

Military Genealogy: Guide to Resources



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Military Genealogy Records

Records in the National Archives:

The National Archives hold military records for those men and women who fought in our nation's service from 1775-present. All modern personnel records 1914-today are housed in St. Louis, Missouri at the National Personnel Records Center. These often include card abstracts of muster rolls, returns, pay vouchers and other records. The info may include references to wounds, hospitalization, absence from the unit, courts-martial and death.

Revolutionary War (1776-1783)

Revolutionary War Pensions: The first several acts passed by Congress only included those who were disabled due to injuries suffered during the war or to widows and minors of those killed. A War Department fire in 1800 destroyed all early applications*(see note at the end of the section). By 1818 pensions were given to those that could show need. By 1832 anyone who served for 2 years could file for pension benefits and by 1855 anyone who served for any length of time including widows whose husbands were veterans could apply.

Information includes: Name, rank, military unit, period of service, residence, birthplace, and date of birth or age. If the claim was based on need, a list of property owned is included. Also, for widows and heirs additional supporting information may be available including date and place of death of veteran, discharge papers, marriage and or birth certificates.

Land Bounty Warrants: Land given to those officers and enlisted men who served until the end of the war. By 1855 anyone who served in the Revolutionary War or widows and minors of those who served could file for Land Bounty Warrants. These files only include land that was given by public act by Congress (1776-1856) and does not include lands given by individual states for service in the Revolutionary War.

The total acreage given was as follows:

Enlisted men 100 acres

Ensign 150 acres

Lieutenant 200 acres

Other officers up to Colonel 500 acres

General 850 acres

Brigadier General 1100 acres

The Daughters of the American Revolution are the premier source of information pertaining to American Revolutionary War soldiers and citizen patriots. They have an extensive collection of books, journals, documents, microfilm and other types of records available within their research library in Washington D.C. Can't make it to Washington? Try visiting their online database here: http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search/?Tab_ID=1.

Other sources of Revolutionary War records include, www.ancestry.com, FamilySearch www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2068326, Fold3 www.fold3.com, HeritageQuest, Internet Archive www.archive.org has millions of digitized books available to download for free, Library of Congress's Revolutionary War map collection <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/armhtml/armhome.html>, Military Indexes www.militaryindexes.com and the U.S. National Archives www.archives.gov/research/military/american-revolution

*All Revolutionary War pension applications and files received before 1800 were destroyed in a War Department fire. Those on file were resubmitted by pensioners or family after the fire.

War of 1812 (1812-1814)

War of 1812 Pension Applications Files Index 1812-1910.

Information includes: Name, pension application and certificate numbers, bounty and land warrant application number and the name/number unit served in.

Additional information available at the Illinois State Archives includes: "Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois" includes Illinois residents who fought on the western frontier and includes the soldier's name, rank, name and number of unit and his enlistment term and place of enlistment (list incomplete).

Supplements of this record can be found in "Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Quarterly 1904" and the "Illinois Genealogical Society Quarterly fall 1973."

If you are searching for Illinois soldiers a searchable index is available at the Illinois Secretary of State web site. www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html

www.ancestry.com and www.myheritage.com have indexes to the original published volumes of War of 1812 pensioner records.

Black Hawk War (1831-1832)

Black Hawk War Records 1832-1891

Muster roll entries include: Name, rank, date and length of enrollment, county residence, amount of pay due and the number of traveling rations drawn. For Cavalry, value of arms and equipment issued and descriptions of horses are also provided. Microfilm rolls are arranged by brigade or county of residence.

If you are searching for Illinois soldiers a searchable index is available at the Illinois Secretary of State web site. www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html

Mexican War (1846-1848)

Muster Roll entries include: Name, rank, age, date place and term of enrollment, county residence, name of person who enrolled the soldier, date last paid, paymaster's name, discharge date, amounts allowed for travel and sustenance following discharge and values of horses and equipment, if any. Records are arranged by county of residence.

