



National Archives and Records Administration

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REFERENCE COPY OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION FOR ACCESSIONED ELECTRONIC RECORDS (Copied: June 16, 2003)

WORLD WAR II Prisoners of War Punchcards

RG 389 RECORDS OF THE Office of the Provost Marshal General

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been accepting electronic records into its holdings since the early 1970s. Technical documentation has accompanied each transfer of electronic records. The documentation is necessary to understand the meaning of the digitized bits of information within the electronic records.

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In creating the reference copy of the documentation package, NARA staff have selected from the technical and/or supplementary documentation available for this series or file(s). We have annotated or highlighted the table of contents that follows to indicate which portions of the full documentation for this series or file are included in this reference copy of documentation. Any materials not included here are available upon request. Any user notes prepared after the table of contents was prepared appear before the table of contents. This documentation will differ in structure, organization and contents from technical documentation for other series or files of accessioned electronic records. The readability and visual quality are also variable.



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SUPPLEMENTAL USER NOTE 1 – Identity Code

An Identity Code, a single letter followed by a printed '&' or '-', may appear as the first character in a serial number. These codes provide additional information about the individual's branch of military service or state personnel source. A table of these codes for officers and enlisted personnel appears in the War Department Technical Manual (TM 12-310), Codes, Machine Records Unit (War Department, 15 February 1944), Code Number 25 (see attached).

Accession No: 389-57-384
Prepared by Lee A. Gladwin, Archivist
Date: December 16, 2005

Reference Copy #i

NARA's web site is <http://www.archives.gov>

IDENTITY CODE

Officer Personnel

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>C</u>	Contract Surgeons
<u>K</u>	U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Officers
<u>L</u>	Women's Army Corps - Officers
<u>M</u>	Physical Therapy Aides - Officers
<u>N</u>	Army Nurse Corps
<u>O</u>	Army Officers
<u>P</u>	Public Health Officers
<u>R</u>	Hospital Dietitians - Officers
<u>T</u>	Flight Officers
<u>W</u>	Warrant Officers

Enlisted Personnel

<u>A</u>	Women's Army Corps
<u>E</u>	Enlisted Men



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Supplemental User Note 2: Meanings for Previously Undefined Abbreviations World War II Prisoners of War Data File NN3-389-98-999

Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General (Record Group 389)

Staff have subsequently located meanings for some of the previously undefined abbreviations (codes) used in the "Grade, Alpha" and "Arm and Service" fields. These meanings were found in the *Glossary of U.S. Naval Abbreviations*, prepared by the Office of Naval History, March 1947, or derived the meanings from the code lists from the NARA series Records of World War II Prisoners of War and the NARA series Records of Duty Locations for Naval Intelligence Personnel. Tables with the previously undefined abbreviations, the meanings, and the citation for the meanings follows.

Abbreviations used in the "Rank" field

Rank Codes	Meaning	Source of Meaning*
ACK	Assistant cook	<i>Glossary</i> , page 2
ACRM	Aviation chief radioman	<i>Glossary</i> , page 2
AERG1C	Aerographer, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 7
AERM1C	Aerographer's mate, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 7
AERM2C	Aerographer's mate, second class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 7
AERM3C	Aerographer's mate, third class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 7
AERMIC	Aerographer's mate, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 7
AFC1C	Aviation fire controlman, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 7
AMIC	Aviation metalsmith, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 12
AMMC3	Aviation machinist's mate, third class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 12
AMMIC	Aviation machinist's mate, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 12
ARM1C	Aviation radioman, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 16
ARM2C	Aviation radioman, second class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 16
ARM3C	Aviation radioman, third class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 16
ARMIC	Aviation radioman, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 16
ART2C	Aviation radio technician, second class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 16
ASTCK	Assistant cook	<i>Glossary</i> , page 17
BMSTR	Bandmaster	<i>Glossary</i> , page 24
BUG1C	Bugler, first class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 25
CBMA	Chief boatswain's mate acting	<i>Glossary</i> , page 29
CCMA	Chief Carpenter's mate acting	<i>Glossary</i> , page 4 & 30
CCS	Chief commissary steward	<i>Glossary</i> , page 30
CCST	Chief commissary steward	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"; Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"
CDR	Commander	<i>Glossary</i> , page 30
CHCK	Chief cook	<i>Glossary</i> , page 33
CHMGUN	Chief Marine Gunner OR Chief Machine Gunner	<i>Glossary</i> , page 32 & 94
CK3C	Cook, third class	<i>Glossary</i> , page 35

CM	Carpenter's mate or Chief metalsmith	<i>Glossary, page 35</i>
CM3	Carpenter's mate, third class	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"; Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"
CMSMTH	Chief Metalsmith	<i>Glossary, page 27 & 98</i>
CPHM	Chief pharmacist's mate	<i>Glossary, page 41</i>
CTMA	Chief torpedoman, acting	<i>Glossary, page 4 & 45</i>
DRMMAJ	Drum major	<i>Glossary, page 54</i>
F1	Commander-in-Chief, plans division	<i>Glossary, page 61</i>
FC	Fire controlman	<i>Glossary, page 62</i>
FLDCK	Field cook	<i>Glossary, page 64</i>
FM1C	Field music, first class	<i>Glossary, page 65</i>
FM2C	Field music, second class	<i>Glossary, page 65</i>
FMCPL	Field music corporal	<i>Glossary, page 65</i>
FMSGT	Field music sergeant	<i>Glossary, page 65</i>
L COL	Lieutenant Colonel	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"; Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"
LT C	Lieutenant Colonel OR Lieutenant Commander	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"
LT GEN	Lieutenant General	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"
M SGT	Master Sergeant	Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"
M1C	Molder, first class OR Metalsmith, first class	<i>Glossary, page 90</i>
M2C	Molder, second class OR Metalsmith, second class	<i>Glossary, page 90</i>
MA1C	Master at arms first class	Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"
MARGUN	Marine Gunner	<i>Glossary, page 71 & 91</i>
MLDRIC	Molder, first class	<i>Glossary, page 96</i>
MUS1C	Musician, first class	<i>Glossary, page 99</i>
MUS2C	Musician, second class	<i>Glossary, page 99</i>
MUS3C	Musician, third class	<i>Glossary, page 99</i>
P SG	Platoon Sergeant	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"; Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"
PRT1C	Printer, first Class	<i>Glossary, page 142</i>
PRT2C	Printer, second class	<i>Glossary, page 142</i>
QMC	Quartermaster Clerk OR Quartermaster Corps	<i>Glossary, page 145</i>
QMCLK	Quartermaster Clerk	<i>Glossary, page 145</i>
QMSGT	Quartermaster Sergeant	<i>Glossary, page 145</i>
RT1C	Radio technician, first class	<i>Glossary, page 152</i>
SIC	Seaman, first class	<i>Glossary, page 153</i>
SP1C	Specialist, first class	<i>Glossary, page 168</i>
STIC	Steward, first class	<i>Glossary, page 171</i>
STM1C	Steward's Mate, first class	<i>Glossary, page 172</i>
STM2C	Steward's Mate, second class	<i>Glossary, page 172</i>
STM3C	Steward's Mate, third class	<i>Glossary, page 172</i>
STMIC	Steward's Mate, first class	<i>Glossary, page 172</i>
SUPSGT	Supply Sergeant	<i>Glossary, page 173</i>
YM1C	Yeoman, first class	WWII POW "Grade, Alpha"; Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank"

