

Roll Call! Researching Your Veteran Ancestors: Civil War, WWI and WWII

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DRAFT RECORDS

Civil War

There were four Civil War Drafts for Union forces that occurred between 1863-1865. The draft records are divided into three different classes.

- Class I: men 20-35 subject to military duty & unmarried men 36-44 subject to military duty
- Class II: married men 36-44
- Class III: volunteers.

These records can be searched on Ancestry.com (\$) www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1666/

WWI

Over 24 million men registered for the U.S. Draft at the time of World War I over the course of three drafts.

Draft	Date	Persons Affected
First	June 5, 1917	Men, aged 21 to 31 years old
Second	June 5, 1918	Men who had reached the age of 21 since the 1917 registration
Third	Sept. 12, 1918	Men, aged 18 to 45

The World War I draft cards can be searched on FamilySearch.org <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530>

WWII

WWII Draft registrations for men born between February 17, 1897 to July 31, 1927 are available online from Ancestry.com and Fold3.com. If you do not find it currently online, you can obtain a copy from:

National Archives and Records Administration
Attn: Archival Programs
P.O. Box 28989
St. Louis, MO 63132-0989

The fourth draft, conducted April 27, 1942, was for men born between the years 1877 and 1897. These men were the last line of defense, and often included many former World War I veterans. These draft cards can be searched and viewed online at FamilySearch.org and Fold3.com

Note: *Even though a name might appear in the draft registrations, it does not confirm that they were drafted into the military service.*

SERVICE RECORDS

Civil War

An index of veterans of the Union and Confederate forces can be search on the National Parks Service Civil War Soldiers System <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>. Some service records are available on Fold3.com for various states.

World War I and World War II

A fire in 1973 at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri destroyed 16 to 18 million personnel records for the U.S. Army between (service years 1912 to 1960) and the U.S. Air Force (service years 1947 to 1964): <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/fire-1973>

Some surviving “burnt files” are available from the NPRC. Accessing records from various repositories including State Adjutant General or State Archives. These records can also be a valuable replacement for missing service records for WWI and WWII. U.S Marine Corps muster rolls are available online from Ancestry.com from 1798-1958.

Over 9 million enlistments for the U.S. Army between the years 1938 and 1946 are available online. These enlistments can be searched and viewed online at FamilySearch.org U.S. Navy muster rolls 1938-1949 are available from Ancestry.com

PENSION RECORDS

Civil War Pensions

Union Pensions: Most of the original pensions granted 1861-1934 to Union veterans are at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. These records are presently being digitized by Fold3.com. Currently some of the early Widow’s pensions for the Army, as well as Navy Pensions are available on Fold3.com

Confederate Pensions: Confederate veterans could apply for a pension from the state they resided in, even if they served from a different state during the war. The list of the various State agencies who have these records can be found at: www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/confederate/pension

CANADA

WWI Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF) service records are available on Library and Archives (LAC) web site at <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/personnel-records.aspx>.

WWII service records for members who died between 1939 and 1947 can be found on the LAC web site at <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/second-world-war/second-world-war-dead-1939-1947/Pages/files->



second-war-dead.aspx. All other WWII service records are restricted and need to be requested per the instructions on the following page: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/transparency/atippr/Pages/Access-information-military-files.aspx>.

PUBLISHED RESOURCES

General

Lt. Col. Richard S. Johnson and Debra Johnson Knox, *How to Locate Anyone who is or has been in the Military – Armed forces locator guide*. (Spartanburg, SC: MIE Publishing, 1999).

James C. Neagles, *U.S Military Records: A Guide to Federal and State Sources* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Ancestry, 1994).

Civil War

David A. Norris, *Tracing Your Civil War Ancestors: The Research Resources You Need for Success!* (Toronto, Ontario: Moorshead Magazines, 2011)

WWI

Christina K. Schaefer, *The Great War: a guide to the service records of all the world's fighting men and volunteers*. (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1998)

WWII

Jennifer Holik, *Stories from the World War II Battlefield – Volume 1: Reconstructing Army, Air Corps, and National Guard Service* (Woodbridge, IL: Generations, 2015)

_____, *Stories from the World War II Battlefield – Volume 2: Navigating service records for the Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Merchant Marines* (Woodbridge, IL: Generations, 2015)

_____, *Stories from the World War II Battlefield – Volume 3: Writing the Stories of War* (Woodbridge, IL: Generations, 2015)

Debra Johnson Knox, *World War II Military Records – A Family Historian's Guide*. (Spartanburg, SC: MIE Publishing, 2003)

WEBSITES

- ABMC: American Battlefield Monuments Commission – www.abmc.gov
- American Ancestors – www.americanancestors.org
- Ancestry - www.ancestry.com
- DANFS: Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships – www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs.html
- FamilySearch – www.familysearch.org
- Fields of Honor – www.fieldsofhonor-database.com
- GenealogyBank.com www.genealogybank.com/
- Find a Grave – www.findagrave.com
- Fold3 – www.fold3.com
- Library and Archives Canada – www.bac-lac.gc.ca
- National Archives www.archives.gov
- Newspapers.com <https://www.newspapers.com/>
- US Army War College - <http://usahec.polarislibrary.com/polaris/Search>
- WWII Casualties - www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/navy-casualties
- WWII Memorial Registry - www.wwiimemorial.com/Registry/Search.aspx