

National Personnel Records Center Fire

On July 12, 1973, a disastrous fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) destroyed approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF). The records affected:

Branch	Personnel and Period Affected	Estimated Loss
Army	Personnel discharged November 1, 1912 to January 1, 1960	80%
Air Force	Personnel discharged September 25, 1947 to January 1, 1964 (with names alphabetically after Hubbard, James E.)	75%

While thousands of US Army Veterans suffered having their records lost in this fire, for the most part, men who served with the 1st of the 50th in Vietnam were not affected.

If you have been told your records were destroyed in this fire (Assuming you served with the 1/50th in Vietnam)...you need to get the name of the Archivist or person who told you this and report them to their superiors.

Occasionally, there are unprofessional personnel who use this "fire" as an excuse to blow people off. One can give them a "reasonable doubt" exception if they were never properly schooled in what was burned in that fire. Please do not "assume", however, that all archivists and workers at the NPRC are incompetent. In fact, the vast majority are excellent workers and vigilant in the performance of their duties. As with any "group" there may be some who are not performing up to standards...and they should be reported. I recommend that you not argue with them, simply ask them for their name and end the conversation. Follow up by re-contacting the NPRC and obtaining the name of a supervisor and provide that supervisor with the offender's name and the date and time the misinformation was given.

The information at the top of this page was copied "verbatim" (word for word) from the National Archives Personnel Records Center Website page which identifies what was destroyed in that fire.

<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/fire-1973.html>

Long story short: Unless your service commitment in the US Army ended prior to January 1st, 1960, **YOUR RECORDS WERE NOT BURNED IN THIS FIRE.**

Jim Sheppard
Historian Archivist
1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Association