RESEARCHING A WWII ARMY VETERAN

Army, Army Air Corps, & Army Air Forces



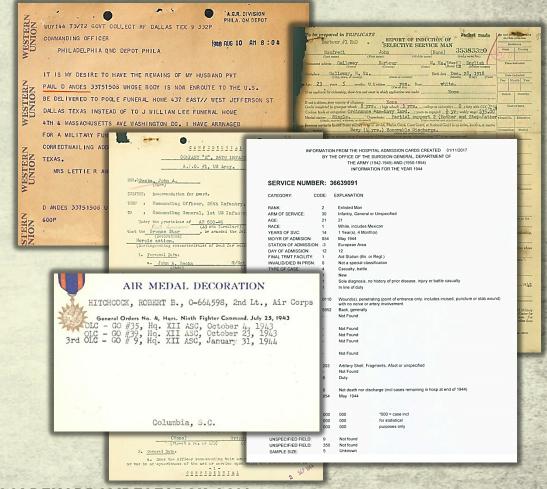
RESEARCHING A WWII ARMY VETERAN

This presentation explains how to reconstruct the service history of individual WVII Army veterans whose official military personnel files were lost in the 1973 archives fire.



RESEARCHING A WWII ARMY VETERAN

While the vast majority of the military service records which were consumed in the fire will never be recovered, there are alternate records which can be used to rebuild and document your veteran's story. Let's take a closer look at some of these records.



SAFEGUARDED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS

The National Archives estimate that 80 percent of Army military service records were lost in the 1973 fire. Twenty percent of Army and Army Air Corps files survived at least partially intact.



SAFEGUARDED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS

Service records with pages which survived the fire are classified as 'safeguarded military service records' and can actually be viewed in person at the National Archives. It is common to find singe marks as well as water damage on many of the surviving pages.

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The IDPF was a separate personnel file created for Army and Army Air Forces veterans who died in the service during WWII. The focus of these files is primarily on the death and burial of the



However, the Individual Deceased Personnel File can also provide valuable information about the service history of the veteran as well.

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	I can readily understand your desire to learn more of the circumstances surrounding your son's death. Additional records now available show that his death occurred in the vicinity of Gressano, while participating in the Italian Campaign. It is extramely difficult under battle conditions to record all de-

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tails concerning casualties and I regret that no further infor-

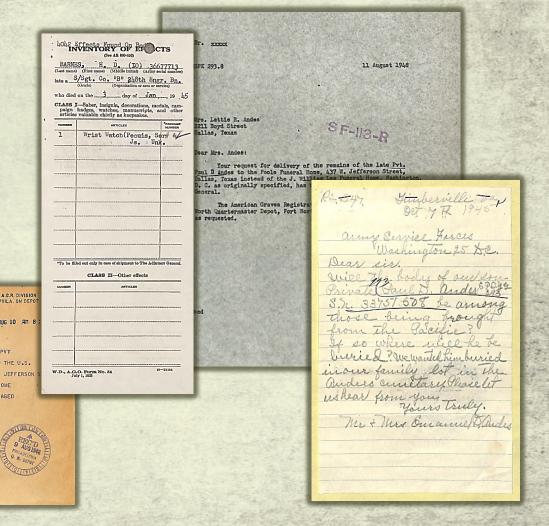
mation regarding your son's death has been received.

Many Individual Deceased
Personnel Files include
correspondence regarding
repatriation of the veteran's
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personal effects to the

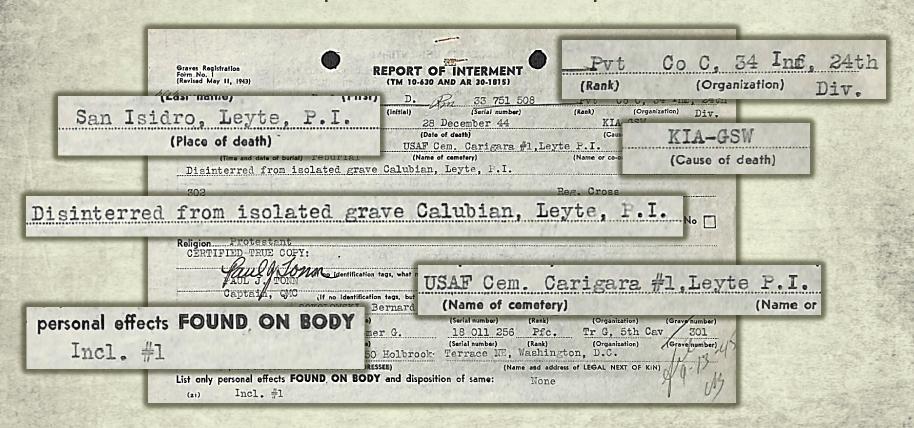
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MRS LETTIE R ANDES.

family.



