Genealogy Bargain$

10 Tips & Tricks for Military Records and Genealogy

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 which is rich in documents.

☐ **Check Yearbooks for Military Service Enlistments:** During World War I and World War 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/
- Pritzker Military Library and Museum
  http://www.pritzkermilitary.org/
- 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
- War of 1812 Pension Files (Fold3)
  https://www.fold3.com/title/761/war-of-1812-pension-files

REGISTRATION CARD

486

ORDER NUMBER

U. S. CITIZEN

Naturalized	Citizen by Father's Naturalization Before Registrant's Majority	Declarant
11	12	13

U. S., of what nation are you a citizen or subject?

OCCUPATION

EMPLOYER'S NAM

17

HOW to FIND
MILITARY RECORDS

ft

Service Records
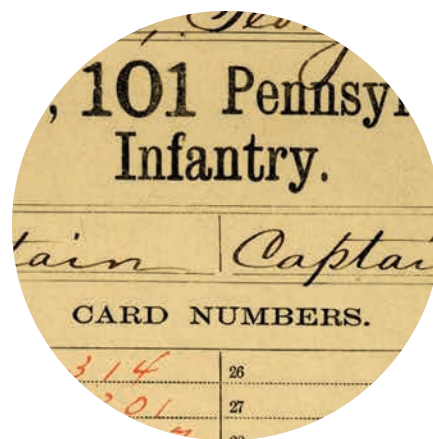
H ave you heard stories about a Revolutionary War or Civil War soldier in your family, but lack documents about him? Military service in the 18th or 19th century can be an important part of your family's story.

Fortunately, the US government realized long ago that it needed a way to keep track of an individual's service—especially when it came time to pay veterans benefits. The resulting compiled military service records, or CMSRs, offer a window of opportunity to genealogists looking for information about men who served in wars prior to 1902.

Keep reading to learn how you might find a CMSR. Note that service during more-recent conflicts—World War I to the present—was documented differently. Records are generally held by the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, and many were destroyed by a fire in 1973.

WHAT'S A CMSR?

A CMSR is an envelope (called a jacket) containing a set of cards that provide an overview of an individual's service in a military company. The jacket is labeled with the soldier's name, rank, military unit and a list of card numbers. The information on each card was taken from some type of original record in which the soldier's name appears, such as an enlistment book, muster roll, hospital roll, descriptive book, prison record, payment voucher or discharge. Some CMSRs, especially those of officers, also may contain personal papers.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, clerks of the War Department Record and Pension Office painstakingly copied information from original records onto the cards to expedite the processing of pension claims. Family historians reap the same benefit today.

Once they finished Union Civil War CMSRs, clerks did the same thing for men who'd served in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, 19th-century Indian wars and Mexican-American War. Service records for Confederate soldiers, the Spanish-American War, and the Philippine Insurrection were created a bit later.

CMSRs primarily cover those who served in volunteer military units, typically raised at the local or state level in times of war. With the exception of the Revolutionary War, few CMSRs exist for men who served in the regular Army (career soldiers). Civil War "volunteers" included men who were drafted as well as those who enlisted voluntarily. If your ancestor re-enlisted or served in two different compa-nies during a war, he'll probably have two separate CMSRs.

Though derivative sources, CMSRs have highly reliable information. Accuracy was vital to the government

officials who transcribed the data in them, so the original rolls rarely contain more information than was copied into the CMSR.

CLUES IN A CMSR

The number and type of cards included in a CMSR varies from war to war and soldier to soldier. Civil War and later folders tend to be more robust than those from earlier wars.

In addition to the soldier's rank and military unit, you might discover some or all of the following in a CMSR:

- date and place he enlisted
- age at enlistment (which was used as age in all subsequent documentation)
- physical description
- term of enlistment
- date and location he mustered into (joined) the unit
- his presence at regular musters
- notations about illness, wounds or desertion
- date he mustered out (left) the company or died

These bits of data can tell you a good deal about your ancestor's wartime experiences. You might find he stayed in a field hospital due to illness, or learn when he was wounded. If a man was captured by the enemy, deserted, or died while in service, his file should have a reference to it. Any personal papers tucked into the jacket will give you even more details. While service records don't generally name a soldier's parents, you may find hints to help in your search for their identities.

FINDING CMSRS

Depending on the war, your soldier's CMSR may be on microfilm and/or digitized online. If it's not online, you'll need to look up the name in a service records index, then find the record on microfilm or order a copy from NARA. Start with these steps:

Revolutionary War (1775–1783)

Service records were compiled for men who served in the Continental Army, various state and local militia units, and the American naval forces. But many records were destroyed when the British burned Washington, DC, in 1814, and others deteriorated or were lost over the years, so not every man who served has a CMSR. The good news

is that all the surviving records have been indexed, microfilmed and digitized.

You can search the complete collection on Fold3 <www.fold3.com/publication/470/revolutionary-war-service-records>. This contains actual images of soldiers' service record jackets and cards, digitized from NARA microfilm. A similar collection <www.fold3.com/publication/789/revolutionary-war-service-records-navy> provides the same access to sailors.

War of 1812 (1812–1815)
During this war, many men enlisted in local or state militias for short stints, and some served in more than one company. The resulting CMSRs are generally thin (sometimes holding only a few cards), but fascinating nonetheless.

Get started with the full index to War of 1812 service records, derived from NARA microfilm number M602, on Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/4281>. The index includes name, rank, company or regiment, and "roll box" where the CMSR is located at the National Archives.

The CMSRs themselves for this war haven't been microfilmed or digitized. Use the information from the index to order a copy of your ancestor's file from NARA.

Indian Wars (1815–1858) and Mexican-American War (1846–1848)
With the frontier expanding rapidly, skirmishes erupted between settlers and native Indian tribes in several areas. Volunteer armies were raised for the Seminole Wars, Black Hawk War, Creek Wars and other conflicts. Fold3 has digitized the index to service records for these military engagements (from NARA M694) <www.fold3.com/publication/898/indian-wars-service-record-index>.

Fold3 (and FamilySearch) has also digitized an index to

Mexican-American War service records <www.fold3.com/publication/871/mexican-war-service-record-index> (from NARA M616). In addition, Fold3, Ancestry.com and FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1987567> have full CMSRs for just a handful of states; you'll need to request records from other states from NARA.

Civil War (1861–1865)
Civil War service files generally contain more information than those from earlier wars. Types of cards you'll commonly find include:
- Company muster-in or muster-out rolls that identify rank, age, date and place of enlistment, term of enlistment, date and place of mustering in/out, date last paid, and balance owed or due
- Company descriptive books that give enlistment information; color of eyes, hair and complexion; birthplace and occupation
- Company muster rolls that tell whether the soldier was present for the period of time specified on the card (generally two months), along with any remarks

Union Civil War CMSRs are indexed by state, and the files for several states have been microfilmed and/or digitized. All Confederate CMSRs have been digitized.

