



Know Your Records Presentation Handout
**The Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General and Enemy
Prisoners of War Held in the United States During World War II**
Presented by Rachael Salyer on September 13, 2023

Q1: Does the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) have records of individual enemy prisoners of war (POWs/PWs)?

A1: No. Records related to individual POWs/PWs were returned to their home countries after the war. Please contact national or military archives in those countries for more information.

Q2: Where can I find information about the types of records or about the series of records in Record Group 389: Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1920–1975?

A2: Depending what you are looking for, you can:

- Browse records or search for specific file units or series in the National Archives Catalog: catalog.archives.gov/id/688
- Use the Record Group Explorer to see a visual representation of Record Group (RG) 389: www.archives.gov/findingaid/stat/discovery/389

Q3: What are some of the subordinate offices within the Office of the Provost Marshal General that might have created records related to enemy POWs/PWs and POW/PW camps?

A3: Prisoner of War Operations Division: catalog.archives.gov/id/10550255

- Operations Branch: catalog.archives.gov/id/10552212
- Operations Branch. Italian Service Unit: catalog.archives.gov/id/10551274
- Labor and Liaison Branch: catalog.archives.gov/id/10551478
- Legal Branch: catalog.archives.gov/id/10551477

Enemy Prisoner of War Information Bureau: catalog.archives.gov/id/10552083 Military

Police School: catalog.archives.gov/id/10677124

Q4: Where should I start to search for records related to specific camps?

A4: These three series are a good starting place, and their file units are searchable online:

- Subject Files, 1942–1946 (entry A1 461): catalog.archives.gov/id/833674
- Decimal Files, 1943–1946 (entry A1 459-A): catalog.archives.gov/id/721341
- Subject Correspondence Files Relating to the Construction of and Conditions in Prisoner of War Camps, 1942–1947 (entry A1 457): catalog.archives.gov/id/657477

Q5: What about broader administrative, operational, or policy issues?

A5: In addition to the series listed above, you may find some relevant records in series like:

- Subject Files, 1942–1957 (entry A1 467-E): catalog.archives.gov/id/895263
- Unclassified Decimal Correspondence Files with Related Index, 1942–1945 (entry A1 451): catalog.archives.gov/id/651858
- Security Classified General Correspondence, 1942–1970 (entry A1 452-B): catalog.archives.gov/id/653181
- Unclassified Decimal Files, 1941–1954 (entry A1 434-A): catalog.archives.gov/id/645081
- Subject Correspondence Files, 1942–1945 (entry A1 435): catalog.archives.gov/id/645921

- Records Relating to Enemy Prisoners of War During World War II, 1942–1947 (entry A1 466-E): catalog.archives.gov/id/865093
- Policy and Procedural Records Relating to the Supervision of Prisoners of War and their Camps, 1942–1945 (entry A1 458): catalog.archives.gov/id/719026
- Numeric-Subject Correspondence Files Relating to the Internment, Care, and Labor of Prisoners of War, 1942–1946 (entry A1 467): catalog.archives.gov/id/892123

Q6: What if I am only interested in prisoners just from Germany (or Italy or Japan)?

A6: If you want to learn more about prisoners of a particular nationality, then you may want to search for series like these:

- School Training Records of German Prisoners of War, 1943–1946 (entry A1 462): catalog.archives.gov/id/824589
- Former German Prisoner of War Files, 1945–1946 (entry A1 466-A): catalog.archives.gov/id/849159
- Records Relating to German Prisoners of War during World War II, 1943–1952 (entry A1 466-C): catalog.archives.gov/id/876973
- Fiscal Accounting Records Relating to Monies of Former German Prisoners of War or Internees, 1947–1949 (A 463): catalog.archives.gov/id/824661
- Records Relating to Italian Prisoners of War During World War II, 1942–1947 (entry A1 466-D): catalog.archives.gov/id/871763
- Rosters of Deceased Italian Prisoners of War, 1942–1952 (entry A1 1012): catalog.archives.gov/id/1067506
- Records Relating to Japanese Prisoners of War During World War II, 1942–1948 (entry A1 466-B): catalog.archives.gov/id/855490
- Rosters of Deceased Japanese Prisoners of War, 1942–1952 (entry A1 1011): catalog.archives.gov/id/1067502

Q7: Are there any records about the Corps of Military Police (MP) in RG 389?

A7: Yes! You may find some useful information in series like these:

- Records Relating to Military Police Schools, 1942–1950 (entry A1 445): catalog.archives.gov/id/649959
- Subject Files Relating to Military Police Schools, 1942–1950 (entry A1 445-B): catalog.archives.gov/id/649990
- Decimal Files Relating to the Corps of Military Police, 1942–1945 (entry A1 446-A): catalog.archives.gov/id/650019
- Reports and Correspondence Relating to Activities of Military Police Overseas, 1942–1947 (entry A1 449): catalog.archives.gov/id/651744

Q8: Does the National Archives (NARA) have any pictures of POWs and POW camps?

A8: NARA does not have photographs of individual POWs. There are also **no** separate series of photographs in RG 389, although there may be an occasional photograph mixed in with the textual records.

There are some photographic series in other record groups that include images of POWs and POW camps; however, most of the names of the individuals who appear in are unknown. Here

are several series that include digitized photographs that are available and searchable in the Catalog:

- American Unofficial Collection of World War I Photographs, 1917–1918 in the Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs (Record Group 165): catalog.archives.gov/id/533461
- Photographs of American Military Activities, ca. 1918–ca. 1981 in the Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer (Record Group 111): catalog.archives.gov/id/530707
- Photographic Albums of Prints of Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation, September 1942–December 1945 in the Records of the Office of the Chief of Transportation (Record Group 336): catalog.archives.gov/id/542169
- Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Public Domain Photographs, 1882-1962 (Collection FDR-PHOCO): catalog.archives.gov/id/195301

Q9: What other NARA resources might help me research the Office of the Provost Marshal General (OPMG), enemy POWs, POW camps, and Military Police (MPs)?

A9: You may want to check out NARA's online research support community History Hub or read blogs and other articles in NARA's publications. Many records filing manuals are also online.

- War Department Decimal Filing System Manual: www.archives.gov/research/guides/war-dept
- History Hub: historyhub.history.gov/
- Access to Archival Databases (AAD): aad.archives.gov/aad/
- National Archives Blogs: www.archives.gov/social-media/blogs
- Prologue Magazine: www.archives.gov/publications/prologue
- Other National Archives Publications: www.archives.gov/publications

Q10: Who should I contact if I have any questions about records in RG 389 or if I want to arrange a research visit to access the records?

A10: Please email questions to the Textual Reference Branch at the National Archives in College Park, MD (Archives II) at archives2reference@nara.gov. More information, including how to make a research appointment, is also available online at www.archives.gov/college-park.