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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

F359: Personnel Records of the National Archives at St. Louis

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Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration (L. Hurtado)



Outline

- Brief History of Federal Personnel Records & the tie to St. Louis
- Overview of Records of Interest to Genealogists
- Military Personnel Records in the National Archives
- Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs)
- Official Personnel Folders (OPFs)
- Selective Service Draft Cards & Classification Ledgers
- Courts-Martials & Other Auxiliary Series
- Access to Records
- Resources Available to Guide Researchers
- How to Request Records
- Q & A



Brief History of Personnel Records & Tie to St. Louis

- The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) holds military service records from the Revolutionary War to the present
- Generally, early military personnel records were unit-based & contained limited information on the respective veteran
- Early records include:
 - Personnel that served from the Revolution (Continental troops & state troops that served as Continental troops-but no state militia records)
 - Personnel serving during the War of 1812 through the Civil War, at our facility in **Washington, D.C.**
- For Union army soldiers, there are three major records in NARA that provide information on military service:
 - Compiled military service record (CMSR)
 - Pension application file &
 - Records reproduced in microfilm publication M594, Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations (225 rolls)



Brief History of Personnel Records & Tie to St. Louis (cont.)

- For Confederate army soldiers, there are two major records that provide information on military service:
 - Compiled military service record (CMSR)
 - Records reproduced in microfilm publication M861, Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Confederate Organizations. (Records relating to Confederate soldiers are typically less complete than those relating to Union soldiers because many Confederate records did not survive the war).
- In the 1890s, the Department of War used numerous sources, including muster, descriptive, & pay rolls, to create CMSRs
 - CMSRs generally show when a soldier joined a unit and if he was present when the unit was mustered.
 - Note: The Department of War abstracted the compiled military service records for men who fought in the Revolutionary War from extant records among its files in an attempt to create substitutes for records destroyed by fires in 1800 and 1814. Because the Department was not able to reconstruct every record, a soldier may have fought in a Continental Army unit during the war, but there may not be a compiled military service record for him.



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Brief History of Personnel Records & Tie to St. Louis (cont.)

- Modern military personnel record can be traced to late 19th Century
- U.S. Navy was first to create a more detailed personnel record in late 1800's
- After World War I we see widespread establishment of benefits for veterans
- Post World War II expansion of entitlements created demand for military personnel records
- By late 1940's Defense Department (DoD) recognized a need to more efficiently access & store the plethora of military personnel records for use by vets, Next-of-Kin (NOK) & governmental entities
- Led to a desire to centralize the records...where do we put them?
- First effort led to centralizing records in North Carolina (temporary solution)—then in Kansas City—again a temporary solution





Brief History of Personnel Records & Tie to St. Louis (cont.)

- By early 1950s DoD had secured funding from Congress for a Demobilized Military Personnel Records Facility to be constructed in St. Louis (centrally located)
- \$12.5 million dollar project (\$119 million in 2019 dollars) saw construction of facility at 9700 Page Avenue in Overland, MO
- Similar effort was begun for civil service personnel records leading to construction of Civilian Personnel Records (CPR) facility in South St. Louis
- National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) established in 1960 when military and civilian personnel records were combined in St. Louis



Military Personnel Records Center circa 1958



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Brief History of Personnel Records & Tie to St. Louis (cont.)

- In 2004, the AOTUS with the DoD determined the OMPF to be permanent, archival record of the United States
- Decision required significant investment to revisions/upgrades old facilities to properly preserve/store records in perpetuity
- Ultimately more cost-effective to replace than try to renovate
- New facility at 1 Archives Drive was finished in May 2011
 - Achieved \$2.1 million in direct construction savings
- Moved 2.2 million cubic feet of records to Archives Drive from 5/1/11 to 11/6/12
 - Averaged 5-6 semi trucks & over 6,000 boxes daily
 - Saved taxpayers over \$9 million dollars through innovative methods and active project management





In Summary...

- **Military Personnel Records:**

- Revolutionary War to Late 19th Century are in Washington, D.C. 



- Late 19th Century to Early 21st Century are in St. Louis 



- **Military Unit & Organizational Records are in College Park, MD** 





Records of Interest to Genealogists

- National Archives at St. Louis is a personal data record series archive
- Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)
- Official Personnel Folder (OPF)
- Selective Service System Registration Cards & Classification Ledgers
- Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs)
- Courts-Martial Records
- Many other personnel-related records rich in genealogical material



Are Archival Records Free?

