

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority AWD 883078

MILITARY PERSONNEL FILES - MAINTENANCE

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
U. S. ARMY RECORDS CENTER  
St. Louis 14, Missouri

MEMORANDUM  
NR 343-265-16

(Records Administration)

MAINTENANCE AND DISPOSITION OF MILITARY RECORDS  
Selective Filing of Papers in Military Personnel Records

1. PURPOSE. This memorandum outlines the selective filing of papers received or created when answers to questions in military personnel records, specifies the types of papers that may be retained, either permanently or temporarily, and offers alternatives for permanent retention of certain papers that have heretofore been filed in the records.

2. GENERAL. When a paper is filed in the records, it in effect becomes a permanent part of the records, consumes space, and prevents a vast accumulation of papers from being added to the military personnel records. The selective filing of papers that only selected papers be filed in the records. The selective filing of papers is intended to mean papers or information that will more completely document a particularly important activity which may be needed for future reference. Information on unit personnel type records, and copies of documents filed at field installations (original of which will be retained in the records) can be secured again if of sufficient importance.

3. POLICY. a. To limit the filing of papers in military personnel records to papers that contain data of value (papers that tend to add to the completeness of the records) in instances where, either because of existing data or the nature of the paper for possible future reference, the selective filing is the better alternative for permanent retention.

b. Envelopes in which inquiries are routed, routing slips, informal notes regarding action on papers, and papers of no permanent value will not be filed in the records. Permanent retention is authorized, however, for those papers to those that contain essential information. Information is not to be retained merely because they are related to papers that are retained.

4. PROCEDURES. a. Papers and forms that are not retained in current regulations or directives as permanent records should be retained in the TAG 201 file until the individual is discharged. The Army Reserve will be filed in the records.

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22 December 1958

(Records Administration)

MAINTENANCE AND DISPOSITION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL FILES

Selective Filing of Papers in Military Personnel Records

1. **PURPOSE.** This memorandum outlines the policy concerning the filing of papers received or created when answering inquiries in the military personnel records, specifies the types of papers that will or may be retained, either permanently or temporarily, and furnishes alternatives for permanent retention of certain types of papers that have heretofore been filed in the records.
2. **GENERAL.** When a paper is filed in the military personnel records, it in effect becomes a permanent part of the records. To conserve space, and prevent a vast accumulation of valueless papers from being added to the military personnel records, it is essential that only selected papers be filed in the records. The term "essential \* \* \* papers" is intended to mean papers or information that make the record more complete or document a particularly important action taken which may be needed for future reference. Information extracted from unit personnel type records, and copies of documents received from a field installation (original of which will be retired to the center) can be secured again if of sufficient importance.
3. **POLICY.**
  - a. To limit the filing of papers in the military personnel records to papers that contain data of permanent record value (papers that tend to add to the completeness of the records) except in instances where, either because of existing directives or the importance of the paper for possible future reference, there is no suitable substitute for permanent retention.
  - b. Envelopes in which inquiries are received, rough drafts, routing slips, informal notes regarding action to be taken, and other papers of no permanent value will not be filed. In instances where permanent retention is authorized, the papers retained will be limited to those that contain essential information. Papers will not be retained merely because they are related to papers that are retained.
4. **PROCEDURES.**
  - a. Papers and forms stamped "Permanent," listed in current regulations or directives as permanent, and those to be retained in the TAG 201 file until the individual is separated from the Army Reserve will be filed in the records.

b. Inquiries and/or file copies of replies to inquiries will not be filed in the personnel records unless they are in one of the following categories:

(1) Essential papers in all instances:

(a) Administrative determinations, with essential background papers containing information that cannot be secured again.

(b) Applications or appeals for review or correction of discharge or records with supporting papers that have been made a part of the Board Proceedings. (Birth certificates, naturalization papers, affidavits, and similar type documents, other than Board Proceeding exhibits, will be returned to the applicant after cases have been completed and essential facts noted in a Memo For Record on the file copy of the reply or other related paper.)

