

18.

(c) Examinations shall be competitive, free and open to all persons who may be lawfully appointed to any position within the class for which the examination is held, with such limitations as may be specified in the rules by the Secretary as to age, sex, health, habits, moral character, physical condition, and other qualifications, except as hereinafter provided that are in the judgment of the Secretary prerequisite to the performance of the duties of such positions; provided, however, that the Secretary may, from time to time, provide for general rules exempting from competitive examinations, positions to be filled by unskilled manual laborers, including positions for road patrolmen under the State Roads Commission, and may, if he sees fit, provide in lieu of said competitive examinations such system or systems of registration for said laborers or otherwise as in its judgment will best provide for such positions; and provide further as to all positions that the Secretary may by his rules give preference in competition for higher classes of positions to classified service employees or to classified service employees of a certain class or classes by giving credit for experience and demonstrated efficiency (not to exceed twenty per centum of all marks) in determining the relative fitness for promotion of such employees. Veterans of the military and naval services of the United States who served a *minimum of ninety (90) days or were released prior to that length of service due to a service connected disability prior to January 31, 1955, [sometime during the war with Spain (April 6, 1898, to July 2, 1902) or the first World War (April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918) or in the second World War (September 16, 1940, the date on which the Selective Service Act became effective, to December 31, 1946, or between June 1, 1950 and June 1, 1953) or who served sometime during 1965, 1966 and 1967 in a military area or zone wherein there is conducted an active military policing operation undertaken by the government of the United States in conjunction with a foreign nation in combating an existing hostile force or element without the continental limits of the United States, its territories or possessions, or who have received, or who are eligible to receive, any of the following medals: (1) the armed forces expeditionary medal established by executive order 10977; (2) the Vietnam service medal established by executive order 11231; or any other service medal established by the President of the United States and which he finds by executive order to be comparable to either (1) or (2) above,] or who served on or after January 31, 1955 for a minimum of one hundred and eighty-one (181) days of continuous active duty or were released prior to that length of time due to a service-connected disability, who have either been honorably discharged or who have received a certificate of satisfactory completion of such service, and who have been bona fide residents of this State for five years or more immediately prior to filing an application [preceding the date on which such veteran takes any merit system examination], shall be given special credit for such service [; provided, such veterans served a minimum of ninety days in the service of the United States, as aforesaid, or were discharged by reason of a disability incurred in line of duty]. Such war veterans who are disabled as a result of their war service shall be given a credit of ten points in all examinations for appointments. Nondisabled veterans shall be given a credit of five points in all*