- Archival records are free to access in our public research rooms & on-line Catalog
- Archival records can be photographed or scanned for free in our research rooms
- If a patron wants photocopies of an archival record, or if the request is from an off-site patron, we impose copy fees for this work
- Copies of archival records are subject to fees under 44 USC 2116 & 36 CFR 1258
 - NARA does not receive appropriations for making copies of records
 - Fees for archived records are processed through the NARA Trust Fund (44 USC 2307)
 - Archival military personnel records are subject to fees except for requests for benefits & entitlements from the vet or Next-of-Kin (NOK)
 - Current fee schedule for OMPFs: .80 per page; \$25: 5 pp or less; \$70: 6 pp or more



Archival OMPFs

- **All OMPFs become a public, archival record 62 years to-the-day from when the veteran retired, separated or was killed in service**
 - **This is a rolling date: $(62 - \text{Today's date}) = \text{Archival date}$**
 - **Example: $62 - 5/10/2019 = 5/10/1957$**
- Any record with this date of retirement, separation or KIA or EARLIER is a public, archival record
 - Anyone can request & review or purchase a copy, subject to FOIA Privacy Exemption review
- If a record is newer than the current archival date it has limited access:
 - Veteran, NOK, military service department, law enforcement

1973 Fire

- Shortly after midnight, on July 12, 1973, a fire was reported at NPRC's military personnel records building at 9700 Page Avenue in Overland, MO
- It burned uncontrolled for 4 days
- 42 Fire Departments responded
- Facility was not constructed with fire sprinklers or fire breaks
- Approximately 22 million OMPFs were stored on the 6th (top) floor



1973 Fire (continued)



*Irreplaceable
loss...*

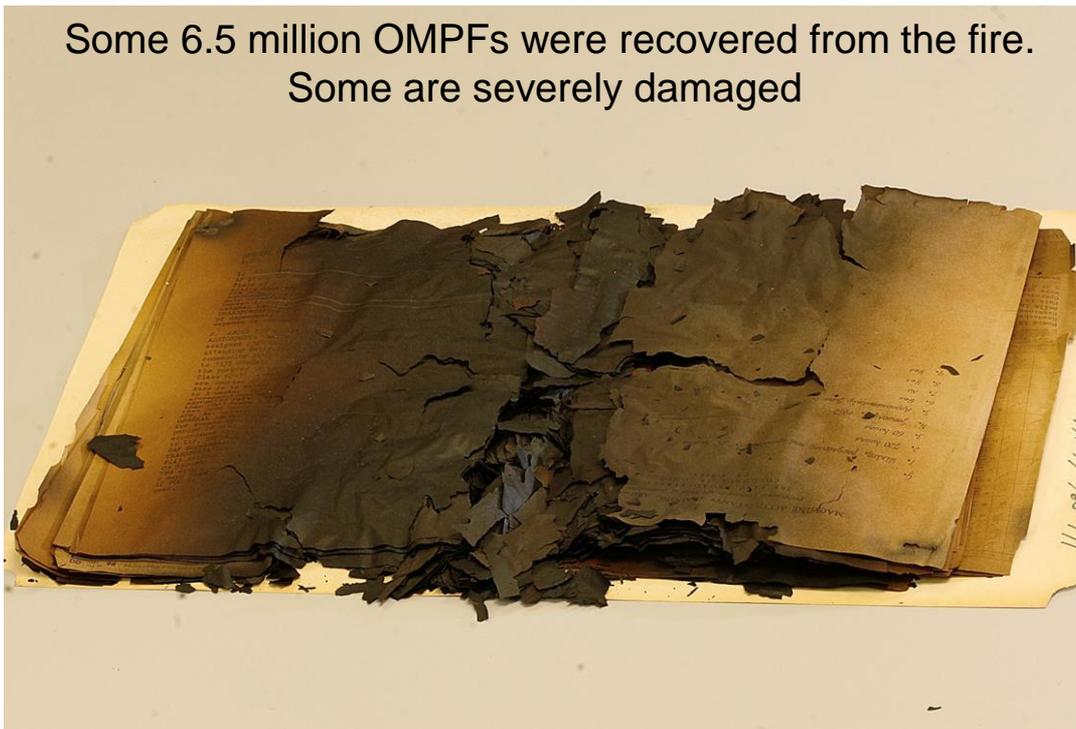




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A Burned Record: “B-File”