Whether your ancestor hailed from the North or the South, start with Fold3. Browse by the state where your relative lived at enlistment. Enter the name in the search box, using a middle initial if necessary to narrow the results. If the file is digitized, you'll be able to download it. If only the index card in available, order the file from the National Archives.

ORDERING A CMSR
All these pre-WWI service records are now held at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) <www.archives.gov> in Washington, D.C.

NARA has an online order form you can use to request a copy of your ancestor's CMSR from any of the wars listed here. Go to <www.archives.gov/forms> and scroll down to "(Pre-WWI) Military Service Records (NATF Form 86)." Select whether you want to order online or mail in the form. You can receive the file electronically as a PDF emailed to you, or in print via postal mail (all for a fee). Orders are estimated to take two or three months to fulfill, though wait times at many archives have been longer due to back-orders associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you don't want to wait that long, you have a complex request, or you don't know exactly which file you need, consider hiring a professional genealogist in the Washington, DC, area. You can find one through the Association of Professional Genealogists <www.apgen.org> or the Board for Certification of Genealogists <www.bcgcertification.org>.

Fast Facts

Coverage: Pre-World War I military conflicts, with notes about service dating to 1775

Jurisdiction where kept: US War Department, maintained by the National Archives

Key details: Soldier's name, age, rank, military unit, dates and places of enlistment and musters, date and place of discharge, sometimes place of birth, physical description

Alternates and substitutes: Draft records, pension records, lineage society applications, bounty land grants, military payrolls and ledgers, soldiers' home records, 1890 special census of Civil War veterans and widows

At a Glance: Civil War Service Record

Citation: Compiled service record, Newel King, Pvt., Co. B, 91st Ohio Infantry; Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations, Civil War; Record Group 94: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1782–1917, National Archives, Washington, DC.

1 The Company Descriptive Book section of Newel King's CMSR shows he was 23 when he enlisted 6 August 1862. This gives an approximate birth year of 1839. The card also states his place of birth: Gallia County, Ohio. These clues could lead to his parents' names.

2 The jacket contains several company muster roll cards. This one, for September and October 1864, reports Newel was absent from the company because he'd been hospitalized for illness.

3 The company muster-out roll shows Newel was discharged 24 June 1865 in Cumberland, Md. Note that his age was still 23 years; the military used the same age throughout a man's term of service as a means of identification.

> **Read an extended version of this guide—including information on the Spanish-American War and a bonus sample CMSR from the Revolutionary War— at <www.familytreemagazine.com/records/military/military-service-records-workbook>.**

Then again, perhaps you want to visit NARA to retrieve your ancestor's file in person. Plan ahead for your trip using the resources at <www.archives.gov/research>. You must schedule an appointment to access research rooms.

USING CMSRS AND INDEXES

Indexes to service records often show more than one man of the same name from the same state. Particularly if the name is common, it can be a challenge to determine which one is your ancestor. First identify the veteran in pension records, which also name military unit, wives or other family members. Those details might help you identify the right serviceman.

Compare details in a service record index with your other genealogical information. Does his age in the CMSR correspond with his age in censuses? What about his location? Men typically joined units that formed close to home, often with neighbors. To find the names of units raised in a county, check local histories and consolidated state lists. A web search on the company name or number also can help you find out where its members lived.

Once you've obtained the right CMSR, squeeze every detail out of it. Begin by sorting the cards in rough chronological order: first the muster-in roll and descriptive book cards, then the muster cards in order, followed by the muster-out card. Transcribe the information into a word document or spreadsheet to get an overview of your soldier's service.

Then look for clues to other documents. A place of birth and age at time of enlistment can lead you to a birth year, which you can use to find related census, church, probate and land records. Those might give you the names of possible parents and other relatives.

To research your ancestor's wartime experiences more deeply, find published histories of the regiment or company he served in. WorldCat <www.worldcat.org> can help you find books in libraries.

Learning about your ancestor's military service is exciting and enlightening. With the availability of online indexes and databases, it's easier than ever to find this piece of your family history puzzle. ●

Shelley K. Bishop

Draft Records

U S military draft records are potentially untapped sources of information on male ancestors and sometimes their female family members. Even men who didn't serve in the military may have had to register under one of the conscription acts for the Civil War, World War I, or World War II.

Online resources make it easy for today's savvy researcher to find and use draft records as a springboard for family history discoveries. We'll give you an overview of registration records created between 1862 and 1945, identify where to find them, and explain how to expand on the information they provide.

CLUES IN DRAFT RECORDS

Local districts or boards conducted draft registrations to identify men eligible for service in times of war—specifically, the Civil War and World Wars. Many of the registration lists and cards these boards created survive, providing a deep well of data on several generations of American men. Those born as early as 1816 and as late as 1924 could've been eligible to be drafted for one or more of these three wars.

Questions the draft boards asked registrants varied from war to war, and even from one registration to the next. Typically, you'll find information about the registrant's name, residence, age, date and place of birth, race, US citizenship and occupation.

Depending on the registration, you also may discover details about your ancestor's previous or current military service, his marital status, the name and address of a relative or contact person, a physical description, and his signature.

These findings can move your research forward in many ways. Birth information can tell you about births that occurred long before a state began keeping vital records. A woman named as a man's nearest relative might narrow your search for a marriage record. An immigrant's claim to be a US citizen could lead to naturalization papers.

Draft information is also useful in combination with other evidence. Residence and occupation details can distinguish your relative from others with the same name. If you're "missing" a person in census records, a draft registration can indicate where he lived. Descriptions of height, build, hair and eye color can help you visualize your ancestor.

CIVIL WAR DRAFT RECORDS

Prior to the Civil War, the federal and state governments relied on offering free public land to attract volunteer soldiers in wartime. These bounty land incentives were discontinued by 1855.

The Civil War brought an unprecedented need for troops on both the Union and Confederate sides. Governors from Maine to Mississippi issued calls for volunteers beginning in 1861. As the war escalated, the need for men reached crucial heights.

Without the promise of free land to spur recruits (an incentive in previous wars), how could this demand be met?

Although the idea of a national draft faced considerable opposition in the North, it seemed the only viable solution. The Enrollment Act of 1863 required all men age 20 to 45 to register within their congressional district, which often covered several counties.

The first Union registration took place 1 July 1863. Three smaller enrollments followed. For eligibility purposes, men were divided into classes. Those age 20 to 35 years, plus unmarried men age 36 to 45, were designated Class I. Nearly everyone else was Class II.

In addition to name and residence, Northern draft registers typically show:

- age on the registration date
- race
- occupation or trade
- whether married
- state or country of birth

The registrations were assembled into consolidated lists, many of which survive. You can find digital images of existing consolidated lists on subscription site Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com> (which you can use free at libraries offering Ancestry Library Edition). For more-focused results, search within the site's US Military Records category <www.ancestry.com/search/categories/39>. As a starting point, enter your ancestor's name and where you think he lived in 1863.