This single page from a WVII Individual Deceased Personnel File shows us the veteran's unit, how he was killed in action, his place of death, burial location, personal effects and more.



RECONSTRUCTED SERVICE RECORDS

If your veteran's service records were lost in the 1973 fire the National Archives may have created what is known as a 'reconstructed service file'.

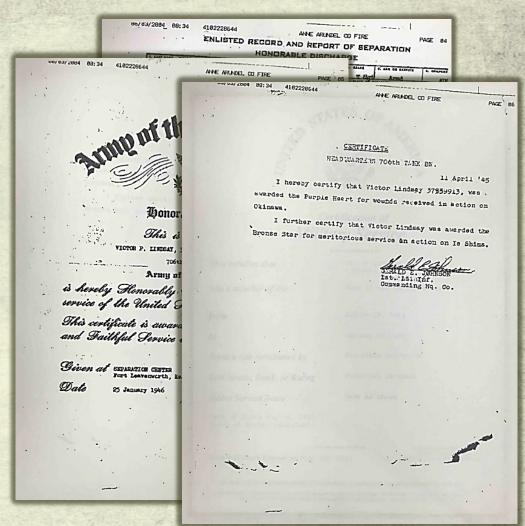
Most commonly these files consist of material which was sent to the archives after the fire as a way for the veteran or the veteran's family to verify eligibility for certain benefits.



RECONSTRUCTED SERVICE RECORDS

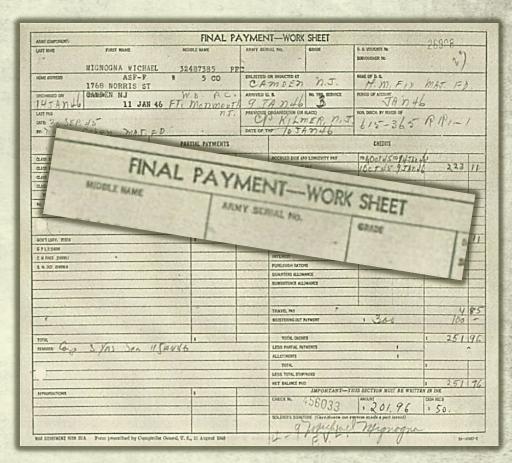
This particular veteran's paperwork was faxed to the National Archives in 2002, at which point the archives created a 'reconstructed service file'.

This file stands in place of his original records which were lost in the fire.



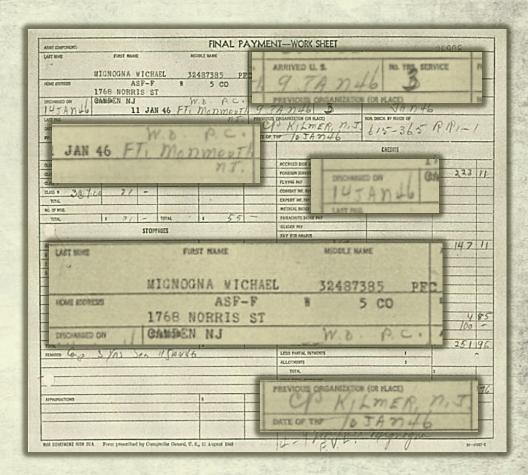
AUXILIARY SERVICE RECORDS

If there are no pages in your veteran's military service file which survived the fire, and no 'reconstructed file', there may only be auxiliary records on your veteran. In most cases the auxiliary file is nothing more than a final pay voucher.



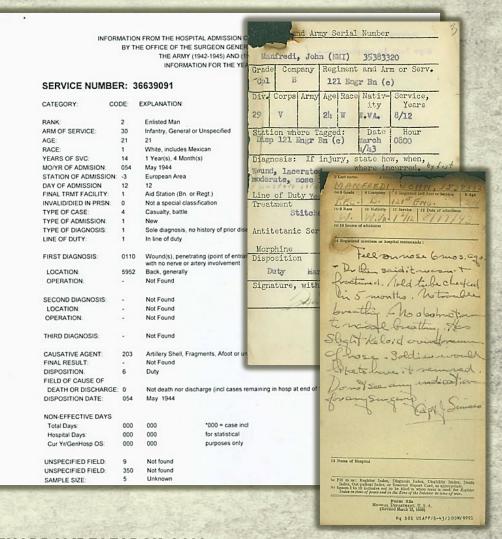
AUXILIARY SERVICE RECORDS

Although sparse in detail, these records do provide helpful clues. Notice that the final pay voucher can show us the date that the veteran arrived in the United States after serving overseas, the date of discharge, the place of discharge, his rank, serial number, home address and previous station.