Some 6.5 million OMPFs were recovered from the fire.
Some are severely damaged





Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs)

- Records damaged or lost include an estimated **16 million military records**. Records damage occurred from both fire and water

Records Affected	Discharge Dates	Estimated Loss
Army WWI	11/1/1912 - 9/7/1939	80%
Army WWII	9/8/1939 - 12/31/1946	
Army Post-WWII	1/1/1947 - 12/31/1959	
Air Force	9/25/1947 - 12/31/1963 surnames Hubbard - Z	75%



What's in an OMPF?

- The OMPF documents an individual's military service:
 - Date & type of enlistment/commissioning/appointment.
 - Duty stations & assignments.
 - Training & qualifications.
 - Performance reports.
 - Awards & decorations received.
 - Insurance/emergency contact information.
 - Non-judicial disciplinary actions (e.g., Article of 15; Letters of Counseling/Reprimand).
 - Date & type of separation/discharge/retirement, including DD Form 214 (Report of Separation).
 - May also contain birth & marriage certificates, divorce decrees, letters, & official photographs.
- **Detailed information about a veteran's participation in battles & military engagements is not found in the OMPF**



Official Personnel Folders (OPFs)

- OPFs are the personnel records of former civil servant employees of the federal government
- A large collection of these records are permanent & some are archival & available to anyone
 - **OPFs from the beginning of Civil Service through 1951 (separation/retirement) are archival, public records**
 - OPFs from 1952 - 1973 are projected to be permanent but not yet archival
 - OPFs from 1974 to present are not permanent records
- Archived OPFs also include the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) & Works Progress Administration (WPA)



OPFs

- OPFs may contain the following documents:
 - Applications
 - Oaths of Office
 - Correspondence
 - Appraisals
 - Leave and Pay Information
 - Letters of Recommendation/Protest
 - Changes in Work Status
 - Photographs
 - Rarely: Vital Records



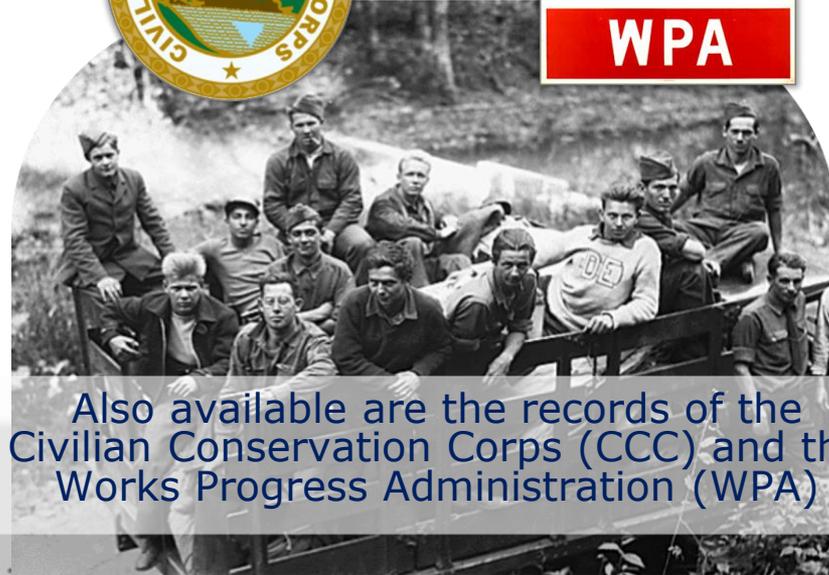
Ellen Harriet Gery

*OPF-Dept. of the Army/Air Force;
RG 146: Records of the Civil Service
Commission;
National Archives at St. Louis*



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OPFs



Also available are the records of the
Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the
Works Progress Administration (WPA)



What other archival records are in St. Louis?

- We have lots of records besides just OMPFs and OPFs:
 - Selective Service System Classification Ledgers & Draft Cards (Post WWI - end of Draft)
 - U.S. Army General Courts-Martial Records (1918-1976)
 - Deceased Veterans Claim Files (XCs) (1898-1945)
 - Individual Deceased Personnel Files (All branches with exception of post WW2 & Korea last names M-Z. These will transfer in coming year or so)
 - Various Army & Air Force Morning Reports, Rolls & Rosters
 - Pay Vouchers (Army & Air Force)
 - And many, many more...



