

10 Tips for Using Military Records in Genealogy

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Throughout your ancestors' lives it is likely that they or a family member served in the military. Military records can provide valuable insights into the lives of your ancestors. Many records can also provide vital record information and even data on those who didn't serve but were related to the ancestor.



- Are They the Right Age to Serve?** Often genealogists think an ancestor served in a specific military conflict, when actually they were too young or too old to have served. Use the **Ages of Servicemen in Wars** chart via FamilySearch Wiki.
- Determine Military Service, Rank, and Division:** This is probably the most important search data needed to get started with military records. You may need to get creative ... interview relatives, search for newspaper articles, etc.
- Interview Relatives:** You may gain information as to your military ancestors' service by interviewing relatives. Use email, Zoom calls, or the telephone and try to extract as much information as you can.
- Check Newspaper Articles:** Find various details as to military service using historical newspapers. Look for draft notices, enlistment lists, roll of honor listings as well as articles about your ancestor and military service.
- Request Military Records:** for US records, file a Request Pertaining to Military Records with the National Archives. NARA will only send selected pages they believe are pertinent to the military service. You may need to file a further request for the ENTIRE FILE.
- Check Yearbooks for Military Service Enlistments:** During World Wars I II, if high school students were serving in the military, very often there might be a special section listing their names, military branch, and area of service.
- Volunteer Military Service:** Did your ancestor sign up for a state militia or volunteer with the National Guard? Peacetime service also produced many military records. Remember to also check on the state level for these records.
- Research Military Reunions:** Starting with the US Civil War, groups of veterans would meet on regular basis. Groups like the Grand Army of the Republic would publish meeting records including yearbooks.
- Check Family Photos:** Are you sitting on old family photos depicting servicemen and servicewomen? Scan the images and examine the uniform worn, any service medals and ribbons, etc.
- Understand Available Resources:** Use the FamilySearch Wiki to determine what military records exist and how they can be accessed. Understand the formation of branches of service, i.e. the US Air Force was part of the US Army prior to 1947.

Check out the **Military Records Genealogy Resource List** on the back page!

Military Records for Genealogy Resource List

General Resources

- **MyHeritage Military Records**
<https://www.myheritage.com/research/catalog/category-3000/military>
- **Cyndi's List – Military Records**
<https://www.cyndislist.com/military-worldwide/>

Australian Resources

- **Australia Military Records** (FamilySearch)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Australia_Military_Records
- **Cyndi's List – Australia Military Records**
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/military/>

Canadian Resources

- **Canada Military Records** (FamilySearch)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Canada_Military_Records
- **Cyndi's List – Canada Military Records**
<https://www.cyndislist.com/canada/military/>

UK Resources

- **British Military Records** (FamilySearch Wiki)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/British_Military_Records
- **Cyndi's List – UK Military Records**
<https://www.cyndislist.com/uk/military/>

US Resources

- **Ages of Servicemen in Wars** (FamilySearch Wiki)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ages_of_Servicemen_in_Wars
- **Archive Grid – Military Records**
<https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/?q=military+records&p=1&ft=1>
- **Cyndi's List – US Military Records**
<https://www.cyndislist.com/us/military/>
- **Genealogy Research in Military Records** (National Archives)
<https://www.archives.gov/research/military/genealogy>
- **Military Records Tips for Beginners** (FamilySearch Wiki)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Military_Records_Tips_for_Beginners
- **Nationwide Gravesite Locator**
<https://www.cem.va.gov/gravelocator/>
- **Online Military Indexes & Records**
<https://www.militaryindexes.com/>
- **Request Military Service Records** (National Archives)
<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>
- **Soldiers and Sailors Database** (National Archives)
<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>
- **United States Military Old Soldiers Home Records** (FamilySearch Wiki)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Military_Old_Soldiers_Home_Records