War:

Military personnel receive many awards and decorations. To help agencies make decisions concerning entitlement to veterans' preference and other benefits, the following list identifies those awards that are campaign and expeditionary medals. Any Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, whether listed here or not, is qualifying for veterans' preference. The Department of Defense, not OPM, determines who is entitled to receive a medal, and under what circumstances.

The list below is derived from DOD 1348.33-M, *Manual of Military Decorations and Awards*. Either a veteran's DD Form 214, Certificate of Discharge or Separation from Active Duty, or other official documents issued by the branch of service are required as verification of eligibility for veterans' preference.

Campaigns and Expeditions Which Qualify For Veterans' Preference

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) A veteran's DD Form 214 showing the award of any Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is acceptable proof. The DD Form 214 does not have to show the name of the theater or country of service for which that medal was awarded.	N/A
Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom)	October 24, 2001, to present
Afghanistan (Operation Iraqi Freedom)	March 19, 2003, to present
Berlin	August 14, 1961, to June 1, 1963
Bosnia (Operations Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, and Joint Forge)	November 20, 1995, to December 20, 1996; December 20, 1996, to June 20, 1998; June 21, 1998 to present
Cambodia	March 29, 1973, to August 15, 1973
Cambodia Evacuation (Operation Eagle Pull)	April 11, 1975, to April 13, 1975
Congo	July 14, 1960, to September 1, 1962, and November 23, 1964 to November 27, 1964
Cuba	October 24, 1962, to June 1, 1963
Dominican Republic	April 28, 1965, to September 21, 1966
El Salvador	January 1, 1981, to February 1, 1992
Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury)	October 23, 1983, to November 21, 1983
Haiti (Operation Uphold Democracy)	September 16, 1994, to March 31, 1995
Iraq (Operation Northern Watch)	January 1, 1997, to present
Iraq (Operation Desert Spring)	December 31, 1998, to December 31, 2002 (projected)
Iraq (Operation Enduring Freedom)	October 24, 2001, to present
Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom)	March 19, 2003, to August 31, 2010
Korea	October 1, 1966, to June 30, 1974
Kosovo	March 24, 1999, to present
Laos	April 19, 1961, to October 7, 1962
Lebanon	July 1, 1958, to November 1, 1958, and June 1, 1983, to December 1, 1987
Mayaguez Operation	May 15, 1975, to May 15, 1975
Operations in the Libyan Area (Operation Eldorado Canyon)	April 12, 1986, to April 17, 1986
Panama (Operation Just Cause)	December 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Earnest Will)	July 24, 1987, to August 1, 1990
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Southern Watch)	December 1, 1995, to present
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Vigilant Sentinel)	December 1, 1995, to February 1, 1997
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Desert Thunder)	November 11, 1998, to December 22, 1998
Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Desert Fox)	December 16, 1998 to December 22, 1998
Persian Gulf Intercept Operation	December 1, 1995, to present
Quemoy and Matsu Islands	August 23, 1958, to June 1, 1963
Somalia (Operations Restore Hope and United Shield)	December 5, 1992, to March 31, 1995
Taiwan Straits	August 23, 1958, to January 1, 1959
Thailand	May 16, 1962, to August 10, 1962

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Vietnam Evacuation (Operation Frequent Wind)	April 29, 1975, to April 30, 1975
Vietnam (including Thailand)	July 1, 1958, to July 3, 1965

Note: Section 572 of Subtitle G of the Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105-85), signed into law on November 18, 1997, allows the secretary of the military department concerned to determine whether individual members who participated in Operation Joint Endeavor or Operation Joint Guard in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in such other areas in the region as the secretary of defense considers appropriate, meet the individual service requirements for award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM). Generally, service members will be considered eligible if they:

- Were deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina (or other area that the secretary of defense considers appropriate) in direct support of one or both of the operations;
- Served on board a ship in the Adriatic in direct support of one or both of the operations; or
- Operated in airspace above Bosnia, Herzegovina (or other area that the secretary of defense considers appropriate) while the operations were in effect.

Navy Expeditionary Medal and Marine Corps Medal for These Operations

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Cuba	January 3, 1961, to October 23, 1962
Indian Ocean/Iran	November 21, 1979, to October 20, 1981
Iranian/Yemen/Indian Ocean	December 8, 1978, to June 6, 1979
Lebanon	August 20, 1982, to May 31, 1983
Liberia (Operation Sharp Edge)	August 5, 1990, to February 21, 1991
Libyan Area	January 20, 1986, to June 27, 1986
Panama	April 1, 1980, to December 19, 1986, and February 1, 1990, to June 13, 1990
Persian Gulf	February 1, 1987, to July 23, 1987
Rwanda (Operation Distant Runner)	April 7, 1994, to April 18, 1994
Thailand	May 16, 1962, to August 10, 1962

