#### Department of Veterans Affairs M21-1MR, Part III, Supart iii, Chapter 2, Section F

**Veterans Benefits Administration December 27, 2013**

**Washington, DC 20420**

#### Transmittal Sheet

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| Changes Included in This Revision | The table below describes the changes included in this revision of Veterans Benefits Manual M21-1MR, Part III, General Claims Process, Subpart iii, Chapter 2, Section F, “Merchant Marine Service Records.”***Note***: Minor editorial changes have also been made to * update incorrect or obsolete hyperlink references
* update the term “veteran” to “Veteran”
* update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
* clarify Block labels and/or Block text, and
* bring the documents into conformance with M21-1MR standards.
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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation(s) | Page(s) |
| * To emphasize that U.S. Merchant Marine discharge certificates are issued under two different public laws and VSRs and RVSRs must be aware of which public law is involved.
* To renumber Block c as Block a.
 | Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 2, Section F, Topic 36, Block a (Formerly III.iii.2.F.36.c) | 2-F-2 |
| * To add clarifying information and a reference pertaining to Merchant Mariners who are eligible for any VA benefit under Public Law 95-202.
* To renumber Block a as Block b.
 | III.iii.2.F.36.b(Formerly III.iii.2.F.36.a) | 2-F-3 |
| * To clarify that qualified service under Section 402 of PL 105-368 is deemed active duty service for purposes of all VA burial benefits.
* To add a reference pertaining to Merchant Mariners who are eligible only for VA burial benefits under Section 402 of Public Law 105-368.
* To renumber Block b as Block c.
 | III.iii.2.F.36.c(Formerly III.iii.2.F.36.b) | 2-F-3 |
| * To state that applicants for discharge certificates should submit to the service department any available copies of documentation of sea service.
* To clarify that photocopied death certificates, funeral obituaries, or other evidence showing the date of death are acceptable.
* To state that applicants seeking to verify service under Public Law 105-368 must enclose a $30 check or money order.
 | III.iii.2.F.36.d | 2-F-4 |

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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation(s) | Page(s) |
| To update and clarify mailing addresses to verify service as a civilian for the* Army Transport Service (or Army Transportation Corps, Water Division), or
* Naval Transportation Service
 | III.iii.2.F.36.e | 2-F-42-F-5 |
| * To clarify that VA may not pay benefits based on service in the U.S. Merchant Marine without a discharge document and to clarify that the claimant (not VA) must obtain the discharge document. However, VA is not precluded from accepting the discharge document from any legitimate source.
* To state that an EP is established when there is a VADS record or a discharge document.
 | III.iii.2.F.7.a | 2-F-6 |
| To state that the date of completion on a DD 214 could be December 31, 1946, when service verification under Public Law 105-368 is involved. | III.iii.2.F.37.b | 2-F-7 |
| To state that a DD 1300 is valid even if an equivalent military pay grade is not shown and development is required only when the pay grade information is necessary but not provided. | III.iii.2.F.37.c | 2-F-7 |
| To clarify that it may not be possible to enter voyage information during CEST when voyage information is not yet available. | III.iii.2.F.37.d | 2-F-7 |
| * To state that the Coast Guard no longer issues DD 214s that contain statements verifying 90 days of qualifying service when there is proof that a mariner sailed on oceangoing vessels, but records are complete, and to add a reference to the block that describes what currently issued DD 214s contain.
* To remove duplicate information.
 | III.iii.2.F.37.f | 2-F-8 |
| To add a clarifying note that the Coast Guard does not issue U.S. Merchant Marine discharge documents for training time with the U.S. Maritime Service. | III.iii.2.F.38.d | 2-F-10 |

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| Changes Included in This Revision (continued) |

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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation(s) | Page(s) |
| To remove (and reserve) Topics 39 and 47 because we have received information that the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) does not have Service Treatment Records (STRs) for civil servants who were employed by the U.S. Army Transport Service (later designated the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, Water Division), or the Naval Transportation Service during World War II. | N/A | 2-F-122-F-31 |
| In Topic 40, to remove Block a and to designate Blocks b through h as Blocks a through g. | III.iii.2.F.40.a through g(Formerly III.iii.2.F.40 b through h) | 2-F-13 |
| To state that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HSRA) of the Department of Human Services maintains records of the former Public Health Service (PHS) at the National Hansen’s Disease Center in Baton Rouge, LA. | III.iii.2.F.40.a(Formerly III.iii.2.F.40.b) | 2-F-13 |
| To clarify the address to use to request PHS records. | III.iii.2.F.40.c(Formerly III.iii.2.F.40.d) | 2-F-15 |
| To change terminology from PHS to HSRA and to change terminology from the Office of Maritime Labor and Training to the “Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support.” | III.iii.2.F.40.d(Formerly III.iii.2.F.40.e) | 2-F-15 |
| To clarify that although the HSRA is authorized to destroy PHS treatment records after 50 years from the date of treatment, records administrators may choose not to do so. | III.iii.2.F.40.g(Formerly III.iii.2.F.40.h) | 2-F-17 |
| * To state that the U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support verifies medals for Merchant Mariners.
* To provide an updated mailing address and a website for the Maritime Administration.
* To make other minor changes consistent with the above.
 | III.iii.2.F.42 | 2-F-212-F-22 |

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| Rescissions | None |

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| Authority | By Direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits |

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| Signatures | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_David R. McLenachen, DirectorPension and Fiduciary Service\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Thomas J. Murphy, DirectorCompensation Service |

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