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Tips on **Requesting Copies of Military Records**

If you need your **military records**, the simplest way to obtain them is by using the government's form, "Request Pertaining to Military Records," also called *SF-180*. A copy of the form is attached to this memo. Most military records are stored at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis.

- **Use SF-180, the government's request form.** Read the instructions before filling it out; all the requested information can be found on a veteran's military discharge papers, form DD-214. If you don't have the DD-214, answer with as much information as you can recall. Remember to sign and date the form.

In Section II.1., we suggest you check the following items: DD Form 214 or equivalent, and UNDELETED; All Documents in Official Military Personnel File (OMPF); and Medical Records. In Section II.2., check the box that says "Other, explain" and write in "Privacy Act Request."

Make a copy of the completed form for your records before mailing the original.

- **Where should I send the form?** See the instructions section of the SF-180 for the correct address. The location of your records depends on your branch of service and when you served.

- **The NPRC will not provide classified records or some psychiatric records.** You may be able to obtain psychiatric records with the help of your doctor or lawyer. If you do not receive complete copies of your records, consider asking for help from your member of Congress. Members of Congress have no direct authority over the military archives, but they can be very helpful in securing records when you have made a complete Privacy Act Request on the proper form.

- **Can I pay someone else to locate my records?** Yes. You may wish to use a private records retrieval service to locate your records. These services vary in cost and how they operate. Most can be found on the Internet by searching for "military records acquisition" or the like.

- **What if I sent my request but haven't received anything?** If your request was sent to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), there is an e-mail address for follow-up inquiries about your request. You can e-mail NPRC at MPRstatus@nara.gov, if you receive no response within a month or so. Give your full name, dates of service, SSAN and the date you mailed or sent the request form in. They will respond and usually get the records to you soon after. More recently discharged vets must make their request to various branch personnel centers and not to the NPRC. Unfortunately, at this time, there is no e-mail follow-up address available for these sources other than the NPRC.

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