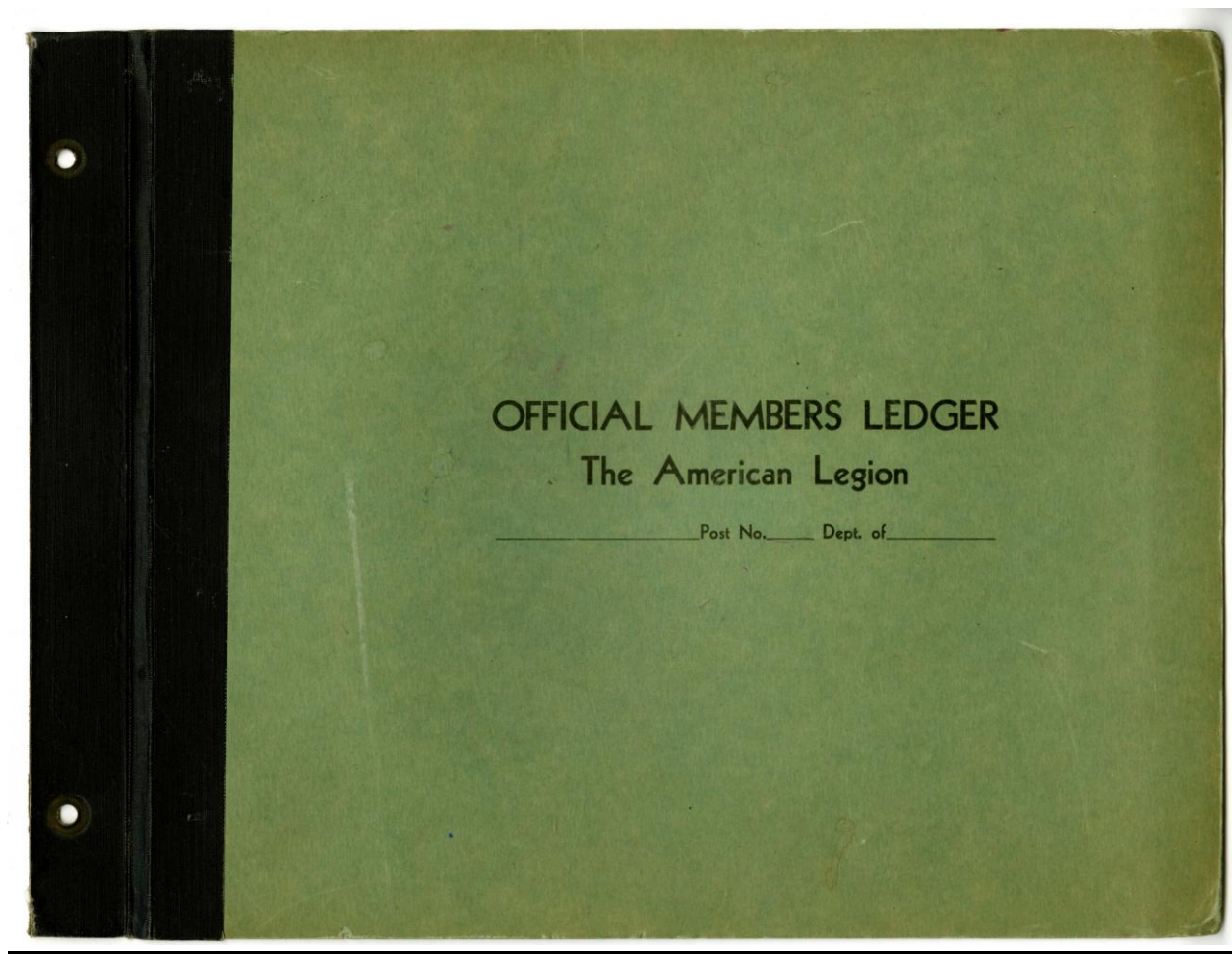


# Military Genealogy: Guide to Resources



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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 Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) records from 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. A fire at the National Archives Destroyed up to 80% of Army/Army Air Corps OMPF records from 1914-1960.*

## **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](http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search/?Tab_ID=1).

Other sources of Revolutionary War records include, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), FamilySearch [www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2068326](http://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2068326), Fold3 [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com), HeritageQuest, Internet Archive [www.archive.org](http://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](http://www.militaryindexes.com) and the U.S. National Archives [www.archives.gov/research/military/american-revolution](http://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 are those resubmitted by pensioners or family after the fire.

### **War of 1812 (1812-1814)**

Records have been digitized by the National Archives with the support of the Federation of Genealogical Societies. This collection is available for free through [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com)

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](http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html)

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) and [www.myheritage.com](http://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](http://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](http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html)

## **Civil War (1861-1865)**

The National Archives has numerous files related to the Civil War. There are separate indexes 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. Additional information on requesting these records is available at the National Archives:

<https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/help/bountylandreadmore.htm>. Other military service records are available by specific record group.

Civil War records for Union soldiers have become available online, but are not yet complete. Indexes to soldiers and sailors are available from the National Parks Service Index to Compiled Service Records of Union Army Veterans (1861-1865) [www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm](http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm) and [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) plus other genealogy websites. The National Archives has been digitizing both the Civil War Union Pension Files and Widow's Pension Applications. If your soldier, sailor or nurse has not been digitized, you can request a copy from the National Archives by submitting NARA form 85. The National Archives recommends consulting state archives for records pertaining to state or local militias or National Guard units that were not federalized.

