



Reconstructing WWII and Korean War Service Records

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The 1973 NPRC Fire

- On July 12, 1973 a fire broke out at the Military Personnel Records Center on Page Blvd in St. Louis, Missouri. The blaze lasted nearly a week and destroyed the top two floors of the building.
- Between 16-18 million military records were destroyed, primarily impacting 75-80% of Army and Air Force records.
- This makes genealogical research with WWII and Korean War records unique. Navy and Marine Corps records were unaffected by the 1973 fire*, but Army and Army Air Corps/Force records were significantly damaged. Missing documents, gaps in the service period, and verifying military information are common obstacles when utilizing the 'B' Files (Burnt Records).

A few were impacted as they were pulled and placed in the wrong storage bay





How the NPRC Reconstructs Records

- The National Personnel Records Center uses a variety of internal and external sources to reconstruct a WWII and Korean War service member's military information. This proves crucial when applying for financial or burial benefits.
- The information acquired from specific resources and utilizing the full availability of NPRC and NARA holdings creates a more complete picture of one's military service.

How the NPRC Reconstructs Records Cont.

-The NPRC standard operating procedure for handling WWII records: Archival records all carry a reproduction fee (unless used for financial or burial benefits). If the record is identified as burned, auxiliary records are used to compare submitted information with available sources.

1. P-payroll vouchers: discharge date, character of service, rank, service number, duty station
2. E-enlistment / induction: name, DOB, enlistment date, SN
3. D-Discharge orders
4. C-Clinical coversheets: hospital records, SN, discharge, character
5. SGO-Surgeon General's Office: SN
6. J-JAG Memos, Court Martial
7. K,W-WWII and Korea POWs

DALTON PATRICK DALY ^X C 461 818
 Sgt 1/c Fld Hosp 159 2 Army K 415 522
 Prov Sn Tn
 Lakeview Apts Salt Lake City A 1 226 436
 Utah
 Sn 1 622 464 Died 4-14-39 T 1 635 623
 Born 2/20/91 R
 Enl 6/19/17 Dis 7/3/19 Cl. 290 578
 2/2/15 I

U. S. VETERANS BUREAU
 MAIL AND RECORDS
 Form 7202-Rev. Sept., 1925

INDEX CARD

GPO 2-13969

WAR DEPARTMENT Form No. 70-010 Form Prescribed by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1914		WAR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS' PAY, ALLOWANCE, AND MILEAGE VOUCHER		D. O. VOUCHER NO.	
1. LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL HISTPAS ALFRED H		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 0 469 812		3. GRADE Capt	4. BRANCH CHC
5. PAY STATUS DATA 24 May 42 GREEN BAY WISC.		6. PAY PERIOD 10 Dec 31 Dec 31 Jan 31 Mar 3 Apr 3 May		7. TOTAL AMOUNT \$ 1908.94	
8. 18. Base and longevity (10)		9. 19. Flying, nonflying officer (J)		10. 20. Parachutist (P)	
11. 21. Mustering out (A) 2200		12. 22. Allowance for—		13. 23. Class-B allotment—Bonds	
14. 24. Subsistence		15. 25. Rental (R)		16. 26. Travel, mileage status (J)	
17. 27. Total Credits		18. 28. Class-B allotment—Insurance		19. 29. Class-B allotment	
20. 30. Class-N, N-1 (1) Army Life Insurance		21. 31. Class-N, N-1 (2) Army Life Insurance		22. 32. Class-N, N-1 (3) Army Life Insurance	

COMPANY MORNING REPORT FORM 7 August 1944

STATION **Harlins 1 MI N T436**
 ORGANIZATION **Co B 100th Inf** Sect **Inf**

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
0029302	Koehn	1 Lt	M
0029303	Frellman	Pfc	
0029304	Henderson	Pvt	
0029305	Walden, R W	S Sgt	
0029306	Flah	Pfc	
0029307	Nirsh	Pfc	
Above Off and 5 MI KIA			
0029308	Walters, John J	Pvt	A
0029309	McCord, Race White	Pvt	A
0029310	Hurley, Paul Earl	Pvt	A
0029311	McCord, Race White	Pvt	A
0029312	Palmer, George (W)	Pvt	A
0029313	McCord, Race White	Pvt	A
Above 3 MI and 14 fr from 100th Inf			
0029314	Gill	1st Lt	M
Fr of to LIA (hospitalized) to dropped			
0029315	Sebaratt	Pvt	A
0029316	Tomson	Sgt	A
0029317	Kostwick	Pvt	A
0029318	Dox, R	Pvt	A

REPORTING OFFICER: **E. A. NYQUIST**, Major, F.D.
 Separation Fort

COMPANY MORNING REPORT FORM 7 August 1944

STATION **Harlins 1 MI N T436**
 ORGANIZATION **Co B 100th Inf** Sect **Inf**

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
0029319	Quarford	S Sgt	M
0029320	Sebaratt	Pfc	A1
Above 6 MI fr of to SMA to dropped fr August			

REPORTING OFFICER: **E. A. NYQUIST**, Major, F.D.
 Separation Fort

Images Clockwise:
 Morning Report; daily reports detailing changes in personnel at the company level.