Abbreviations used in the "Arm" field

Arm Codes	Meaning	Source of Meaning*
AC (MC)	Air Corps (Medical Corps)	WWII POW "Arm or Service"
CG	Coast Guard	<i>Glossary</i> , page 32
NC	Petroleum Technician OR USN officer designation for Nurse Corps USN	<i>Glossary</i> , page 122
USA	United States Army	<i>Glossary</i> , page 182
USA (CAC)	United States Army (Coast Artillery Corps)	<i>Glossary</i> , page 182; WWII POW "Arm or Service"
USA (ORD)	United States Army (Ordnance Department)	<i>Glossary</i> , page 182; WWII POW "Arm or Service"
USAAC	United States Army Air Corps	<i>Glossary</i> , page 182; WWII POW "Arm or Service"
USN (DC)	United States Navy (Dental Corps)	<i>Glossary</i> , page 183; WWII POW "Arm or Service"
USN (MC)	United States Navy (Medical Corps)	<i>Glossary</i> , page 183; WWII POW "Arm or Service"
USN (SC)	United States Navy (Supply Corp) OR United States Navy (USN officer designation for Supply Corps USN)	<i>Glossary</i> , page 156 & 183

*Citations used in the Source of Meaning column:

Glossary = *Glossary of U.S. Naval Abbreviations*, prepared by Office of Naval History, March 1977

Naval Personnel "Rate or Rank" = "Rate or Rank" code list in the NARA series Records of Duty

Locations for Naval Intelligence Personnel

WWII POW "Arm or Service" = "Arm or Service" code list in the NARA series Records of World War II Prisoners of War

WWII POW "Grade, Alpha" = "Grade, Alpha" code list in the NARA series Records of World War II Prisoners of War

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June 12, 2006



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User Note 1 for the World War II POW Data File

The U.S. Army transferred punch card records of World War II prisoners of war (POWs) into the National Archives of the United States as a unique series in its 1959 transfer of all of the U.S. Army's Departmental Archives. The punch cards came with tabs that separated them into presorted groups. In 1978 the cards for the American Military POWs Returned Alive from the European Theater (92,493 records) and American Military POWs Returned Alive from the Pacific Theater (19,202 records) were migrated to an electronic format by the Veterans Administration for a study of Repatriated U.S. Military Prisoners of War.

In 1998 NARA migrated the remaining punch card records to an electronic format. In June 2002, NARA preserved all of the migrated punch card records in a single data file. A small number of the punch cards were too badly bent or damaged to be migrated and are available only as paper copies. The World War II POW Data File contains 143,374 records and is 11,469,920 bytes in size.

Throughout World War II, the International Red Cross Committee in Bern, Switzerland, routinely sent lists of POWs to the US Army Office of the Provost Marshal General. Once there, the Prisoner of War Information Bureau, Office of the Provost Marshal General, U.S. Army, sent letters to the next of kin and copies of casualty and Prisoner of War reports to the Office of the Adjutant General, Machine Records Branch. The Machine Records Branch produced a series of IBM punch card records on U.S. military and civilian prisoners of war and internees, as well as for some Allied internees. These cards, together with many others, were used by the Adjutant General, Machine Records Branch, Organization and Strength Section and the Strength Accounting and Reporting Office of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff to generate monthly logistical reports of the current and actual strengths of Army and Army Air Force units worldwide.

The records identify World War II U.S. military and civilian prisoners of war (POWs) and internees, as well as some Allied internees. Potentially, every record documents the type of prisoner; whether detained in an enemy or in a neutral country; and whether repatriated, deceased, or an escapee. The record of each prisoner potentially provides serial number; name; grade and grade code; service code; arm of service and its code; date reported; race; state of residence; type of organization; parent unit number and type; whether captured in the Asiatic, European, Middle East, North African, North American (Aleutian Islands), Pacific, South Pacific, or Southwest Pacific theaters of war; latest report date; source of report; status; detaining power; detention camp code; and whether the POW was on a Japanese ship that sank, or if he died during transport from the Philippine Islands to Japan.

Coverage dates are December 7, 1941 to November 19, 1946, reflecting the earliest and latest report dates in the records. Inclusive dates 1942 to 1947 is the time period when the U.S. Army Adjutant General's Office presumably created and maintained the database.

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USER NOTE 2

During reference use, it was discovered that some of the Parent Unit Type and Type of Organization fields contain the characters "{" or "}". The presence of these characters may indicate a "signed" number field. Positive signing of the field is indicated by an alphabetical character A through I (which is the character representation of 12 (+) overpunch plus numeric values 1-9. The field is signed negative when there is an alphabetical character J through R (which is the character representation of an 11 (-) overpunch plus numeric values 1-9. In these records, when the right most number in the field was a zero, and the field had a positive value, the character representation is sometimes a "}". When the value of the field is negative, the character representation is a "{". This signing format follows standard IBM mainframe programming conventions for the signing of both positive and negative values. However, since the data in this field may be "signed," conversion of this field requires special programming.

We do not know of any reason why the fields in this series of records would have included signed values and can only conjecture that the presence of the "}" and "{" represent mispunched data when the final character in the field was a zero.

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Archivist's Perspective

TOP SECRET

Recovering and Breaking the U.S. Army and Army Air Force Order of Battle Codes 1941-1945

By Lee A. Gladwin

What was the current strength of the U.S. Army and Army Air Force each month during World War II? What were the numbers of casualties and prisoners of war? How many more men would have to be drafted, trained, and sent overseas? The answers were vital to the war effort. The authorized and actual numbers of officers and enlisted men for specific units was classified as "TOP SECRET" and were reported monthly in the *Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis*, large, thick reports circulated only among those with a right and need to know. Only eighty-six copies were printed for distribution. Not even President Franklin D. Roosevelt received a copy.

Tracking the men and material needs of the U.S. Army ground and air forces was a daunting task. In order to quickly and accurately tally actual versus authorized strength, the War Department's Adjutant General's Office (AGO) relied upon IBM data-processing equipment. Members of the AGO's Machine Records Units keypunched raw data onto eighty-column IBM punch cards, which were then fed into various machines that tallied the figures and printed reports. For the purpose of identifying specific units, three fields had to be punched: Type of Organization, Parent Unit Number, and Parent Unit Type.

The Type of Organization identified the kind of unit to which the serviceman belonged: e.g., "Heavy Bomber (B17 or B24)" or "Field Artillery 105MM Howitzer." The Parent Unit Number was the actual unit's number. Parent Unit Type indicated whether the unit was, for example, a group, squadron, regiment, or battalion. Most of the punch cards containing troop basis-related codes were destroyed after the war, but one collection remains: the World War II Prisoners of War Punch Cards, Record Group 389, Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1941-. It contains the records of 143,360 POWs. But for the actions of War Department personnel, later army records managers, and some perceptive army archivists, these cards might have been

branded "nonarchival" and relegated to the lost treasures of the world. Thanks to them, the evidence of the War Department's pioneering effort in encoding the troop basis and estimating man and material needs now resides in the National Archives and Records Administration's electronic records.