If you are searching for Illinois soldiers a searchable index is available at the Illinois Secretary of State web site: www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html



Civil War (1861-1865)

The National Archives has numerous files related to the Civil War. There is a separate index for Confederate soldiers and Union soldiers. Record groupings include muster rolls, military censuses, compiled service records and official records. Also records pertaining to pensions and Land Bounty Warrants are separate from enlistment papers and other military service records.

Civil War records for Union soldiers are not arranged by name. There are microfilmed indexes for each state as well as numerous other digitized indexes available from Ancestry.com and other genealogy websites. Most of the military services records for Union soldiers have NOT been microfilmed! You would have to submit a request to the National Archives for photocopies of those records. The National Archives recommends consulting state archives for records pertaining to state or local militias or National Guard units that were not federalized.

For those records that have been microfilmed the indexed records include: Soldiers name, rank, unit/s in which he served. If the records have not

been microfilmed the researcher can ask to see the original records at the National Archives in Washington DC or you can request copies using form NATF 86.

Record grouping at the Illinois State Archives: These records are not limited to Illinois soldiers. They often include soldiers who were transferred to Illinois units.

Muster and Descriptive Rolls (1861-1865):

Information includes: Name, rank, regiment number, company letter, age, height, eye and hair colors, complexion, occupation, marital status, birthplace and residence, date and place where mustered in, name of mustering officer, date and place of mustering out, name of mustering out officer, remarks concerning transfers, promotions and special duty, and any indications of injury or death.

Military censuses 1861-1863: These are roughly arranged by county then township. These censuses were conducted by township assessors and recorded men eligible for service between the ages of 18-45. There were two lists. The first list was comprised of volunteers who organized themselves into units. The information includes: Name, residence, age, birthplace, occupation and date and term of service. The second list included men who did not volunteer, but were eligible to be drafted. This list usually lists the man's name, nativity (typically state only) and age. Copies of these records are also kept in most state archives.



Index to Compiled Service Records of Union Army Veterans (1861-1865) Name index includes: Name, regiment number, company letter, rank, mustered in date and mustered out date. This is an index only. Official records would need to be requested from the National Archives. National Parks Service Civil War Veterans: www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm

Official Records of the War of Rebellion and Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion: Information includes: Official reports, correspondences, orders, returns and maps. (Microfilm) a general index provides series and volume listings to the names of all persons included in these papers.

If you are searching for Illinois soldiers a searchable index is available at the Illinois Secretary of State web site: www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html

Genealogy web sites such as Ancestry.com, Proquest's Ancestry Library and others offer digitized abstracts of Civil War records including searchable databases. The following databases are the most popular:

- American Civil War Regiments
- American Civil War Soldiers
- Civil War Service Records
- Civil War Pension Index (provides digitized image of pension card)

The information provided in these databases varies and can include: Name of soldier, rank, enlistment date, mustered out date and the state and unit of service. The pension indexes include: Name, state and unit served, date pension claim was made, application number, certificate number and for widows' pensions', name of the widow and state claim was filed.

Confederate Civil War Records

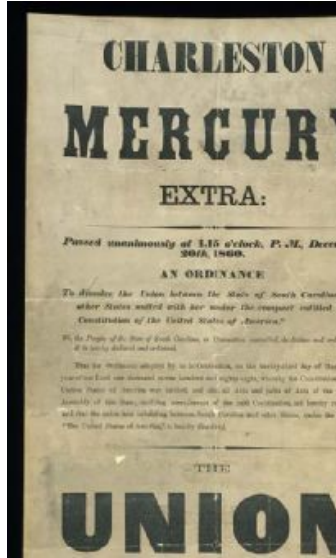
Fold3 www.fold3.com

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/109.html

Texas State Library and Archives Commission Digitized Records

www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/genfirst.html#indigent



Alabama Department of Archives and History

www.archives.state.al.us/referenc/military.html

North Carolina Archives and History Center

www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/archives/veterans.htm#info

Georgia State Archives <http://cdm.georgiaarchives.org:2011/cdm>

Georgia Vault includes Confederate pension applications

South Carolina Archives and History Center

www.state.sc.us/scdah/research.htm

Florida State Archives <http://dhis.dos.state.fl.us/barm/fsa.html>

(Also has WWI draft cards)

Virginia State Archives www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/mil/index.htm

Extensive digitized collection of military records from the Revolutionary War to WWII.)