The original consolidated lists are in Record Group 110 (Records of the Provost Marshal General) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) <www.archives.gov> in Washington, DC. The regis-

tration books from which they were compiled, which sometimes contain additional information, are held at NARA's regional branches.

If your ancestor registered, does that mean he served in the war? Not necessarily. Those in Class II were rarely made to serve. Each community and state was responsible for filling a quota of men. If they could raise that number with volunteers, no one needed to be drafted, so volunteers were heavily encouraged. Some states, like Massachusetts and Ohio, never had to call up draftees.

Even if they were drafted, men could be exempted from service if they were:
- physically or mentally impaired
- only sons of dependent widows or infirm parents
- widowers or orphans supporting young children
- non-citizens who hadn't declared intent to naturalize
- convicted of a felony
- able to furnish a substitute or pay a $300 fee

The South also instituted a draft. The Confederate Conscription Act of 1862 required all white males age 18 to 35 years to register. This was extended to ages 17 to 50 by early 1864. Ministers, teachers, civil officials, tradesmen, railroad workers and plantation owners were typically exempt. Initially, a man could hire a substitute and pay up to $1,000 to avoid service, but that allowance was scrapped in late 1863 due to bitter opposition. Men already enlisted for one-year terms automatically saw their service extended to three years.

There are no consolidated lists of Confederate registrations. Each Southern state conducted its own drafts. Many times, troops raised by conscript were merged with existing units. Relatively few Confederate conscription registers survive today, and those that do can be difficult to find.

Fast Facts

Coverage: Civil War, World War I, World War II

Jurisdiction where kept: The US federal government; records held by the National Archives and Records Administration and its branches

Key details: Name, address, age, date and/or place of birth, race, citizenship status, marital status, employment information, name of nearest relative, physical characteristics

Alternates and substitutes: Military enlistment rosters, service records, state adjutant general's records, military unit histories, military pension records, newspapers, and county histories

The best place to begin your search for any existing Southern conscription records is in the state adjutant general's records. Some states compiled and published adjutant general records after the war. Georgia, for instance, published six volumes of *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, which are available free on Google Books <books.google.com>.

If your ancestors lived in Tennessee, search the Civil War Sourcebook <www.tnsos.net/TSLA/cwsourcebook>, a digital collection of official records, diaries, letters and newspaper articles. The South Carolina Archives offers information about its Confederate Military Records as well <scdah.sc.gov/research-and-genealogy/resources/military-records>.

Learn more about Civil War records for individual states, North or South, on FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org>.

WORLD WAR I DRAFT RECORDS

The need for a national draft emerged again in 1917 when the United States entered the Great War. In response, Congress created the Selective Service System, consisting of local and state draft boards under the Office of the Provost Marshal.

Three registrations took place in 1917 and 1918. In total, about 24 million men between the ages of 18 and 45, including noncitizens, were required to register. If your relative was born between September 1873 and September 1900, he was probably among them.

A draft board official asked questions of each man and recorded the answers on individual, two-sided cards. The questions varied by registration, but in general noted:
- name and age
- address
- date and place of birth
- citizenship status
- occupation and employer
- race and physical description

Some registrations also asked marital status, the name and address of the man's nearest relative, his father's birthplace, or information about dependants. Unless he was illiterate, the registrant signed his card to verify accuracy.

Draft boards used the cards to determine which men to call up for service. They kept docket books listing the names and actions taken. Only a small percentage of those who registered were actually drafted.

Because they cover nearly 98 percent of the male population between 18 and 45 years old, WWI draft cards represent a tremendous resource for genealogists. Even if your ancestor didn't have to register, he might've had a brother who did. The cards can reveal unknown birth dates and places, the names of wives and/or parents, and clues to marriages and naturalization.

At a Glance: WWI Draft Record

Citation: "U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," digital image, Ancestry.com (http://www.ancestry.com : accessed 26 October 2022), card for Gilman Stanton Sanborn, serial no. 311, Cody, Park County, Wyoming.

1 At 45 years old, Gilman Stanton Sanborn was at the upper end of the draft range. After amendments, the Selective Service Act required men age 18 to 45 to register.

2 Draft cards can substitute for early birth records. Gilman was born in 1872. Like many states, Wyoming didn't begin keeping birth records until the early 1900s.

3 WWI draft cards indicate whether immigrants were naturalized or if not, whether they had declared intention for citizenship.

4 Who was Gertrude D. Sanborn, Gilman's nearest relative? Draft records often provide evidence of wives, parents or siblings.

5 Each card has two sides. The reverse notes the man's physical description, with a stamp showing where he registered.

TRAR'S REPORT 15-PARK-C

TION OF REGISTRANT

	BUILD		COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR
der	Medium	Stout		
	25 ✓	26	27 Hazel	28 Dk Brown

and, eye, or is he obviously physically disqualified?

e true; that the person registered has read or has
s; that I have witnessed his signature or mark,
ch I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

J.C. Goodrich
(Signature of Registrar)

-18

the County of
of Wyoming.
Cody, Wyoming
L BOARD)

jurisdiction of the area in which
all be placed in this box.)   C3—6171   (OVER)

Digital images of WWI draft registration cards are online at Ancestry.com, Findmypast <www.findmypast. com> and the free FamilySearch. When searching these sites, start by entering your ancestor's name and likely residence at the time of registration. If you get too many results, filter them by adding a probable birth year and/or state. If you get too few, try variant name spellings. (You can use the asterisk wildcard to substitute for zero or more letters.) Each record consists of two images, the front and back of the card—be sure to view both.

The original registration cards are in Record Group 163 at the National Archives branch in Atlanta. Local docket books, classification lists, and miscellaneous papers relating to draft records may be found in state archives or National Archives regional locations.

WORLD WAR II DRAFT RECORDS

When the Great War ended, so did military registration. There was no ongoing US draft in the 1920s and 1930s. Then escalating world conflict led to the first-ever peacetime registration in October 1940.

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, thousands of men voluntarily enlisted in the service. But with war raging on multiple fronts, the need for soldiers, airmen, and sailors was far greater. Congress passed a new Selective Service Act requiring all males between ages 18 and 45 to register.

WWII registrations of young men were long withheld for privacy reasons, but are now available online. Ancestry. com has a collection of full-color digital images for every US state except for Maine (whose records were destroyed before digitization could begin).

The fourth registration, conducted 27 April 1942, required men born between 28 April 1877 and 16 February, 1897 to register. These men were 45 to 64 years old at the time. Nicknamed the "Old Man's Draft," this registration included many who'd already served—or at least registered—for World War I. Its intent was to gather information about older men's skills and occupations that could be utilized in manufacturing, transportation and other aspects of the war effort.

As during the First World War, registrants in the WWII draft answered several questions on two-sided cards:
- name and age
- date and place of birth
- residence address
- telephone number
- place of employment or business
- employer's name and address
- name and address of a contact person
- race and physical characteristics

The "Old Man's" registration cards for most states have

also been microfilmed and digitized. You'll find collections on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and Fold3 <www.fold3.com>. On any of these sites, start with a general name and place search, being aware of possible spelling variations. Narrow your search with additional fields, such as birthplace and year, if necessary.