Researchers who need copies of their personal records or those of family members who were prisoners of Germany or Japan during World War II usually write to NARA. They may use the information to support a claim for benefits or to complete a genealogical history. Until a couple of years ago, reference staff conducted manual searches of the printouts of some of the records that they had created for reference purposes and, if a record were found, composed a letter to the researcher that incorporated the field names and their values from the record. The following data fields may appear in any record: Serial Number, Name, Grade alpha, Grade Code, Service Code, Arm or Service Code, Date Reported (DDMMY), Race, State of Residence, Type of Organization, Parent Unit Number, Parent Unit Type, Area, Latest Report (DDMMY), Source of Report, Status, Detaining Power, Camp, Repatriation Status, and, in a small subset of the records, data on Ship Sinkings. Many of these fields use alphanumeric codes to record the data. To interpret the coded data, NARA staff had to turn to the codebooks included as part of the documentation for the electronic datafile. After years of manually searching printouts and codebooks in order to write responses, the entire collection of punch cards was migrated to a digital format, and the thirteen data files composing this POW collection were recently loaded into an Access 2.0/97 database along with separate tables containing all of the codes and all available meanings. At the start of the project, the Type of Organization, Parent Unit Number, and Parent Unit Type code values had not been found. The Access database includes not only the raw data from the electronic records but also additional fields to hold the code meanings. Happily, I recently found



A keypunch operator of the Thirty-sixth Machine Records Unit in Belgium enters data from morning reports onto cards.

many, though not all, of the meanings of the Type of Organization codes, and they were added to the documentation package for the electronic records file and also to the Access database.

This is the saga of how IBM punch cards and the War Department's Machine Records Units helped win World War II. It is also the tale of how, nearly sixty years later, the Type of Organization codes were partly discovered or broken through the application of quantitative methods and recently discovered code documentation.

Office Automation Goes to War

Before 1939, neither the War Department nor any of the twenty-four European war ministries served by the International Business Machines European Headquarters in Geneva showed much interest in machine-readable records. Administration, military or otherwise, was viewed as a "necessary evil" of little importance for the defence of the country," wrote J. W. Schotte, IBM's general manager for Europe. This attitude changed abruptly after the German occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Germany's preparation for war included "internal organization," or the "organization of the second front." Newspapers were filled with stories of the "necessity of having in all phases of life behind the front an organization, which would remain intact and would function with

'Blitzkrieg' efficiency in times of general mobilization and war."¹ Confronted by German expansion, the war ministries of Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Holland, and France ordered "punch card equipment" in an effort to overtake the German lead. Late in 1939, Germany seized most of IBM's equipment within its area of influence for use by its own installations.²

Punch cards, keypunch machines, and mechanical sorters had been introduced by Herman Hollerith in time for the tabulation of the 1890 U.S. population census. Having proved their effectiveness in recording, storing, and manipulating large amounts of records, they were soon adopted by business and some federal agencies. Their acceptance and use gained ground during the New Deal era as a means of implementing its social policies and tracking payroll deductions and unemployment insurance.³

Incredibly, the War Department had not fully embraced current business machine technology, with the exception of the typewriter. Nevertheless, before World War II, the army's Adjutant General's Office used punch cards to maintain officer and enlisted strength statistics. In fact, the Surgeon General's Office used punch cards as early as World War I to maintain records of the sick and wounded and annually tabulate medical statistics. A very few machines were allowed the Army Signal Corps and the Office of Naval Intelligence for cryptological work. Two

Prologue

ordnance arsenals and two engineer districts employed business machines to process payroll and accounting records.⁴

Following the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, the Adjutant General's Office of the War Department was confronted with the eventual need to account for men and materials on a massive scale. There may have been some who remembered events during

World War I, when the effort to "maintain locator cards and keep track of changes in status of units and individuals broke down completely under the deluge of so-called 'snow flakes' or change slips which showered the Adjutant General's Office from overseas."⁵ Despite the Roosevelt administration's encouragement of the use of IBM basic punch-card machines for civilian purposes, that characteristic enthusiasm and urgency was lacking with regard to military preparedness. An isolationist Congress may have thought that buying fewer business machines would keep America out of war. As late as April 23, 1940, the Adjutant General's Office could boast of only one "Hollerith punch card system" being used in its Enlisted and Reserve Divisions.⁶ When it was announced that some money might be available from the President's Contingency Fund, the Adjutant General's Office requested \$200,000 for the "complete modernization and mechanization of the administrative system of the army." It was proposed to use such funds for establishment of a central machine records section in the office of the Adjutant General, in each corps area and department headquarters, at air corps general headquarters, larger army posts, and at least "one experimental unit at an army headquarters in the field, to develop procedures for tactical purposes." The AGO proposed to staff these units with civilians so as to free military personnel from administrative duties.⁷ To buttress their argument for funding, they pointed out that by placing the "administrative system of Army on a mechanical basis," the office could more quickly handle a mass of personnel records while reducing the number of personnel. The AGO predicted that one set of machines could replace sixty men.⁸



The Second Machine Records Unit in New Guinea, May 1944. These men and machines helped win the logistics battles that contributed to victory in World War II.

The announced purpose of the system was to "shift the burden of personnel administration from tactical units (company, regiment, division, corps and army) to installations of corps area service commands through the establishment of machine administration service units, as part of corps area service commands." While "normal channels of communication" would continue to be used for general administrative purposes, machine records units (MRUs) would convert personnel accounting records into "punched card records."⁹ An MRU was to be established at each corps area and departmental headquarters; auxiliary units were set up at air corps general headquarters and at locations with the heaviest personnel administrative load. Additionally, an "experimental" mobile unit was to serve an army headquarters, and funding was found for nineteen such units.¹⁰ The army hoped to put mobile MRUs as close to the action as possible.¹¹

A series of punch cards was even then being printed. The statistical card would record such personal information as the individual's height, age, and date and place of birth. Other cards included the status card, report of change (personal and unit), a medical card to record the serviceman's medical history based upon morning and sickness reports, locator cards, rosters and returns, and casualty reports.¹²

Despite the October conference and initial funding, financial support remained a problem into 1941. As Europe and the Far East plunged ever deeper into war, in January 1941 the Adjutant General's Office pleaded for parity of funding with other services as it defended "the necessity for the Reorganization of the Army Personnel System and the installation of Business Machines for the handling of personnel matters for the Army."¹³

The necessary note of urgency was struck at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. At the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, the staff worked through the night. They had to quickly "compute the defense reserves of equipment then in the overseas departments, particularly in Hawaii and the Philippines, which had been established on punched cards."¹⁴ Following the attack upon Pearl Harbor, thousands of patriotic young men descended upon army recruiting centers across the country. Area commands were confronted with more servicemen than their current MRUs could handle and cabled the Adjutant General's Office for assistance.¹⁵

Demands for punch-card machines and men to operate them far exceeded initial supplies. By July 31, 1942, there were forty-four machine records units serving the U.S. Army, and more keypunch machine operators, tabulating machine operators, and card-punch-sorting machine operators were desperately needed. The shortage of experienced keypunch operators was described as "acute." MRUs were ordered to search their collections of qualification and status cards for qualified enlistees, and training programs were conducted on a massive scale that summer.¹⁶

Construction of the mobile trailers apparently began during the winter of 1942-1943. Each mobile unit consisted of two truck-trailers mounted on rubber shock absorbers. The machines contained within them were powered by two generators producing eighty horsepower. Following construction, the trailers were sent to the International Business Machine Corporation's Engineering Laboratory at Endicott, New York, for installation of the punch-card machines. Huge as they were, these trailers were mobile enough to follow the troop landings in every theater from Sicily and Normandy in the European theater to the islands of the Pacific. At least one mobile machine records unit was attached to every army corps. Of the more than one hundred MRUs, thirty-three received unit citations.¹⁷

Punch cards recorded personnel and unit information. These cards and their related reports allowed the army chief of staff to monitor troop strength as printed out in the troop basis or its monthly analysis. The reports compared authorized and actual strength for the purposes of drafting, training, and replacing service personnel.

