Military Service Records and Unit Histories: A Guide to Locating Sources

Julissa Gomez-Granger
Information Research Specialist

Anne Leland
Information Research Specialist

July 26, 2012
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<thead>
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<th>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</th>
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*Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)*

Prepared by ANSI Std Z39-18
Summary

This guide provides information on locating military unit histories and individual service records of discharged, retired, and deceased military personnel. It includes contact information for military history centers, websites for additional sources of research, and a bibliography of other publications.

This report will be updated as needed.
Personnel Files: Military Service and Pension Records at the National Archives

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), Military Personnel Records, holds most military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services from World War I to the present. Personnel records may be requested online at http://www.archives.gov/veterans or by completing the Standard Form 180 (see Appendix) and sending it to the correct address listed on the back of the form.

Note that in 1973, a disastrous fire at NPRC destroyed approximately 16 million to 18 million Army and Air Force official military personnel files. In such cases where files were lost, NPRC uses alternate sources of information to respond to requests.

More information about obtaining military personnel files can be found on the NPRC website, http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/, or by contacting the center at

   National Personnel Records Center
   Military Personnel Records
   9700 Page Avenue
   St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
   Tel: (314) 801-0816 congressional line
   Tel: (314) 801-0800 public line
   E-mail: MPR.center@nara.gov

Older military personnel records (generally prior to World War I, depending on the service branch) are located at

   National Archives and Records Administration
   Old Military and Civil Records Branch (NWCTB-Military)
   Washington, DC 20408
   http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records.html

Finding Unit Histories

Unit records are preserved at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For unit records of World War I contact the Archives I Textual Reference Branch of NARA, Washington, DC 20408; telephone (202)-501-5430. For unit records of World War II, Korean, and Vietnam Conflicts contact the Archives II Textual Reference Branch at NARA, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001; telephone (866) 272-6272.

NPRC has morning reports for the Army (from November 1, 1912 to 1974) and the Air Force (from September 1947 to June 30, 1966). In addition, NPRC has Army unit rosters from 1912 to 1974, with certain exceptions. For more information on unit rosters and morning reports, see the NPRC website at http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/morning-reports-and-unit-rosters.html.
Certain published unit histories can be found in the collections of the Library of Congress or military history centers of each branch (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Military History Centers and Museums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center or Museum</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Air Force</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency</td>
<td>(334) 953-2395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 Chennault Circle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building 1405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force Historical Studies Office</td>
<td>(202) 404-2264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ USAF/HOH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Brookley Avenue, Box 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolling AFB, DC 20032-5000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:afhso.research@pentagon.af.mil">afhso.research@pentagon.af.mil</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.afhso.af.mil/">http://www.afhso.af.mil/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Museum of the U.S. Air Force</td>
<td>(937) 255-3286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100 Spaatz Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/">http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Army</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Army Center of Military History</td>
<td>(202) 685-4042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 4th Avenue Bldg. 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McNair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20319-5060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:CMHAnswers@conus.army.mil">CMHAnswers@conus.army.mil</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.history.army.mil/">http://www.history.army.mil/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Army Heritage &amp; Education Center</td>
<td>(717) 245-3949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950 Soldiers Drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle, PA 17013-5021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:usarmy.carlisle.awc.mbx.usamhi@mail.mil">usarmy.carlisle.awc.mbx.usamhi@mail.mil</a> (research inquiries)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://usahec.org">http://usahec.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coast Guard</strong></td>
<td>(202) 372-4651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Coast Guard Historian’s Office (CG-09224)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Rm B-717</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100 Second Street, SW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20593-7362</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.uscg.mil/history/">http://www.uscg.mil/history/</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Guard Museum</td>
<td>(860) 444-8511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waeshe Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Coast Guard Academy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Mohegan Avenue</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New London, CT 06320-8511</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg092/museum/">http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg092/museum/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marine Corps</strong></td>
<td>(703) 432-4874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps History Division</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3078 Upshur Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantico, VA 22134</td>
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*Congressional Research Service*
## Center or Museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center or Museum</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps Heritage Foundation</td>
<td>(800) 397-7585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3800 Fettler Park Drive</td>
<td>(703) 640-7965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite 104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries, VA 22025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@marineheritage.org">info@marineheritage.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.marineheritage.org/">http://www.marineheritage.org/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Merchant Marine**

| American Merchant Marine Museum     | (516) 726-6047   |
| 300 Steamboat Road                  |                  |
| Kings Point, NY 11024               |                  |
| http://www.usmma.edu/about/museum/  |                  |