Keep in mind that you should find two images for a single registrant. The cards for some states were microfilmed in such a way that the front of one man's card appears with the reverse of the previous man's card, so take particular care to get the right match when working with the records of those states.

These collections aren't necessarily complete, however, as registration cards for some states were destroyed before being microfilmed. No Fourth Registration records survive for Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina or Tennessee. For New York, only those from the boroughs of New York City survive. Other states or parts of a state may be missing from a particular database. If you don't find the results you expect, read the notes that accompany the database to learn about its coverage.

The original cards for all six WWII draft registrations are at NARA's National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. They're divided into two groups: one for the Old Man's Draft, and one for the other five drafts of younger men.

USING DRAFT RECORDS

Once you've found a draft record, you'll want to get all the information you can from it. What does it tell you about your ancestor? Is this consistent with what you already know about him? There might've been many men with similar names in any given state. Analyzing the information is crucial to making sure you've found the right one.

Compare facts such as birth date and place with information from census records and death records. The name of a specific town or township of birth is an important detail, giving you a place to dig for other family records. If the draft registration database reveals other men with the same surname born in the same place, you'll want to investigate a possible kinship between them. Could they be brothers?

Consider his occupation as well. Draft records generally provide more details about employment than census records. You may find the name and address of the company or land-
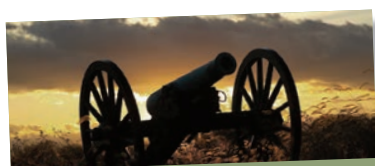
At a Glance: US Drafts for WWI and WWII

Conflict name & years of US involvement	Dates registrations held	Birthdate range of eligible men
World War I (1917–1918)	• 5 June 1917 (ages 21–31) • 5 June 1918 (age 21) • 12 September 1918 (ages 18–45)	13 September 1873 to 12 September 1900
World War II (1941–1945)	• 16 October 1940 (ages 21–35) • 1 July 1941 (age 21) • 16 February 1942 (ages 20–45) • 27 April 1942 (ages 45–65) • 30 June 1942 (ages 18–20) • 10–31 December 1942 (age 18)	28 April 1877 to 31 December 1924

owner your ancestor worked for. Exploring this further can provide a lot of interesting material for your family history.

Many draft records asked questions about birthplace and US citizenship. If your ancestor wasn't born in America, his draft registration might indicate if he'd started or completed the naturalization process. Based on this, you can search for a passenger list, declaration of intention, and/or final papers. Non-citizens who agreed to fight for the United States often received expedited naturalization after the war.

Both WWI and WWII draft records list the name and address of the nearest relative or "person who will always know your address." Who did your ancestor put down for this? Married men typically named their wives. Unmarried or widowed men might've named a parent, sibling, friend or employer. If you don't recognize the person your ancestor named, try to determine who he or she was. You could discover a relationship you didn't know about.

It's particularly interesting to compare the cards of those who registered as young men for World War I and again in the Old Man's Draft for World War II. These records give you snapshots of your ancestor at two points in time, about 25 years apart. Note the differences in address, employment, nearest relative or contact person and physical traits.

Finding a draft record naturally leads to the question of whether or not an individual actually served in the war he registered for. To determine this, you'll want to learn more about the records created for that particular war.

Enlistment records, service records, discharge papers, state adjutant generals' reports, and published unit histories are among the places you might look. Many of these resources are now available online. For an overview, see the United States Military Records wiki on FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Military_Records>.

You might also find accounts of men who served in a county history book or local newspapers. During the Civil War, newspapers often published notices of enlistments and events. They sometimes published lists of those attending GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) events in later years, or noted an old soldier's service unit in his obituary. Also search for your potential Civil War ancestor in the 1890 veterans' census, soldiers' home records and pension files. Because they usually contain a good deal of documentation, pension records are particularly worth seeking out.

Cemetery records are another way to confirm service, as many veterans' gravestones bear military inscriptions or markers. Gravestone photographs and memorials on Find A Grave <www.findagrave.com> and BillionGraves <www.billiongraves.com> often indicate military service. Some towns and counties have constructed veterans' memorials or published lists of those who served in various conflicts.

Military draft registrations served a specific government purpose in times of war. Knowing how and why draft records were created can help you use the information to better understand your ancestors. Draft registrations can provide evidence of birth dates and places, marriages, names of parents or other relatives, addresses, employment, physical appearance, and more. Used in conjunction with other evidence, these details allow you to develop a fuller picture of your ancestor's life, and pave the way to future discoveries. ●

Shelley K. Bishop

Fold3

FOLD3 AIMS TO be the premiere online source for researching US military records. Launched in 2007 as Footnote.com, the site originally sought to publish a range of digitized original documents from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) **<www.archives.gov>** and other repositories. Ancestry.com **<ancestry.com>** acquired Footnote in 2010 and narrowed the site's focus to military records. Ancestry.com later renamed the site Fold3, a reference to the flag-folding ceremony in which the third fold is said to memorialize veterans.

Key resources here include Revolutionary War pension files (from NARA microfilm M804, which has the complete pension files); a growing collection of War of 1812 pension records (free to access without a subscription and digitized as part of the Preserve the Pensions Project); Civil War service records; some Civil War "Widows' Pensions;" FBI Case Files; WWII "Old Man's Draft" registration cards; and photos, Navy cruise books and casualty lists from more recent wars.

Nonmilitary records from the Footnote days include city directories, naturalizations, Native American enrollment cards and Nebraska homestead records. You also can search the indexes to pensions on FamilySearch, but you need to follow the links to Fold3 to view record images.

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

Level	Benefits	Cost
Basic	■ access free records and member images ■ upload images ■ create Memorial Pages ■ spotlight record images ■ annotate member images	free
All-access	all of the above, plus access and share premium record images	$79.95/year or $7.95/month (look for discounts for Ancestry.com members)

Most of Fold3's key military records, such as Revolutionary War pension and service files, indexes to service and pension files from the War of 1812 and the Civil War, and draft registration cards the World Wars, are also available on Ancestry.com. Many record indexes are searchable at FamilySearch **<www.familysearch.org>**, which sends you to Fold3 to view the record.

How to Search

These search techniques will help you find your ancestors' records among Fold3's bounty:

■ **SEARCH FOR A NAME.** Use the search boxes at the top of the home page to find a name in all the site's records. The Search tab lets you add other criteria. Those include a keyword that might appear in the record you want, the place, a year range, and how recently the record was added to Fold3 (great if you're repeating a search and want to see only new results).