Preserving the Punch Cards on Electronic Media

In 1959 the army transferred boxes of punch cards to the National Archives and Records Service as part of the wholesale transfer of the army's World War II

archives. They were assigned to Record Group 389. No effort was made to convert them to a digital format until the late 1970s, when the Veterans Administration borrowed some of the punch cards and migrated these records to digital format as two files copied to nine-track, reel-to-reel tape. These two files were known as the U.S. Military Prisoners of War (POW)—World War II, Military Personnel Returned Alive from the European and Pacific Theaters files in the Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General. In 1998 the Center for Electronic Records, in collaboration with the Textual Archives Services Division and the Information Technology Branch of the Office of Human Resources, arranged for the conversion of eleven additional files to magnetic media. As a result, all of the World War II POW punch cards were migrated to a digital format. There are thirteen files containing 143,000 records.

In Quest of Meaning: Finding the Documentation, 1970-1999

Without documentation for coded data fields, individual data records often have little or no meaning. In coded data, much of the information exists only in code; e.g., a number "1" in the Race field stands for "White." No documentation for the punch card records was identified directly by the army when it transferred the cards to the National Archives. However, we now know that the code values and the card formats are defined in textual records from the Machine Records Units and these, too, are preserved in the National Archives. Documentation is absolutely essential for using the data in any way. The documentation identifies the names of the fields, their sizes, and type (whether alphabetical, numeric, or alphanumeric). For those seeking to understand the codes in the records, codebooks are a vital part of this documentation.

The World War II Prisoner of War Codes

Throughout the war, the International Red Cross Committee in Bern, Switzerland, routinely sent lists of POWs to the Office of the Provost Marshal General. The office then sent a letter to the next of kin and a copy of the casualty report to the Office of the Adjutant General, Machine Records Branch. A telegram was also sent to the next of kin by the Office of the Adjutant General while the Machine Records Branch punched the POW card.

We owe a great deal to those who preserved these cards and transferred them to the National Archives in 1959. Much is owed also to William H. Cunliffe, assistant chief for reference, National Archives

Prologue



CAMP	LOCATION	MAP KEY
Stalag IIA	Neu Brandenburg 53°34'24" x 13°17'18"	1
Stalag IIB	Hammerstein 53°41' x 16°57'	2
Stalag IIIB	Furstenburg 52°07' x 14°40'	3
Stalag IIIC	Alt Drewitz 52°36' x 14°37'	4
Stalag IVB	Muhlberg 51°27'20" x 13°17'50"	5
Stalag IVD	Torgau 51°33'30" x 13°00'20"	6
Stalag IVF	Hartmannsdorf 50°53' x 12°48'20"	7
Stalag VB	Villingen 48°9' x 08°38'12"	8
Stalag VIg	Grummersbech 51°5' x 7°35'	9
Stalag VIIA	Moosburg 48°29' x 11°56'30"	10

the codes matched some of what we later discovered were the Type of Organization codes found in the cards, the sheet was believed to contain codes for a possible field, Wounds, Amputations and Diseases. It was not until 1989, when one of the cards was copied onto a transparency for a presentation, that the previously obscured field names could be read. In mid-sentence, Margaret Adams, Center for Electronic Records, turned to the enlarged image on the

Modern Military Branch, 1975-1980. He found the first set of documentation that matched most of the observed fields in the War Department Adjutant General's Office Form No. 0326, Prisoner of War punch card.

In the 1970s, when former POWs requested documentation of their incarceration, National Archives staff copied the POW card and Red Cross reports for the camps in question. According to Cunliffe, "We were all aware that the punch holes in the cards represented information beyond what was printed out along the top of the card." Trying to find the key to this information, Cunliffe, "worked out allotment of the columns all across the card (assigned to name-rank serial #, etc.). This activity identified the columns where codes were being used." He then searched a variety of records and reference materials for files, issuances, and regulations that covered codes for military units, personnel, stations, and geographic locations.

Cunliffe discovered eleven-by-fourteen-inch gold-enrod coding sheets that included a sheet titled "Wounds, Amputations and Diseases." The codes, both alpha and numeric, could be combined to form three-character combinations, e.g., S54. Since the sheet of codes was included with the other code sheets and

screen and realized that the field layout for the cards had been preprinted on each of the punch cards. At that point, she realized that rather than information on "Wounds, Amputations and Diseases," columns 56-58 in each card recorded "Type of Organization," "Parent Unit Number," and "Parent Unit Type."

In 1994, when I was looking for codebooks in connection with documenting another series of records, the World War II army serial enlistment file, the first codebooks for Type of Organization, Parent Unit Number, and Parent Unit Type came to light. These codebooks contained alphanumeric codes that consisted of three numbers followed by a letter (e.g., 522P for armored infantry regiment). Though codebooks for 1944 and 1945 were now in hand, no effort was made at that time to decode the Type of Organization and Parent Unit Number and Type fields in the POW records. It was not until several years later, after the Center for Electronic Records began creating search, retrieval, and reporting systems for its Korean Conflict and Vietnam Conflict casualty and POW records, that interest turned to creating a similar system for the World War II POW records.¹⁸

Following a question from another archivist concerning the meanings of the uninterpreted Types of

This map and key provide the latitudes and longitudes of selected camps, which were included with camp identification information in the documentation.

Organization codes in a POW's record, I began a search in June 1999 for additional technical manuals, codebooks, or correspondence pertaining to the creation and use of these codes and the three coding systems.

Discovering Code Books and Breaking Type of Organization Codes

The earliest known systems for encoding Type of Organization are numeric and alphanumeric. Both were in use between 1942 and 1945. A mimeographed copy of the numeric system codes was found, but no printed version was discovered. In the "Army Ground Force Units" version (March 8, 1943), Type of Organization and Parent Unit Type are given in parallel columns. Spaces were left for adding new

biographies at various private POW web sites can this coding system be broken.

Analysis revealed large percentages of Type of Organization codes beginning with certain letters clustered around specific arm or service codes. For example, code C associated with the Chemical Warfare Service, code D with the Quartermaster Corps, and code E with the Corps of Engineers. The next step was to link unit numbers with specific Type of Organization codes. For this purpose, great reliance was placed on two sources: *Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis* and Shelby L. Stanton's *World War II Order of Battle*. Breaking the codes begins with finding the arm or service associated with the given unit number. Consider the example of William E. Harman's World War II POW record. His record gives the Type of Organization

IBM Punch Card for [General] J[onathan] M[ayhew] Wainwright, captured commander of the Philippine Division.

organization types. A defect of this system was that there was no way to identify higher-level parent organizations, such as division. This system was somewhat limited, therefore, in its descriptive power.