(c) Copy of letter, if required, transmitting an original Discharge Certificate or Reports of Separation issued by this Center. (Application or letter request will be returned with transmittal letter.)

(d) Congressional inquiries received from Member of Congress (file copy of the reply and the original of the letter from the Member of Congress will be retained). Letters from constituents must be returned to the Member of Congress transmitting them. Copies will not be made unless contents require retention under other criteria. Routing and referral slips will not be copied or retained.

(e) Correspondence forwarded to Washington for signature or review by The Adjutant General, The Chief of Legislative Liaison, and other officials. (Papers forwarded for permanent retention in the files of The Adjutant Generals Office (either in this Center or in Washington) will be limited to one green file copy of the draft or proposed letter, the incoming communication with inclosure(s) or a copy of synopsis thereof, as appropriate, and essential allied papers. Routing and referral slips will not be copied or retained. Supporting papers that are returned or forwarded to the requester will not be copied for file unless contents require retention under other criteria.)

(f) Correspondence essential to the processing of claims, when records are incomplete.

(g) Directives or instructions from appropriate offices that change or clarify the records or form bases for action taken.

(h) Transmittal of a Last Testament or Will.

(i) TJAG Opinions with essential background material.

(j) Decorations and awards issued, authorized, or denied. (Inquiry will not be retained unless it contains essential information.)

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(k) Litigation or legal action.

(l) Loan of medical or personnel records, other than routine. (Transmittal to be retained only when the inquiry contains essential information.)

(m) TSGO Opinions, with essential background material.

(n) Statements of Service from the National Guard and other branches of the service.

(o) VA Forms 3101.

(p) VA Letters, Forms 3232, and Form Letters 10-85, 3-110, and 9-150, when original records are lent.

(2) Those deemed of sufficient importance to be made a permanent part of the records:

(a) Carbon copies of statements of service, biographical sketches, etc., according to criteria established by the chief of the branch. (Not more than one copy for the same period(s) of service should be retained or prepared. Second requests should ordinarily be complied with by furnishing a photo copy of the retained copy.)

(b) Correspondence containing essential information used to supplement or establish record data not available from other sources when a suitable notation cannot be entered on a related paper or document.

(c) Replies from the field or other branches in response to requests for the location of records.

5. SUBSTITUTES FOR PERMANENT RETENTION. Papers of little or no importance have been retained in the past because of the belief that they might possibly be useful for future reference or because no other provision had been made for their disposition. In most instances the anticipated use for future reference never happened. In many instances, one of the following will provide an adequate substitute:

a. Transitory File. TWX messages and telegrams on which action has been completed will be filed in the Transitory File of the action section, if permanent retention is not warranted under other criteria. This file, which will be maintained chronologically, will also be used for papers that do not merit permanent retention or are not suitable for return to the requester, and when there are definite reasons to believe they will be needed for reference purposes within three months. If a paper does not meet the criteria, it will be destroyed immediately - papers will not be created merely for transitory filing. In accordance with AR 345-220, the file will be cut off at the end of each quarter, held three months, and destroyed.

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b. Memo For Record. A brief Memo For Record or notation on a related paper may serve in lieu of retention of one or more papers. Good judgment should be exercised in determining whether a Memo For Record or retention of the paper(s) is more appropriate. A Memo For Record should not be substituted in instances where an excessive amount of time will be required to note the essential facts.

c. Requesting Return of Correspondence. In instances where it is believed correspondence may be needed in processing a subsequent inquiry from the same source on the same subject, the statement shown on USARCEN Form 345, "If further correspondence with this office is necessary, please return this letter and the attached request," or a similar statement, should be included in the reply, if return of the inquiry to the requester is appropriate.

d. Notation in the Records. A notation may be made on the envelope containing the records, on the reverse side of the enlisted jacket, or on the backing sheet of officer records, in instances where it is believed a record of the action is necessary. Such notations should be brief and should be limited to those that will serve a useful purpose.

(AGCD-CM 313.2)

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

  
HARLEY R. DREW  
Captain, AGC  
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