

Requesting Military Records

Dean A. Beers, CLI, CCDI

11/23/2014

How to request military records, turn-around time and what is available? First, what if you need to check the status of a current service member? These questions come up frequently for investigators. For current status, visit https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/single_record.xhtml. For veteran records, its not so simple, but it has been simplified. Our agency it has been some time since doing these regularly. A few things have improved - one area that hasn't is their response. Although frequently recorded with the Clerk & Recorder (or similar) DD214s are considered confidential and available only to the veteran - spouse or other next-of-kin cannot receive a DD214.

However, the near equivalent information is available from the Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF); see below. What does this cost? There is no charge – free, even for a rush. For a rush request, see below. What is the difference in for a rush and routine request to receive your records? In our experience a rush is about one month (4-6 weeks typically) and standard is about three months (3-4 months typically).

Important contact information:

The address is - National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Dr., St. Louis, MO. 63138

The main customer service number is - (314) 801-0800

The request fax number is (314) 801-9195

Veterans, and spouses of deceased veterans, can request these records online. The start page for all requests is <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/foia-info.html>. Note - requests cannot be emailed, only faxed or mailed.

The form required is SF-180 and veterans can order directly online at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

Once you have sent your request, you can check on the status of a request for records that has been submitted to NPRC going to www.archives.gov/st-louis/forms/index.html or by phone at (314) 801-0800 (early morning central time is best). You can longer check the status by email (mprstatus@nara.gov) are no longer accepted (February 2015).

How long might this request take? Requests are about 12 weeks / 3 months! If you have a deadline date, please send in a statement stating the dateline date and urgency and fax it to our emergency fax number (314) 801-0764 and they will try to send the records when you need them.

The public has access to certain military service information without the veteran's authorization or that of the next-of-kin (the un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister) of deceased veterans. Examples of information which may be available from Federal (non-archival) Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) without an unwarranted invasion of privacy include:

Name

Service Number

Dates of Service

Branch of Service

Final Duty Status

Final Rank
Salary *
Assignments and Geographical Locations
Source of Commission *
Military Education Level
Promotion Sequence Number *
Awards and decorations (eligibility only, not actual medals)
Photograph
Transcript of Courts-Martial Trials
Place of entrance and separation

If the veteran is deceased:

Place of birth
Date and geographical location of death
Place of burial

*Items rarely available in the records we maintain.

FOIA and Official Personnel Folders (OPF)

Most information in a Federal (non-archival) Official Personnel Folder (OPF) is not releasable to the general public without the written consent of the individual whose record is involved. The Freedom of Information Act does allow, however, for certain information to be released without the individual's consent. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has determined that the following information can be released to the public:

Name
Past and present positions
Past and present titles
Past and present salaries
Past and present grades
Past and present job locations

Knowing the importance of complete records checks, we researched this process in October 2014. Due to a pending settlement conference, we requested and received copies on a rush basis (about one month). In our case, the client provided a copy of the subject's DD214, which had some time lapses, and noted an Honorable discharge. The records received filled in those dates – the subject was both AWOL and a deserter with administrative punishment for these convictions. The discharge, with benefits, was negotiated. See our updated commentary at <http://www.deathcasereview.com/afi-llc-blog/the-necessity-of-complete-background-investigations>

Dean A. Beers, CLI, CCDI and Karen S. Beers, BSW, CCDI
Cheyenne WY Licensed Private Investigators (No. OL-15-31146)
Board Certified Legal Investigator / Expert Consultant (national)
Board Certified Criminal Defense Investigators
Certified in Medicolegal Death Investigations / former Deputy Coroners

Associates in Forensic Investigations, LLC
A Rocky Mountain West Agency
Expert Consultants and Legal Investigators
Personal Injury, Negligence & Death in Civil, Criminal and Probate Litigation

www.DeathCaseReview.com ~ beersda@DeathCaseReview.com
WY - (307) 222-0136 Office and (307) 222-0138 Fax
CO - (970) 480-7793 Office and (970) 480-7794 Fax
'Quaero Indicium' - To Find The Evidence