The creation of these alphanumeric codes begins in mystery and ends in enigmatic uncertainty. No codebooks were ever found for this system, though some of the earliest POW records, including that of Gen. Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, commander of the Philippine Division, who surrendered his forces to the Japanese after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, were encoded using this system (J32 in his case). The system was used simultaneously with the numeric system and, in some ways, supplements it. Only by analyzing the records themselves and trying to identify unit numbers with those given in the *Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis* and cross-checking with online

organization types. A defect of this system was that there was no way to identify higher-level parent organizations, such as division. This system was somewhat limited, therefore, in its descriptive power. The creation of these alphanumeric codes begins in mystery and ends in enigmatic uncertainty. No codebooks were ever found for this system, though some of the earliest POW records, including that of Gen. Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, commander of the Philippine Division, who surrendered his forces to the Japanese after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, were encoded using this system (J32 in his case). The system was used simultaneously with the numeric system and, in some ways, supplements it. Only by analyzing the records themselves and trying to identify unit numbers with those given in the *Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis* and cross-checking with online

as K15, the Parent Unit Number as 0092, and the Parent Unit Type as 06. In the *Analysis of the Present Status* we find 92 BOMB HV [92nd Bombardment, Heavy]. The parent unit type 06 means Group, giving us the complete title, 92nd Heavy Bombardment Group. To confirm the interpretations of these alphanumeric codes, I consulted various private World War II POW and army air force-related web sites.¹⁹ I then compared hundreds of records in these online collections and cross-referenced them with the information in the World War II POW punch card records to confirm the interpretations of Type of Organization and Parent Unit Type codes (see sidebar "Meanings of Type of Organization Codes" on page 182). By this method, I am confident that I have broken 25 of 235 alphanumeric codes. In time, hopefully, the same codebreaking methods may be successfully applied to the remaining unbroken codes.

Prologue

In order to interpret the Type of Organization codes found in the World War II POW punch cards, it was necessary to discover additional codebooks or find some way to break the codes. Three coding systems were identified: a three-digit numeric system (e.g., 215) and two alphanumeric systems (e.g., S53 and 401A). The first two coding systems were used as early as May 1942. After the third coding system was introduced in 1944, all three systems were used simultaneously.

All three systems were based on two common sources: the table of organization and equipment (TOE) and troop basis reports. The TOE provided a numeric system of hierarchical organization for the U.S. Army and Army Air Forces together with brief "titles" or organization identifiers.²⁰ TOE numbers and units were printed in small pamphlets issued on a regular basis as new numbers and organizations were added or old ones changed. They did not contain all numbers and organization names. Much more extensive and inclusive were the monthly troop basis reports, which specified organization strength in officers and enlisted men. They were based on the numbers and titles found in the TOE but were briefer in their "type unit" descriptions.²¹

More voluminous still, and more useful for identifying specific organizations and their component units, is the *Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis* (December 1, 1944). This monthly statistical report was based upon the troop basis, which specified authorized unit strength, but it also identifies all organizations and their units in the hierarchical order laid down in the TOE. These analyses revealed both authorized and actual strength and were the basis for making decisions about where to send troops and how many more men would need to be drafted, trained, and supplied; i.e., it was the staffing plan for the U.S. armed forces. In format, the *Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis* is a step closer to the surviving codes so far discovered. The TOE number remains constant, and the "type unit" descriptions are similar to those found in the troop basis. What is different is that the Analysis identifies specific units and their positions in the TOE hierarchy (e.g., 43 TROOP CARR designates the Forty-third Troop Carrier).²²

To track changes in unit strength and compute differences between authorized and actual numbers, the AGO created codebooks that set up a one-to-one correspondence between the TOE numbers and troop basis type unit descriptions and the codes punched into the Type of Organization and Parent Unit Type fields.

As early as 1941, an effort was made to encode unit type information:

WWII POW Report

Serial Number: 35628336

Name: HARMAN WILLIAM E

Grade (alpha): SGT *Sergeant*

Grade Code: 5 *Sergeant*

Service Code: 1 *Army*

Arm of Service: AC *Air Corps*

Arm of Service Code: 20 *AC: Air Corps*

Date Reported (DDMMY): 22024 22 February 1944

Race: 1 *White*

State of Residence: 53 *Ohio*

Type of Organization: K15 *Heavy Bomber (B17, B24)*

Parent Unit Number: 0092

Parent Unit Type: 06 *Group*

AFSC: 79 *Denmark*

Date Report (DDMMY): 29055 29 May 1945

Source of Report: 1 *Official*

Status: 8 *Returned to military control, liberated, or repatriated*

Detaining Power: 1 *Germany*

Comid: 091 *Stalag Luft 4 Gross-Tychow (formerly Heydekrug), Pomerania, Prussia (moved to Wobbelin 54-16)*

Four numbers separated by a "-" indicate camp's latitude and longitude

Repatriation Status*: *Meaning unknown except in the case of Deceased American POWs, Pacific Theater, who died in ship sinkings, 1944, Repatriation Status and Ship Sinking fields are combined to indicate a particular ship.

Ship Sinking:

The above report is from a database application that the Center for Electronic Records developed to extract and print individual records from World War II Prisoners of War Punchcards, [Electronic Records]; Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, RG 389, National Archives at College Park.

The report has three parts: the field name (in bold letters on gray background), the data as recorded in the electronic datafile, and where the recorded data is in code form, the meaning of the relevant code in italics.

SUBUNIT		PARENT UNIT	
No.	Type	No.	Type
A	09	12	06

In this early version of subunit codes, "09" means "company," and "A" is its designation. In the parent unit pair, "06" means "regiment," and "12" designates this as the Twelfth Infantry Regiment. Even at this early stage, Parent Unit Number was the actual number of the unit, not a code, and the unit type was already encoded.²³

Changing the Type of Organization and Parent Unit Type Codes (1944)

Late in 1944, the Type of Organization field was expanded from three to four characters consisting of three numbers and a letter. The Parent Unit Number henceforth was the "actual division number." This change appears to have been made in order to identify units within the larger divisional hierarchy, not

OPPOSITE: *Sample WWII POW Report produced by a computer database application used to answer reference queries, showing a newly discovered meaning for Type of Organization code K15.*

just as types of units, as was previously the case. The first character indicates the type of division. The second and third characters specified the sequence for sorting and printing the units in the same order in which they appeared in the Troop Basis. The fourth, alphabetical, character denotes the arm or service of the organization.

The two-character Parent Unit Type field identified all units except divisions with regard to size and importance in the chain of command. It no longer was used to specify whether a unit was a regiment, battalion, or some other type of unit.

How to Punch a Four-Character Code into a Three-Character Field

The new set of coding instructions posed a dilemma. Key punch operators now had to squeeze a four-character Type of Organization code into a three-character field. The record for POW Staff Sgt. William T. Reyenga illustrates how operators solved this problem. Reyenga was attached to the infantry, which was coded 722P. The last three characters, 22P, also match two other infantry organization types:

522P ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT
722P INFANTRY
822P INFANTRY

Since the first character, 7, indicated "type of division," or infantry, and this was already indicated by the arm or service code, the first digit was apparently stripped away to create the three-character code 22P. In order to compute the actual versus authorized strength of specific units, the Type of Organization, Parent Unit Number, and Parent Unit Type fields had to be completed. Such information was not provided by the Office of the Provost Marshal General. The information may have been taken from the status or report of change cards that identified the individual's organization. Once the card was found, the keypunch operator punched the codes using one of the available codebooks.

