

Chapter Seventeen

Getting Your Military Records

By Dick Bielen

Documented records of a person's service in the U.S. military have been around since before the Revolutionary War. These records have come in many forms. Some are as simple as a handwritten roster of members of a unit or ship. Others are one or more thick folders containing page after page of paper accumulated over a period of many years of service. And still others being generated today are maintained in digital form, available only with the use of a computer.

Many of these records are individual files officially established on the servicemember's first day of duty. Beginning with an enlistment contract or a commissioning order, the file will be filled with information about important events and activities in the servicemember's life in the military—training completed, assignments, changes in rank and grade, awards and decorations, performance evaluations, and disciplinary issues among others.

Another important individual file that is established on day-one is the servicemember's health record. It should contain details of medical conditions and problems encountered on active duty and the treatment provided.

Obviously, these two individual records have been important in the accounting, administration, management, training, and care of personnel in the military. But even after the servicemember completes a period of military service, these records can still be extremely valuable.

The service record can provide the following:

- Proof of military service for employers, the VA, and the Social Security Administration
- Proof of service in a combat zone
- Proof of assignment to a particular unit or ship
- Identify and verify authorized awards and decorations
- Identify, by name, an immediate supervisor, or unit commander
- Results of disciplinary actions (Article 15, Captain's Mast, courts-martial, reprimands)
- Documentation related to early discharges

The health and dental record contain the following:

- Physical examination results from pre-entry to separation
- Reasons for out-patient clinic visits and treatment provided
- Lab work results
- Physical evaluation reports

Locating a military service or medical record will depend on the branch of service of the servicemember or veteran, his or her current military status, and the date of that status.

The following chart can be used to locate the records. It should be noted that the information is current as of September 28, 2008. Report any discrepancies to (314) 423-0860 or uslocator@earthlink.net.

To use the chart, first select the appropriate service branch on the left side of the page. Next, review and select the current military status of the servicemember or veteran. The two columns on the right contain location code numbers that are identified in detail below the chart.

Branch	Current Military Status	Personnel Record	Medical Record
Air Force	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service before May 1, 1994	11	10/11/14
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service May 1, 1994—September 30, 2004	11	10/14
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service on or after October 1, 2004	1	10/14
	Active duty, Air National Guard on active duty in the Air Force Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL)	1	12
	Reserve, retired reserve without pay, Air National Guard officer not on active duty in the Air Force or Air National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force	2	10
	Current Air National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force	2/15	10
	Army	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service before November 1, 1912 (enlisted) or before July 1, 1917 (officer)	6
Discharged, retired with pay, or died in service November 1, 1912 –October 15, 1992 (enlisted) or July 1, 1917—October 15, 1992 (officer)		11	10/11/14
Discharged, retired with pay or died in service October 16, 1992–September 30, 2002		11	10/14
Discharged, retired with pay or died in service on or after October 1, 2002		7/13/11	10/14
Reserve or active duty records of current Army National Guard members who performed service in the U.S. Army before July 1, 1972		7/13	10/11
Active duty enlisted (including Army National Guard on active duty in the U. S. Army) or Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL) enlisted		13	12
Active duty officers (including Army National Guard on active duty in the U.S. Army) or Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL) officer		13	12
Current Army National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the U.S. Army (including records of Army active duty performed after June 30, 1972)		13 / 15	10 / 11
Current Army National Guard officer not on active duty in the U.S. Army (including Records of Army active duty performed after June 30, 1972)		13/15	10/11

Coast Guard	Discharged, retired with pay, or died in service before January 1, 1898	6	
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service January 1, 1898–March 31, 1998	11	10/11/14
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service on or after April 1, 1998	11	10/14
	Active duty or Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL)	3	12
	Reserve	3	10
Marine Corps	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service before January 1, 1905	6	
	Discharged, retired with pay, or died in service January 1, 1905–April 30, 1994	11	10/11/14
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service May 1, 1994–December 31, 1998	11	10/14
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service after January 1, 1999	4	10/14
	Active Duty or Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL)	4	12
	Selected Marine Corps Reserve	4	10
	Individual Ready Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps	5	10
Navy	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service before January 1, 1886 (enlisted) or before January 1, 1903 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, retired with pay, or died in service January 1, 1886–January 30, 1994 (enlisted) or January 1, 1903–January 30, 1904 (officer)	11	10/11/14
	Discharged, retired with pay, or died in service January 31, 1994–December 31, 1994	11	10/14
	Discharged, retired with pay or died in service on or after January 1, 1995	9	10/14
	Active Duty or Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL)	9	12
	Reserve	9	10

Record Locations

1. Air Force Personnel Center

HQ AFPC/DPRP

550 C Street West, Ste. 19

Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4721

www.afpc.randolph.af.mil

Phone: (800) 616-3775. Select option 1, 1, 2

Internet access to personnel record by servicemember only at: www.afpc.randolph.af.mil; click on "AF Contact Center" and then click on "Secure Apps" tab.

2. Air Reserve Personnel Center/DSMR

HQ ARPC/DPSSA/B

6760 E. Irvington Place, Ste. 4600

Denver, CO 80280-4600

Internet: www.arpc.afrc.af.mil

Phone: (800) 525-0102. Normal business hours are 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mountain time, M-F, the first and third Saturday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the first and third Sunday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Internet access to personnel record by servicemember only at: www.afpc.randolph.af.mil, click on "AF Contact Center" and then click on "Secure Apps" tab.

