

World War II from the Battlefield

Jennifer Holik looks at retracing service history through daily and monthly reports

World War II service encompasses more than the contents of the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF.) This file is a main component of establishing military service, but it is not the end all be all for research. As many Army, Air Corps, and National Guard veterans and researchers have discovered, the file may not even exist.

Over the last several months, I wrote about all the branches and explained how to start your research. Once the OMPF is obtained, where possible, and the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) is secured if your soldier was Killed In

Action, it is time to delve into records created beyond the individual. These records will add to your timeline of service and create a fuller picture of what a soldier, sailor, or Marine endured during service.

The records described in this article are only the tip of the iceberg of what is available at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis and National Archives in College Park, Maryland. They are however, the next step in adding to your soldier's timeline of service and piecing together a complete history.

Army and Air Corps Monthly Personnel Rosters and Morning Reports

Prior to Company Morning Reports, the Army and Air Corps had *Monthly Personnel Rosters*. These documents were created at the beginning of each month at the company level. These records exist through approximately mid-1943. The remaining rosters through the late 1940s were destroyed after the Fire in 1973.

Monthly Personnel Rosters usually listed:

- Name of the soldier or airman
- Serial number/Service number
- Date of the report
- Location of the unit
- MOS or job code

MISCELLANEOUS REPORT FORM		SHEET 1 OF 5									
SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF INDIVIDUAL	GRADE	DUTY	REG'T	COMP	UNIT	TYPE	NUMBER	DATE	STATUS	REMARKS
MONTHLY PERSONNEL ROSTER MAR 31 1942											
CD B 71 QM BN STAGING AREA											
359087	CORNIER EDGAR F	M SC	140NCB	09		7107	1			5880	320032
390911	SPOKORNY CHARLES F JR	1 SC	140NCB	09		7107	7			1403	20032
351481	CLARK FELIX J JR	T SC	350NCB	09		7107	7			1403	20032
488637	ELTMCK VICTOR F	T SC	140NCB	09		7107	1			1420	1071
334934	SHOAK WILLIAM R	T SC	140NCB	09		7107	1			1450	4081
311416	ALBOVAGE JOHN J	S SC	140NCB	09		7107	7			2560	320032
301402	VAITULONIS ALEXANDER JS	JS SG	140NCB	09		7107	7			1403	20032
301410	CONTURSO JAMES Y	SGT	500NCB	09		7107	3			2014	022
301416	CEFFIC HAROLD A	SST	140NCB	09		7107	7			1420	1071
301417	DEER EDWARD F	SST	250NCB	09		7107	7			2560	320032
301418	BLACE JOSEPH	SGT	500NCB	09		7107	7			1403	20032
301419	BLINDER HALTER F	SST	180NCB	09		7107	7			1800	1121
301420	DEES BERNARD	SGT	140NCB	09		7107	4			1403	20032
301421	ELLIKOFF ABBOTT J	SGT	140NCB	09		7107	7			5000	2111
301422	CASSINI ARMAND A	CPL	500NCB	09		7107	7			1403	20032
301423	CRAIG STEPHEN S JR	CPL	140NCB	09		7107	3			0320	032
301424	KURCHA MICHAEL	CPL	140NCB	09		7107	7			1420	1071
301425	LONG JAMES R	CPL	130NCB	09		7107	7			1300	320032
301426	SKIDMORE CALVIN H M	CPL	2010NCB	09		7107	7			1720	320032
301427	WALKER HALVIN P	CPL	500NCB	09		7107	7			2450	320032
301428	RYKINS CHARLES F JR	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	7			1420	30091
301429	COLAVITA MICHAEL E	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	3			1420	27012
301430	NENNIS WILLIAM M	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	3			8014	022
301431	EVANITSKY MICHAEL	PFC	250NCB	09		7107	7			2560	1022
301432	POY TOM D	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	7			1420	1022
301433	PRECHETTE RAYMOND M	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	7			1420	1032
301434	PILGEM HUGO	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	3			1420	1032
301435	GINTER HAROLD A	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	3			1420	1032
301436	HALPIN JOSEPH L	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	3			2014	022
301437	SHANDAGO WILLIAM W	PFC	500NCB	09		7107	7			5000	0121
301438	SHINES WALTER J	PFC	140NCB	09		7107	7			2150	13091

Record Location: National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

Monthly Personnel Roster dated March 1942 for the 71st Quartermaster Battalion stationed at Ft. Dix, New Jersey. (Author's collection)

Company Morning Reports were another record set created to track a Company's location, personnel, and changes in rank and MOS. These are seen starting in mid-1943 and first appeared in handwritten format and later on typewritten forms. You must know a soldier's unit down to the company level to have these records searched. To search, visit NPRC in St. Louis or hire a researcher. I recommend Norm Richards who can be contacted by email: normrichards9@gmail.com

