

X Lists, 1939-1945

Almost without exception, Second World War army service records contain numerous references to the 'X Lists'. The X Lists recorded personnel who were absent from their regular units for one reason or another.

THE "X" LIST

1. All personnel are held on the posted strength of a unit or are carried on the "X" list.
2. The "X" list is maintained in 5 sections, and all transfers to and from it – or from one section of it to another - Units will, of course, casualty movements within the sections of, or involving transfer to, or from the "X" list.
3. THE X (i) LIST comprises all ranks posted to fill vacancies in authorised War Establishments of a Headquarters or an extra-regimental unit (such as a base depot, school etc.). An officer placed in X (i) list will be seconded.
4. THE X (ii) LIST comprises all ranks evacuated on medical grounds beyond Regimental First Aid Post. Personnel so evacuated cease to be on the effective strength of their units. Temporary or acting rank will be relinquished 28 days after being so transferred to X (ii) list. Personnel remain in X (ii) list until they are classified as fit for posting when they are transferred to the X (iv) list of their corps and marched out to the appropriate training depot, or until discharged by a medical unit direct to their original units.
5. THE X (iii) LIST comprises
 - a) Confirmed prisoners of war,
 - b) Personnel officially declared missing,
 - c) OR under un-suspended sentence of detention or imprisonment (personnel undergoing field punishment remain on unit strength),
 - d) Deserters

Missing personnel will NOT be transferred to X (iii) list until the official notification is received. Deserters are NOT struck off unit strength until [notification] is received and personnel are declared deserters through Part II Orders. Temporary or acting rank will be retained by, and extra-duty pay will continue to be payable to, personnel posted missing or PoW [Prisoner of War].

6. THE X (iv) LIST comprises all unposted reinforcements and incoming reinforcement drafts. Personnel discharged from (x(ii)) to Training Depots, fit for duty, are transferred to the X (iv) list of their corps, until posted to a unit, when they are struck off X (iv) and taken on unit strength. Reinforcements in transit between the Base and a unit remain on X (iv) (and the Base Depot strength) until they actually reach and are taken on the strength by the unit to which they are proceeding. Escaped PoWs [Prisoners of War] who until such escape have been on the X (iii) list are transferred to X (iv) list on reaching their respective training depots.

7. THE X (v) LIST

- a) When officer personnel attend as students at courses of instructions or schools, for more than twenty-eight days, they will be transferred to X (v) list.
- b) When other rank personnel attend as students at courses of instruction for more than twenty-eight days, they will be transferred to X (v) list (and thus struck off the strength of their unit) unless the unit expressly states that they should remain detached.
- c) All candidates for OCTU [Officer Cadet Training Unit] will immediately transferred to X (v) list; on commissioning they will be transferred to X (iv) list of their corps and subsequently posted to a unit.
- d) All personnel acting as instructors at courses or schools outside the, or struck off unit strength for duty with a unit outside the, will be transferred to X (v) list. Although officers might in such circumstances be seconded, they will be placed on X (v) list.

19. Immediately an officer or other rank is transferred to the "x" list, he is "lost" to his unit, and is immediately replaceable by a reinforcement. Subject to Regulations, a vacancy for promotion is immediately created. It is in the interest of the unit to make immediate promotion or replacement as there is no guarantee that the individual will ever return to his unit. Return of specialist may, however, be requestedOnce personnel are transferred to X (iv) list from any other section of the "X" list, they are liable to be used as reinforcements for any unit within their own corps. Subject to certain conditions and exceptions as laid down in Regulations, acting or temporary rank will be relinquished on transfer to the "X" list.

Personnel temporarily detached from their units and not actually posted or transferred to other units or corps will NOT be transferred to the "X" list, neither will they be replaceable by reinforcements.