

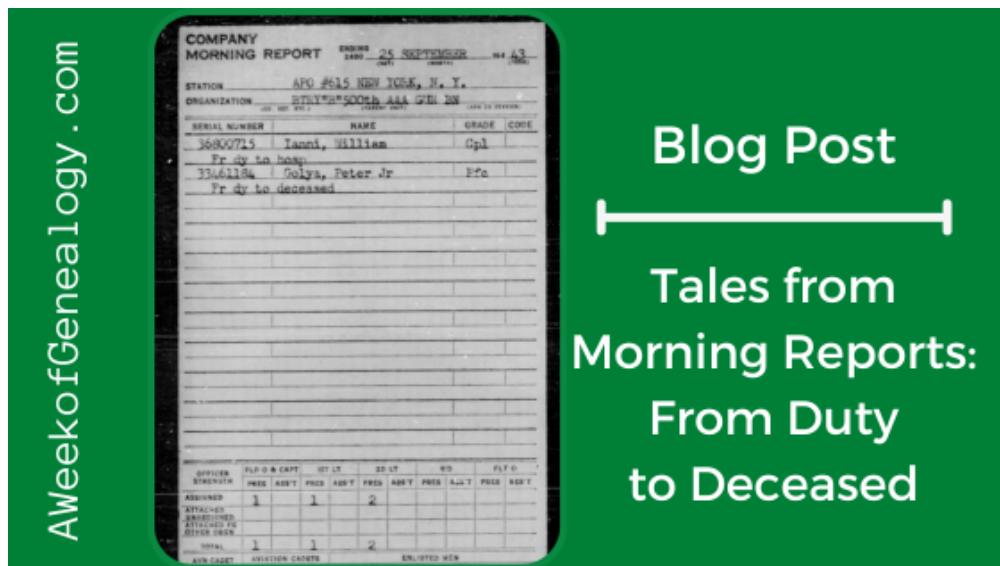


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## [Tales from Morning Reports: From Duty to Death](#)

Posted by [Dr. Mac](#) on Apr 12, 2025 in [Military research](#), [Morning Reports](#), [WWII](#) | [0 comments](#)



Although it was not directly about my father's service in Greenland, I learned a lot about the place reading Greenland's *Icy Fury* by Hansen, who was part of the Ice Cap Detachment stationed in Greenland during WWII. These brave few men battled the elements and topography to provide weather information to the Allied Forces about the north Atlantic and Europe. In the book there was a mention of a soldier taking his own life in Southern Greenland (p. 3). I wondered about the circumstances, how these isolated men might have come to have this knowledge, and if perhaps this might have been a story that changed as it was repeated until it reached them at a later time. I also wondered if this soldier had been in my father's Battery (Battery A, 500th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion).

Using the NARA Catalog, I searched for the Morning Reports of the 500th AAA Gun Battalion (shown in [WWII Morning Reports using the NARA Catalog](#)). Remember that when you traverse these records in ascending image order, you travel through them in reverse chronological order. In other words, as you go forward through images using the arrows next to the image number, you go backwards in time.

When I download Morning Reports, I typically download all of the Morning Reports for a whole military organization for each month, rather than just focusing on certain days or just when an ancestor's name appears. There are common experiences within the units that may be expressed differently or in a different level of detail.

Going through the Morning Reports for the 500th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion, I located a report about the funeral service and burial of a soldier from Battery B. Battery B was stationed at Ivigtut [now Ivittuut], Greenland. Battery A, the battery to which my father was assigned, was stationed farther south in Narsarssuak [now Narsarsuaq]. Both are in the southwest of Greenland.

The story in Morning Report was very moving, describing the solemn ceremony that laid PFC Peter Golya Jr's remains to rest in Greenland. The battery traveled to the the Green Valley Cemetery by barge for his funeral services for "Peter Golya Jr a well known and liked member of this organization." The Green Valley Cemetery was listed as near Ivigtut in a finding aid for Cemetery Plat Maps in Record Group 92 (RG92) prepared by the American Graves Registration Service.