Tennessee State Library and Archives www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/index.htm

Includes lists of soldiers up to Vietnam. (Does not include WWII)

Arkansas History Commission www.ark-ives.com/research/materials/military_records.asp

Web site contains an extensive collection of military records including WWI, WWII, Confederate Soldiers Home records and other non-military records. (Digitized Records)

Mississippi State Archives and Library www.mdah.state.ms.us/arlib/collection.html Web site does not give specific list of documents available at the archives.

Spanish-American War (1898-1899) American-Philippian War 1899-1902

Both wars occurred concurrently and are often combined into the Spanish-American War. General Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War with Spain:

Mustered-In Rolls: include: Age, birthplace, eye and hair color, complexion, height, marital status, occupation and the names and addresses of next-of-kin.

Mustered-Out Rolls: Include: Name, rank, date, place and term of enrollment, name of enrolling officer, places of residence and discharge, amounts of pay, travel and reimbursement due.

The National Archives has written two in-depth articles in *Prologue*, their quarterly publication about the war. You can read both articles here:

www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/spring/spanish-american-war-1.html

If you are searching for Illinois soldiers a searchable index is available at the Illinois Secretary of State web site: <http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html>

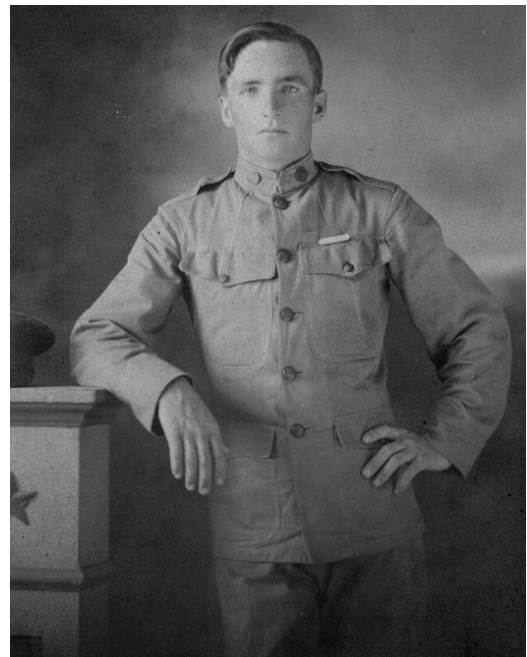
A good source of Spanish-American War Information is available through the Sons of the Spanish-American War veterans: <http://ssawv.org/index.htm>

World War I (1917-1919)

Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) live at the National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63138. www.archives.gov/st-louis These personnel files include the personal details about your soldier during the war.

Sadly, 80% of Army and Air Force records from 1914-1960 were destroyed in a fire in the 1970s. So you may get a letter back saying your requested file is a "fire record". NPRC also has monthly regimental reports and muster rolls for WWI and WWII on microfilm.

If your soldier has a fire record, you can try to recreate some of that history through collections at the National Archives I in Washington, D.C. and National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. The National Archives I holds Record Group 393 Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947 which include units stationed within the Continental U.S. in bases and camps during the war.



National Archives II in College Park, MD has Record Group 120 Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), 1848 – 1942 These records include all military actions and reports filed for units stationed overseas during the war, Casualty Reports and Registrar's reports. Information included: name, address, date and place of birth, age, race, citizenship status, occupation, name and address of employer, name and address of next-of-kin, records of prior service. Registrar's Reports also include: Physical descriptions such as height, build, eye and hair color, presence of baldness and any physical disabilities. These registration cards do not say whether or not the person in question served in the military.