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Selective Service Draft Cards & Ledgers

- National Archives at St. Louis maintains World War II through Vietnam era Selective Service Records
- Men born April 28, 1877 to March 28, 1957 or,
- Registrations from 1918 to 1976 (end of draft)

RG 147: Records of the Selective Service System, 1940 to Present
NAID: Varies by state

Honorable Disch. 3-1-46.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER 306	1. NAME (Print) T. Stanley Frank Musial	ORDER NUMBER T. 10994
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 53 S. McKean Donora Wash. Pa.		
3. MAILING ADDRESS Same		
4. TELEPHONE 416	5. AGE IN YEARS 21 DATE OF BIRTH Nov. 21 1920	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Donora Pa.
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Lillian Musial - 53 S. McKean Donora, Pa.		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS National League St. Louis Base Ball Club - St. Louis, Mo.		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS St. Louis Missouri		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
D. S. S. FORM 1 (Revised 1-1-42)		Stanley Frank Musial (Registrant's signature)



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Selective Service Draft Cards: “Old Man’s Draft”

**-DOB- APRIL 28TH 1877-
FEBRUARY 16TH 1897**
**-NOT LIABLE FOR MILITARY
SERVICE**
-OCCUPATIONAL STRENGTH
**-REGISTERED 14,369,325 MEN
(911,630 IN NYC ALONE)**

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897)

SERIAL NUMBER U 1111	1. NAME (Print) ALBERT (First) (None) (Middle) EINSTEIN (Last)	ORDER NUMBER
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 112 MERCER ST. Princeton, Mercer N.J. (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)		
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]		
3. MAILING ADDRESS Same (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)		
4. TELEPHONE Prin 1606 (Exchange) (Number)	5. AGE IN YEARS 63 DATE OF BIRTH March 14 1879 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Ulm (Town or county) (State or country)
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Institute of Advanced Study Princeton N.J.		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS As above		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Princeton (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
D. S. S. FORM 1 (Revised 4-1-42)	(over)	16-21630-2 Albert Einstein (Registrant's signature)



Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF)

- Record created to document the death of a military member & the actions associated with the disposition of remains
- For personnel killed in line of duty, peacetime, during training & off-duty
- Sometimes called “Mortuary File/Record” or “Casualty File”
- Current holdings include:
 - Air Force 1940-1985 (RGs 341 & 342)
 - Army 1941-1976 (RG 92) All except M-Z for WW2 & Korea (being digitized by DoD)
 - WW1 Burial Case Files 1915-1939 (RG 92)
 - Navy & Marine Corps 1898-1989 (RG 24)
 - Tan Son Nhut (Vietnam) 1966-1972 (RG 218)
 - Deceased/War Casualty Seamen’s Records – Merchant Mariners 1937-1950 (RG 26)



Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs)

- Documents specifics of the death & the required actions to complete the case
- Included both mortuary officer & summary courts martial officer actions:
 - Mortuary officer: duties associated with search & recovery, positive identification, preparation of remains for final disposition, arrangements for mortuary/final services, military honors & burial
 - Summary courts martial officer: duties associated with closing out personal affairs, collection & disposition of personal property, closing accounts, financial obligations, legal matters
- Surrogate material for Army & Air Force military personnel records lost in 1973 fire
- Excellent source for genealogical material: Date/place of birth, date of death, addresses, NOK, etc.



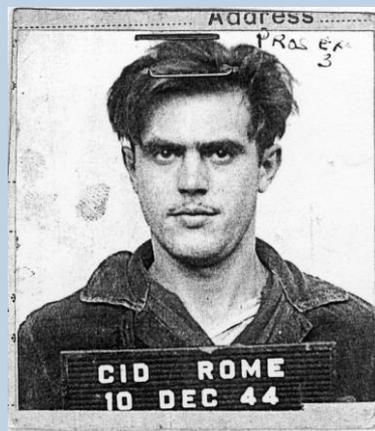
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Special & General Courts-Martial Records