Other Campaign and Service Medals Qualifying for Preference

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Army Occupation of Austria	May 9, 1945, to July 27, 1955
Army Occupation of Berlin	May 9, 1945, to October 2, 1990
Army Occupation of Germany (exclusive of Berlin)	May 9, 1945, to May 5, 1955
Army Occupation of Japan	September 3, 1945, to April 27, 1952
Chinese Service Medal (Extended)	September 2, 1945, to April 1, 1957
Korean Service	June 27, 1950, to July 27, 1954
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Allied Force	March 24, 1999, to June 10, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Joint Guardian	June 11, 1999, to (date to be determined)
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Allied Harbor	April 4, 1999, to September 1, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Sustain Hope/Shining Hope	April 4, 1999, to July 10, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Operation Noble Anvil	March 24, 1999, to July 20, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Hawk	April 5, 1999, to June 24, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Saber	March 31, 1999, to July 8, 1999
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Falcon	June 11, 1999, to (date to be determined)
Kosovo Campaign Medal (KCM) Task Force Hunter	April 1, 1999, to November 1, 1999
Navy Occupation of Austria	May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
Navy Occupation of Trieste	May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954
Southwest Asia Service Medal (SWASM) (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm)	August 2, 1990, to November 30, 1995
Units of the Sixth Fleet (Navy)	May 9, 1945, to October 25, 1955
Vietnam Service Medal (VSM)	July 4, 1965 to March 28, 1973
Rwanda (Operation Distant Runner)	April 7, 1994, to April 18, 1994
Thailand	May 16, 1962, to August 10, 1962

486 **Adjudicating Claims for 10-Point Preference**

486.1 **Nature of Discharge**

Human resources must verify the veteran's discharge under honorable conditions. A statement from the records of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs showing that the veteran was discharged under honorable conditions will meet this requirement. Alternatively, the discharge may be verified from the character of service block on the DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty*. (See [232.3h](#) for a description of discharges under honorable conditions. and discharges that do not meet the requirement.)

486.2 **Documentation**

The adjudicator must have a fully completed SF 15 for any claim for 10-point preference. Applicants who claim 10-point preference must provide all of the documentation described on the SF 15 for the type of preference they are claiming.

Occasionally, applicants may submit a copy of a rating decision letter that contains medical information to support a claim for 10-point preference. In such instances, human resources (a) acknowledges receipt of the information; (b) indicates successful adjudication of the claimed preference on the bottom of page one of SF 15; and (c) promptly returns the document containing the medical information to the veteran applicant.

486.21 **Disabled Veterans' Preference**

The adjudicator determines if the documentation described on the SF 15 and the completed SF 15 submitted by the applicant provide sufficient proof for one of the following categories:

- a. *Compensable disability preference (CP)* — Has a compensable service-connected disability that is at least 10 percent but less than 30 percent.
- b. *Compensable 30 percent preference (CPS)* — Has a compensable service-connected disability that is 30 percent or more.
- c. *Disability preference (XP)* — (1) has received a Purple Heart; (2) has a current service-connected disability; or (3) is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs, but does not qualify as a CP or CPS.

486.22 **Spouse, Widow, or Mother Preference**

Claims for spouse, widow, or mother preference are dependent on the current marital status of the claimant, as attested to on the SF 15. (A copy of

the marriage license or certificate must always be included with the SF 15.) Under the law, nonservice-connected disabilities cannot be considered in the allowance of spouse preference, even though the nonservice-connected disability is total or permanent.

486.221 **Claims for Spouse Preference**

The Office of Organizational Effectiveness at Headquarters adjudicates claims for spouse preference. Requests for adjudication should be submitted to this office with the applicant's SF 15 and all supporting documentation.

486.222 **Claims for Widow or Widower Preference**

Human resources is responsible for adjudicating preference claims for widows or widowers who meet the criteria listed in [483.222](#), [Widows or Widowers of Veterans](#), and have the proof described on SF 15, including a copy of the marriage license or certificate.

486.223 **Claims for Mother Preference**

The Office of Organizational Effectiveness at Headquarters adjudicates claims for mother preference. Requests for adjudication should be submitted to this office with the applicant's SF 15 and all supporting documentation.

487 **Adjusting Veterans' Preference After Adjudication**

487.1 **Claimed Preference Adjustments**

If the preference points to which the veteran is entitled are different from the veteran's claim at the time of application, human resources adjusts the score based on the proof presented by the eligible.

487.2 **Changes on Hiring List When Veterans' Preference Is Adjusted**

See [481](#).

487.3 **Notification to Applicant When Claimed Preference Is Not Allowed**

In any instance where claimed preference is not proven and allowed, human resources informs the eligible in writing. If the final examination rating was adjusted, notification to the eligible must include the new rating.

487.4 **Return of Documents Presented for Proof**

After the preference has been adjudicated, all original documents submitted by the applicant as proof are returned to the applicant.

Occasionally, applicants may submit a copy of a rating decision letter that contains medical information to support a claim for 10-point preference. In such instances, the adjudicator (a) acknowledges receipt of the information; (b) indicates successful adjudication of the claimed preference on the bottom of page one of SF 15; and (c) promptly returns the document containing the medical information to the veteran applicant.

488 Appointment at Lesser Preference Level

The hiring official can select and appoint an applicant if, while the applicant's claim for preference is being adjudicated, the applicant is within reach for appointment as ranked with a lesser preference for which the applicant is entitled.