

## MODERN MILITARY RECORDS

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### *National Archives at College Park, Maryland*

The Modern Military Records unit has custody of records relating to World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Please note that the records vary by conflict and by branch of service.

#### **ARMY**

##### *Army Courts-Martial*

Records related to the proceedings of U.S. Army courts-martial, courts of inquiry, and military commissions covering the years 1917 to 1938 are found in entry 15B, RG 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army). These records are filed by case file number. The index covering the years 1917 to 1938 is still in the legal custody of the Army JAG office. Staff at the National Archives can contact the Army JAG office to obtain the necessary file number information needed to access the file.

##### *World War I*

The National Archives does not have duplicates of the World War I military personnel files that were destroyed in the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center. We do, however, have several different types of records for divisions, regiments, and other units of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I. These include war diaries, historical files and organizational records, and unit strength returns found in Records of the American Expeditionary Forces in (World War I), RG 120. It should

be understood that these records seldom, if ever, contain information on individuals. Strength returns will usually show the number of men in a unit, but will not list their names; occasionally there will be a roster of officers. There is usually a brief “record of events” for the month of the return and strength returns at the company level for most units. War diaries and historical files were created at the divisional and regimental levels. War diaries consist of brief entries on forms prepared daily. Historical files are working papers which may include manuscript histories although these are generally less complete than available published unit histories.

Casualty lists of the American Expeditionary Forces, World War I, are found in Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1917–, RG 407, and are arranged by state. They include the decedent’s name, serial number, rank, organization at time of death, date of death, and race

*Soldiers of the Great War* (Washington: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920) is a three-volume publication. Entries are arranged alphabetically by state from which the soldier served. Within each state, the entries are arranged under type of casualty: Killed in Action, Died of Disease, Died of Wounds, and Died of Accident. Under each type of casualty, the entries are arranged according to rank: commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers, miscellaneous ranks, and privates. The entries include only the names of the casualties and their hometowns. These volumes also include miniature photographs of many of the persons named in the lists. These volumes have been filmed on a single reel of 35mm microfilm. You can request copies of this film by writing to [inquire@nara.gov](mailto:inquire@nara.gov).

Navy and Marine Corps casualty lists for World War I are arranged alphabetically by individual surname. A listing by state is not available. *Officers and Enlisted Men of the United States Navy Who Lost Their Lives During the World War From April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), is subdivided into three parts: Officers, Regular and Reserve; Enlisted Men; and Navy Enlisted Men Not in Active Service. Each entry includes: name and rank of deceased; date, place, and cause of death; and the name and address of next of kin.

The Marine Corps casualty list in the Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, RG 127, consists of mimeographed listings of names of officers and names of enlisted men. Each part is arranged alphabetically by name of deceased. Entries include name, rank, and unit of deceased; date, place, and cause of death; and name and address, and relationship of next of kin. These two listings are preceded by a statistical summary of the number of officers and the number of enlisted men from each state who died overseas. A portion of the page of this summary is missing; therefore, there are no figures of enlisted casualties from Alabama through Louisiana. These two lists have been combined on a single reel of 35mm microfilm. You can request copies of this film by writing to *inquire@nara.gov*.

For information on U.S. soldiers being transported to and from Europe during World War I, there are several series in RG 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, relating to troop transports: entry 2060, Lists of Incoming Passengers, 1917–23, and entry 2061, Lists of Outgoing Passengers, 1917–26. Both series are arranged alphabetically by name of vessel and thereunder chronologically. If your search is limited by the name or number of the organization, consult entry 2043, List of Vessels Leaving the United States to Transport Troops to Europe, 1917–1919. This series is arranged alphabetically by organization and thereunder numerically by unit number. There are also two series containing card lists: entry 2051, Card List of Vessels Transporting Organizations Overseas and Back to the United States, 1918–1919, and entry 2053, Card List of Vessels Transporting Troops Back to the United States, 1918–20. Both series are arranged alphabetically by type of organization and thereunder numerically by unit number.

Please note that, unlike World War I, there are no troop manifests or troop transport lists for Army personnel transported during World War II in the custody of the National Archives.

### *World War II*

Army Air Forces combat mission reports for the World War II period are among the textual records held in the custody of Modern Military Records. This series consists of the original mission reports pertaining to specific targets. These

reports were filed by the units and include some encounter reports by pilots, aerial photographs, and loading lists. The reports found in Records of the Army Air Forces, RG 18, are arranged by units, and identification of the group or squadron is necessary before a search can be conducted. They do not contain individual combat records of missions flown or a record of flying times.