Pay Voucher: determines active duty status, MOS, rank, and significant dates.

VA Index: agency index card system providing essential information on veteran: name, rank, service number, date of birth, dates of entry.

How the NPRC Reconstructs Records Cont.

8. Officer payroll records, Flight records, Air Force award cards, unit records, sick reports, daily logs, officer registers, FBI military background check, Selective Service System, Order of Battle / History of divisions, division commands and staff, casualty lists, state and county record offices

-Records that suffered severe fire or water damage, but are still salvageable undergo an intensive reconstruction process. Small bits of charred records are put back together, scanned, and digitally enhanced. 'RECON' technicians at the NPRC are trained to handle burnt and mold damaged records. This process takes a significant amount of time, but it provides the requester with as much veteran information along with accompanying information from secondary sources.



RECON technicians use specialized mold removal tools, vacuum chambers, and x-ray cameras to extract information from the most severely damaged records.

Making the Research Process Easier

Ask yourself these questions if you think the record you're researching is fire-damaged:

1. How much identifying information do I have on my WWII veteran?
(e.g. name, date of birth, service number, branch of service, enlistment date, MOS [military occupational specialty], character of service, discharge status)
2. What unit did the veteran serve with during the war?
(e.g. 101st Airborne, 2nd Armored Division, 1st Marine Division, USS Hornet, PT-109, etc.)
3. Do I have any primary source material in my possession already?
(e.g. Separation document [DD214], Discharge certificate, dog tags, draft letter, enlistment card, personal letters / photographs, telegrams, death certificates, etc.)

Making the Research Process Easier Cont.

Standard Form 180 (Rev. 11/2015) (Page 1) Authorized for local reproduction
 Prescribed by NARA (26 CFR 1233.18 (d)) Provisions often unusable OMB No. 3095-0029 Expires 04/30/2021

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Requests from veterans or deceased veteran's next-of-kin may be submitted online by using eVetRecs at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>. To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE BELOW.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much information as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, full middle)	2. SOCIAL SECURITY #	3. DATE OF BIRTH	4. PLACE OF BIRTH
5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below.)			
	DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	SERVICE NUMBER (If unknown, write "unknown")
a. ACTIVE			
b. RESERVE			
c. STATE NATIONAL GUARD			

6. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? NO YES - MUST provide Date of Death if veteran is deceased:
 7. DID THIS PERSON RETIRE FROM MILITARY SERVICE? NO YES

SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:

DD Form 214 or equivalent. Year(s) in which form(s) issued to veteran: _____
 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. If you request a DELETED copy, the following items will be blacked out: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and, for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost.
 An UNDELETED copy will be sent UNLESS YOU SPECIFY A DELETED COPY by checking this box: I want a DELETED copy.

Medical Records Includes Service Treatment Records, Health (outpatient) and Dental Records. IF HOSPITALIZED (inpatient) the FACILITY NAME and DATE (month and year) for EACH admission MUST be provided: _____

Other (Specify): _____

2. **PURPOSE:** (Providing information about the purpose of the request is strictly voluntary; however, it 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.)
 Benefits (explain) Employment VA Loan Programs Medical Genealogy Correction Personal Other (explain)
 Explain here: _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. **REQUESTER NAME:** _____

2. I am the MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN identified in Section I, above. I am the VETERAN'S LEGAL GUARDIAN (MUST submit copy of Court Appointment) or AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (MUST submit copy of Authorization Letter or Power of Attorney)
 I am the DECEASED VETERAN'S NEXT-OF-KIN (MUST submit Proof of Death. See item 2a on instruction sheet.) OTHER (Specify type of Other) _____

3. **SEND INFORMATION DOCUMENTS TO:** (Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.)
 Name _____
 Street _____ Apt. _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

4. **AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE:** 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 and that I authorize the release of the requested information. (See items 2a or 2b on accompanying instruction sheet. Without the Authorization Signature of the veteran, next-of-kin of deceased veteran, veteran's legal guardian, authorized government agent, or other authorized representative, only limited information can be released unless the request is archival. No signature is required if the request is for archival records.)