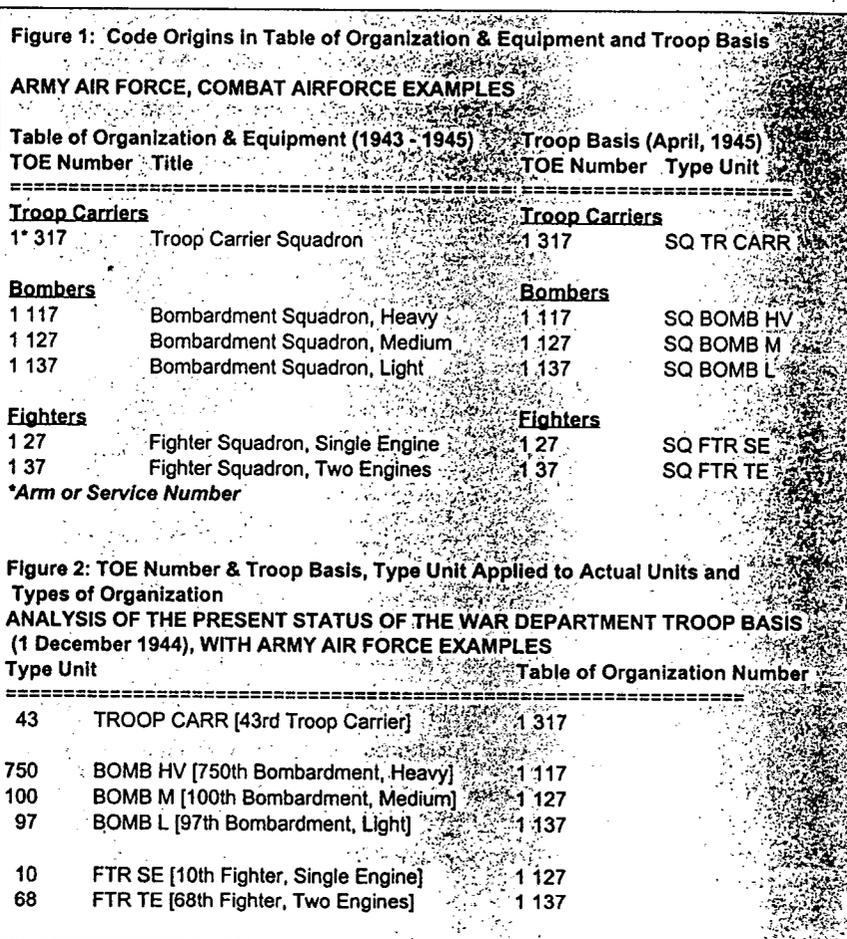
Conclusion

The three coding systems used by the World War II POW punch cards for the Type of Organization and Parent Unit Type fields can now be broken with a

great deal of effort and a little luck. More of both will be necessary if we are to complete the task. Still, we are far ahead of where we were in understanding these coding systems and can make the resultant code interpretations available to researchers, while explaining which code values come directly from extant War Department documentation and which are interpretations. At the same time, however, enigmas remain. Why were three systems developed and used simultaneously? What guided the selection of any coding system? Hopefully, additional codebooks or correspondence will be found that will answer these questions.

For whatever reasons, these early coding systems, and the data fields themselves, were abandoned by the time of the outbreak of the Korean conflict. The

These charts illustrate how code makers used War Department table of organization & equipment and troop basis publications to create Type of Organization codes.



Prologue

Meanings of Type of Organization Codes		
CODE	CODE ABBREVIATION	MEANING
Signal Corps		
A00	SIG CO	Signal Company
A10	SIG CO AIRBORNE	Signal Company Airborne
A21	RADAR M TY F	Radar Maintenance Type F
A90	ABRN SIG CO	Airborne Signal Company
Ordnance		
B61	HV MAINT FA	Heavy Maintenance Field Army
B63	ORD LM CO	Ordnance Light Maintenance
B95	MED MAINT	Medium Maintenance
Chemical Warfare Service		
C50	CML MORTAR BN	Chemical Mortar Battalion
Quartermaster Corps		
D32	QM CO	Quartermaster Company
D82	TRUCK	Truck
Corps of Engineers		
E12	ENGINEER AVIATION BN	Engineer Aviation Battalion
E23, E24	ENGINEER COMBAT BN	Engineer Combat Battalion
E45	ENGINEER GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENT	
E90	AIRBORNE ENGINEER BN	Airborne Engineer Battalion
E95	ARMORED ENGINEER BN	Armored Engineer Battalion
Air Corps		
K15	BOMB HEAVY (B17, B24)	Heavy Bomber (B17, B24)
K16	BOMB MEDIUM (B25, B26)	Medium Bomber (B25, B26)
K30	FIGHTER SE	Single-Engine Fighter
K32	FIGHTER TE	Twin-Engine Fighter
S53	BOMB HEAVY	Heavy Bomber
S55	BOMB MEDIUM	Medium Bomber
S86	FTR GP SE	Single-Engine Fighter Group
S90	FTR GP TE	Twin-Engine Fighter Group
T83	TR CARR	Troop Carrier

concept, however, remained in the form of the troop sequence number (TPSN) codes found in the Records of the Office of the [Army] Adjutant General, RG 407, Korean War Casualty File, 1950-53.²⁴ It uses an eleven-character number, providing the flexibility and power sought by the code makers of World War II.

The value of IBM machines to the war effort was clearly proven each and every time the troop basis or analysis was printed. These machines allowed the Office of the Chiefs of Staff to plan and to direct men and material where they were needed, when they were needed. The Machine Records Units and their machines won the logistical battles that helped win World War II. ♦

Notes

¹ Confidential Report to Mr. L. H. La Motte, "Our Dealing with War Ministries in Europe," May 16, 1940, p.1; Modernization of Army Administrative Methods Through Use of Business Machines Reorganization of Army Personnel System Initiation of Machine Records System, box 1629, 310 Business Methods and Procedures From (5-21-40) (1) Section 1 To Section 1A, Army Adjutant General's Decimal File 1940-1945, Records of the Adjutant General's Office 1917-, Record Group (RG) 407, National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP). Hereinafter referred to as Modernization of Army Administrative Methods.

² Ibid.

³ Margaret O. Adams, "Punch Card Records: Precursors of Electronic Records," *American Archivist* 58 (Spring 1995): 182-201.

⁴ Lt. Col. Carl G. Allen, "The Use of Machine Records by the Army," p. 7, IBM War History Files, copy provided from collection of Adjutant General Corps Museum, Fort Jackson, SC.

⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶ Memorandum for the Administrative Assistant, AGO, Subject: Contingent Expenses, War Department, 1942, from Maj. H. G. Holdridge, AGD War Plans Officer, Apr. 23, 1940, Modernization of Army Administrative Methods, RG 407, NACP.

⁷ Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, through the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Subject: Modernization of Army Administrative Methods through use of Business Machines, from Maj. Gen. E. S. Adams, Adjutant General, May 25, 1940, Modernization of Army Administrative Methods, RG 407, NACP.

