

# Military Record Requests Using Standard Form 180 (SF-180)



Order copies of [WWI Draft Registration Cards](#) online.

Veterans or [next-of-kin](#) of deceased veterans can use the online order form at [vetrecs.archives.gov](#) (or use the SF-180). [Archival requests](#) may also be processed online (or via the SF-180).

- [Obtain and Fill out Standard Form 180 \(SF-180\)](#)
- [Or Write a Letter to Request Records](#)

## 1. How to Obtain Standard Form 180 (SF-180) to Request Military Records

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There are several ways to obtain an SF-180. You can:

### 1. **Download and print a copy of the SF-180 in PDF format.**

- You need access to a printer and the Adobe Acrobat Reader software (see link below). The form is a total of 3 pages.
- The SF-180 is formatted for letter size paper (8.5" x 11"). If your printer can not accommodate this, select "*shrink to fit*" when the Adobe Acrobat Reader "*Print*" dialog box appears.
- This is also a fillable version of the SF-180. It will allow you to type the needed information into the form using your keyboard. You will still need to print, sign and mail the form. Otherwise, it works the same as stated above.

**Please Note:** While Section II, Paragraph 1 of the Standard Form 180 outlines multiple types of records that may be available to the requester, the DD Form 214 is the most common document necessary to obtain most veteran's benefits. The typical DD Form 214 request can be processed within ten work days while requests for other types of records will require longer processing time. If a complete copy of the military service record is desired, please check the "Other" box and specify "Complete Copy" in the provided space.

[Download form SF-180](#)

[to mail or fax your request.](#)

Where to Return the Form:

- Review the tables on page 3 of SF 180 to identify the correct location of the record you need (based on branch of service, dates of separation, and type of record)
  - send the completed form to the address identified on the table
2. **[Contact Us](#) to order the form through the mail**
- National Personnel Records Center**  
1 Archives Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63138

#### **Other Ways to Obtain the SF-180:**

- From the Department of Defense
- From Federal Information Centers
- From [local Veterans Administration offices](#)
- From veterans service organizations

The SF 180 may be photocopied as needed. Please submit a separate SF 180 for each individual whose records are being requested.

## 2. Write a Letter to Request Records

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If you are not able to obtain a SF-180, you may still submit a request for military records. Requests must contain enough information to allow us to identify the record from among the more than 70 million on file at the NPRC. For example, if you are requesting an Official Military Personnel File (OMPF), please include as much of the following information as possible:

- The veteran's complete name used while in service
- [Service number or social security number](#)
- Branch of service
- Dates of service

- Date and place of birth may also be helpful, especially if the service number is not known
- If the request pertains to a record that may have been involved in the [1973 fire](#), also include:
  - Place of discharge
  - Last unit of assignment
  - Place of entry into the service, if known.

Please submit a separate request (either SF 180 or letter) for each individual whose records are being requested.

**Please Note:** Next-of-kin (*the un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister of the deceased veteran*) must provide proof of death of the veteran, such as a copy of the death certificate, a letter from the funeral home or a published obituary.

Additional information is required if you are requesting clinical or medical treatment records (see [Federal Records](#)).

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## How to Submit Requests:

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***WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FEDERAL AND ARCHIVAL RECORDS?*** [Learn more](#)

[Federal law](#) [5 USC 552a(b)] requires that all written requests for Federal (non-archival) records and information be **signed** (in cursive) and **dated** (within the last year).

You may submit more than one request per envelope or fax, but please submit a separate request (either SF 180 or letter) for each individual whose records are being requested.

**Please Note:** While Section II, Paragraph 1 of the Standard Form 180 outlines multiple types of records that may be available to the requester, the DD Form 214 is the most common document necessary to obtain most veteran's benefits. The typical DD Form 214 request can be processed within ten work days while requests for other types of records will require longer processing time. If a complete copy of the military service record is desired, please check the "Other" box and specify "Complete Copy" in the provided space.

- **Mail a letter or [Standard Form \(SF\) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records](#) to:**

National Personnel Records Center  
1 Archives Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63138

- **Fax a letter or Standard Form 180 to:** 314-801-9195

The Center will respond in writing by U.S. Mail.

## Order Processing Time

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Response time for records requested from the [National Personnel Records Center \(NPRC\)](#) varies and is dependent upon the complexity of your request, the availability of records and our workload. Please do not send a follow-up request before 90 days have elapsed, as it may cause further delays. While the NPRC works actively to respond to each request in a timely fashion, the Center receives approximately 4,000 - 5,000 requests per day. We are responding to requests for separation documents within 10 days about 92% of the time. However, requests that involve reconstruction efforts due to the [1973 Fire](#), or older records which require extensive search efforts, may take 6 months or more to complete.

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## Emergency Requests and Deadlines:

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If your request is urgent (e.g. upcoming surgery, funeral, etc.) and there is a deadline associated with your request, please provide this information in the "**Comments**" section of [eVetrecs](#) or in the "**Purpose**" section of the **SF-180 and fax it to our Customer Service Team at (314) 801-0764**. Our goal is to complete all urgent requests within two working days. However, in some instances we can complete requests the same day if necessary. Please contact our customer service staff at (314) 801-0800 if you have questions or require same day service. Due to the large number of calls we receive at this number, hold times are often long. However, once you reach a technician they will be happy to assist you with emergency service.

If your burial request involves internment at a Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery, contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (800) 535-1117 or visit their website [http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial\\_benefits/](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/). We work directly with the Veterans Affairs staff to obtain records to verify service for burial benefits. If the veteran

is not going to be interned at a National Cemetery, the requester may fax the SF-180 or signature page from eVetRecs (including signature of the next of kin and proof of death) to the Customer Service Team at (314) 801-0764. If your request involves the burial of a Marine Corps veteran, you may also contact the USMC Liaison Officer at (314) 538-2344.

**NOTE:** [The 1973 Fire](#) at the National Personnel Records Center damaged or destroyed 16-18 million Army and Air Force records that documented the service history of former military personnel discharged from 1912-1964. Although the information in many of these primary source records was either badly damaged or completely destroyed, often alternate record sources can be used to reconstruct the service of the veterans impacted by the fire. Sometimes we are able to reconstruct the service promptly using alternate records that are in our holdings, but other times we must request information from other external agencies for use in records reconstruction. In some instances, therefore, requests that involve reconstruction efforts may take several weeks to a month to complete.

***"NARA ensures, for the Citizen and the Public Servant, for the President and the Congress and the Courts, ready access to essential evidence."***