ARMY MEDICAL RECORDS FROM WWII

Hospital admission records are organized by serial number and they document the medical treatment of WWII veterans. The information contained on the medical extracts come directly from the original medical records of the veteran before those records were lost in the 1973 fire.



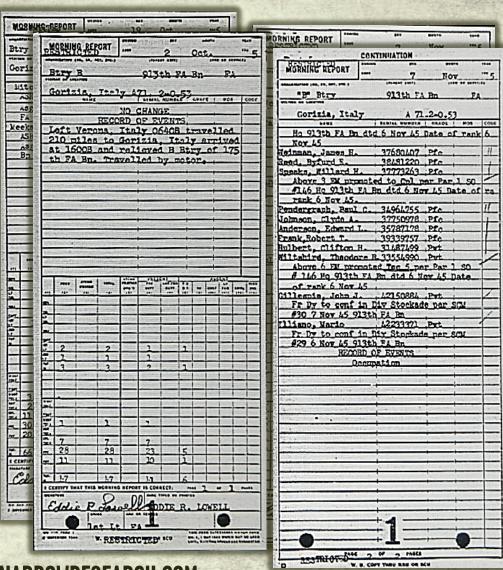
ARMY MEDICAL RECORDS FROM WWII

From this particular medical extract we can see that the veteran was in the infantry and was wounded in action on May 12th, 1944 as the result of enemy artillery fire. His medical diagnosis indicates that he took artillery shrapnel to his back.

CATEGORY: CODE: EXPLANATION RANK: 2 Enlisted Man Infantry, General or Unspecified AGE: 2 FARS OF SERVICE: 30 MONTR OF ADMISSION: 0.54 May 1944 MONTR OF ADMISSION: 0.54 May 1944 STATION OF ADMI
ARM OF SERVICE: AGE: YEARS OF SVC: WAND'R OF ADMISSION: DAY OF ADMISSION: DAY OF ADMISSION: PINAL TRMT FACILITY: INVALIDIBLED IN PRSN: TYPE OF CASE: TYPE OF ADMISSION: TYPE OF DIAGNOSIS: LINE OF DUTY: In line of duty Artillery Shell, Fragments, Afoot or unspecified Not Found Infantry, General or Unspecified MOYR OF ADMISSION: DAY OF ADMISSION: 1 Separate Area DAY OF ADMISSION: 1 Sole diagnosis, no history of prior disease, injury or battle casualty In line of duty Artillery Shell, Fragments, Afoot or unspecified Not Found
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FINAL RESULT: - Not Found
DISPOSITION: 6 Duty

Back, generally Not Found

The morning reports are company-level unit records which enable us to track individual soldiers day to day within the units to which they were assigned. These records document important details such as: combat participation, military duties, promotions, ranks, dates and locations where a veteran was wounded, injured or killed in action, and map coordinates where an Army veteran was stationed on a given date.



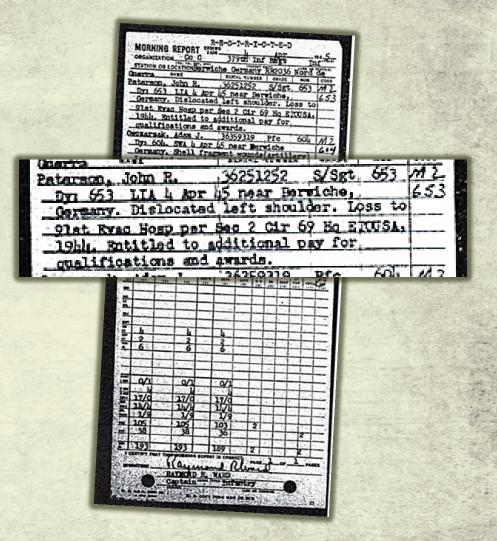
The military abbreviations which are used on the morning reports are essentially a form of military shorthand. The unit designation, date and geographical location are listed at the top of each page allowing us to determine the exact locations the veteran visited.

