

## Lost Records, What Can You Do to Find Them?

*(Courtesy a posting on S-1 Net on the Battle Command Knowledge System, 19 Aug 2010)*

The following information was posted by Mr. Wade Beckner in response to a post from a Soldier who had lost all records and wanted to know what to do (also stated the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) had no copies of the records).

"I would recommend the first action the Soldier takes is to request a copy of his/her records kept on file at the National Archives: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/>. Depending on what types of documents the Soldier requests depends on how long the request may take. Also consider how many years of service, branches of service, etc. as applicable. It took about two months for me to receive the envelope of paper copies of my records, for example.

Second action the Soldier/personnel office should take is to contact previous units and agencies (S-1s, MPDs, Career Counselors, MEPS, etc.) for copies of any documents that are needed (enlistment contracts, award certificates, orders, etc).

Validation of military education should be accessible through the following: ATRRS, <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/AARTS>, <https://aartstranscript.army.mil> VMET, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/vmet/index.jsp> VMET being the most detailed and complete.

When it is all said and done, the reality may be that (unfortunately for the Soldier) some documents are gone for good. Let this be reminder and a lesson learned that in this digital age, there should always be at least a backup copy of all important documents stored in a safe place in both hard copy and on secure (password-protected) media, preferably in separate locations. This applies both to the Soldier and official records custodians in compliance with ARIMS regulatory guidance: <https://www.arims.army.mil/>.

It would still be a good idea for the Soldier to contact iPERMS to find out why the OMPF is empty. There is no guarantee, but they may be able to determine if there were any records that were previously on file.

Have the Soldier log in to his/her iPERMS: <https://iperms.army.mil> and choose the HELP tab for assistance."

*(Editors note: While the article is geared to active Army soldiers, some of the sources can be used by Reserve component soldiers.)*