A Company Morning Report often lists:

- Name of the soldier or airman
- Serial number/Service number
- Date of the report
- Location of the unit with map codes if they are overseas
- MOS or job code
- Changes in rank
- Changes in a soldier's status (this means a healthy soldier to wounded, Missing, Prisoner, or Killed In Action.)
- Documents when a soldier enters or exits a company. Often the clerk would indicate from where or to where a soldier was going so you can continue to trace service history.
- Strength of a unit in men and indicated numbers of men lost.
- Record of events for each day. Sometimes this was completed and sometimes not.

Record Location: National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

In addition to learning about the individuals in a company, the companies were required to report numbers of men at each

COMPANY MORNING REPORT FORM 200 **30 Sept 1944**

STATION: **Trainwater 14 MI SE WFOH22 England**
 ORGANIZATION: **Co I 504th Parachute Inf**

SERIAL NUMBER: **35622691** NAME: **Wagner Robert A** GRADE: **Pvt** CODE: **A**
Fr of to Slightly Injured in Action &
abs at 61st Gen Hosp ID 19 Sept 44 By-745
(Settle Casualty)

OFFICER	PLD O & CAPT		1ST LT		2D LT		WO		PLT O	
	PRE	ABST	PRE	ABST	PRE	ABST	PRE	ABST	PRE	ABST
ASST	1		4		2		1			
ASST							1			
ASST										
ASST										
ASST										
ASST										
ASST										
ASST										
ASST										
TOTAL	1		4		2		2			

AVG SERG	AVIATION CADETS		ENLISTED MEN		RESERVE	SERVING
	PRESENT	ABSENT	PRESENT	ABSENT		
ASST			133		9	142
ASST					2	2
ASST			3		1	4
TOTAL			136		12	148

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF MEN: **148**
 RATIONS REQUIRED FOR DATE: **3 Oct 44**
 BREAKFAST: **144** DINNER: **144** SUPPER: **144** TOTAL: **432** AVERAGE: **144**

H M PELLIAN WO(jg) USA NMB

Left Spanhoe Airport by plane at 1300 arrived & dropped in Holland 1317 Hrs W. of OUrves. Now in defense position 1500 yds N. of Graves 17 Sept 44.

Left Nederasselt by foot, moved NE 12 miles. Arrived at 2230 Hrs & bivouaced at grid coord. 731-566 on map- 19 Sept 44.

H M Pellian
 H M PELLIAN
 WO(jg) USA
 Assg Adj



Morning Report for I Company 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment 82nd Airborne dated 30 September 1944. (Author's Collection)

meal, which provided information to the Army, who then was able to provide food and appropriate supplies for the soldiers. These numbers also alerted headquarters when the ranks were depleted and replacements were needed.

RESEARCH TIP!

Is your soldier really where you think he is? The month of September, I Company 504th PIR is listed as being in England, even though they dropped into Holland for Operation Market Garden. The Morning Reports do not indicate this until the end of the month with a note. Pay attention to all the details to create an accurate timeline of service.

Monthly Personnel Rosters and Morning Reports are useful because they can help you track a soldier's service from start to finish, as long as the company clerk included all the details of the entrance and exit of a soldier, showing where he came from, and where he was going.

Not all company clerks did this or had the time to do this. For example, consider the chaos of D-Day, 6 June 1944, and the days following. Also consider the length of time it took to get information up the line to the man typing the reports. Everything was chaotic as men were moving from place to place. Some were separated from their units, and many more had been killed.

RESEARCH TIP!

When you search for your soldier on a Morning Report, you will not always find him, and the event like Missing in Action, on the date you think you will. It could have been reported several days later.

Army Air Force Accident Reports and Missing Air Crew Reports

Two record sets created specifically for the Army Air Corps are the Air Force Accident Reports and the Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs). These reports may appear to be similar, but they are used for different purposes.

Air Force Accident Reports were created for operational accidents, not aircraft that crashed due to combat damage. The accident did not always result in the death of the pilot or crew.