**Navy**

| Naval History & Heritage Command    | (202) 433-2210 main |
| 805 Kidder Breese Street, SE        | (202) 433-4132 library |
| Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060 |                  |
| http://www.history.navy.mil         |                  |

**Source:** Table compiled by the Congressional Research Service.

## Additional Sources for Research

- **Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress**
  The project collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans.
  http://www.loc.gov/vets/

- **Veterans Affairs Nationwide Gravesite Locator**
  The database contains burial locations of veterans and their family members.
  http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

- **American Battle Monuments Commission**
  The website contains databases of veterans interred or memorialized at overseas American military cemeteries and memorials.
  http://www.abmc.gov

- **Philippine Army and Guerilla Records at the National Archives**
  The collection includes records of the Philippine Commonwealth Army of the United States Armed Forces Far East (USAFFE), including recognized Philippine Guerrilla forces (not the Army of the United States or Philippine Scouts) during World War II.
  http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/philippine-army-records.html#reasons

## Select Bibliography


Appendix. Standard Form 180

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION SHEET FOR SF 180, REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS</th>
</tr>
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| **1. General Information.** The Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records (SF180) is used to request information from military records. Certain identifying information is necessary to determine the location of an individual’s record of military service. Please try to answer each item on the SF 180. If you do not have and cannot obtain the information for an item, show “NA,” meaning the information is “not available.” Include as much of the requested information as you can. Incomplete information may delay response time.

Online requests may be submitted to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) at http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-records/.

2. Personnel Records/Military Human Resource Records: Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) and Medical Records/Service Treatment Records (STR). Personnel records of military members who were discharged, retired, or died in service less than 62 years ago and medical records are in the legal custody of the military service department and are administered in accordance with rules issued by the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, Coast Guard). STR’s of persons on active duty are generally kept at the local servicing clinic, and usually are available from the Department of Veterans Affairs approximately 40 days after the last day of active duty. (See item 3, Archival Records, if the military member was discharged, retired or died in service over 62 years ago."

   a. Release of Information. Release of information is subject to restrictions imposed by the military services consistent with Department of Defense Instructions and the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974. The service member (either past or present) or the member’s legal guardian has access to almost any information contained in that member’s own record. An authorization signature, of the service member or the member’s legal guardian, is needed in Section III of the SF180. Others requesting information from military personnel records and/or STR’s must have the release authorization in Section III of the SF 180 signed by the member or legal guardian. If the appropriate signature cannot be obtained, only limited types of information can be provided. If the former member is deceased, surviving next of kin may, under certain circumstances, be entitled to greater access to a deceased veteran’s records than a member of the general public. The next of kin may be any of the following: unremarried surviving spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother. Requesters must provide proof of death, such as a copy of a death certificate, newspaper article (obituary) or death notice, coroner’s report of death, funeral director’s signed statement of death, or verdict of coroner’s jury.

   b. Fees for records: There is no charge for most services provided to service members or next of kin of deceased veterans. A nominal fee is charged for certain types of service. In most instances service fees cannot be determined in advance. If your request involves a service fee, you will be notified.

3. Archival Records: Personnel records of military members who were discharged, retired, or died in service less than 62 years ago have been transferred to the legal custody of NARA and are referred to as “archival” records.

   a. Release of Information: Archival records are open to the public. The Privacy Act of 1974 does not apply to archival records, therefore, written authorization from the veteran or next of kin is not required. However, in order to protect the privacy of the veteran, his/her family, and third parties named in the records, the personal privacy exemption of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6)) may still apply and preclude the release of some information.

   b. Fees for Archival Records: Access to archival records is granted by offering copies of the records for a fee (44 U.S.C. 2116(c)). You will be notified if there is a charge for photocopies of documents contained in the record you are requesting. For more information see http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-program/military-personnel-archival-access/archival-requests.html.