* This form is available at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html> on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) web site. *

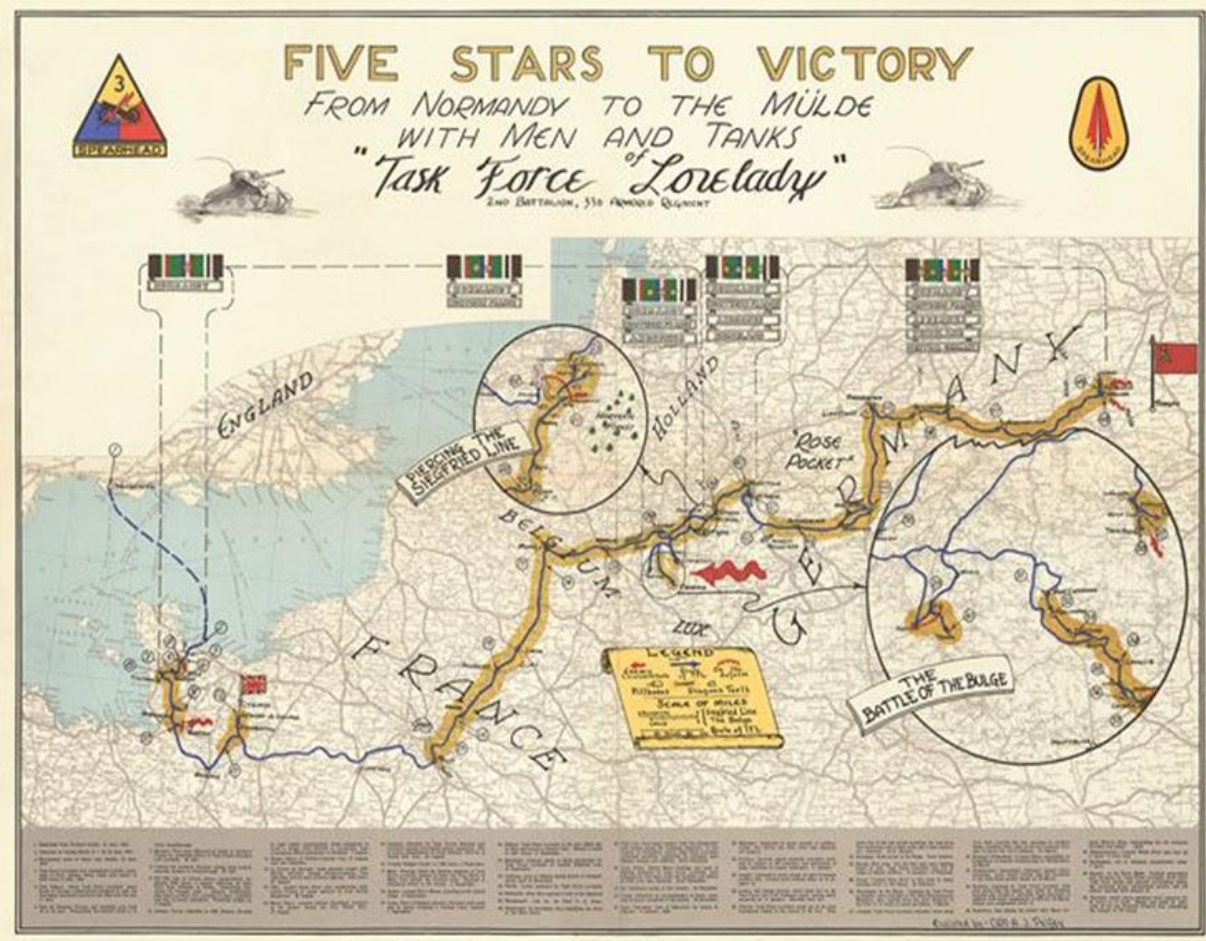
Signature Required - Do not print _____ Date _____
 Daytime phone _____ Fax Number _____
 Email address _____

-The Standard Form 180 (SF180) is the routine form that veterans and the general public uses to request military personnel and medical records. The NPRC receives over 6,000 requests a day; a combination of paper and digital request forms. Only authorized recipients can request a service record: veteran, surviving spouse / next of kin, legal guardian / power of attorney.

-Records older than 62 years from the veteran's date of birth are classified as archival records. Archival records are fully available to the general public and maybe purchased for a reproduction fee. In the case of burn records, the NPRC provides a full copy of the available documents in the record, along with a summary of military service with information obtained from auxiliary sources.

-Complete this form as fully as possible. The more information you submit, the easier it will be for NPRC technicians to locate the correct record.

You Have the Record, Now What?



-Interpreting record information can be tricky, especially if there are missing gaps. Establishing a timeline is a crucial first step (enlistment / induction date, promotion dates, transfers, hospital admissions, movements, discharge date). Knowing what dates are available will help determine length of service and cross referenced with location can help determine travel.