Main components of an Air Force Accident Report include:

- **Report of Accident.** This contained the main pieces of information which included:
 - Names of all crew on board, along with rank and service number
 - Type of plane flown.
 - Mission or training run information
 - Number of hours flown in that type of aircraft or in general
 - Location of crash
 - Location of base from which aircraft departed
- **Description of Accident and Witness Reports**

Depending on the circumstances of the accident, there may or may not be witnesses to report on what occurred. The War Department conducted full

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

"On December 19, 1942, about 12:10 o'clock, Captain Brouk with a formation of six ships, of which I was flying number four, made a strafing attack on Kissimmee Air Port. The formation approached with Lt Kane flying very close to Captain Brouk. I was about three hundred yards behind Lt Kane directly in trail. As the two planes ahead pulled up to clear the hangar one of them suddenly turned on its back and crashed; then the other climbed up to about six hundred feet and the propeller fell off. The second ship then apparently assumed a normal glide toward a field almost directly ahead. When the plane reached an altitude of about two hundred feet the pilot made an extremely steep turn, toward a better field, pulled his nose up in the turn and fell off on the left wing and plunged straight into the ground. Both planes burst into flames as they crashed. I did not see the two planes collide in mid-air.

Joseph P. Lehmann
JOSEPH P. LEHMANN,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
10th Fighter Squadron.

The testimony regarding the air crash of Robert Brouk in Orlando, FL 19 December 1942. (Author's photo)

investigations into the crashes. Some reports contain pages of testimony about why the crash occurred, secret equipment on the planes, and the final determination of the cause

● Photographs and Maps

Accident reports often contain graphic crash scene footage of the plane and maps of the surrounding area. Because these reports were microfilmed, photographs and maps often appear dark and grainy. Officials studied the terrain, elevation, obstacles (buildings, trees, mountains, etc.) that may have contributed to the accident. Diagrams exist, in some cases, for the spread of wreckage.

● Summary of Investigation

A description of the accident with a summary will be included in these reports. The report will describe the crash, list those involved, when and where it occurred, summarize the information in the entire report, and often provide recommendations for the pilot or crew and Air Corps.

RESEARCH TIP!

Air Force Accident Reports were created for accidents in the United States, although some exist for accidents in England.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD and also available through Aviation Archaeology at www.aviationarchaeology.com

Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs)

MACR's were created in mid-1943 and primarily covered combat losses, but sometimes exist for aircraft that went missing on operational flights overseas. These reports were filed within 48 hours of a plane going missing, unless the crew made it back to friendly lines before 48 hours had elapsed. MACRs often provide many clues to help you continue the research on your pilot or crew member. You can explore the mission they flew, the area over which they crashed, how their remains were recovered (or not), and the unit to which they belonged.

RESEARCH TIP!

Only the Army Air Forces used these reports, and you will not find MACRs for Navy or Marine aviators. Reports of those missing from the Navy and Marine Corps are found in Mission Reports. Make sure to obtain the IDPF for the crew member if he perished in a crash.

Main Components of a MACR include:

The Missing Air Crew Report

This document contains the name, rank, unit, and service number of crew members, location within the plane or bomber of each crew member, destination of the plane, and location of the crash or approximate location the plane went missing. The type of aircraft, equipment with service numbers on board, and details about the mission and crash or loss status are also included.

RESEARCH TIP!

MACRs not only document fighter pilots or bombing crews, but also hospital planes or troop transports, which may have carried personnel in other branches of the military. If your soldier was declared MIA due to an air crash, regardless of branch, this is one record you should seek. In addition, MACRs were digitized by Fold3.com and exist as individual images. Most reports are 15+ pages long and some range up

German Documents

German documents and translations of those documents may be included in the MACR. The Germans documented the planes they shot down, number of crew killed or captured, and credited those losses to a specific unit within the German Army. These reports may provide additional details to assist in locating buried airmen.

Maps/Diagrams

Maps or diagrams may be found within the file, showing the formation of a bomber group in relation to what happened to the lost plane(s).

Additional Personnel Onboard - Non-Army Air Corps Personnel

Missing planes did not always carry only Air Corps personnel. Hospital planes and troop transport planes were also lost.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD and through Aviation Archaeology at www.aviationarchaeology.com. Available online at Fold3.com

CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES WASHINGTON

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

Classification changed to RESTRICTED by F. M. M. Lt. Col., AG

Form with fields for Organization, Location, Date, Aircraft Type, Crew List, and Remarks. Includes a table for crew members with columns for Name, Rank, Grade, Serial Number, and Current Status.

Handwritten initials 'and'

HEADQUARTERS 5476 TRUCK CANTIER #106 APO 210

MEDICAL PERSONNEL ABOARD X366, MISSING 12 MARCH 1945

Table with columns: STATUS, NAME, RANK, ASN, ORGN. Lists medical attendants and patients with their respective ranks, serial numbers, and units.

MACR documenting an Army hospital transport plane that went missing in 1945. These pages list the crew and patients on board. (Author's collection)

Navy and Marine Corps Muster Rolls

Muster Rolls are similar to Army Morning Reports in the way they document men entering and exiting a unit, provide rank and status changes, and sometimes the location of the unit or in the case of Navy, a ship or station. Unlike Morning Reports, which were created daily, Muster Rolls were compiled monthly.

