

Donald E. Young

Veterans and the U.S. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census Bureau has always been a home to veterans of the United States Armed Forces. The first superintendent of the census, William Augustus Weaver, appointed in 1840, received wounds as a combat veteran in the War of 1812. Francis Amasa Walker, the highly influential superintendent of the 1870 and 1880 Censuses was a veteran of the Civil War and former prisoner of war. In 1890, census legislation made it clear that honorably discharged veterans of the armed services would receive preference for employment as enumerators—a practice that continues to this day and one that has been further strengthened and expanded through civil service reforms. Throughout the history of the Census Bureau, agency employees proudly served in all of America's major conflicts.



Courtesy of the Young family.

Donald Young, known as Don, was born on May 5, 1922 in Newton, Massachusetts. His father, Howard, worked as a clerk, while his mother, Mabel, worked as a stenographer and records librarian for Boston's Floating Hospital, which later became Tufts Children's Hospital. Following his graduation from Malden High School in the summer of 1940, Don briefly worked as an insurance clerk until the outbreak of World War II. He was drafted into the U.S. Army on October 12, 1942.

A snippet of a 1930 census form. The form is titled "POPULATION SCHEDULES" and contains various columns for demographic information. A red box highlights a specific row of data. Overlaid on the form is a red text box with the following text: "Historic census records are maintained and released by the National Archives and Records Administration, not the U.S. Census Bureau. Visit <http://www.archives.gov> for more information about publicly available records like the one shown here."

Young Family, 1930 Census.

As a military police officer, Don guarded German prisoners of war in Oklahoma. He later recalled that the prisoners were treated better as American prisoners than they were as German soldiers. Despite having access to saws and axes for field work, the prisoners did not want to escape and even built shelters for their guards. As the

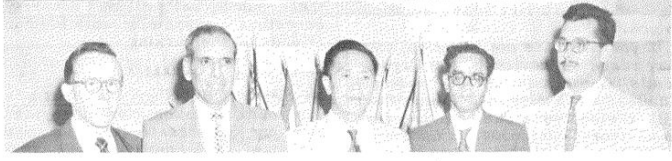
Allies prepared for the invasion of Europe, Don and the rest of his group were retrained as medics and sent over to England on the USS West Point, which crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a record 4 days by traveling alone, without the protection of a convoy. In another notable moment, Don's ship from England was the first to dock at the newly retaken and repaired port in La Havre, France. This allowed him and his fellow soldiers to walk off their vessel rather than have to climb down cargo nets like the troops who had come before them.

Don and his fellow medics established a major hospital in Paris—for which the unit was later awarded a Croix de Guerre—where he served as chief postal clerk keeping track of patient mail. After the war ended in 1945, Don returned home. Like many veterans, he used his GI Bill to further his education and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in statistics from Boston University, graduating magna cum laude in 1950. After briefly working in the Boston area, Don joined the Census Bureau as a statistician in the Industry Division, beginning a career that would traverse the globe and include several groundbreaking census programs.

An advertisement for "Surveying Census". At the top, there is an illustration of a surveying instrument (a theodolite) on a tripod and a stack of books. Below the illustration, the text reads "Surveying census". Underneath, a bullet point states: "• Donald Young arrived in Manila October 27 to assume his position as Economic Census Advisor to the Philippine Government. Mr. Young joins Milton Lieberman, E. Richard Bourdon, and Juliet Jones who have been assisting the Philippine Government in their statistical programs."

Census Bulletin (Vol. 6, No. 24), November 30, 1956.

Foreign Technicians Graduate



Last month Director Burgess presented graduation certificates to three foreign technicians at a staff luncheon given by the Office of the Coordinator, International Statistics, to honor the graduates. The technicians had just completed a year of study at the Bureau in a program conducted in cooperation with the International Cooperation Administration (formerly the Foreign Operations Administration). The purpose of the program is to instruct census officials of foreign countries in methods and techniques of census operations in the United States.

The three graduates and their fields of study were, Perfecto R. Franche, Philippines, census organization and administration; M. A. Sabzwari, Pakistan, social statistics; and M. Yusuf, Pakistan, sampling. Guests at the graduation luncheon included Dennis Conroy and Thomas Israel of the International Cooperation Administration, Deputy Director A. Ross Eckler, John P. Eberle (Per), Joseph A. Zettler (Ind), and six other foreign technicians who are now studying at the Bureau.

In the photo from left to right are Donald Young of the OCIS staff, who handled the details of the technician's training, Mr. Sabzwari, Mr. Franche, Mr. Yusuf, and Mr. Conroy, who is project manager for Technical Assistance Training Staff, International Cooperation Administration.

Don (on the left) with his first class of foreign exchange graduates, 1955.

Census Bulletin (Vol. 5, No. 18), September 9, 1955.

establishment of governments around the entire globe. One of those most important parts of that process was accurate data on which to make and measure governmental policy, which required national statistical agencies producing accurate censuses. The Census Bureau participated heavily in this by establishing the International Statistics Program (ISP) to send statisticians abroad to teach, as well as inviting foreign government employees to Suitland to learn. After transferring into the program, Don served as a liaison at headquarters before relocating to the Philippines from 1956 to 1958. Upon his return, Don went to the Census Bureau's newly opened National Processing Center (then known as the Data Preparation Division) located in a former Army quartermaster building in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Don spent almost a year there supervising punchcard workers, or tabulators, as they computed economic, agricultural, and decennial data before returning to Suitland.

Don returned to his old role in the ISP, and while serving as liaison he met a young statistician from Puerto Rico named [Carmina Fernandez](#). The couple married on June 8, 1960. Soon after, the Census Bureau assigned Don back to the Philippines, where the family stayed for almost 2 years. While in the Philippines, Don assisted with the 1961 Philippine Economic Census.



Donald and Carmina Young, June 8, 1960.

Courtesy of the Young family.

After their return to headquarters in Suitland in 1963, Don began working on the 1967 Census of Construction Industries, which was the first report on that subject in almost 30 years. His work earned him the U.S. Commerce Department's Silver Medal "for providing new economic benchmarks" through the completion of the 1967 survey. Following his work with the Construction Statistics Division, Don joined the staff of the Associate Director for Economic Fields, where he continued his international work as he served in places like Paraguay, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and China. In 1985, Don earned another Commerce Department award, the Bronze Medal, for his work on the 1982 Agricultural and Economic Censuses.



THE FIRST ONE IN NEARLY 30 YEARS—Bureau Director George Hay Brown (center) receives the first report of data from the 1967 Census of Construction Industries from members of the Construction Census Branch, Construction Statistics Division. On hand for the recent presentation were (from left) Bette Alexander, Elaine White, Patsy Phipps, Margaret Tannahill, Donald Young, Assistant Division Chief for Industry Surveys, Samuel Dennis, Chief of Construction Statistics Division, Dr. Brown, Jack Silver, Assistant Division Chief for Statistical Research and Methods, Walter Ryan, Associate Bureau Director for Economic Fields, William Langham, Bill Visnansky, and Alan Blum.

Don (standing behind the paper) and his team delivering the 1967 Census of Construction Industries to the director of the Census Bureau.

Census Bulletin (Vol. 20, No. 15), July 24, 1970.

After 35 years of service to the Census Bureau, Don retired from federal service in 1985. Don and Carmina, who also worked at the Census Bureau for over 3 decades, raised two children and were both long-time members of the American Statistical Association. Don also was a member and served in leadership positions in his local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts. After a life of service to his country and community, Don passed away on December 19, 2022, at the age of 100. The Census Bureau thanks Donald E. Young for his many years of service to the Census Bureau and our nation.