Modern Military Records has custody of three indices to the missing aircrew reports. These indices are by name of individual crew member, by date of loss, and by plane tail number. The name index from Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, has been microfilmed and is available on M1420, *Name Index to the Missing Air Crew Reports of the United States Army Air Forces, 1942–1947*. The reports, also from RG 92, are found on National Archives microfiche, M1380, *Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs) of the U.S. Army Air Forces, 1942–1947*.

The latter two indices also are available on microfilm. These indices were created by the Air Force for their use and include the missing aircrew report number, the country where the plane was lost, the Air Force number, the group or squadron number, the plane type, tail number and date the plane was lost. The copy in the custody of Modern Military Records, provided by the Air Force, is in extremely poor condition and does not copy well. We suggest you obtain a copy of this microfilm from the Air Force Historical Research Agency, 600 Chennault Circle, Building 1405, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6424.

For unit information consult U.S. Army Command Reports, 1949–54, found in Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1917–, RG 407. These records consist chiefly of narrative historical and after action reports as well as unit journals and other supporting documents. Because the files are arranged hierarchically, identification of the specific unit (i.e., division, regiment, and battalion) is necessary before a search can be conducted. They do not include personnel or medical information.

Modern Military also maintains custody of unit histories and supporting documents for Army units for the period 1917 through 1954. However, records for Army units active during the inter-war periods (1920–39 and 1945–50) are incomplete. Most of the unit records dating after 1954 (except units which served in Vietnam), if they still exist, remain in the custody of the Department

of the Army. For information concerning these records you should write to the Department of the Army, Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Division, 7701 Telegraph Road, Casey Building, Suite 144, Alexandria, VA 22315-3905.

### *Korea*

The National Archives does not have histories for the Korean War. The principal unit records for the period 1949–54 are found in monthly compiled U.S. Army Command Reports, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1917–, RG 407. These reports consist of narrative historical after action reports as well as unit journals and other supporting documents. They are filed at both the regimental and divisional levels on a monthly basis and often include several hundred pages, per month, of documentation.

### *Vietnam*

For records relating to U.S. Army units in Vietnam consult the Records of the United States Forces in Southeast Asia, 1950–1975, RG 472. These records consist mostly of unit organizational histories, after action reports, unit daily staff journals, and general orders. The files are arranged by unit, and identification of the unit is necessary before a search can be conducted. They do not include personnel or medical information.

### **NAVY**

Modern Military Records has custody of U.S. Navy deck logs from 1941 through 1973 as part of Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, RG 24. A deck log is a brief record of the daily administrative and operational activities of a ship. It includes journal-style entries of the ship's administrative activities; location and course of travel; disciplinary procedures; and any unusual events. Deck logs are not detailed journals describing a ship's mission and all events transpiring in and around the ship. Also, for the period of 1941 to 1956, deck logs generally include monthly rosters of officers.

Beginning in March 1957, officers are included in the Navy muster rolls/personnel diaries found in Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, RG 24. Therefore, lists of officers may be obtained from the ship's muster rolls/personnel

diaries from 1957 onward. To access deck logs from 1941 through 1973, you need to know the name, designation, or hull number of the ship, and dates of interest.

Navy muster rolls/personnel diaries for World War II through 1970 are found in RG 24. Muster rolls consist of quarterly reports of a ship/unit's enlisted personnel with monthly updates of personnel changes. For the period of World War II through 1956, they list only the names of enlisted personnel who were officially attached to a particular ship/unit, not officers. Muster rolls typically contain the names, ranks/ratings, and service numbers of the individual servicemen. They do not contain current addresses of former naval personnel or their survivors. Some of the rolls do include the original place of enlistment. They are arranged by name of ship/unit for World War II through January 1, 1949. For 1949 through 1970, they are arranged by the ship/unit's activity number. These records are preserved in the form of 16mm positive microfilm copies of the original muster rolls/personnel diaries. To access these records you need to know the name or destination of ship/unit and dates of interest.

If you decide to order copies of the microfilm from the period of 1949–70, the records of more than one Navy unit or ship will appear on each reel. You can request copies of this film by writing to [inquire@nara.gov](mailto:inquire@nara.gov). Prior to 1949, the Navy filmed each ship/unit's record on separate reels. The records are arranged on the microfilm by the ship/unit's *activity number*. For example, the activity number for Composite Squadron 33, or VC-33, is 6716-0033; the activity number for USS *Wisconsin* is 0356-0064. The Modern Military Records staff can provide researchers with the ship/unit's activity number. To find the records, simply scroll through the microfilm until you come to records bearing this number near the top of the pages (usually next to the name of the ship/unit). Once you find the records for the unit in question, they are arranged chronologically.