Soldier and Sailor Military Service Files are available online as well through [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com). You can request copies from the National Archives in Washington DC by submitting 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.



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](http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases.html)

Genealogy web sites such as Ancestry.com, Proquest's Ancestry Library Edition 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.

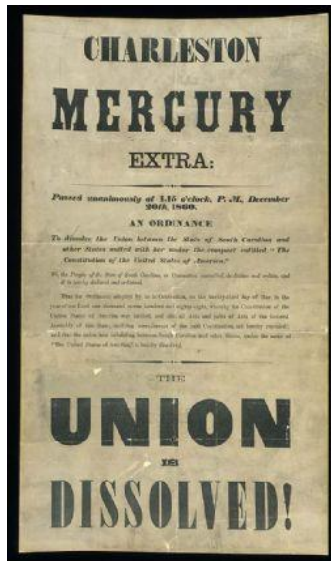
### **The Confederate States of America War of the Rebellion Records**

Fold3 [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com)

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/109.html](http://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](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/genfirst.html#indigent)



Alabama Department of Archives and History  
[www.archives.state.al.us/referenc/military.html](http://www.archives.state.al.us/referenc/military.html)

North Carolina Archives and History Center  
[www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/archives/veterans.htm#info](http://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](http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/research.htm)

Florida State Archives <http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/barm/fsa.html>  
(Also has WWI draft cards)

Virginia State Archives [www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/mil/index.htm](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis) These personnel files include the personal details about your soldier, sailor or nurses' time during the war. Sadly, 80% of Army and Air Force records from 1914-1960 were destroyed in a fire in the 1970s. You may receive a letter saying your requested file is a "fire record". You can use the additional sources below to track down additional information. NPRC does have monthly regimental reports and muster rolls for WWI/WWII units on microfilm, which can help you trace your veteran's time in the service.



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. National Archives I has Record Group 393- Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947 which include units stationed at U.S. 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.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) or [www.fold3.com](http://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 the Illinois National Guard State Historian.

## **Illinois 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. Fold3 has purchased the UK military website <https://uk.forceswarrecords.com> which includes a sizeable collection of U.K. Soldiers and Sailors indexes and original records.

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



### Archives, Libraries, and Historical Societies

Allen County Public Library: [www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/index.html](http://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](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Links_to_Other_WWI_Sites)  
British Library [www.bl.uk/world-war-one](http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one)  
Canadian War Diaries WWI <https://canadiangreatwarproject.com/diaries>  
Cantigny First Division Museum: <http://www.fdmuseum.org>  
Daughters of the American Revolution: [www.dar.org/library/default.cfm](http://www.dar.org/library/default.cfm)  
Gettysburg College Civil War Archives: [www.gettysburg.edu/library/gettdigital](http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/gettdigital)  
Illinois State Archives: [www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases/home.html](http://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](http://www.archives.gov)  
N.Y. State Archives and Military Museum: [www.dmna.state.ny.us/historic/mil-hist.htm](http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/historic/mil-hist.htm)  
Pritzker Military Library: [www.pritzkermilitary.org/explore/library/digital-resources](http://www.pritzkermilitary.org/explore/library/digital-resources)  
Wisconsin Historical Society: [www.wisconsinhistory.org/military](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/military)  
U.S. War College WWII War Diaries collection  
[www.usnwcarchives.org/repositories/2/archival\\_objects/2242](http://www.usnwcarchives.org/repositories/2/archival_objects/2242)

## Military Museums, Military History and Related Web Sites:

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

## Military Service Organizations

American Ex-Prisoners of War <http://www.axpow.org>  
American Legion: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)  
Daughters of the American Revolution: [www.dar.org](http://www.dar.org)  
Daughters of the Union [www.duvcw.org](http://www.duvcw.org)  
Daughters of WWII [www.daughtersofww2.org](http://www.daughtersofww2.org)  
Grand Army of the Republic Records: [www.garrecords.org](http://www.garrecords.org)  
Korean War Veterans Association <https://kwva.us>  
My Merchant Marines: [www.mymerchantmarines.com](http://www.mymerchantmarines.com)  
Society of the Cincinnati [www.societyofthecincinnati.org](http://www.societyofthecincinnati.org)  
Sons of the American Revolution [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org)  
Sons of the Confederacy [www.scv.org/new](http://www.scv.org/new)  
Sons of Spanish American War Veterans [www.ssawv.org](http://www.ssawv.org)  
Spanish American War Veterans [www.spanamwar.com/genealog.htm](http://www.spanamwar.com/genealog.htm)  
Veterans of Foreign Wars: [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)  
Vietnam Veterans of America <https://vva.org>



## **Military Genealogy Books and Resources:**

Croom, Emily Ann, *Genealogist's Companion and Sourcebook 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Bolingbrook, IL. Independently Published. 2024.

Knox, Deborah, Johnson. *WWII Military Records: A Family Historians Guide.* MIE Publishers, Spartanburg, S.C. 2003

Morgan, George G. *How to do Everything Genealogy.* 4<sup>th</sup> 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 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 at Denver**

Administrative Records Related to Bases/Camps in the western U.S.  
17101 Huron St.  
Broomfield, CO 80023

# NOTES