STATION AND RECORD OF EVENTS	
SEPTEMBER-26	Btry was formed at 1600 at the Army dock Btry embarked at 1615 on a small barge for Green Valley Upon arrival the btry debarked the barge at 1645 and was formed in two platoons and marched to Green Valleys cemetary Upon arrival at 1700 the funeral services started a few minutes later for the enlisted man Peter Golya Jr a well known and liked member of this organization At end of service btry was formed back into formation and marched back to Green Valleys Navy dock Btry embarked barge at 1745 and sailed back to our own Army dock Upon arrival at 1815 btry debarked barge and was dismissed

The next image sequentially (in my Firefox browser) was the Morning Report for the previous day, 25 September 1943, when not long after arriving in Greenland, PFC Peter Golya's status had changed from duty to deceased.

COMPANY MORNING REPORT			
ENDING	2400	25 SEPTEMBER	1943
	(DAY)	(MONTH)	(YEAR)
STATION	APO #615 NEW YORK, N. Y.		
ORGANIZATION	BTRY "R" 500th AAA GUN BN		
	(CO. DET. ETC.)	(PARENT UNIT)	(ARM OR SERVICE)
SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
36800715	Ianni, William	Cpl	
	Fr dy to hosp		
33461184	Golya, Peter Jr	Pfc	
	Fr dy to deceased		

I did more research into this soldier and found several records online with supplemental details. PFC Golya died as a result of a machine gun bullet perforating his head. He was 36 when he died. The hospital admission card recorded his death as being in the line of duty. In the hometown newspaper articles, his death was reported as accidental.

The hometown local newspapers contained his obituary, accompanied by a photo, and the text of the telegram his mother received. The telegram contained the date of his death, and the fact that he died in the North American area. His obituary was titled: "Dupont Man Dies Serving His Country:

Soldier Last Reported Stationed in Greenland Passed Away Sept 25. In Service 7 Months.” When his remains were returned to the US, they arrived by train in 1947 escorted by a Staff Sergeant from the local area. Members the VFW Post, the American Legion, and Catholic War Vets met the train and escorted them to the fallen soldier’s father’s home. There was a military funeral, followed by a mass of requiem at his Catholic Church with the burial being in the parish cemetery.

As I located records, I added pieces of the story where I could. On FindaGrave.com I uploaded the Morning Report to the Memorial. I also created a subject page on Fold3 to collect the documents Fold3 had about him.

The records that were found pieced together a story of what happened to him and where. The Morning Reports were the only records containing details of the movement of the battery to bury him in Greenland. From the few words the reader learns about the soldier being well known and liked, and can imagine that cold barge ride, and march to the Green Valley Cemetery to bury a comrade who suffered an accidental death in the line of duty.

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**Resources that were located online** (Note: some records can be found on multiple websites.)

### **NARA**

- Access to Archival Databases (AAD)

### **Fold3**

- US, WWII Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946
- US, WWII Draft Registration Cards, 1940
- US, WWII Hospital Admission Card Files, 1942-1954
- US, Rosters of World War II Dead, 1939-1945

### **FamilySearch**

- Military • United States World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946

### **Ancestry.com**

- U.S., Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1861-1985
- U.S., Rosters of World War II Dead, 1939-1945
- U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947
- U.S., World War II Hospital Admission Card Files
- Pennsylvania, U.S., Veteran Compensation Application Files, WWII, 1950-1966

### **Findagrave**

- A memorial for his burial in the United States

## Google

- A finding aid for World War II Cemetery Plat Maps in Record Group 92 (RG92) prepared by the American Graves Registration Service listing the cemeteries in Greenland

## Newspapers.com

- Hometown newspapers contained his obituary, and articles about the repatriation of his remains for funeral and burial in his hometown

## American Battle Monuments Commission

I searched ABMC, but did not expect to find any record of his passing in this database, as there is no American Cemetery in Greenland. Through a FindaGrave.com search, I did find that his remains had been repatriated, and reinterred in the United States.

The **WWII Hospital Admission Card Files** are available on Ancestry.com and Fold 3. They contained only transcriptions of the Admission Cards, which including only summary data. Digging deeper into records from the hospital might not be helpful as it appears he died quickly after the injury.

A next step might be to look for his **Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF)**. These records are separate from the personnel files that burned in the 1973 fire. As of writing this blog post, a small fraction of them are online at NARA, and PFC Golya's is not among them. You can search at:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/search-within/297287480?sort=title%3Aasc>



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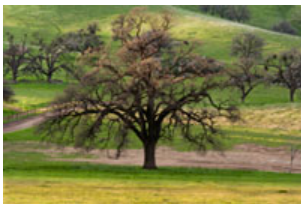


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