Navy casualty reports from World War II through the late 1950s are found in Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, RG 24. The Modern Military Records unit maintains several series of casualty reports that may include casualty lists, reports of incidents resulting in casualties, statements of witnesses or survivors, and other documents relating to casualties. The content of casualty

reports for specific ships, units, or operations may vary widely in quantity and quality. To access these records you need to know the name of ship, unit, or command; date of incident; name of the operation, battle, or campaign; and dates.

Navy Armed Guard Logbooks for the World War II period are found in Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, RG 24. These records are the daily logbooks of U.S. Navy Armed Guard detachments aboard non-Navy (usually merchant) ships during the Second World War. These logs were prepared under the direction of the Armed Guard commander aboard each ship, and comprise a brief daily account of events of the Armed Guard crew. These logbooks vary widely in quality. The collection—as transferred to the National Archives by the Navy—is not complete, including occasional gaps in coverage for some ships. It is possible that the logbooks of certain ships may not be available for a particular time period. To access these records you need to know the name of ship to which the Armed Guard unit was attached and the dates.

Navy Action Reports for the World War II period are found in Records of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38. These materials represent the basic source of reports for naval actions and operations during World War II. Navy regulations required naval units to submit reports of combat engagements and other operations. The reports include materials on special operations during the pre-war period, some training reports, routine operations that occurred during the war, reports of the participation of commands in battles and engagements with the enemy, submarine special mission reports, and other war-related actions. To access these records you need to know the date of the action or date of report; name of ship, unit, or Navy command involved in the action or making report. If unknown, then you need the geographic location, name of the battle, engagement, action, operation, and the date.

Navy war diaries for the World War II period are in RG 38. These documents are daily journals of events submitted by all but the most minor of naval commands during the Second World War. The operational information they contain is complementary to information provided by the action reports. If certain information cannot be located in one series, it may sometimes appear in the other. The structure and style of information presented in the war diaries is analogous to that found in the deck logs of Navy ships.

In some cases, the Navy filed handwritten deck logs that ship commands submitted in lieu of war diaries. To access these records you need to know the name or destination of the ship, unit, or command and dates.

Navy Armed Guard Reports for the World War II period, in RG 38, contain reports of U.S. Navy Armed Guard detachments aboard non-Navy ships during World War II. The reports usually include Armed Guard crew lists, voyage reports, data relating to armaments and supplies provided by the U.S. Navy, correspondence relating to recommendations for medals for members of the Armed Guard crew, orders, and miscellaneous correspondence. To access these records you need to know the name of the ship to which the unit was attached and the dates of interest.

Submarine War Patrol Reports for the World War II period in RG 38 include daily narrative summaries of the vessel's location and activities, weather conditions, mechanical issues, attacks against the enemy, and other information. Reports submitted from late 1943 through 1945 tend to be more detailed than earlier reports. In addition to the information listed above, reports for this period may also include information about tides, ship contacts, aircraft, mines, anti-sub measures or evasive tactics, radio, radar, sound gear, conditions, health, food, and habitability, personnel, fuel, communications, and other information. These records are available on M1752, *U.S. Submarine War Patrol Reports, 1941–1945*.

Records of Individual Convoys (Records of the 10th Fleet) for the World War II period, in RG 38, relate to the operations of convoys and the routing of independent ships during the war. They include detailed records of each convoy and of the activities of individual U.S. and Allied merchant ships that participated in them. To access these records you need to know the convoy designation or name of the ship participating in convoy; and the dates of the convoy.

Movement Report Cards (Records of the 10th Fleet) for the World War II period, in RG 38, consist of file cards for Navy ships, merchant marine vessels having Navy armed guard crews on board, some Army troop transport ships, and other ships. Movement report cards detail the travel information of ships throughout the Second World War. They list ports of arrival, due dates, dates of actual arrival, and the dates of setting sail to the

next port. If a ship sailed in a convoy, the cards also list the respective convoy designations in the route column. You need to know the name of the ship and dates of interest to access these records.

For general information on U.S. Navy vessels consult the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, a multivolume publication of the Department of the Navy. The publication contains brief histories of officially commissioned U.S. Navy ships. Typical entries may include name of ship; hull number; class; sites/dates of construction and launch; dates of commissioning/decommissioning; narrative of major activities; and information about purchase/sale and scrapping.