- Proceedings spanning from 1918 through 1976 (Army); 1951-1976 (Navy & Marine Corps)
- Courts-Martial Records are very large as compared to personnel files
- Unlike personnel files, court records are freely open to the public with no redactions (“buyer beware”)
- Can contain graphic images, information and testimony

RG 153: Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army) NAID: 12459579

RG 125: Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Navy) NAID: 38982845



Werner Schmiedel, aka “Robert Lane”

- Convicted in August 1944 & sentenced to 20 years for AWOL & terrorizing citizens; sentenced reduced & escaped
- Lead “Lane Gang” that terrorized & robbed Italian shopkeepers & travelers in 1944. Responsible for murder of civilian & multiple escapes
- Convicted a second time & hanged June 1945

Branch of Service	Non-OMPF Record Series Description	Years
All Branches	Applications For Headstones	1925-1970
All Branches	Applications for Headstones and Markers; Department of Memorial Affairs	1970-1985
All Branches	Arlington National Cemetery Daily Logs	1948-2011
All Branches	Burial Case Files	1915-1939
All Branches	Deceased Veterans Claims (XC files) - successor series to "Pension Files"	1898-1945
All Branches	Deceased Veterans Claims Index Cards	1918-1945
All Branches	Interment Control Forms	1928-1962
All Branches	North Carolina WWI Index Cards	1917-1918
All Branches	VA Master Index File	through 1972
Air Force & Army	Daily Sick Reports/Books, US Army and Army Air Force	1912-1953
Air Force & Army	Separation and Discharge Records, US Army and Air Force	1942-1959
Air Force & Army	Enlistment/Induction Serial Number Ledgers	1947-1960
Air Force	Awards Card File, Air Force	1942-1963
Air Force	Casualty Files / Mortuary Files / Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs), Air Force	1940-1973
Air Force	Drop Cards	1947-1969
Air Force	Individual Flight Records	1911-1958
Air Force	Morning Reports, Air Force	1947-1966
Air Force	Pay Vouchers, Final	1947-1950, 1961-1962
Air Force	Publications (microfilm)	1940-1953
Air Force	Publications (paper)	1954-1968
Army	American Expeditionary Forces Card File	1917-1918
Army	Army Hospital Clinical Record Cover Sheets	1906-1959

Branch of Service	Non-OMPF Record Series Description	Years
Army	Award Cards, WWI Army	1918-1940
Army	Awards Precedence Files	1918-1920
Army	Berlin Airlift Device Cards	1948-1949
Army	Chaplain Files	1917-1950
Army	Chemical Warfare Service Officers Index	1941-1959
Army	Courts Martial Records of Trial, General	1917-1976
Army	Courts Martial Records of Trial, Special (resulting in Bad Conduct Discharge)	1939-1976
Army	Courts Martial Summaries, American Expeditionary Forces in Germany	1919-1921
Army	Daily Reports of Changes, US Army	1918-1919
Army	Dependency Folders, U.S. Army	1918-1943
Army	Deserters Vouchers, US Army	1926-1930
Army	Disability Discharges, US Army	1917-1939
Army	Discharge from the Draft, US Army	1918
Army	Discharge Reports, WWI, US Army	1918-1920
Army	District of Columbia National Guard	1887-1945
Army	Individual Civilian Internment Cards	1941-1946
Army	Mexican Border Service	1916-1917
Army	Miscellaneous Unit Records and Name Lists	1912-1957
Army	Morning Reports and Rosters, US Army	1947-1959
Army	Morning Reports, US Army	1912-1946
Army	Muster Rolls and Rosters, US Army	1912-1943
Army	National Guard Papers, WWI, US Army	1916-1919
Army	Nominal Checklist for Report of Sick and Wounded, US Army	1917-1939
Army	Nurses Cards, World War II Army	1944
Army	Nurses (Student) Individual Academic Records, US Army	1919-1937
Army	Officers' Reports of Change	1918