You also can decide whether to get results in records indexed by optical character recognition (OCR) software, such as newspapers and city directories. In these records, a first and last name you type may not appear close together. To improve your results in OCR-indexed records, search on a name as a phrase in the keyword box, such as *"John Q. Smith"* and *"Smith John Q."*

For example, a search on the name of my relative Frank Shaubut produces a few matches. One, an index to Civil War

the BASICS

URL: <www.fold3.com>

Contact: 1-800-613-0181, **<www.fold3.com/help>**

Major sister sites: Ancestry.com **<ancestry.com>**, Ancestry ProGenealogists **<www.progenealogists.com>**, Ancestry Academy **<ancestryacademy.com/browse>**, Ancestry Institution **<ancestry.com/cs/us/institution>**, RootsWeb **<home.rootsweb.com>**, Newspapers.com **<www.newspapers.com>**, Find A Grave **<www.findagrave.com>**, Archives.com **<www.archives.com>**

Major collections: US military records, some US census records and British military records, user-contributed Memorial Pages

Social media: <www.facebook.com/foldthree>, <twitter.com/fold3>

service records, says he was a private in Company E of the 9th Infantry of the Minnesota Volunteers. Two matches in city directories show he worked as an accountant in New Orleans in 1867 and 1868. The other match is a memorial page where Fold3 members can add photos, stories, facts and links to more information about him.

■ **FILTER YOUR RESULTS.** If your search doesn't produce the records you want, try a broad search with just a name, then use Fold3's sophisticated filters to narrow your results. The right side of your search results page will show every record matching your search. To the left, you'll see filtering options. There, checkboxes let you limit your results to specific military conflicts, to nonmilitary records, or to contributions from Fold3 members (such as memorial pages and photo uploads).

Click the Add a Date or Add a Place buttons to add more filter options. The former gives you a timeline and calendar, while the latter allows you to drill down from country to state to city.

■ **FOCUS ON KEY COLLECTIONS.** On the home page, click on a war to view lists of popular record collections and new or updated collections. For example, click on US Revolutionary War and you'll see a summary page about the conflict, including a few featured publications and a search bar to search all records from that conflict. The most popular collections in each group are usually the largest and most useful ones.

■ **BROWSE COLLECTIONS.** If you want to see what collections Fold3 has for a given conflict—or you know when and where your ancestor's record was created—browse to the record set you want, then navigate through it page by page. Click on the Browse tab and select a category on the left (such as Civil War), then select a publication.

You can do a search at any point when drilling down through the hierarchical record arrangement by using the search box at the top of the page. For example, you could search the entire Civil War category or work your way down the levels to the Civil War Pensions Index, a state, an arm of service (such as cavalry or infantry), and, finally, company. So if a search for a soldier doesn't turn up a match in the pensions index, but you know the unit in which he served, you could browse the records for that unit.

Subcategories depend on how the collection is organized—you might select a volume number, year range, place or alphabetical range.

When you've homed in on record images, click one to open it in the Fold3 viewer. Click the filmstrip icon at the bottom to page through the records. Note that you can download only one page at a time, which can take a while for long service records and pension files.

■ **GET COPIES OF RECORDS.** If you find a reference to a record that's not online, order a copy. For example, Fold3 has digitized index cards to War of 1812 and Civil War pensions, but doesn't have all the pension applications online. These usually provide more family information than service files.

In person at NARA, you can make copies from paper records. You can also request copies by mail or online. You can receive your order as a paper reproduction or as PDF files on a CD or DVD or by email.

Order fulfillment can take up to a year, so it's often faster—and cheaper—to hire a professional researcher. See NARA's list of researchers available for hire at **<www.archives.gov/ research/hire-help>**. Look for one in the Washington, D.C., area who specializes in genealogy and family history records or military records.

Insider Advice

Be a Fold3 search master with these tips:

■ **SEARCH WITH A WILDCARD.** If you're unsure how your relative's name is spelled in a record, you can search with wildcards in the names boxes, as well as in the keyword and place search boxes (available on the advanced search form). Use an asterisk * to stand in for any number of letters. For example, a search on the last name *Olmst*d* finds Olmsted and Olmstead.

■ **GET A FREE TRIAL.** Click the 7-Day Free Trial link on the home page to try Fold3 for free. You'll have to enter your contact information and credit card. If you don't want to purchase a subscription, you must cancel before the end of the trial to avoid charges. You can do so using the Account Details link under your user name. Additionally, FamilySearch Centers and participating libraries **<www.familysearch. org/locations>** have complimentary access to Fold3.

■ **ACCESS FREE RECORDS.** Some collections at Fold3 are totally free to access. From the bottom of the page, click List All Records, then look for collections that have a small green Free icon in their title. Note: *Searching* records is free, but you'll need to subscribe to view most record details. Run a few searches for your ancestor's name before subscribing to see if the site has records you're interested in.

■ **ANNOTATE RECORDS.** When you find a record of interest, use the plus button in the image viewer toolbar at the top to add notes about people, places and dates the record mentions. For example, if a record refers to a woman by her married surname, you could add her maiden name. These annotations become searchable, and others interested in that record can contact you through the site. Note that the plus button on the right enlarges the image.

■ **DON'T GIVE UP ON BAD LINKS.** Occasionally, a name in an index is linked to the wrong record, but if you browse around, you might find the right record. Searching for the name *Reuben Shaubhut*, I got a match in US Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards. But it links to the card for Joseph Shaubarker. I clicked on View Larger and then on the left arrow to navigate to the previous image and, voilà! It's the card for Reuben Shaubhut.

■ **CREATE A MEMORIAL PAGE.** You can honor veterans and other ancestors by creating Memorial Pages with photos,

Viewing Search Results

1 Click to add or change your search terms.

2 Filter the search results by conflict, title, publication name and more

3 Type dates to filter results by a range of years.

4 You can drill down to more-specific places, such as US states.

5 Click on a record to view a larger version.

6 Sort records by different factors, such as relevance, year, or date updated.

7 Filter out records that were added in a specific time period, such as in the past month since you last searched.

8 Toggle to Browse mode, which lets you look for records within specific collections and drill down to specific military units, dates, etc.

stories and links to Fold3 records. To start with one of the automatically generated pages created from WWII Army Enlistment records, the Social Security Death Index and other data sets, search for a name. You also can use the Start a New Page link to create a page. You also can click Memorials > Create a Memorial.

You can create pages about any person, place or historical event. Access your pages by clicking Memorials > Your Memorials.

■ **ATTACH RECORDS TO YOUR TREE.** Have an Ancestry Member Tree? Click the Save to Ancestry button in Fold3's image viewer to add the record to a profile in your tree. ■

» Rick Crume

These

Honored

Dead

**Learn about your ancestors' Civil War service
with these 21 records and resources.**

by MICHAEL L. STRAUSS AND SUNNY JANE MORTON

Those who served

in the Civil War faced untold horrors and challenges. Roughly 750,000 troops never returned home. Battlefield doctors chopped off limbs to save lives. Some troops endured extreme neglect in prisoner-of-war camps. For years afterward, survivors suffered permanent disfigurement, lingering illness and psychological damage.