⁸ "Possible Uses For President's Contingency Fund (Personnel)," May 18, 1940, Modernization of Army Administrative Methods, RG 407, NACP.

⁹ Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Subject: Reestablishment of Post and Regimental Personnel Sections, ca. October 1940, pp. 2-4, Modernization of Army Administrative Methods, RG 407, NACP.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹² Ibid., pp. 6-9.

¹³ Memorandum to Chief of the Budget and Legislative Planning Branch, War Department, General Staff, Attention Colonel Brown, from Lt. Col. R. E. Cummings, Adjutant General, Jan. 24, 1941, p. 2, Modernization of Army Administrative Methods, RG

407, NACP.

¹⁴ Allen, "The Use of Machine Records by the Army," p. 8.

¹⁵ Cable from Presidio of San Francisco 455P, Dec. 15, 1941, to the Adjutant General, Army Adjutant General Decimal File 1940-1945, box 1626, 310 Business Methods and Procedures (10-6-41) to (12-31-41), RG 407, NACP.

¹⁶ Memorandum from Brig. Gen. H. B. Lewis, Acting Adjutant General, to Commanding Generals, Subject: Machine records unit personnel, July 31, 1942, box 1628, 310 Business Methods and Procedures (10-6-41) to (12-31-41), RG 407, NACP.

¹⁷ Allen, "The Use of Machine Records by the Army," p. 11.

¹⁸ See Ted Hull "Electronic Records of Korean and Vietnam Conflict Casualties," *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration* 32 (Spring 2000): 54-61.

¹⁹ See www.ax-POW.org (formerly combatvets.net/asp/biotope.asp) for POW biographies; www.heavybombers.com/restored.html for lists of bomber groups based in the European Theater and photographs of aircraft; www.pyker.dircon.co.uk for an extensive lists of the 20th, 55th, 78th, and 364th Fighter Groups' aircraft, pilots, casualties, and POWs; and <http://www.fourthfightergroup.com/>.

²⁰ Table of Organization and Equipment (1943-1945), Table of Organization and Equipment (TAGO Series TOE) Beginning TOE Index, Ending: TOE 1-167T, box TOE1, Publications of the U.S. Government, U.S. Army, 1941-, RG 287, NACP.

²¹ The War Department Troop Basis (Apr. 1, 1945), box 63, DRB Reference Collection, Document No. 214, War Department Troop Basis (December to May 1945), RG 407, NACP.

²² Analysis of the Present Status of the War Department Troop Basis (Dec. 1, 1944), box 117, Office of the Comptroller of the Army, Program Review and Analysis Division Statistics Branch, Records of the Army Staff, RG 319, NACP.

²³ Army Regulations No. 330-63, Machine Records Codes, Code 63—Unit and Installation Code—Types of Units and Installations, Army Adjutant General Decimal File 1940-45, box 1626, 310 Business Methods and Procedures 10-6-41 to 12-31-41, RG 407, NACP.

²⁴ [U.S. Army] Korean War Casualty File (TAGOKOR), RG 407, NACP.



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August 26, 1998

WORLD WAR II PRISONERS OF WAR PUNCHCARDS
Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General
(Record Group 389)

Introduction

In an effort to improve access to certain punch card records in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Center for Electronic Records, with assistance from the Textual Archives Services Division, arranged for the conversion of eleven files of punch cards. In May 1998, these punchcards were shipped to NARA's Information Technology Operations Branch, Office of Human Resources and Information Services (St. Louis, MO), where they were converted to an electronic form. The conversion was completed in June 1998, and the eleven files were shipped back to the Center for Electronic Records for preservation in electronic form. The staff who converted the cards indicated that they captured the information off 98-99% of all cards. Some cards were unconvertible because they are very brittle and/or have edge damage. The original punch cards were returned to the Textual Archives Services Division, where they may continue to be examined.

A description of the punch cards is in the NARA publication "Records Relating to Personal Participation in World War II: American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees Reference Information Paper 80, 1992, p. 6-7). The following information was excerpted from that description:

The series of IBM [punch] cards subject index, n.d., was produced during World War II by the Prisoner of War Information Bureau, Office of the Provost Marshal General, United States Army, using Red Cross cables, other international messages concerning the status of POWs, and other records, most of which are in the POW Information Bureau subject files described in the previous section. The carded information was maintained over the course of the war. Complete data are frequently not available for an

individual. The data elements in each of the files are identical, although the output from them varied somewhat in format. Most of the information punched into the cards is also printed at the top of each card. Name, serial number, rank, and camp at which detained are invariably printed.

The information on the punch cards, and thus in the computer files, is far from consistent or complete. "Latest report date" and "camp location" are often missing. "Latest report date" sometimes refers to the date the file was closed and not the date the individual was released from POW status. Camp location sometimes refers to the camp in which the prisoner was first detained; sometimes it refers to the camp in which the prisoner was last detained. Indeed, since many prisoners were moved from camp to camp in both theaters of war, it very often falls short of revealing all locations at which a given individual was held. Also, some prisoners were assigned to constantly mobile details, and thus might have had no camp location.

Reference Information Paper 80 identifies the original punch cards as in 11 'files.' In the Spring 1998, when Center for Electronic Records staff prepared the cards for conversion to an electronic format, they found some subdivisions within those eleven files and decided that each subdivision should be a separate electronic file, bearing the title found in the subdivision marker. In addition, three of the eleven 'files' identified in the Reference Information Paper 80 list, "December Sinkings," "October Sinkings," and "September Sinkings" were merged into one electronic file, POW Punchcards: American Prisoners who Died in Ship Sinkings (Japan), 1944 (3299 records), since the codes in the final two characters in each of these records allow the records to be separated by ship and date of sinking.

Because of distinct breaks in the alphabetical pattern of the original cards or clearly identified separations, staff of the Center for Electronic Records decided to break two of the files identified in Reference Information Paper 80 into their component sub-files. Specifically, staff separated the originally defined 'file' "American Escapees (Never POWs-Germany)" into three electronic files: Escapees/ KIA (Japan) (21 records); Never POWs (Japan) (92 records); and MIA - RMC (1554 records). Similarly, the "Civilians" 'file' was separated into two electronic files: Civilians A-Z (488 records) and Civilians, Unofficial (747 records). Thus, creating the 11 electronic records files converted in May-June 1998. Additionally, in the late 1970's, the Veteran's Administration previously converted fully to an electronic format, and transferred to NARA, one of

the files listed in Reference Information Paper 80, "American POWs Returned to Military Control by Japanese." Therefore, since these records were already preserved in an electronic format, the 19,202 punch cards of this 'file' were not re-converted to an electronic format in the 1998 project. However, a subset of the punch cards from the file, "American POWs Returned to Military Control by the Germans" was converted to an electronic format in the 1998 project, because there are some records missing from the European Theater repatriated U.S. military POW file (85,541 records) that the Veteran's Administration converted in the late 1970s and transferred to NARA. Specifically, the file, POW punchcards: American POWs Returned to Military Control (Germany), Vititoe-Zywot (6952 records), is a continuation of the previously converted U.S. Military Prisoners of War (POW) - World War II, Military Personnel Returned Alive from the European Theater file, with some overlap. Therefore, researchers interested in all records of U.S. military personnel repatriated from European Theater POW camps should obtain and process both files.

