Requesting and Researching Veteran Records

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

Requesting Records from NARA:
1. Visit the National Archives and Records Administration Website: http://www.archives.gov/
2. Click on the blue box titled "Veterans' Service Records – Request Military Records"
3. Next page, click on "Request Records Online with eVetRec"
4. Review the instructions and decide if you want to submit an online request or fax/mail your request.
5. Depending on what you request, there could be reproduction costs incurred.
6. NOTE: This agency services the entire United States, and your request can take several months to complete. There is a section on the Requesting Page, "Instructions – Table of Contents" that allows you to track your submitted request.

Researching Records Online at NARA:
1. Visit the National Archives and Records Administration Website: http://www.archives.gov/
2. Click on the dark blue box titled "Research Our Records"
3. Click on "Research Military Records"
4. This page contains an immense amount of information and documents.
5. On the far, left menu see header titled "What's Online" and then click on "More…"
6. There are two basic areas to research if you are looking for basic records related to a specific war and/or branch of service: **ARC** (Archival Research Catalog) and **AAD** (Access to Archival Databases).
7. AAD has digitized documents on various aspects/events of specific conflicts, including Enlistment Records of WWII Veterans. Officers' records <u>are not</u> listed online, at this time. Clicking on "AAD Main Page" will take you to the Search Table for specific conflicts, or you can use the following link: http://aad.archives.gov/aad/

The Fire of '73: The below contains information listed on NARA's website regarding the destruction of certain files. As stated, they have reconstructed most of the documents, or can reconstruct them upon request. Please understand you must politely, but firmly, keep after the researchers to find something. We have yet to see where a family member who requested information on a Veteran has not received anything.

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Surviving a Fire

A fire on July 12, 1973, left the top floor of the military personnel records facility in ruins. This floor had contained some 22 million personnel folders, filed alphabetically, for U.S. Army personnel discharged from 1912 through 1959 and of the U.S. Air Force discharged from September 1947 through 1963. At the time of the fire, one-third of the air force records already had been relocated and thus saved, but overall, fewer than 4 million records were recovered, either entirely or with as little as one identifiable document. A subsequent renovation included frequent firewalls within the storage areas as well as a comprehensive sprinkler system.

Since 1973, NPRC has obtained alternative sources of documents to verify the dates of individual military service and the character of separation for many of the veterans whose files were destroyed. Among these are final pay records, enlistment registers from induction stations, an index of World War II service numbers and dates they were assigned, morning reports, unit rosters, and discharge orders. Many state and federal agencies, particularly the Department of Veterans Affairs, assist NPRC in the reconstruction effort.

NPRC reconstructs a file only after receiving a request involving that veteran, and even then, replacement of an entire folder is impossible for these one-of-a-kind documents. Medical information is especially difficult to replace. NPRC has provided several million reconstruction replies since the fire, but as the number of living veterans from the affected years declines, so has the volume of requests. Nevertheless, NPRC still processes up to 3,000 reconstruction inquiries each week.

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