

ARMY PERSONNEL RECORDS

AND

FAMILY INTEREST ENQUIRIES



HISTORICAL DISCLOSURES

- The Ministry of Defence (MOD) keeps the records of former members of our Armed Forces for administrative use after their discharge.
- The Army Personnel Centre - Historical Disclosures Section has access to Army records dating back to the 1920s and can supply copies of documents to the next-of-kin of deceased former soldiers and officers.
- Records of service prior to then, such as World War 1 records, are held at the National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Kew.

INFORMATION HELD ON FILE

- There is not as much detail held on Army personal files as people think. Army files are paper-based records that follow the career of the individual and, in most cases, make little mention of theatres of operation or action seen.
- Medals and awards are recorded but citations are never included. Only very rarely does a file contain a soldier's photograph, and photographs are not held in the Archive.
- Some files contain more information than others and we have no way of knowing what any particular file holds until we have looked at it. Regimental War Diaries, which are held at the National

Archives (see ‘Helpful Contact Addresses’) may be of more use than Army personal files in providing an insight into an individual’s war experience.

THE SERVICE PROVIDED

- For the widow or widowers of former servicemen and women we can supply copies of service documents or confirmation of particular aspects of service from those records we hold. There is no charge for this service.
- We can provide the same service for other members of the family or members of the public, subject to consent of the next of kin and the payment of a fee.

ARMY RECORDS

- Historical Disclosures has access to the records of all Army personnel discharged from regular or reserve service between 1921 and 1997 except Officers and Soldiers of the Foot Guards Regiments. These records are held at the Regimental Headquarters in Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London, SW1E 6HQ.

OTHER RECORDS

- If we do not hold records for the service in which you are interested, there is a list of addresses where you may be able to find help later on in this leaflet.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

- Information from Army personal files can be released to the next-of-kin of former Army personnel or to anyone who has written consent from the next-of-kin. We have a legal obligation

regarding confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998 which is why we require proof of the death of the former serviceman. However, this requirement may be waived when the date of birth of the individual was more than 116 years ago.

FINDING THE FILE

- We will not accept an enquiry unless there is a reasonable chance of locating the file in our archive. Ideally we need the full name, date of birth, Army number, regiment and year of discharge of the individual.
- However, the size and age of the archive is such that in a small number of cases it will be impossible for us to find a file, even if we have been supplied with all the relevant information. If we have to inform you of this disappointing result you may be assured that every possible search has taken place. If a search is unsuccessful we are unable to refund payment.
- **Please note, if you do not know either the date of birth or the service number of the subject of your enquiry a successful search for the file is unlikely, no matter how much other information you are able to provide.**

ESTIMATED RESPONSE TIME

- Urgent welfare enquiries from organisations helping former service men and women are given priority over family interest enquiries. Paid enquiries are acknowledged immediately upon receipt. We endeavour to supply you with information as soon as possible, but a wait of several months would not be unusual.

CHARGES FOR INFORMATION

- There is no charge for the service provided by Historical Disclosures to widows or widowers asking about their late spouse's service.

**ALL OTHER ENQUIRERS ARE CHARGED £30.00
WHICH IS NON-REFUNDABLE.**

- Charges are made because in 1986 it was decided that the cost of answering non-official enquiries was an unfair charge to the taxpayer. Consequently, the only alternative to turning down such requests is to recover part of the costs of the tracing and researching activities involved in answering them. The cost is open to review annually.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN NOW

Widows/Widowers enquiring about the service of their deceased spouse must provide:

- * **Completed Certificate of Kinship**
- * **Completed Search Document**
- * **Proof of death if the service person died after leaving the service**

Everyone else must send us:

- * **Completed Certificate of Kinship**
- * **Completed Search Document**
- * **Proof of death if the service person died after leaving the service**
- * **A cheque or postal order for £30.00 made payable to “MOD Accounting Officer”**

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH

THE DATA PROTECTION ACT

The information in this leaflet and the forms you have been provided with are for the use of family members researching the Army service of their deceased relatives only.

The following information applies only to former service personnel who wish to access their own Army records.