If your ancestor was somewhere in the smoke of the war (which was also called the War Between the States or the War of the Rebellion), you likely want to know more. Where was he? On which battlefields, carrying out what responsibilities? Was he killed, injured or captured? Was he ever promoted (or demoted)? If he survived, what happened to him? Did he collect a pension? Did he continue to suffer physically? What were the lasting effects on his family?

Answers to many of these questions unfold in a variety of historical records. Here, we honor those who served with this 21-resource salute, ranging from common genealogical records to less-familiar military documents.

DETERMINING WHETHER THEY SERVED

Neither the Union nor the Confederacy supported large standing armies when the conflict began. The North—also called the Federals—held command of the nation's small regular army and navy, while the South claimed the arsenals of military installations in Confederate territory. Both sides recruited additional volunteers, instituted drafts, and called upon loyal state militias.

Hodgepodge recruitment resulted in piecemeal record-keeping by each side, as well as within each military branch or militia. The result is that no *single* collection of historical records can confirm whether your ancestor fought in the Civil War.

However, his circumstances may be telling. If he was born between about 1828 and 1848 and was a US citizen (rendering him eligible for the draft), he likely served. Or if he could afford it, he hired a substitute. (Yes, paid substitutes were legal on both sides—at least for part of the war.)

But these aren't the only men who served. Resident aliens were not subject to the draft, but not all of them knew that or chose to stay out

of the conflict. Thousands of immigrants who hadn't yet naturalized volunteered or served as paid substitutes, especially on the Union side.

Free men of African heritage could only serve in the US Navy at the war's outset; eligibility broadened after the US Militia Act of 1862. In 1863, after the Emancipation Proclamation declared freedom for enslaved people in the Confederate South, the US Army established the United States Colored Troops, which eventually numbered more than 178,000 men. Regional black militia units also served the Union. On the Confederate side, Black military recruitment was limited almost entirely to non-combatant roles.

Before you rule out any ancestor's service—or rush off to order military records—look closely at the following resources.

Family stories and artifacts

Maybe you grew up hearing proud tales of the ancestor in Confederate gray or Union blue. Perhaps a cherished military portrait photograph graced a family album or fireplace mantel. If you were lucky, maybe your family had Great-grandpa's Civil War letters, a belt buckle from his uniform, or other artifacts. Even if you've seen no evidence, ask around—maybe another relative has.

Federal census records

Study your family's entries in the 1860 and 1870 US censuses. Did an adult male disappear from your family? Did children's births stop when a father would have been away fighting?

Next, check the 1890 schedule of Union veterans and widows. It survives for about half the country and includes some Confederate names. The 1910, 1930 and 1940 censuses also asked about past military service. (In 1940, this was only in the supplemental questions that were asked of a small minority of participants.) You can find US censuses, including the 1890 veterans schedule, on most major genealogy websites.

State and territorial censuses

States also took their own censuses, and sometimes asked about military service. The New York State census of 1865, for example, enumerated men who had or were currently serving in the "present war." Later Minnesota censuses of 1885, 1895 and 1905 asked about participation. Alabama took censuses of surviving Confederate veterans intermittently beginning in 1907.

Civil War soldier, serving in
the Union

Obituaries and death notices

Newspapers may have reported a serviceman's death in papers local to the deceased or his distant loved ones. For decades following the war, obituaries of veterans proudly proclaimed their service to the Union or Confederacy. Read a guide to obituaries at <www.familytreemagazine.com/records/newspapers/genealogy-guide-obituaries>.

Tombstone inscriptions and databases

Gravestone inscriptions, icons and even the shape of the stones can all hint at military service. Burial in a military cemetery or with military honors—which you may discover in a burial database—is also a good clue.

Soldiers and Sailors database

Millions of Confederate and Union servicemen appear in the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System database at <www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>. To date, entries of Army soldiers are most complete. The sailors' listings include about 18,000 African Americans on the Union side. While not comprehensive, this is a great place to start searching for Civil War ancestors.

Draft registrations

Civil War-era draft registrations exist in some places, but they won't indicate whether a man actually served. You can find some Union draft records online at Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1666>, but you'll need to research surviving Confederate records (as well as additional Union documentation) at the National Archives <www.archives.gov>.

DOCUMENTING MILITARY SERVICE

Once you've established a relative served, you can access several kinds of records to learn about his service. You can even determine what action his regiment would have seen.

But before explaining where to find records, we should stress a distinction among Civil War servicemen. As mentioned earlier, a small number of "regulars" were career military at the time of the Civil War—their service wouldn't have begun or ended due to the war.

Civil War Timeline

September 17: The Battle of Antietam, the first major battle fought on Union soil, takes place; with 22,000 casualties, the day is the single bloodiest in American military history

April 25: The Union captures New Orleans, a critical port city

November 6: Abraham Lincoln is elected president

December 20: South Carolina becomes the first state to secede from the Union

April 12: Confederate forces fire on Fort Sumter (a Union base) in Charleston, S.C., beginning the war

1860

1861

1862

February 8: The Confederate States of America form from states that have seceded: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas

April 26: The Confederate government institutes mandatory conscription for white men aged 18 to 35 (later extended to age 45, then 50); substitutes were allowed. Later in the year, overseers on large plantations are exempted