-Documents can show the primary unit a veteran serves with (company, ship, squadron, headquarters, etc.) Assume the veteran is with that unit for the duration unless you see orders or transfer showing differently.

-Compare the service record with unit records and you can trace the veteran's movements. This is helpful when determining entitlement to awards.

Personal Research: Fred Laverne Richardson

Fred's record was significantly impacted by the 1973 fire; only a payroll and enlistment record survived. Despite that, he left behind a large number of personal items that determined his veteran status.

He left behind an Air Medal, Good Conduct, and WWII Victory Medal. Good Conducts were awarded for 1-year honorable service during wartime, WWIIVCM for serving during WWII, and the Air Medal for aerial achievement. Ordering the surviving burn records, I received a service number (38563209).

Using the SN and payroll voucher, that showed connection with the 499th Bomb Squadron, under the 345th Bomb Group. The 345th fought engagements over New Guinea, Biak, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, China, and the Japanese home islands.

Fred also left behind a unit service history book showing his record of service. The Bats Outta Hell.



Personal Research: Fred Laverne Richardson Cont.

Contacted Garfield County Records Office in Enid, Oklahoma where he returned following the war. They obtained a copy of his discharge paperwork using Name, DOB, and SN.

Payroll records showed Fred leaving CONUS (Continental United States) on October 17, 1944, the day the Philippines were invaded by Gen. MacArthur. He landed in New Guinea, then transferred to the Philippines. Discharge paperwork shows him participating in 8 campaigns during his service.

Unit records show the 345th relocating to Ie Shima and then transferred to Fort Lewis, Washington. The 345th became part of the occupation force and Fred remained until December 1945. A telegram shows Fred making it to Vancouver (date) and then later Fort Leavenworth where he was fully discharged.

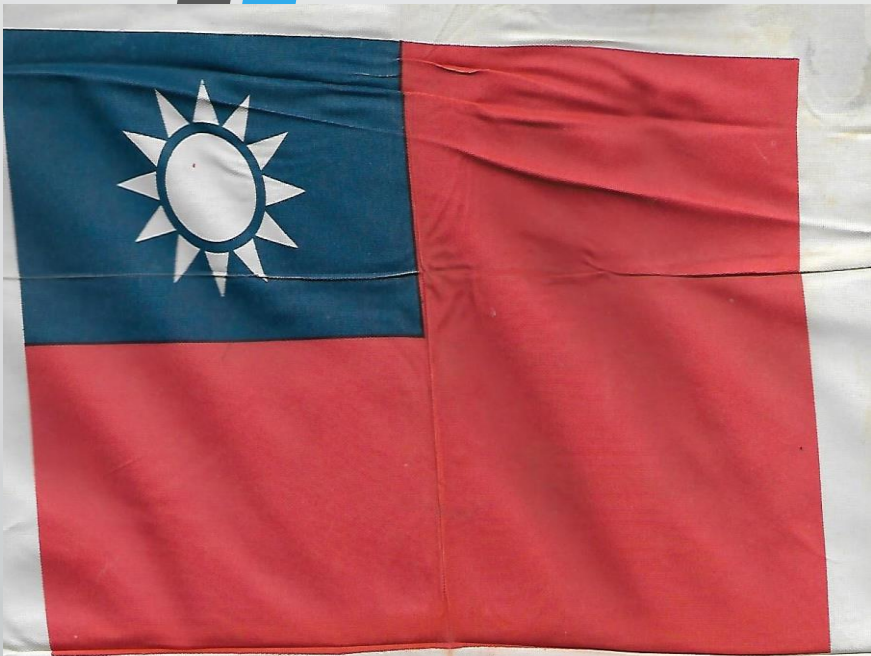
Discharge paperwork shows his MOS, training at Fort Lowry and Fort Myers, and character of service. The Philippine Liberation Ribbon is also listed on the discharge.

Personal Research: Fred Laverne Richardson Cont.

All this information allowed me to fully reconstruct his time overseas and complete the full picture of his awards. The Air Force Award Cards series was referenced using his name and SN, which returned a card showing the AM w/ 1 BOLC, meaning it was received twice, not once. The awards include the following:

1. Air Medal w/ OLC
2. Good Conduct Medal
3. Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal w/ eight stars
4. American Campaign Medal (stationed in CONUS)
5. Army of Occupation Medal (unit stationed in Japan)
6. WWII Victory Medal
7. Philippine Liberation Medal
8. Philippine Independence Medal
9. Presidential Unit Citation
10. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation
11. Sharpshooter Badge w/ Carbine Bar
12. Aerial Gunner Badge (MOS as Machine Gunner)





美國空軍
來華助戰
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借用
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the war!

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But Time to Buy That

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VICTORY BOND!**