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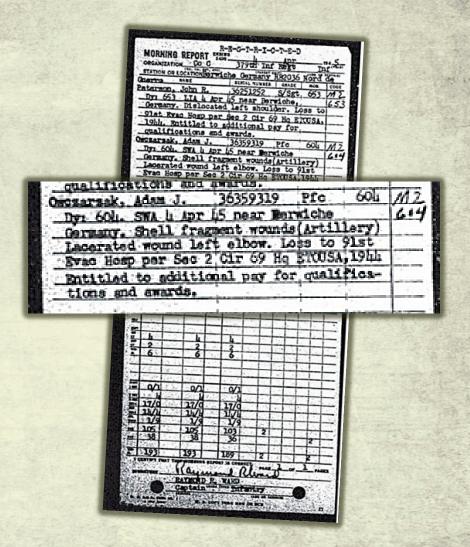
Note the incredible amount of detail on just this one page:

On April 4th, 1944 John R Patterson who is a Staff Sergeant with duty code 653 (meaning that he was a noncommissioned officer) was lightly injured in action, dislocating his shoulder. He was subsequently sent to the 91st Evacuation Hospital for treatment.



Likewise, his fellow C Company companion Adam John Owczarsac with duty code 604 (meaning that he was a heavy machine-gunner) was SWA (or seriously wounded in action) due to artillery fire on the same date.

He was also sent to the 91st Evacuation Hospital for treatment.



GENERAL ORDERS & MEDAL CITATIONS

Many WWII army veterans were awarded medals for heroic actions performed in battle.

The army created a permanent copy of the citation for these medals which is known as a 'general order'. The general orders often provide a detailed explanation of the gallantry exhibited by the veteran while under fire.



Captain dages J. Morris, 01295583, 39Ath Infantry, United States army for gallantry in action against the energy on 1A March 1987, in Cormany. If force of 200 Germans were infiltrating up through an exposed drew to the south and west of Company "I"'s positions. Captain "erris, without thought of personal safety crowled forward through heavy enemy artillery and shall arms fire and contacted the reserve plateon of Company "A". He led the plateon to the exposed draw and then located the artillery observer who directed artillery on the enemy, breaking the enemy's attack. The Courage and leadership displayed by Captain Lorris serits the highest graine. Entered military service from California.

following efficers and unliked men are awarded the Silver Star week!

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AIR FORCE PILOTS AND FLIGHT LOGS

Individual flight logs were maintained for WVII pilots, co-pilots and navigators.

Flight logs do not exist for enlisted flight crew members. However, their missions can be reconstructed as well if their assigned pilot can be determined.



AIR FORCE PILOTS AND FLIGHT LOGS

Notice how this pilot's flight logs show us the units to which he was assigned, dates and times that he was in the air, and the type of aircraft he flew.

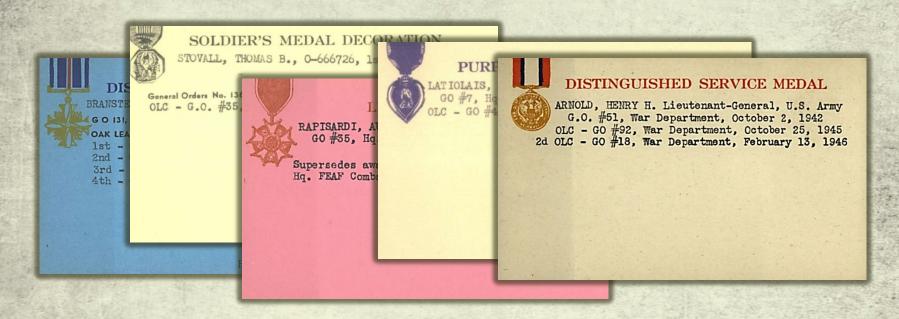
This information can be used to pinpoint the exact combat missions flown by individual crew members during WWII.

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AIR FORCE AWARD CARDS

Air Force award cards show us the medals to which individual Air Force or Army Air Forces veterans were entitled. While the award cards typically do not provide a detailed citation, they do provide us with the general order number which can be used to find the actual citations for the medals.



AFTER ACTION AND MISSION REPORTS

After action and mission reports are normally maintained at the squadron, battalion or regimental level.



p-Day, September 17, 1944: The Solat Parachute Infentry Segiment began its drop at 1900. The last Battallon was dropped on a DE o miles NY of selected DE, and assembled within 40 minutes with 90% of its emuliment and paraconal. Slight enemy opposition was encountered near DZ (about 30 disorganized rear chelon troops). Let Battelion objective was reached at approximately 1600 -ne energy enception enrouse. The End Bettalion dropped at 1310, 1500 yards west no entary embedding enrouse; are and marked on acoppes at 1319, 1500 years we of the D2. Drop pattern was excellent. Assembly was completed in 45 minutes without enemy opposition, 95% of equipment and personnel arriving in assembly area. Decond Battalion objective seized by 1515. 3rd Battalion dropped at 1310. Drop pattern was excellent. 95, of equipment and personnel assembled in 45 minutes without enemy opposition. Hoved out immediately to occupy EDRUE and block VECHEL - ST. QDEMRODE Highway. Objective reached and seized by 1500.

