Public Service: Military & Civilian

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

2023 GENEALOGY SERIES

May 3–June 14 on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. ET

www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2023
Welcome!

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is pleased to present this educational series of lectures on how to conduct family research. As one of the nation’s premier genealogy institutions, it is our mission to inform the public about National Archives holdings that relate to family history and to make those records available to you.
About the Sessions

Our presentations will demonstrate how to use federal resources at the National Archives and Records Administration for genealogical research. This year we focus on individuals who have served our nation in military or civilian service. We also have a session on how to preserve your own family collections.

National Archives presenters are broadcasting from Washington, DC; College Park, MD; Denver, CO; and St. Louis, MO. Sessions are intended for beginners to experienced family historians—all are welcome!
Join the conversation!

Participate with the presenters and other family historians during a session’s premiere.

Live Chat on YouTube
Log in and type your questions and comments.

Follow us at @USNatArchives on Twitter and join the Genealogy Series conversation using #GenieSeries2023.
Instructions

Show More
- captioning
- handout
- evaluation

Chat
- log in
- participate
- ask questions

Videos and presentation materials remain available after the premiere date.
## Schedule: May 3–17

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>1 p.m. ET</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>1:05 p.m. ET</td>
<td>Civilians at War: Records of Participation in U.S. Military Conflicts</td>
<td><strong>Claire Kluskens</strong> - Subject Matter Expert for Genealogy/Census Related Records and Digital Projects Archivist from the National Archives in Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>1 p.m. ET</td>
<td>Basic Military Records at the National Archives: Revolutionary War to 1917</td>
<td><strong>John Deeben</strong> – Archivist from the National Archives in Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>1 p.m. ET</td>
<td>National Archives at St. Louis: Understanding the 1973 Fire and Its Impact on Genealogical Research</td>
<td><strong>Eric Kilgore</strong> - Archives Specialist from the National Archives at St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Presenter</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>1 p.m. ET</td>
<td><strong>Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division on the Reservation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cody White</strong> - Subject Matter Expert for Native American Related Records and an Archivist from the National Archives at Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7</td>
<td>1 p.m. ET</td>
<td><strong>Accessing and Understanding Korean War Army Unit Records</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rachael Salyer</strong> - Subject Matter Expert in Modern Military Records and an Archivist from the National Archives at College Park, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td>1 p.m. ET</td>
<td><strong>Creating Your Own Preservation Survey and Plan for Family Collections</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sara Holmes</strong> - Conservator in Preservation Programs from the National Archives at St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td>1:55 p.m. ET</td>
<td><strong>Closing Remarks</strong></td>
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**National Archives and Records Administration**
The catastrophic fire at the National Personnel Records Center in 1973 destroyed millions of military personnel records and presents a variety of challenges for researchers. This presentation will examine the fire, record losses, and common myths, and will provide guidance on how to research the records of veterans who were affected by the fire. Part of overcoming these challenges is knowing about other records that are available to supplement information lost in the fire. This presentation will highlight those record series at the National Archives at St. Louis and their usefulness for unlocking information from the past.
Presenter Biography

Eric Kilgore is an Archives Specialist with the National Archives and Records Administration. He has been with the National Archives at St. Louis since 2010, with the majority of that time working directly with the public in the research room. Eric holds a B.A. and an M.A. in History from the University of Missouri.

Eric Kilgore
National Archives at St. Louis: Understanding the 1973 NPRC Fire and Its Impact on Genealogical Research

Presented by: Eric Kilgore, Archives Specialist
National Personnel Records Center / National Archives at St. Louis
A Central Repository

The Department of Defense (DOD) Military Personnel Records Center at 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO, after completion in 1956.
The Day that Changed Everything

July 12, 1973, fire at the DOD Military Personnel Records Center.
Sifting through the Ashes

Melted steel filing cabinets used for record storage.

Steel shelving being removed through the collapsed ceiling.
Triage: Saving What Could be Saved

Employees sliding record boxes in tubs down the escalator rails. (Notice the ash tray on wall.)

Men fogging the bottom drawers of record cabinets to prohibit mold growth.
Workers attempting to salvage burned records and fragments from the floor and shelves prior to shelves being removed. They had to race to keep ahead of the clearance crew.