4. Where reply may be sent. The reply may be sent to the service member or any other address designated by the service member or other authorized requester.

5. Definitions and abbreviations: DISCHARGED -- the individual has no current military status; SERVICE TREATMENT RECORD (STR) -- The chronology of medical, mental health and dental care received by service members during the course of their military careers (does not include records of treatment while hospitalized); TDRL -- Temporary Disability Retired List.

6. Service completed before World War I: National Archives Trust Fund (NATF) forms must be used to request these records. Obtain the forms by e-mail from smare@nara.gov or write to the Code 5 address on page 2 of the SF 180.

PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

The following information is provided in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3) and applies to this form. Authority for collection of the information is 44 U.S.C. 2907, 3101, and 3103, and Public Law 104-124 (April 26, 1996), as amended in title 31, section 7701. Disclosure of the information is voluntary. If the requested information is not provided, it may delay servicing your inquiry because the facility servicing the service member’s record may not have all of the information needed to locate it. The purpose of the information on this form is to assist the facility servicing the records (see the address list) in locating the correct military service records) and information to answer your inquiry. This form is then retained as a record of disclosure. The form may also be disclosed to Department of Defense components, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, U.S. Coast Guard), or the National Archives and Records Administration when the original custodian of the military health and personnel records transfers all or part of those records to that agency. If the service member was a member of the National Guard, the form may also be disclosed to the Adjutant General of the appropriate state, District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico, where he or she resides.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

Public burden reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be five minutes per request, including time for reviewing instructions and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any aspect of the collection of this information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-0011. DO NOT SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS: Send completed forms as indicated in the address list on page 2 of the SF 180.
### REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

*Request form to request or discuss Vietnam-era & post-Vietnam military service records.*

(To ensure the best possible service, please thoughtfully review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. Please print clearly or type.)

#### SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, and middle)</th>
<th>2. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.</th>
<th>3. DATE OF BIRTH</th>
<th>4. PLACE OF BIRTH</th>
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<table>
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<th>5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT</th>
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<td>BRANCH OF SERVICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE ENTERED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE RELEASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENLISTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if unknown, write unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SECTION II - INFORMATION AND OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:
   - DD Form 214 or equivalent. What was the DD Form(s) 214 issued? YEAR(S): __________
   - If more than one period of service was performed, in the same branch, there may be more than one DD214. This form contains information normally needed to verify military service. A copy may be sent to the veteran, the deceased veteran’s next of kin, or other persons or organizations if authorized in Section III below. An UNDELETED DD214 is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits. Sensitive items, such as the character of separation, authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPF/SFP) code, and dates of time lost are usually shown.
   - An unredacted copy will be sent unless you specify a deleted copy. Indicate here if you want a deleted copy of the DD Form 214.
   - The following items are deleted: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPF/SFP) code, and for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost.
   - All Documents in Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)
   - Medical Records (Includes Service Treatment Records, Health (outpatient) and dental records.) If hospitalized (outpatient), the facility name and date for each admission must be provided.
   - Other (Specify): __________

2. PURPOSE: (An explanation of the purpose of the request is strictly voluntary, however, such information may help to provide the best possible response and may result in a faster reply. Information provided will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.) Check appropriate box:
   - Benefits
   - Employment
   - VA Loans Programs
   - Medical
   - Genealogy
   - Correction
   - Personal
   - Other, explain: __________

#### SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER: [Signature Required in #3 below of veteran, next of this, legal guardian, authorized government agency or other “authorized representative.” No signature required for archival records.]
   - Military service member or veteran identified in Section 1, above
   - Next of kin of deceased veteran. (Relationships)
   - Legal guardian (Must submit copy of court appointment)
   - Other (Specify)

2. MUST HAVE PROOF OF DEATH - See item 3a on instruction sheet

3. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:
   - [Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Apt</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. SIGNATURE REQUIRED - Do not print
   - Daytime phone: __________
   - Fax Number: __________

5. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE WHEN REQUIRED (See items 2a or 3a on accompanying instruction): I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section III is true and correct. No signature required for archival records.