Remainder of D-Day quiet and time spent in organ enemy opposition was encountered in escape. The Engineer Detachment be

D plus 1, September 18, 1944: force estimated at one company made was repulsed with heavy losses, in northwest by enemy forces estimated light losses to both sides. At 140 as negimental neserve. One company VAART CARAL. Patrolling was contin this date badly scattered and over

> p plus 2, September 19, 1944; ish column began passing through at 1200, "C" Company to Lint ilsed enemy attack from northwe ms driven out of its positi

D plus 3, September 20, 1944: E to clear section of the eme was blown. The 2nd Bettelion

seized at approximately 2215; organization for defense of the area was ected immediately. The And Battalion remained ty Combin, outposting entire m. 3rd Battalion from EMEDE moved at 1740 to selse and cut ST. ODINGON - m.

D plus 5, September 22, 1944: The lot Battalion resumed attack and, in unction with attack of 3rd Battalion, seized all of Schilndel by 0915. ensive line was organized facing to the south and some 400 enemy about 1200, the battalen was ordered to TLBESCH to seize and hold that en and provide flank protection for VECHEL. Mission was seccesslished by and the Battalion remained in the area for the night. The 2nd Battalion

Dolus 4. September 21, 1944: The let Estalion grossed at HEFFILK in morning and formed a bridge-med. Patrollinguas effected during the day.
1945 an attack was made toward SCHINDEL and northwest section of the town Road. Objective was obtained during the night.

AFTER ACTION AND MISSION REPORTS

The after action reports provide a detailed account of the combat actions for the army unit to which a veteran was assigned.

Here is an after action report from the 101st Airborne Division, 501st Parachute Regiment during Operation Market Garden.

D plus 1, September 18, 1946: During early morning of D plus 1 an encay force estimated at one company made counterattack on 2nd Battalion objective but was repulsed with heavy losses, 1st Battalion objective attacked from the northwest by enemy forces estimated at one company. Countersttack repulsed with onth sides. At 1400 the 3rd Battalion objective was attacked

1310. Drop pattern was excellent. 95, of equipment and personnel assembled it 45 minutes without enemy opposition. Moved out immediately to occupy EMAIL and block McMinds and the second of the second o way traffic on VECHAL - ST. ODLARODE Highway.

0915 the 1st Battalion attack of attack on 2nd Battalion objective but 420 prisoners were captured. up extensive patrolling activity

ion objective attacked from the as outpost on west side of WILLIAM-

in all directions. Resupply mission on this date badly scattered and over half fell into enemy hands.

p plus 2, September 19, 1944; At 0645 on the morning of D plus 2, the British column began passing throun VECHEL. The Srd Battalion moved out to Enable at 1800, "C" Company to Uniter, one plated to 1800 Mary 1800 Mar

D plus 5, September 22, 1944: The 1st Battalion resumed attack and, in \ conjunction with attack of 3rd Battalion, seized all of SCHLJNDEL by 0915. defensive line was organized facing to the south and some 400 enemy captured. At about 1200, the bettalion was ordered to WILBOSCH to seize and hold that

> At 1845 an attack was made toward SCHIENDEL and northwest section of the town eas seized at approximately 2215; organization for defense of the area was aty. The 2nd Battalion remained at VLGBLE, outposting entire ton from ERRDE moved at 1740 to selse and cut ST. ODENRODE -bjective was obtained during the night.

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D plus 2, September 19, 1944: At 0645 on the morning of D plus 2, the British column began passing through VECHEL. The 3rd Battalion moved out to ELEDE at 1200, "C" Company to Dinter - one plateon to Hasswilk. 2nd Battalton repulsed enemy sitack from northwest by enemy forces estimated at 250. Company "h" was griven out of its position by German parachutists' night attack. Position was retaken by coordinated flanking attack by "E" and "F" Companies.



I hope that you found this presentation helpful.

If you think that others may be interested in
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share this video on social media and let others
know about the services we provide!

"Every veteran has a unique story. The mission of Golden Arrow Research is to document your individual veteran's wartime experiences, allowing you to better understand and also preserve the history of their military service. Our expert research team is on-site daily at multiple archival facilities. We use our exclusive research process to trace your individual veteran, showing you where they were and what they did during the war.

Let us help you to tell your veteran's story."