Employees squeegeeing water off the floor. They are on the 4th floor and are most likely Army employees.
A portion of “tent city.” Stacked rows of milk crates can be seen in the middle left. Several thousand crates were purchased for the salvage operation. The square columns of stacked crates were called "hog pens."
## Estimated Losses

**Estimated Number of Military Files on 6th Floor**  
*July 12, 1973*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Number Stored</th>
<th>Number Recovered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Army WWI</td>
<td>5,143,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army WWII</td>
<td>8,977,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army PWW</td>
<td>5,941,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army 1970s</td>
<td>317,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Personnel</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy/Marine Corps Medical</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault</td>
<td>9,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 22,093,615  
**Estimated Percentage of Files Lost:** 79%
Researching at the National Archives at St. Louis

Pearl Harbor National Memorial Chief Historian Daniel Martinez reviewing the OMPF of a U.S. Marine who served aboard the USS Arizona.
Addressing Common Misconceptions

• Not all World War II records were destroyed in the fire.
• Military personnel records are un-classified.
• Any member of the public can request personnel records 62 years after the service member’s separation from service.
## Final Pay Voucher

### Army Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Initial</th>
<th>Army Serial No.</th>
<th>Service Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sargent</td>
<td>William J</td>
<td></td>
<td>13118072</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Address

1711 N. Eigel St., Phila., Pa., 45, Pa.

### Employment History

- **Sargent, William J.**
  - Job Title: 2nd Com. Eng. Engt.
  - Dates: Oct 1943 to Dec 45
  - Location: Atlantic City, New Jersey
  - Grade: 1st. Lt. Engt.

### Pay Information

- **Date of Payment:** 31 Mar 1945
- **Date of Payment:** 8 Apr 45
- **Date of Payment:** 31 Mar 45
- **Date of Payment:** 1 Apr 45
- **Date of Payment:** 1 Jan 45

### Pay Details

- **Total Amount Paid:** $1,000.00
  - **Retirement Pay:** $500.00
  - **Pay Period:** Apr 1/45 to Dec 31/45
  - **Pay Period:** Jan 1/45 to Mar 31/45
  - **Pay Period:** Apr 1/45 to Dec 31/45

### Payment Method

- **Check No.:** 1381
- **Check Date:** 3/31/45

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**Note:** This document contains a final pay voucher for a military service member, detailing their employment history and pay information.
What is an R-File?
Alternative Sources and Organizational Records: Veterans Administration (VA) Index Card
Alternative Sources and Organizational Records: Morning Reports
Army Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF)
Record Group 92 (continued)
Personal Data Series Records at the National Archives at St. Louis

- **Official Military Personnel Files**: RG 24 (Navy), RG 26 (USCG), RG 127 (USMC), RG 319 (Army), RG 342 (USAF)
- **U.S. Army General Courts Martial Records of Trial**: RG 153
- **U.S. Army Individual Deceased Personnel Files**: RG 92
- **Vietnam Mortuary Files 1963–1978**
- **Merchant Mariner Licensee Files**: RG 26
- **Records of the Selective Service System Registration Cards and Classification Ledgers**: RG 147 and RG 163

This is just a small sample of record series available for research!
Thank you!

For more information about Military Personnel Records or conducting research at the National Archives at St. Louis, please visit:

www.archives.gov/st-louis
After the broadcast . . .

Email questions to
inquire@nara.gov

Video recordings of lectures and
downloadable handouts
will remain online at

www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2023
Feedback

We value your opinion.

Please take a minute to complete a short evaluation. Your comments help us maintain the quality of our services and plan future programs.

Thank you!

Event Evaluation:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval
Thank You Genealogy Series Team!

**Presenters**
- Claire Kluskens
- Cody White
- Eric Kilgore
- John Deeben
- Rachael Salyer
- Sara Holmes

**Production**
- Alexis Van Dyke
- Amber Forrester
- Andréa Matney
- Erin Townsend
- Jamie Atkinson
- Jason Winston
- Julie Reid
- Miriam Kleiman
- Rudregus Davis
- Sasa Simic
- Vernon Smith

**Communication**
- Cara Lebonick
- Hilary Parkinson
- Laura Sheehan
- Mary Ryan
- Victoria Macchi
Educational resources on how to access and conduct research using U.S. federal government records held at the National Archives and Records Administration.

Know Your Records

www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records

Videos and Handouts on YouTube

Playlists: Civilian Service and U.S Veterans
Know Your Records in Autumn 2023

**Thursday**
*August 10*
1 p.m. ET

*Sound Recordings of the World War II Era*

Ashley Behringer – Archivist from the National Archives at College Park, MD

**Wednesday**
*September 13*
1 p.m. ET

*The Records of the Provost Marshal General and Enemy Prisoners of War Held in the United States during World War II*

Rachael Salyer - Subject Matter Expert in Modern Military Records and an Archivist from the National Archives at College Park, MD
Please stay if you have questions.

Although this concludes the video portion of the broadcast, we will continue to take your questions in chat for another 10 minutes.