

Volume III - Technical Factor 3 - Sub-Factor 1 - Assumptions Document**Assumptions:**

1. We assume some flexibility with the requirements in order to respond to user research and feedback.
2. For the purposes of the challenge scenario, we assume that the DD-217 is a widely used form for a Veteran's discharge certificate. Our research indicated other display / ceremonial discharge certificates such as DD-256 are more widely used.
3. The terms "empty", "does not exist", and "missing" are used interchangeably in test_data_cases.md.
4. We interpret "submitting a request" in the test_data_cases.md validation rules to mean any part of the form flow where a user is working on the request submission.
5. The required field list specifies the fields necessary for the receiving application to process the forms, and that the list is intended to ensure that the payload sent to the receiving application includes all essential form fields. Additionally, we assume that it is not mandatory for the UI to capture optional form data that is not pertinent to the scenario (e.g., date of death).
6. The expectation of a "similar experience for the newly developed Alpha" as the form example provided is referring broadly to the experience and not to specific features like being able to save the form.
7. If service history does not pre-populate, we assume a Veteran must have at least one service record submitted as part of the form, but does not need to enter all service periods to be eligible for the benefit.
8. We assume the VM or container running the solution will be a recent Ubuntu instance per the challenge scenario.

Decisions and Tradeoffs:

Decision	Trade-offs
Exclude Date of Death as a field in the UI, but do pass the field in the payload to the mocked application	Given that "the form is intended to be filled out by the authenticated Veteran," we determined that excluding date of death in the form flow would be a better user experience (UX) since a user must be alive to fill out the form. The tradeoff was a deviation in requirements, which is addressed in Assumption 1.
Do not implement the ability to save the form in-progress	While the ability to save the form would offer a more usable experience, we prioritized other features that Veterans brought up during research sessions.
Use Cypress tests to demonstrate UX when some form data does not pre-populate because certain data is not available	Using Cypress tests, we can show different scenarios of user data to simulate users who don't have all data pre-filled, such as address. This will allow reviewers to validate intended functionality without manually running through multiple user scenarios, but does not give the reviewer an easy way to manually review if

	desired.
Use radio buttons in the UI for selecting values for fields with a constrained list of options, such as <i>type of wood</i>	Using radio buttons for fields with a constrained list of options does not allow us to demonstrate validation in the UI, a requirement in test_data_cases.md, but does meet the assumed intent of disallowing invalid entries on those fields and creates a better UX.
Guide the Veteran to fill out service history using form DD-214	The DD-214 does not contain relevant data for all service periods for a Veteran. For example, it only contains their last Duty Assignment and major command. Using form DD-214, a Veteran would only be able to fill out one service period; however, assumption 7 is that users must submit only one service history, and user research indicated this form is readily available for most Veterans.
Do not allow users to update their profile with changes or additions to service history	The challenge requirements state “ <i>The Alpha must resolve cases where the pre-filled data does not exist, including making updates to the user’s profile data.</i> ” While we allow users to manually fill in service history if the data does not pre-fill, we determined that an automated process to update their profile with service history additions or changes is not consistent with existing VA processes for service history updates. We also interpreted “update their service history” to mean update it on the form.
Use VA Design System guidance for phone number and email address patterns	The standard Forms library validations for phone number and email were leveraged in order to better comply with the VA Design System, which states “Users must provide at least a 10 digit phone number with or without dashes.” Although this is a deviation from the validation rules outlined in test_data_cases.md, we determined it to be a better UX to align with the Design System guidance.
Make a final content change for more inclusive language	Prior to submission, we identified that we used the term “view” instead of “review” in an alert. We decided to make the content change to be more inclusive and to align with the VA content style guide. We acknowledge that “view” is still present in the OMB “View Privacy Act Statement” button, but decided to keep the standard OMB language to comply with the requirement to have that button / language on all forms.