April 17: Virginia secedes from the Union and joins the Confederacy; Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina follow in subsequent weeks
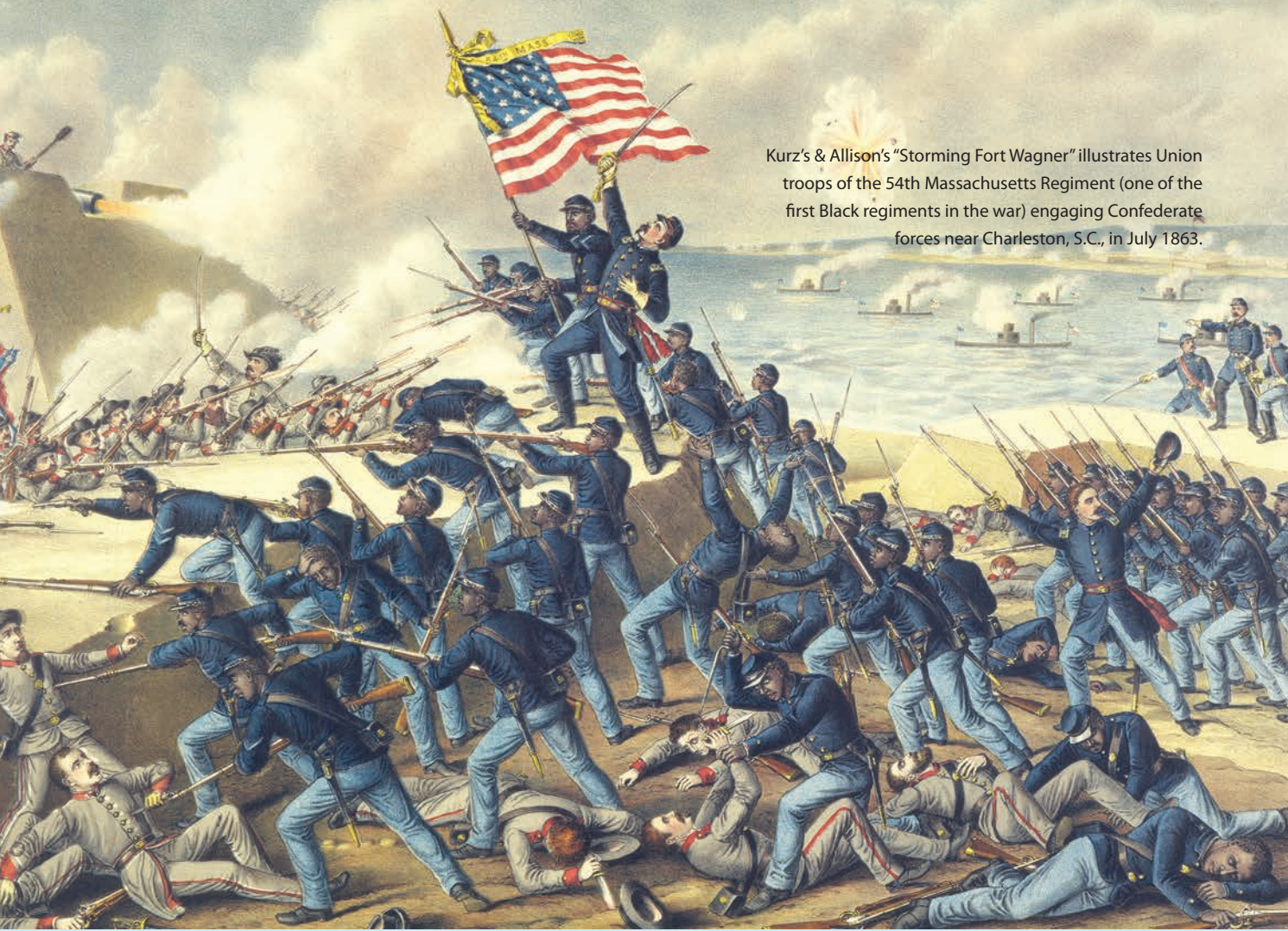
Kurz's & Allison's "Storming Fort Wagner" illustrates Union troops of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment (one of the first Black regiments in the war) engaging Confederate forces near Charleston, S.C., in July 1863.

January 31: Congress approves the 13th Amendment that abolishes slavery; the needed majority of states ratify it on December 6

March 3: The US Congress enacts a military draft for men aged 20 to 45; draftees can avoid service by paying a fee or providing a substitute

April 9: Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Va., ending the war

November 19: Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address

1863

1864

1865

January 1: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation frees the enslaved in Confederate territories; Black soldiers are allowed to enlist in the Union Army

July 3: The pivotal Battle of Gettysburg ends in a Union victory; the three-day engagement results in some 50,000 casualties

September 2: Union General William T. Sherman captures Atlanta

November 8: Lincoln wins re-election

December 21: Sherman's month-long "March to Sea" from Atlanta ends with the Union capture of Savannah, Ga.

April 15: Lincoln is assassinated by John Wilkes Booth; Southern Democrat Andrew Johnson assumes the presidency and oversees the start of Reconstruction

But the vast majority of Civil War servicemen joined just for the duration of the war and were considered "volunteers"—whether they actually enlisted of their own accord or were drafted. It's important to note the difference, because records of volunteers and regulars were kept differently.

CMSRs

Individual Civil War service details are buried in a bewildering variety of enlistments, muster rolls, furloughs, hospital rolls, prisoner-of-war records, medical records and other official documents. Fortunately, for volunteer (i.e., non-career military) forces, these were eventually indexed and organized into individual compiled military service records (CMSR). This effort was so thorough that, in most cases, you can just look for your ancestor's CMSR—you don't need to track down all those original documents.

While not known as strong sources of genealogical information, CMSRs are the go-to resource for revealing your ancestors' wartime experience. They can tell you where your ancestor was, what he was doing, and when he was absent from his command. You may learn about his assignments to specific units, promotions and demotions, injuries, and whether he was a prisoner of war. You may even find a statement of substitute, if your ancestor was hired to fill someone else's shoes in the ranks.

Both Confederate and Union CMSRs are available. Confederate CMSRs have been digitized on subscription site Fold3 <www.fold3.com>. Search within individual state collections and also in separate collections for officers, Confederate government employees, and former Confederates ("Galvanized Yankees"). A miscellaneous collection of unfiled Confederate papers—sorted by surname but never actually deposited into CMSRs—is also searchable on Fold3 and FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org>.

CMSRs for Union volunteer Army troops are indexed on Ancestry.com; Fold3 has fuller collections for several states and the United States Colored Troops. (The latter may also include emancipation records, which would reveal the

identity of a former enslaver.) Compiled service records for other states—and comparable record collections for other military branches—may need to be researched at the National Archives. Explore instructions for ordering copies on the NATF-86 form at <www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records>.

You may find yourself somewhat lost as you begin paging through CMSRs. They aren't always self-explanatory; they weren't written with a public audience in mind. Consult a guide such as Trevor Plante's *Military Service Records at the National Archives*, downloadable for free at HathiTrust <www.hathitrust.org>.

What if your ancestor was an Army regular? You won't be looking for CMSRs. Rather, turn first to the Army registers of enlistments at both Ancestry.com and FamilySearch. If you find an enlistee, follow up in scattered collections on Ancestry.com. (Under Search > Catalog, enter the keywords *regular army*.) Then explore additional manuscripts at the National Archives.

Other branches of the military kept comparable records of service. Look for US Navy rendezvous reports on Fold3 and FamilySearch, and Marine Corps muster rolls on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch. Research more records for these branches—as well as original shipping articles and payroll records for the Revenue Cutter Service (forerunner of the Coast Guard)—at the National Archives.

The Ainsworth List

This collection summarizes every federal unit from the Revolutionary War to the end of the 1800s. Details of Union regiments (broken down into companies) include mustering dates and places, commanding officers and regiment size. Find a digitized version in the FamilySearch Catalog (enter *Ainsworth List* in the title field).

Dyer's *Compendium*

The first of three volumes in this series describes the organization of the federal armies into brigades, divisions, corps and so on. Second is a chronological listing of battles and skirmishes, with participating units. Volume 3 traces the lineage of regiments; look one up by state to see when it was organized, commands to which it was attached, a service record of campaigns, and casualty statistics.

> **Study another record set**—Civil War muster cards <www.familytreemagazine.com/records/military/civil-war-muster-cards>.

Clockwise from upper left: a side drum, created circa 1864; a Civil War-era camp flag; an 1858 Union soldier uniform on display at the Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center; author Michael L. Strauss participating in a Civil War reenactment in Newport News, Va.