In a review of the files prior to conversion and in the verification of the contents of the converted files against the technical documentation, some characteristics of the converted files were noted and are reported below.

In addition, when reviewing the punch cards prior to conversion, staff of the Center for Electronic Records discovered a number of bent punch cards that likely would not convert to an electronic form. A number of 3"x5" index cards were also discovered and removed prior to shipment for conversion. Photocopies of all these cards were made and are available as supplemental documentation.

Finally, numerous punch cards also contain hand-written information about a POW's status, which may contradict the information punched on the card. Therefore, researchers with questions about the reporting of a particular POW's status in the electronic file should also review his/her original punch card. The originals are available for review from the Textual Archives Services Division.

The data elements potentially reported in each record and the associated field locations are:

<u>Name of Data Element</u>	<u>Field Location</u>
Service Number	1-8
Name	9-32

Grade	33-38
Grade Code	39-41
Service Code	42
Arm and Services	43-45
Arm and Services Code	46-47
Date Reported (DDMMY)	48-52
Racial Group Code	53
Home State	54-55
Type of Organization	56-58
Parent Unit, Number	59-62
Parent Unit, Type	63-64
Place Captured	65-66
Latest Report Date (DDMMY)	67-71
Source of Report; Official Status	72
Detaining Power	73
Place Detained; Camp Code	74
Repatriation Status	75-77
Repatriation Status	78
Filler or identifier of Ship Sinking (SS, OS or DS)	79-80

* In the case of the Deceased American POWs (Japanese) - Died in Ship Sinkings, 1944, file the Repatriation Status and Ship Sinking fields are combined (columns 78-80) to indicate the particular ship.

Researchers should be aware that NARA staff found these inconsistencies and/or idiosyncrasies when processing these files. Automated verification reports are available upon request. Titles given to each file are taken from handwritten tabs that separated the categories of the original cards (except for the continuation file for the U.S. Military Prisoners of War (POW) - World War II, Military Personnel Returned Alive from the European Theater).

Verification Results (Summary) [for more detailed information review the Automated Electronic Records Inspection and Control (AERIC) utility reports available as supplemental documentation]:

1) American Civilian POWs (Released and Dead) Interned by the Japanese (13,750 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Service Code = 4 (Merchant Marine, 514 records) or 6 (Civilian, 13208 records)
- * Detaining Power = 2 (Japan, 13,741 records)
- * Grade = C V, CI, CIO, CIV, or CIV - (Civilian, 13,225 records total) or MM (Merchant Marine, 514 records)
- * Grade Code = blank (13,729 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = range = 501-796 (all in range of Japanese camp codes)

* Status = 4 (executed, 365 records), 5 (died as prisoner, 598 records), and codes 7-9 (repatriated, 12,242 records).

2) Deceased American [Military] POWs (Japanese) (7041 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Service Code = 1 (Army, 6,179 records), 2 (Navy, 544 records) or 3 (Marine Corps, 317 records)
- * Detaining Power = 2 (Japan, 7,030 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = range = 501-802 (all in range of Japanese camp codes)
- * Status = 4 (executed, 313 records), or 5 (died as prisoner, 6,720 records).

3) Deceased American [Military] POWs (Japanese) - Died in Ship Sinkings, 1944 (3299 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Service Code = 1 (Army, 2,692 records), 2 (Navy, 401 records) or 3 (Marine Corps, 205 records)
- * Detaining Power = 2 (Japan, 3,295 records)
- * Place Captured = 45 (Philippine Islands, 3,294 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = range = 501-800 (all in range of Japanese camp codes)
- * Status = 4 (died in ship sinking, 3,296 records)
- * Ship Sinking = SS (Shinyo Maru, 654 records), OS (Arisan Maru, 1640 records), DS (December Sinkings, 1003 records)

4) Neutral Internees (U.S. Military Personnel Interned in a Neutral Country) (2164 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Detaining Power = 9 (others, 2088 records)
- * Place Captured = 7D (Switzerland, 782 records), 70 (European Theater, 718 records), 72 (Germany, 387 records)
- * Arm of Service Code = 20 (Army Air Corps, 2128 records)
- * Status = 0 (Meaning unknown, 1277 records)

5) Deceased American POWs (Germany) (2523 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Detaining Power = 1 (Germany, 2509 records)
- * Place Captured = 72 (Germany, 1348 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = range = 002-492, 801-951 (all in range of German camp codes)
- * Status = 4 (Executed, Shot While Attempting Escape, 522 records); 5 (Died as Prisoner, 1951 records)

6) Escapees/ KIA (Japan) (21 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Detaining Power = 2 (Japan, 18 records)

- * Place Captured = 33-54 (all Asia, 21 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = 521 (Philippines Unstated, 7 records)
- * Status = 4 (Executed, Shot While Attempting Escape, 4 records); 5 (Died as Prisoner, 10 records)

7) Never POWs (Japan) (92 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Detaining Power = 2 (Japan, 72 records)
- * Place Captured = 30-55 (all Asia, 88 records)
- * Status = 4 (Executed, Shot While Attempting Escape, 10 records); 5 (Died as Prisoner, 12 records); and 8 (Repatriated, 57 records)

8) MIA - RMC (1554 records)

Distinguishing Characteristics:

- * Detaining Power = 1 (Germany, 230 records), blank (1324 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = blank (1539 records)
- * Status = 8 (Repatriated, 1380 records)

9) U.S. Military Prisoners of War (POW) - World War II, Military Personnel Returned Alive from the European Theater, Vititoe-Zywot (6952 records)

10) Civilians A-Z [Worldwide] (Non U.S. Citizens) (488 records)

Note: Handwritten notes on punchcards suggest that all records are for non-Americans.

- * Service Code = 6 (Civilian, 470 records)
- * Detaining Power = 1 (Germany, 144 records), 2 (Japan, 339 records)
- * Grade = CIV (Civilian, 467 records)
- * Grade Code = blank (481 records)
- * Home State = blank (480 records)
- * Official Sources = 1 (Official, 431 records)

11) Civilians, Unofficial, A-Z [Japan] (747 records)

Note: Handwritten notes on punchcards suggest that all records contain information from unofficial sources.

- * Service Code = 6 (Civilian, 731 records)
- * Detaining Power = 2 (Japan, 745 records)
- * Grade = CIV (Civilian, 746 records)
- * Grade Code = blank (745 records)
- * Place Detained, Camp Code = range = 521-793 (all in range of Japanese camp codes)
- * Home State = blank (746 records)
- * Official Sources = 1 (Official, 366 records); 0 or blank (Unofficial, 381 records)

* Status = 0 (unknown code, 690 records)

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SERIAL NUMBER SUFFIX (3 COL)	AREA	LATEST REPORT DATE			BRANCH	ARM OR SERV	COMP	GRADE	SERIAL NUMBER
		DAY	MONTH	YEAR					
0		0	0	0					
1		1	1	1					
2		2	2	2					
3		3	3	3					
4		4	4	4					
5		5	5	5					
6		6	6	6					
7		7	7	7					
8		8	8	8					
9		9	9	9					

PRISONER OF WAR

SERIAL NUMBER: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 00

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ALPHA CODE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 00

DATE OF BIRTH: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 00

DATE OF DEATH: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 00

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