

Researcher Forum Minutes

29 January 2014

Bryan McGraw (Access Coordinator - St. Louis & Director, National Archives at St. Louis):

Provided a brief introduction RL-SL (Whitney Mahar, Public Research Room Manager), Donna Noelken (Public Research Room Archives Specialist), Sue Nash (Public Research Room Archives Specialist), and introduced representatives from NPRC (who?), Preservation (who?) manning information tables.

Inquired whether 4 PM was a convenient time for the forum, which was agreed upon with no objections, and announced the availability of handouts for visitors located by the entrance.

Whitney Mahar (Public Research Room Manager):

Offered information about public access PCs in the ARR and services offered free of charge. These services are:

- Ancestry.com
- fold 3
- Heritage Quest
- Family Search
- Castle Garden
- Ellis Island
- Communication tools:
 - Facebook, Twitter, Email Blasts
 - Phone contact information and email addresses for commonly used contacts at NARA

Gave a summary of the events surrounding the fire at 9700 Page Avenue on July 12, 1973, and provided a list of the record groups affected by it. Possible alternate methods of obtaining service information or documents (contacting the Department of Veterans Affairs, requesting searches of microfilmed holdings, etc).

Outlined the newly accessioned, non-OMPF, series available at the National Archives at St. Louis, provided instruction on how to access info on OPA using NARA identifier on series list, and informed visitors which request form to use when requesting records from each of these series.

Donna Noelken (Archives Specialist):

Provided an in-depth description of the record series listed below. Points specifically discussed were: the information each record series contains, how to access them (information needed to conduct an effective search for, and the organization of, the records), and the expectations the public should have regarding the condition of the records; some are in poor condition, while others are can prove difficult to read.

Series-specific information was provided as shown below.

- **Air Force Publications (1940-1960 & 1960-1968)**: The records ranging from 1940 to 1960 require the unit to which the veteran was assigned in order to search; the records ranging from 1940-1953 are on microfilm while those ranging from 1954-1960 are on paper. The records from 1960-1968 have not yet been processed; since there are no finding aids, these records are not yet accessible.

Sue Nash emphasized while the serviceman's OMPF may have been lost in the fire, the available Air Force Publications can offer valuable information.

- **Air Force Individual Flight Records (1911-1958)**: These records are stored in alphabetical order, on microfilm. Since these are arranged alphabetically, they can be searched to find service numbers; servicemen should have a card for each year of flight.

- **Air Force Drop Cards (1947-1969)**: These records are cards, filed by service number, that were created when a serviceman was dropped from the rolls; the information they contain can include the date on, and place from, which a serviceman was dropped from the rolls. Cards prior to 1954 rarely contain the discharge date.

Sue Nash (Archives Specialist):

Explained information contained in the records series below, and how it assists in regards to service information reconstruction.

- **Army and Air Force Enlistment/Induction Service Number Ledgers & Orders (1940-1960)**: These records are ledgers, filed in service number order; the service member's date of entry is needed in order to conduct an effective search. Due to the condition of the records, no original documents will be made available to researchers; only an extract of the information.
- **Army and Air Force Enlistment/Induction Orders (1947-1960)**: These records are enlistment orders of Army and Air Force personnel, filed in registry number order; the service member's service number is needed to conduct an effective search. Since these records contain Personal Identifying Information, only redacted copies of these records will be made available to researchers.
- **Hospital Clinical Records Cover Sheets (1955-1959) & Medical Admission Cards (1939-1955)**: These records are cover sheets and admission cards of Army and Air Force personnel who were treated at Army or Air Force hospitals (mainly Letterman General Hospital) during the respective time periods above. The service number of the veteran is needed to conduct an effective search for these records.

Researcher Q & A Session:

Q: Will notes of the forum Power Point be available?

A: Yes, they will be available on Facebook and in the Archival Research Room Inquiry made about civil war and rev war records.

Q: How would one find a veterans service number?

A: Army Service Number Index, or www.NARA.gov (Access to Archival Databases)

Q: Are service numbers on dog tags?

A: Yes.

Q: Can the finding aids that are stored in the core library be brought to the Archival Research Room?

A: **Bill Seibert (Chief, Archival Operations)** replied, "We are working on it and negotiating with the cores."

Q: If a serviceperson was injured in WWII, How can I find information about it?

A: If there is no OMPF due to the fire, the veteran or Next-of-kin may request a copy of the VA claim file from the Dept. of Veteran's Affairs. www.va.gov.

Q: Does NARA St. Louis have Navy records?

A: Yes, these records generally were not affected by the fire.

Q: Why is the Archival date 62 years?

A: There was a study conducted to determine the average use of the record by the veteran.

Q: How does one order a QMC?

A: There is an official request form available in the Archival Research Room.

After closing remarks from Bryan McGraw and Whitney Mahar, the researcher forum concluded at approximately 5:10 PM.