6. Date: __________

## LOCATION OF MILITARY RECORDS

The various categories of military service records are described in the chart below. For each category there is a code number which indicates the address of the bottom of the page to which this request should be sent. Please refer to the instruction and information sheet accompanying this form as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRANCH</th>
<th>CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE MEMBER</th>
<th>ADDRESS CODE</th>
<th>ADDRESS CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel Record</td>
<td>Medical or Service Treatment Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIR FORCE</strong></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired before 5/1/1994</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 9/30/2004</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active (including National Guard on active duty in the Air Force, TIDEL, or general officers retired with pay)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reserve, retired reserve in any state, current National Guard officers not on active duty in the Air Force, or National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COAST GUARD</strong></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1995</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1995 – 4/30/2004</td>
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<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1995 – 12/31/1998</td>
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<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/1999</td>
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<td>Active, reserve, or TIDEL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MARINE CORPS</strong></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1995</td>
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<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1995 – 4/30/2004</td>
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<td>Active, Selected Marine Corps Reserve, TIDEL</td>
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<td><strong>ARMY</strong></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired before 11/1/1912 (enlisted) or before 7/1/1917 (officer)</td>
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<td>Active, enlisted, officers</td>
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<td>Former National Guard/US Army personnel</td>
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<td><strong>NAVY</strong></td>
<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1906 (enlisted) or before 1/1/1913 (officer)</td>
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<td>Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/1995</td>
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<td>Active, reserve, or TIDEL</td>
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<td><strong>PHS</strong></td>
<td>Public Health Service – Commissioned Corps officers only</td>
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</table>

### ADDRESS LIST OF CUSTODIANS (BY CODE NUMBERS SHOWN ABOVE) – Where to write/send this form

1. Air Force Personnel Center
   HQ, AFPC/PSHPR
   300 C Street West, Suite 13
   Robins AFB, GA 31080-0001

2. Air Force Personnel Center
   Records Management Division
   DAF/AFPA
   14036 Faye Creek Ave
   Robins AFB, GA 31080-0011

3. Commander, Personnel Service Center
   PSBC-PSHPR
   Scott AFB
   1111 Wilson Blvd, Suite 1100
   Scott AFB, IL 62225-8000
   http://sipsc.ang.af.mil

4. Headquarter U.S. Marine Corps
   Marine Management Support Command
   (MMSC-10)
   3500 Biddle Rd
   Quantico, VA 22134-5020

5. Marine Corps Reserve
   1600 Navy Drive
   New Orleans, LA 70116-5400

6. National Archives & Records Administration
   National Archives: 20th Century Mail
   20,000 East West Highway
   Beltsville, MD 20705-0001

7. National Archives & Records Administration
   2000 Evergreen Drive
   OPAWCS, Suite 455
   Beltsville, MD 20705-0001

8. National Archives & Records Administration
   2000 Evergreen Drive
   Washington, DC 20408-6900

9. National Archives & Records Administration
   2000 Evergreen Drive
   National Archives: 20th Century Mail
   Beltsville, MD 20705-0001

10. National Archives & Records Administration
    National Archives: 20th Century Mail
    Beltsville, MD 20705-0001

11. Department of Veterans Affairs
    Records Management Center
    F0 Box 500
    St. Louis, MO 63118-0523

12. Division of Commissioned Officers Support
    ATTN: Records Officer
    1191 Woodrow Wilson, P.O. Box 141
    Dept 098, Rexburg, ID 83440

13. Reserved

14. National Personnel Records Center
    (Military Personnel Records)
    1-Army Dr
    St. Louis, MO 63138-1002

**NOTE:** http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/
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Anne Leland  
Information Research Specialist  
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