Each state also kept a record of its WWI Draft Registration Cards. There are numerous websites out there that have indexed soldiers by state (e.g. www.ancestry.com or www.fold3.com).

If you are searching for Illinois WWI soldiers, only records for National Guard units that were federalized during WWI are available through the Illinois State Adjutant General's Office within the Illinois National Guard. For more information, please contact:

National Guard State Historian

1301 N. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62702

Phone: (217) 761-3975

Ancestry.com has the "American Soldiers of WWI" database of soldiers Killed in Action and the U.S. Army Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910-1939. Fold3 has a collection of WWI records including Ship manifests, death cards, cablegrams and draft card files. They have mostly U.K. Soldiers and Sailors indexes to date, but collections are being added often.

World War II (1941-1945), Korean Conflict (1950-1953), Vietnam War (1959-1973).



The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) will provide information upon written request on living and deceased veterans who have left the service 62 years ago. The office requires the veteran's name, war and branch of service and if possible social security number or serial number. Records include: Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF), Individual Deceased Persons Files (IDPF), Court-Martials, Merchant Marine records.

Ancestry.com has the following databases that can be used to obtain records for these conflicts:

WWII and Korean Veterans Interred Overseas:

Includes the name, rank, state, combat organization, date of death, place of monument, last known status, and U.S. awards.

Korean Conflict Death Index: Includes: Name, age,

home, service number, rank, pay grade, branch of service, service component, casualty type, death date, race and citizenship.

Vietnam Casualty Index: Includes: name, birth date, death date, race, home city, state, date tour began, length of service, social security number or service number, casualty type, branch of service, religion, sex, marital status and posthumous promotion.

Check www.ancestry.com and www.fold3.com for more information on WWII soldiers.

There are other sources for military information besides the National Archives. State Archives contain records for Soldiers and Sailors' Homes, Veterans Cemeteries and Soldiers' Widows

Homes. In some cases, states provided bonuses to World War I veterans and continued the practice for other returning veterans up to the Vietnam War.

Returning soldiers filed a copy of their discharge papers with the local county clerk or registrar of deeds. This is an alternative place to look if your relatives' records were destroyed in the National Archives fire. Additional sources are military bases or naval stations where the soldier served or contacting the unit or division headquarters for records filed during their service.

Genealogy Web Sites

General Genealogy Websites

Access Genealogy: www.accessgenealogy.com/military
All Genealogy Sites website: www.all-genealogysites.com/Military
Archivegrid : <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid>
Cindy's List: www.cyndislist.com/military.htm
Familysearch www.familysearch.org
Fold3 <http://www.fold3.com>
Internet Archive: www.archive.org
MyHeritage www.myheritage.com
National Parks Service Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System:
www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm



Archives, Libraries, and Historical Societies

Allen County Public Library: www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/index.html
Brigham Young University WWI Links Index
http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Links_to_Other_WWI_Sites
British Library www.bl.uk/world-war-one
Cantigny First Division Museum: <http://www.fdmuseum.org>
Daughters of the American Revolution: www.dar.org/library/default.cfm
Gettysburg College Civil War Archives: www.gettysburg.edu/library/gettdigital
Illinois State Archives: www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases/home.html
Indiana Memory: <https://digital.library.in.gov>
Iowa Digital Civil War Collections: <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cwd>
National Archives and Records Administration: www.archives.gov
N.Y. State Archives and Military Museum: www.dmna.state.ny.us/historic/mil-hist.htm
Pritzker Military Library: www.pritzkermilitary.org/explore/library/digital-resources
Wisconsin Historical Society: www.wisconsinhistory.org/military
U.S. War College Carlisle, PA. <http://ahec.armywarcollege.edu/library.cfm>

Military Museums, Military History and Related Web Sites:

Air Force Historical Research Agency: www.afhra.af.mil
American Battle Monuments Commission: www.abmc.gov
Army Museum System: www.history.army.mil/museums/directory.html
Congressional Medal of Honor Society: www.cmohs.org
Department of Veteran's Affairs National Gravesite Locator: <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>
Europeana World War I Collections: www.europeana.eu/portal/
First Division Museum at Cantigny (WWI) www.firstdivisionmuseum.org/research/default.aspx
Grand Army of the Republic Records: www.garrerecords.org
Great Lakes Naval Museum: www.history.navy.mil/museums/greatlakes/index.htm
The Great War Society: www.worldwar1.com
Honor The Fallen: Iraq War Casualties: <http://militarytimes.com/valor>
Korean War Veterans Association: www.kwva.org
Library of Congress Veterans' Oral History Project: www.loc.gov/vets
Museum of the American Revolution www.amrevmuseum.org
National Museum of the United States Army <http://thenmusa.org>
National Parks Service: www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm
National World War I Museum: www.theworldwar.org
National World War II Memorial: www.wwiimemorial.com
Naval Historical Center: www.history.navy.mil
Selective Service Records www.sss.gov/records.htm
Son of the South (Harper's Weekly Magazine Archives Civil War) www.sonofthesouth.net
United States Air Force Museum: www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Home.aspx
United States Army Center for Military History: <http://www.army.mil/cmh>
United States Coastguard Historian's Office: <http://www.uscg.mil/history>
United States Marine Corps: www.mcu.usmc.mil/historydivision/SitePages/Home.aspx
World War I Centennial Commission: www.worldwar1centennial.org

Military Service Organizations

American Ex-Prisoners of War <http://www.axpow.org>
American Legion: www.legion.org
Daughters of the American Revolution: www.dar.org
Daughters of the Union www.duvcw.org
Daughters of WWII www.daughtersoffww2.org
Grand Army of the Republic Records: www.garrerecords.org
Korean War Veterans Association <https://kwva.us>
My Merchant Marines: www.mymerchantmarines.com
Society of the Cincinnati www.societyofthecincinnati.org
Sons of the American Revolution www.sar.org
Sons of the Confederacy www.scv.org/new
Sons of Spanish American War Veterans www.ssawv.org
Spanish American War Veterans www.spanamwar.com/geneal.htm
Veterans of Foreign Wars: www.vfw.org
Vietnam Veterans of America <https://vva.org>



Military Genealogy Books and Resources:

- Croom, Emily Ann, *Genealogist's Companion and Sourcebook 2nd Ed.* Military Records. Betterway Books. Cincinnati, OH. 2003.
- DeWhitt, Benjamin. *Records Relating to Personal Participations in World War II: American Military Casualties and Burials.* National Archives. Washington D.C. 2000.
- Dudek, Debra. *World War I Genealogy Research Guide.* Bolingbrook, IL. Independently Published. 2018.
- Knox, Deborah, Johnson. *WWII Military Records: A Family Historians Guide.* MIE Publishers, Spartanburg, S.C. 2003
- Morgan, George G. *How to do Everything Genealogy.* 4th Ed. N. Y., N.Y. McGraw-Hill. 2015
- National Archives. *Military Service Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications.* National Archives. Washington D.C. 1985.
- Neagles, James C. *U.S. Military Records.* Ancestry. Salt Lake City. 1994.
- Neagles, James C. *Locating Your Revolutionary War Ancestor: A Guide to the Military Records.* Logan, Utah. Everton Publishers, 1983
- Penn, Lisha B. *Records of Military Agencies relating to African-Americans from the Post World War I period to the Korean War.* National Archives. Washington D.C. 2000.

National Archives Contact Information

National Archives I

Old Military and Civilian Records (NWCTB-Military) Textual Services Division
700 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20408-0001

National Archives II

Military Unit and Division Records WWI-Present
8601 Adelphi Rd.
College Park, MD 20740

The National Personnel Records Center

Military & Civilian Personnel Service Records WWI-Present
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

National Archives Great Lakes Region

Administrative Records Related to Bases/Camps in the Great Lakes
7358 South Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60629-5898

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