

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

SERIAL NUMBER		NAME OF INDIVIDUAL	GRADE	DUTY	REG'T	COMP	UNIT	TYPE	NUMBER	DATE	STATUS
MONTHLY PERSONNEL ROSTER MAR 31 1942											
CD B 71 QM BN STAGING AREA											
359087	8	CORNIER EDGAR F	M SC	140NCB	09	7107	1			5880320032	
390911	15	SPOKORNY CHARLES F JR	1 SC	140NCB	09	7107	7			140320032	
351481	8	CLARK FELIX J JR	T SC	550NCB	09	7107	7			140320032	
488637	8	ELTMCK VICTOR F	T SC	140NCB	09	7107	1			14201071	
334934	7	SHOAK WILLIAM R	T SC	140NCB	09	7107	1			14504081	
311416	6	ALBOVAGE JOHN J	S SC	140NCB	09	7107	7			2560320032	
301402	5	VAITULONIS ALEXANDER JS	JS SG	140NCB	09	7107	7			140320032	
301419	5	CONTURSO JAMES Y	SGT	500NCB	09	7107	3			2014022	
301416	5	CEFFIC HAROLD A	SST	140NCB	09	7107	7			14201071	
301416	5	CEFFIC EDWARD F	SST	280NCB	09	7107	7			2014022	
301416	5	BLACE JOSEPH	SGT	500NCB	09	7107	7			140320032	
301416	5	BLINDER HALTER F	SST	180NCB	09	7107	7			10201121	
301416	5	BLUES BERNARD	SGT	140NCB	09	7107	4			140320032	
301416	5	ELLIKOFF ABBOTT J	SGT	140NCB	09	7107	7			60201111	
301416	5	CASSINI ARMAND A	CPL	500NCB	09	7107	7			140320032	
301416	5	CRAIG STEPHEN S JR	CPL	140NCB	09	7107	3			0320032	
301416	5	KURCHA MICHAEL	CPL	140NCB	09	7107	7			14201071	
301416	5	LONG JAMES R	CPL	130NCB	09	7107	7			1300320032	
301416	5	SKIDMORE CALVIN H M	CPL	2010NCB	09	7107	7			1720320032	
301416	5	WALKER HALVIN P	CPL	800NCB	09	7107	7			2420320032	
301416	5	RYKINS CHARLES F JR	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			142030091	
301416	5	COLAVITA MICHAEL E	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			142027012	
301416	5	NENNIS WILLIAM M	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			8014022	
301416	5	EVANITSKY MICHAEL	PFC	250NCB	09	7107	27			2560201022	
301416	5	FOY TOM D	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	7			14201022	
301416	5	FRECHETTE RAYMOND M	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			14201022	
301416	5	FELDMAN HUGO	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			14201022	
301416	5	GINTER HAROLD A	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			14201022	
301416	5	HALPIN JOSEPH L	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	3			2014022	
301416	5	SHANDAGO WILLIAM W	PFC	500NCB	09	7107	7			60201121	
301416	5	SHINES WALTER J	PFC	140NCB	09	7107	7			215013091	

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)

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. Lehman
JOSEPH P. LEHMAN,
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 CASCADER #102 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 and service numbers.

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

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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