As a publication of the Government Printing Office, this eight-volume set should be available at most college, university, and large public libraries. Also, many of the dictionary's ship histories have been made available on the Internet at the following web site: [www.uss-salem.org/danfs/](http://www.uss-salem.org/danfs/).

**Note:** Due to the availability of the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* on the Internet and at many large libraries, the Modern Military Records unit no longer provides copy orders of entries from this resource. If you require additional information about ship histories, we suggest that you contact the Ships' Histories Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374, which produced the dictionary.

#### **MARINE CORPS**

The Modern Military Records unit maintains records relating to Marines who served overseas during World War I in Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), RG 120. There are several series that relate to the Second Division to which the Marine Corps units were assigned. Please note that the Marine Corps Muster Rolls for World War I are not located in the Modern Military Records Unit at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, but rather are located at the Old Military Records Unit at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.

The three main record series relating to U.S. Marine Corps participation in World War II are war diaries, action reports, and muster rolls. The war diaries are arranged by unit designation and the action reports are

arranged geographically, primarily by battle location such as Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, etc. U.S. Marine Corps muster rolls are available from 1940 through 1975. There are variations to format and access as there are three distinct time periods for the muster rolls: 1940–45, 1946–58, and 1959–75. Please note that when they appear on the muster rolls, social security numbers are withheld for privacy reasons.

#### **COAST GUARD**

World War II merchant marine vessel logbooks are found in Records of the U.S. Coast Guard, RG 26. The logs document the names and assignments of crew members, drills conducted during the voyage, brief descriptions of situations and events and some personnel-related information. Some of the National Archives regional locations hold merchant marine logbooks for ports served by that region. Some have declassified merchant marine “secret logbooks” from 1942–45, that may contain more specific information than the merchant marine logbooks. Also, a national regional database, available at most of our regional archives, provides vessel names and voyage dates for various ports. Records of merchant vessels operating with navy convoys during World War II are found in Records of Individual Convoys (Records of the 10th Fleet), Record Group 38, located at the National Archives at College Park, see page 103 for more information.

Records of U.S. Navy ships crewed by Coast Guard personnel and serving as part of U.S. Navy task organizations are also among the holdings of Modern Military Records. Logs, muster rolls, and other records of Coast Guard vessels and stations, operated solely as a Coast Guard function, are at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. Muster rolls for Coast Guard–manned Navy and Army vessels can be found there in RG 26 as well.

A merchant marine casualty file can be found in RG 26, Deceased and War Casualty Seaman’s Records, 1937–50, located at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. This series is arranged alphabetically and may provide death date, name of vessel, application of seaman’s certificates, copy of telegram announcing death, certificates of discharge from vessels, next-of-kin information, and photograph of the seaman.

## *Internet Source*

### *Access to Archival Databases*

The Access to Archival Databases (AAD) System gives you online access to electronic records that are highly structured, such as databases. AAD allows you to search for and retrieve specific records from selected series and data files over the Internet. Using AAD, first select a series of electronic records, then select a specific data file within a series, and search for pertinent records by entering unique values, such as personal names, dates, cities, and states. AAD displays the records that match the search criteria. You may then view the records, print the records, or copy the records to your own computer and save them as an electronic file.

World War II Army Enlistment records are available on AAD. The series contains records of approximately 9 million men and women who enlisted in the United States Army between 1938 and 1946, including the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and the Enlisted Reserve Corps. The series does not include records for Army officers, members of other military services, or enlistments from other time periods.

Records of World War II Prisoners of War are also available on AAD. This series has information about U.S. military officers and soldiers and U.S. and some Allied civilians who were prisoners of war and internees held by Japanese or German powers.

For example, if you are looking for information on individuals who died during the Korean War and Vietnam Conflict you now have the ability to search online for his or her record. Select examples of databases available on AAD on this subject are: Records of Military Personnel Who Died as a Result of Hostilities During the Korean War, ca. 1977–November 1979; Records on Korean War Dead and Wounded Army Casualties, 1950–1970; Records on Military Personnel Who Died, Were Missing in Action, or Prisoners of War as a Result of the Vietnam Conflict, January 20, 1967–December 1998; Records of Awards and Decorations of Honor During the Vietnam Conflict, May 1969–March 1973. The AAD system is available on the NARA web site at [www.archives.gov/aad/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/aad/index.html)