Branch of Service	Non-OMPF Record Series Description	Years
Army	Patient Rosters, US Army	1940-1948
Army	Pay Cards, Army Deserters	1943-1945
Army	Pay Cards, Army Officers	1940-1951
Army	Pay Cards, Army WWI Officers & Nurses	1917-1921
Army	Pay Cards, Contract Nurses, US Army	1933-1940
Army	Pay Cards, Contract Surgeons and Chaplains, US Army	1935-1942
Army	Pay Cards, Field Clerks, US Army	1917-1921
Army	Pay Cards, National Guard Officers	1922-1936
Army	Pay Cards, Regular Army Officers and Field Clerks	1920-1941
Army	Pay Cards, US Army, Reserve Officer Training Corps Students	1920
Army	Pay Cards, Warrant Officers, US Army	1917-1921
Army	Pay Vouchers, Final, Army WWI, Officers & Nurses	1917-1921
Army	Pay Vouchers, Final, Post WWI, WWII, and Post WWII	1926-1950, 1961-1962
Army	Pay Vouchers, US Army Enlisted, WWI (Multiple-name and Single-name)	1917-1921
Army	Payments, Enlisted Men, US Army	1915-1917
Army	Philippine Prisoners of War Card File (QTP in Registry)	1941-1945
Army	Reserve Officer Training Camps: Officers & Candidates for Commission, US Army	1917-1918
Army	Return of Nurse Corps, US Army	1917-1920
Army	Russian Railway Service Corps	1917-1920
Army	SGO (Office of the Surgeon General) Hospital Admission Electronic Data Files	1942-1945, 1950-1954, 1958-1963
Army	United States Soldiers Home Accounts	1900-1926
Marine Corps	Compiled Service Records	1895-1904
Navy	Casualty Reports (IDPFs)	1907-1970
Navy	Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs)	1964-1975
Navy	Inpatient (Clinical) Record Files Non-Fixed Medical Facilities	1943-1945



Branch of Service	Non-OMPF Record Series Description	Years
Navy	Officer Orders & Officer Personnel Jackets - South Pacific Force	not shown
SSS	Selective Service System - Registration Cards and Classification Ledgers	1940-1975
SSS	Alien Registration Forms	1940-1947
Merchant Mariners	Card Records of Licenses Issued to Merchant Marine Officers	1910-1946
Merchant Mariners	Deceased and War Casualty Seaman's Records	1937-1950
Civilian	Civilian Employment Records - Official Personnel Folders and Service Record Cards	c.1875-1951
Civilian	Civilian Internment Cards, WWII Individual	1941-1946
Civilian	German Civilian Personnel Files (Post World War II)	1945-(about) 1955



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Resources Available to Guide Research

Civilian Personnel Records open to the public (prior to 1952): <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-programs/civilian-personnel-archival/#written-requests>

Civilian Personnel Records not yet open to the public (1952-present):
<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/civilian-personnel/index.html>

Construction of National Personnel Records Center
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dk_NbxHdk8

Military Personnel Records not yet open to the public: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/about-ompfs.html>

Military Personnel Records open to the public (62 years in the past from “today’s date”):
<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-programs/military-personnel-archival/index.html>



Resources Available to Guide Research

Persons of Exceptional Prominence records: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/public/persons-of-prominence.html>

Preservation Lab at the National Archives, St. Louis:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xNvAudiRwU>

The National Archives at St. Louis: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-programs/index.html>

Veterans Personnel Records at the National Archives, St. Louis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WXQMiR5xxk>



How do I get access to archival OMPFs?

- Off-site via correspondence:

**National Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138**

- Fax a Standard Form 180 to: 314-801-9195.
- Unaccessioned OMPF requests can also be made online via eVetrecs:
<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>
- Veterans can also access their unaccessioned OMPFs by visiting the Agency Research Room by calling 314-801-0800.
- On-site: Contact the Archival Research Room: 314-801-0850 to schedule an appointment.
 - Hours of operation: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CT.



How do I get access to other archival records in St. Louis?

- Off-site/Mail: **National Archives at St. Louis**
P.O. Box 38757
St. Louis, MO 63138
- Requests can also be faxed to 314-801-9187.
- Inquiries can be submitted via email to:
 - General archival inquiries: stl.archives@nara.gov
 - Research Room inquiries: stlarr.archives@nara.gov (Phone: 314-801-0850).
 - Persons of Exceptional Prominence Records (Elvis, Patton, et al.):
pep.records@nara.gov
 - Facebook & Twitter inquiries: stlfb.archives@nara.gov & [@StLouisArchives](https://www.facebook.com/StLouisArchives)
- On-site: Archival Research Room, 314-801-0850 or email above.



Wrap Up

- Q & A
- Contact Info:

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