

Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras

World War I Statement of Service Cards and Indices (Mississippi)

Series 1730: Mississippi World War I Veterans Index Books, 1917-1919

Z/0291.000/S: Master Alphabetical Index of World War I Army Veterans (Mississippi)

Series 1731: Mississippi World War I Statement of Service Cards, 1917-1919

http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/wwicards/

At the urging of various state Adjutants General, Congress passed a law in 1919 that authorized the Secretary of War (for the Army) and the Secretary of the Navy (for the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard) to provide to each state statement of service cards on all service members from that state mustered into service during World War I. These cards were prepared by the two departments over the next seven years, being finally completed in 1926. The cards were originally provided to the states to enable them to determine eligibility for state-provided veterans' benefits. The information provided on the cards was also to be used for historical purposes, primarily by veterans' groups and historical societies. In Mississippi's case, the cards were originally provided to the Office of the State Adjutant General (the Military Department). In 1954, the cards were transferred to the State Veterans Affairs Board, who oversaw the state veterans' benefits programs and provided assistance to Mississippi veterans in dealing with federal agencies. In 1997, the cards were transferred to MDAH since only a very few WWI veterans were still alive and there was no further requirement for the Veterans Affairs Board to have daily access to the information.

Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:

World War I, segregation, military awards and honors, military abbreviations, types of warfare in World War I, differences between branches of service, and overseas service.

Browse Images

Choose a series or collection to browse at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/wwicards/

Series 1730: Mississippi World War I Veterans Index Books, 1917-1919

Six bound volumes provide a county by county listing of Army, Navy, and Marine veterans with name, rank, race, serial number, enlistment date, discharge date, overseas service (yes or no), number of card (corresponds with form number), and percentage disabled. A seventh provides a straight alphabetical listing of Navy and Marine veterans with name, serial number, race, card number, and county.

Z/0291.000/S: Master Alphabetical Index of World War I Army Veterans (Mississippi)

The three bound volumes provide a straight alphabetical listing of Mississippi Army veterans with name, race, serial number, address (city or town), and county. The Army cards are in alphabetical order, the Navy/Marine cards are in alphabetical order by county. Some cards are accompanied by the veteran's World War I Victory Medal application card. A card's reverse was scanned only if it contained information.

Series 1731: Mississippi World War I Statement of Service Cards, 1917-1919

The Army developed five series of cards these were designed to show how the officer or enlisted man entered service. The Regular Army (Form 84a), the National Guard (Form 84b), the Officer Reserve Corps (Form 84c), or the National Army (Form 84d). The enlisted series (Form 724) was designed to indicate whether a soldier had enlisted or was inducted into service. There were also nine numbered causes for separation applicable to both the commissioned series and the enlisted series. The Navy and Coast Guard cards were divided into commissioned officers and enlisted personnel and were of a different format than the Army cards. The Marine cards were also divided into two series similar to the Army cards.

Teacher Discussion Guide

Use images from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled “World War I Statement of Service Cards and Indices (Mississippi)” (found at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/wwicards/) to lead your class in a discussion analyzing and interpreting the following images:

1. Open Series 1731. Click on Army Alphabetical by Name, Tucker S.–Walker D. At the bottom of the page enter “18” in the image box and view.
 - a. What can you tell about Henry J. Tudury from his service card? (Images 18 & 19)
He was a white male from Bay St. Louis, MS. 30 years old. He started as a cook. He served overseas from May 6, 1918 to July 29, 1919. He was slightly wounded on July 19, 1919. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix de Guerre. He was a private in a machine gun battalion. “A very courageous soldier. As courier he had to cross violently bombarded localities. Gassed, he remained at his post of duty until completely exhausted.”
 - b. Research the significance of the French Croix de Guerre. Why do you think this Mississippian was awarded this honor? <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Croix-de-Guerre>
This French military decoration created in 1915 to reward feats of bravery, either by individuals or groups in the course of the two World Wars. This medal may be conferred on any member of the armed forces, on French citizens, or foreigners who have been mentioned in army dispatches and, in special cases, on military units and towns.
 - c. During World War I the armies fought trench warfare. What weapon is mentioned on this card that was commonly used against the Allied armies (French, British, Canadian, and U.S. forces)? Research the effects of this weapon on the men fighting in the trenches. How does this explain why what Tudury did was so valiant? <http://www.firstworldwar.com/weaponry/gas.htm>
Gases progressed from tear gas, poison (chlorine) gas, to mustard gas. Tear gas was only an irritant, but poison (chlorine and phosgene) gas would within seconds of inhaling its vapor, destroy the victim’s respiratory organs and bring on choking attacks. Mustard gas was harder to defend against because it affected the skin. To stay at your post through a gas attack was dangerous because of the damage that was inflicted on the body. Tudury stayed at his post through the attack.
 - d. Using the Internet, research the meaning of some of the various abbreviations on the index card.
2. Open Series 1731 Service Cards and examine some of the Army cards and Navy/Marine cards. What differences do you see in the cards? Examine the Series 1730 Index Books what differences can you find?
Army records contain race on cards and indices while Navy/Marines only tracks race on indices. Segregation did not apply the same to the Navy/Marines as it did to the Army. The Army was heavily segregated with its own African American regiments with a minority of officers who served in various forms. The Navy and Coast Guard would accept African Americans but they were usually given the rank of Seaman, the lowest enlisted rank and could be assigned to the kitchen or other menial tasks on the ship and in port. The Marine Corps would not accept African Americans in their ranks. How are these situations reflected in the cards and books?
3. Open Series 1730 and look for your county. Look through the records and examine them. On the first page of each county you will find a total. What is it and why do you think that it was tracked?
The first page has a handwritten total of whites and “colored” soldiers who served in the Army.