3. Coast Guard Personnel Command

ATTN: CGPC-adm-3

4200 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 1100

Arlington, VA 22203-1804

Internet: www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgpc/adm/adm3/

Phone: (866) 634-0574. Normal business hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time, M-F.

4. Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps

Manpower Management Support Branch (MMSB-12)

2008 Elliot Rd.

Quantico, VA 22134-5030

Internet: www.manpower.usmc.mil/

Phone: (800) 268-3710 Normal hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time, M-F. If you have a problem with the telephone options, try pressing *O* for a live person.

Fax: (703) 784-5792/3900.

5. Marine Corps Mobilization Command

(Code MMI)

15303 Andrews Rd.

Kansas City, MO 64147-1207

Internet: <https://mobcom.mfr.usmc.mil/MOBCOM.asp>

Phone: (800) 255-5082. Customer service agents are available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central time, M-F.

6. Old Military and Civil War Records (NWCTB)

Textual Archives Services Division

National Archives and Records Administration

700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20408-0001

Internet: www.archives.gov

Phone: None available at book deadline.

7. U.S. Army Human Resources Command

ATTN: AHRC-PAV-V

1 Reserve Way

St. Louis, MO 63132-5200

www.hrc.army.mil

Phone: (800) 318-5298. Normal business hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central time, M-F.

8. Commander USAEREC

ATTN: PCRE-FS

8899 E. 56th St.

Indianapolis, IN 46249-5301

Internet: www.hrc.army.mil

Phone: (866) 771-6357. Normal business hours are 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern time, M-F.

9. Navy Personnel Command

Requests must be in writing and include full name, Social Security number, address where record is to be mailed and signature. Requests can be mailed, faxed or made online. An entire file will be provided on CD-ROM. On request, a paper copy of a DD Form 214 can be provided.

Navy Personnel Command (Pers-312)

5720 Integrity Drive

Millington, TN 38055-3130

Fax: (901) 874-2664

www.bol.navy.mil

Phone: (866) 827-5672. Customer service representatives are available from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central time, M-F.

10. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

If the veteran has ever submitted a claim for medical benefits to the VA, the service medical record may be at a VA regional office. Since 1992, most military medical records of members who are released, discharged or retired from active duty, have been sent to the following location:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Records Management Center

P.O. Box 5020

St. Louis, MO 63115-5020

Phone: (314) 538-4500. This office can tell you if the medical record is in the VA system and how to obtain copies. Normal hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central time, M-F.

11. National Personnel Records Center

When making a request, the following minimum information is required: full name of veteran, Social Security number, Military service number (if available), branch of service, signature of veteran or next-of-kin, date of request, daytime telephone contact number and mailing address for records. Additional information that may be useful: dates of service, date of birth, place of birth (city and state) and requestor's e-mail address. If the veteran is deceased, you may be required to provide some sort of proof of death (certificate, obituary, Social Security Death Index printout, etc.)

Requesters of an entire file should note that the Records Center copies only those documents it considers "important." Requesters who want copies of "everything" should consider hiring a private researcher who is authorized to have *direct on-site* access to the records. Review the list of researchers at www.vetrecs.archives.gov. Look for a small green arrow in a box on the right of the screen. Click on "Other Methods and Sources to Obtain

Service Records.” At the next screen, click on “Researchers Specializing in Military Records at the National Personnel Records Center.” When contacting someone on the list, make sure that the researcher or someone working for the researcher actually makes the copies.

National Personnel Records Center

(Military Personnel Records)

9700 Page Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Internet: www.vetrecs.archives.gov

Phone: (314) 801-0800. Customer service representatives are available from 7a.m. and 5 p.m. Central time, M-F.

12. Normally maintained at a military treatment facility or in some cases by the servicemember’s unit of assignment.

13. Army Knowledge Online (AKO)

Internet access to the service record is available only to the servicemember at www.us.army.mil. Log in to the site.

14. A retiree with pay may also have a current or recent medical treatment or pharmacy record at a military medical facility.

15. The Adjutant General where served (state, District of Columbia or Puerto Rico).

There is another type of medical record that may be of interest – the clinical or inpatient hospital record. This record contains information generated and maintained by a military hospital for any patient who is required to spend one or more nights in the facility. These records are kept by the hospital for various periods of time and then sent to the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

For more information about these kinds of records go to www.vetrecs.archives.gov and click on “Medical and Health Records” on the left side of the page. On the right side of the next page, click on “Clinical (Hospital Inpatient) Records”.

Editor’s Note: *It is beyond the scope of this book to explore every possible source of military and VA records which may be of interest to a veteran. An excellent discussion of locating other types of military and VA records is found in Chapter 17 of the Veterans Benefits Manual (VBM) from the National Veterans Legal Services Program. Also, see*

chapter 3.B.4.b of this book for a discussion of locating unit records and other relevant information that may be helpful in proving PTSD claims, or that may show that certain events occurred that the veteran asserts are relevant to support his or her claim.

A veteran is entitled to one free copy of all his or her VA records. These records (claims and medical —permanent records or records of local treatment) can be obtained by filing VA Form 3288. Again, the Veterans Benefits Manual has helpful hints on locating obscure VA records.

Dick Bielen has been a St. Louis-based military records researcher since 1995. He is also a 26-year veteran of the U.S. Army. He can be contacted at (314) 423-0860 or at uslocator@earthlink.net.