Navy Muster Rolls state the ship or station, not necessarily where that ship or station is located. This requires a researcher to dive into War Diaries, Mission Reports, and Naval Deck Logs to learn more about where a sailor was and the duties.

RESEARCH TIP!

Muster Rolls may contain Army units attached to Navy and Marine Corps units. If you are researching Muster Rolls, just as with morning reports, it is important to attempt to provide the unit down to the lowest echelon possible. For example, B Co., 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines for 1945.

When the Marines are stationed stateside, the *Marine Corps Muster Rolls* provide the specific location (camp). Muster Rolls for Marines stationed overseas do not list the specific location they are stationed. The Rolls only list the unit and, usually, "In the Field". Marine Corps Muster Rolls do not repeat the same information for every Marine it pertains to; rather, it directs the reader to a footnote. The footnotes are usually listed at the end of the report for each unit, and provide information on MIA, POW, KIA, wounds, and transfer statuses. In some cases, you will see an entry with a footnote that reads

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

"On December 19, 1942, about 12:10 o'clock, Captain Brook with a formation of six ships, of which I was flying number four, made a strafing attack on Kissimmee Air Port. The formation approached with Lt Kane flying very close to Captain Brook. I was about three hundred yards behind Lt Kane directly in trail. As the two planes ahead pulled up to clear the hangar one of them suddenly turned on its back and crashed; then the other climbed up to about six hundred feet and the propeller fell off. The second ship then apparently assumed a normal glide toward a field almost directly ahead. When the plane reached an altitude of about two hundred feet the pilot made an extremely steep turn, toward a better field, pulled his nose up in the turn and fell off on the left wing and plunged straight into the ground. Both planes burst into flames as they crashed. I did not see the two planes collide in mid-air.

Joseph P. Lemons
JOSEPH P. LEMONS,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
10th Fighter Squadron.

A Navy Muster Roll lists the ship or station to which men are transferred for a period of time. Name, Rating (rank), Service Number and sometimes other details are listed. (Author's photo)

PRIVATES		
1	COWART, William F.	20, killed in action by gunshot wounds during operations at Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands; Buried on Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands in cemetery. GO 20 does not apply.

Section of a Muster Roll showing the death of Pvt. William Cowart, KIA 20 November 1943 on Tarawa. (Author's collection)

"Sent under separate attachment". In this case, you will need to search unit records for more information.

RESEARCH TIP!

The best way to discover where they were stationed or fought is through service records and unit histories.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD and online at Ancestry.com.

Additional Resources for Battlefield Records

There are too many record sets available to list them all in one article or even a book. Within unit records for all branches at National Archives in College Park, Maryland, there are some additional resources you should explore. Each of these additional record sets often serve

multiple purposes, but the main reason you might seek them out is listed here.

● General Orders

These records accomplished many things, but researchers often use them to locate the authorization of awards and citations.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD

● Special Orders

These are helpful when information is lacking in Morning Reports to trace the movement of your soldier.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD

● After Action Reports (Army)

After Action Reports (AARs) document a Division or Unit within a Division for the period of one month. The reports may not list individual soldiers, but will document where the unit was, what combat and enemy engagement was

seen, and provide statistics on materials used, lost, and acquired over the month.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD

● **Mission Reports (Marines)**

Similar to AARs, these reports help place a Marine's service into greater context by providing battle locations and details. Often they will provide additional support areas such as Army or Navy attachments and their histories as they relate to a battle or area of engagement.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD and also may be available on Fold3.com

● **Naval War Diaries**

War diaries were kept by ship Captains or Commanders, someone in charge. These documented daily life on the ship, enemy engagement, and information about units attached to the ship during service. You may find information on your Army or Marine Corps unit within these records.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD, Naval History and Heritage Command, and possibly on Fold3.com

● **Naval Deck Logs**

Similar to a war diary, these documented all the watches and conditions set on a ship during a voyage. Altercations between crew members was documented as was engagement with the enemy. These records will list sailors coming onto a ship and Naval Armed Guard units with a roster.

Record Location: National Archives, College Park, MD and Naval History and Heritage Command

● **Air Force Award Cards**

These index cards are held at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis and contain information on awards given to Airmen during the war.

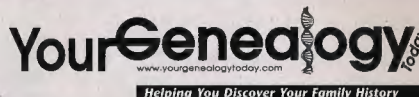
Record Location: National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

For more information on records available, please visit my World War II Research and Writing Center at wwiiresearchandwritingcenter.com and pick up my books *Stories from the World War II Battlefield* featured on my website. ☞☞



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