The Data Protection Act of 1998 gave former soldiers and officers a statutory entitlement to access to information about them held by the Ministry of Defence, including personnel records. If you are a former member of the Army and wish to be provided with copies of your service record please apply, enclosing proof of your identity e.g. a copy of your driving licence, passport or a utility bill, and details of your service, to the following address:

**Army Personnel Centre
MS Support Division
Parliamentary & Disclosure Branch
Disclosures 2 (Data Protection Cell)
Mail Point 535
Kentigern House
65 Brown Street
GLASGOW
G2 8EX**

N.B. Entitlement to information under the Data Protection Act exists only in respect of the individual concerned.

ARMY CONTACT ADDRESSES

<p>Officers whose service ended before April 1922 and Soldiers whose service ended before January 1921*</p>	<p>The National Archives Ruskin Avenue Kew Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU Telephone 020 8876 3444 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk</p>
<p>Officers whose service ended between April 1922 and December 1997 and Soldiers whose service ended between January 1921 and December 1997</p>	<p>Army Personnel Centre MS Support Division Parliamentary & Disclosure Branch Historical Disclosures Mail Point 555 Kentigern House 65 Brown Street GLASGOW G2 8EX</p>
<p>Officers and Soldiers of the Foot Guards Regiments</p>	<p>Regimental Headquarters The ***** Guards Wellington Barracks Birdcage Walk London SW1E 6HQ *** (Insert as appropriate: Grenadier, Coldstream, Scots, Irish or Welsh).</p>
<p>Officers or Soldiers whose regular or reserve service ended after December 1997</p>	<p>Army Personnel Centre MS Support Division Parliamentary & Disclosure Branch Disclosures 1 Mail Point 520 Kentigern House 65 Brown Street GLASGOW G2 8EX</p>

- **Microfilm copies of World War One Service Records are also held by the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter Day Saints (Mormons).**

Films can be requested for viewing at their local Family History Centres.
www.familysearch.org

ROYAL NAVY CONTACT ADDRESSES

Officers born in 1914 and later Ratings enlisted after 1924	Fleet DN Pers Disclosure Cell MP G2 Room 48 West Battery Whale Island Portsmouth PO2 8SX
Officers born before 1914 Ratings enlisted before 1924	The National Archives Ruskin Avenue Kew Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU Telephone: 020 8876 3444 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk

ROYAL MARINES CONTACT ADDRESSES

Officers and Other Ranks enlisted before 1925	The National Archives Ruskin Avenue Kew Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU Telephone: 020 8876 3444 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk
Officers and Other Ranks enlisted after 1925	Fleet DN Pers Disclosure Cell MP G2 Room 48 West Battery Whale Island Portsmouth PO2 8SX

ROYAL AIR FORCE CONTACT ADDRESSES	
<p>Officers whose service ended in 1920 or later</p> <p>Airmen whose service ended in 1928 or later</p>	<p>RAF Disclosures Room 221B Trenchard Hall RAF Cranwell Sleaford Lincolnshire Telephone: 01400 261201 ext 8176, 8172, 8173</p>
<p>Officers whose service ended in 1920 or earlier</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <p>Airmen whose service ended in 1928 or earlier</p>	<p>The National Archives Ruskin Avenue Kew Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU Telephone: 020 8876 3444 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk</p>

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT ADDRESSES	
<p>Service Medal Enquiries</p>	<p>MOD Medal Office Building 250 RAF Innsworth Gloucester GL3 1HW Telephone: 0800 085 3600</p>
<p>Regimental Histories</p>	<p>The Imperial War Museum Lambeth Road London SE1 6HZ Telephone: 020 7416 5000 www.iwm.org.uk</p>

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT ADDRESSES

War Graves Enquiries	<p>The Commonwealth War Graves Commission 2 Marlow Road Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 7DX Telephone: 01628 634221 www.cwgc.org</p>
Indian Army Officer's Records	<p>British Library Asia, Pacific and Africa Collection 96 Euston Road London NW1 2DB www.bl.org</p>
War Pension Enquiries	<p>Service Personnel Veterans Agency Norcross Thornton Cleveleys FY5 3WP Telephone: 0800 169 2277 www.veterans-uk.info</p>
Identification of Uniforms	<p>National Army Museum Royal Hospital Road Chelsea London SW3 4HT Telephone: 0207 730 0717 www.national-army-museum.ac.uk</p>
Information about Regimental Museums	<p>www.armymuseums.org.uk</p>