Wounded soldiers in a hospital during the Civil War

Consult *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* by Frederick H. Dyer (Sagamore Press) for free at HathiTrust. Or go back to the regimental histories summarized on the Soldiers and Sailors database, which references Dyer's *Compendium*.

Record of event cards

Available for both sides of the conflict, these handwritten cards document individual events for each company—such as where it was stationed or fighting—intermittently throughout the war. This is a more advanced resource for those who want to dig deeply, since you'll have to consult them in-person at the National Archives.

Official Record (OR)

OR and ORN (for the Navy) refer to compiled collections of original, significant documents created during the course of the war, such as

> **Learn about clues in Civil War-era family photos <www.familytreemagazine.com/photos/identifying/civil-war-photography>.**

military orders and correspondence. Consult these via Cornell University's online portal, Making of America <collections.library.cornell.edu/moa_new/waro.html>.

Regimental histories

Some military units have had their histories recorded in dedicated works. Search for these in your web browser or in WorldCat <www.worldcat.org>. Or ask reference librarians at major research libraries to help you locate them, perhaps via bibliographic works such as *United States Army Unit and Organizational Histories: A Bibliography* by James T. Controvich (Scarecrow Press).

Images

Photographers were practicing widely by the Civil War, creating resources for those studying both individual servicemen and historical context. Get access to one of the largest collections for individual images from the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Penn., at <ahec.armywarcollege.edu>. Try a keyword search for a battle or unit name, and watch for

images in your results. Two other great sources for discovering Civil War-era images are catalogs of the National Archives <www.archives.gov/research/catalog> and the Library of Congress <www.loc.gov/pictures>.

POST-SERVICE RECORDS

Those wartime records don't generally tell you what happened after the guns finally ceased. Even if your ancestor didn't survive, you can still explore the aftermath in burial and pension records. Additional records help you follow veterans' families over succeeding decades.

Union pension records

These are perhaps the single most important genealogical resource for Civil War veterans. That's because pension applicants—both veterans and their qualifying beneficiaries—had to provide evidence for their claims.

Early in the war, the federal government authorized pensions for the Union Army, Navy and Marine service. Federal pension files generally include the claimant's declaration; a confirmation of service by the War or Navy department; and any number of affidavits submitted in support of a claim. You may find personal and family-history questionnaires with family identities and relationships. Medical records, especially pertaining to postwar physical disabilities, are part of pension records, too. Pension packets can easily exceed 100 pages.

Search among nearly 2.5 million applicants in the Civil War Pension Index, available at FamilySearch and subscription sites Ancestry.com and Fold3. Indexed entries point to card images summarizing the serviceman's dependents and service history. If you find an entry for your ancestor, use the same National Archives link <www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records> (and the form NATF-85) to order a copy of the pension application file.

If your ancestor's pension is instead at the National Personnel Record Center in St. Louis, the National Archives will provide you with instructions to order from there instead. (This especially applies to long-lived ancestors and those who applied long for benefits long after the conflict.)

From Our Archives: The Best Civil War Websites

To commemorate the sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of the Civil War's beginning, our May 2011 issue featured cover-to-cover articles about the war. And to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *that issue*, here are the best websites for researching ancestors who fought in the Civil War, identified by David A. Fryxell in that issue:

1. **The Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System** <www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>
2. **Fold3** <www.fold3.com>
3. **Ancestry.com** <www.ancestry.com>
4. **eHistory** <ehistory.osu.edu>
5. **American Battlefield Trust** <www.battlefields.org> (formerly the Civil War Trust)
6. **Nationwide Gravesite Locator** <gravelocator.cem.va.gov>
7. **Ken Burns' "The Civil War"** <www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war>
8. **The Library of Virginia** <www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/civil-war>

You can view an expanded version of the article at <www.familytreemagazine.com/records/military/best-civil-war-websites>. A PDF of the Civil War-themed May 2011 issue is also available for purchase on our website <www.familytreemagazine.com/product/digital-issue-family-tree-magazine-may-2011-w2158>. (Note: Given the 10 years that have lapsed between publication and the present, some links and promotional offers mentioned in that issue may not still be active.)

Once you've established a relative served, you can access several kinds of records to learn about his service.

Confederate pension records

Confederate pensions were implemented by individual Southern and border states years (even decades) after the war. Pensions were paid out by the state in which Confederate veterans resided at the time they applied. Pensions were only granted to veterans or widows who could demonstrate financial hardship and sometimes physical disability. Unfortunately, except in Mississippi, African Americans were excluded from pension benefits until 1921, by which time most of those who were eligible had died.

A growing number of state Confederate pension collections are available at FamilySearch. Search the FamilySearch Catalog <www.family search.org/search/catalog> at the state and county levels for entries that may include links to digitized images. Otherwise, ask about Confederate pension records at state archives. (Unlike Union pension records, Confederate pensions are not held at the National Archives.)

Veterans Administration pension payment cards

These are a related resource for Union veterans and dependents. For the years 1907 to 1933, you can look up surviving veterans or widows and learn the veteran's unit, death dates of beneficiaries, quarterly payment history (look on the back) and when the pension was dropped. Search this collection at FamilySearch and subscription sites Fold3 and Findmypast <www.findmypast.com>.

Veterans organizations

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a social organization created for Union veterans after the war. It eventually encompassed Ladies of the GAR and the Woman's Relief Corps, and dissolved in 1956. A comparable group in the South was the United Confederate Veterans organization, active 1889 to 1951.

Records of local posts for both sides were never centralized. Visit the GAR Records Project <www.garrecords.org> for a catalog of known local records. Search for any digitized records online at sources like the Internet Archive <www.archive.org>. Use ArchiveGRID <research works.oclc.org/archivegrid>, an enormous online catalog of archival resources, to locate original manuscript collections, or contact state archives or libraries to ask about them.

Soldiers' homes

Your elderly, disabled and/or indigent Civil War veteran may have ended up in a federal or state soldiers' home. Find clues in a pension file, or notice whether a veteran outlived his natural caregivers. Start your search in an Ancestry. com collection of National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers records <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1200>, and pursue originals at the National Archives. Ask about records for state homes at state historical or genealogical societies, or search ArchiveGRID.

Military burials databases

An ancestor's final resting place may provide confirmation of his Civil War service—and more. Explore Civil War burials in national cemeteries at <www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-cemeteries.htm> or <gravelocator.cem.va.gov>. The Confederate Graves Registry <cgr.scv.org> now documents more than 160,000 burials in 47 states. Or search the National Graves Registration Project <www.suvcwdb.org> for Union burials and accompanying biographical details and GAR membership information (if relevant). Yet another collection, available at both FamilySearch and Ancestry.com, includes headstones provided for deceased Union veterans.

Lineage societies

Groups that preserve the memories of Civil War heroes may help you learn more about your ancestors and celebrate their legacies, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy <www.hqudc.org> and Sons of Confederate Veterans <www.scv.org>. The latter offers basic genealogy assistance (under the Contact tab). Explore the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War website <www.suvcw.org> for resources that might help you research a Union forebear. ●

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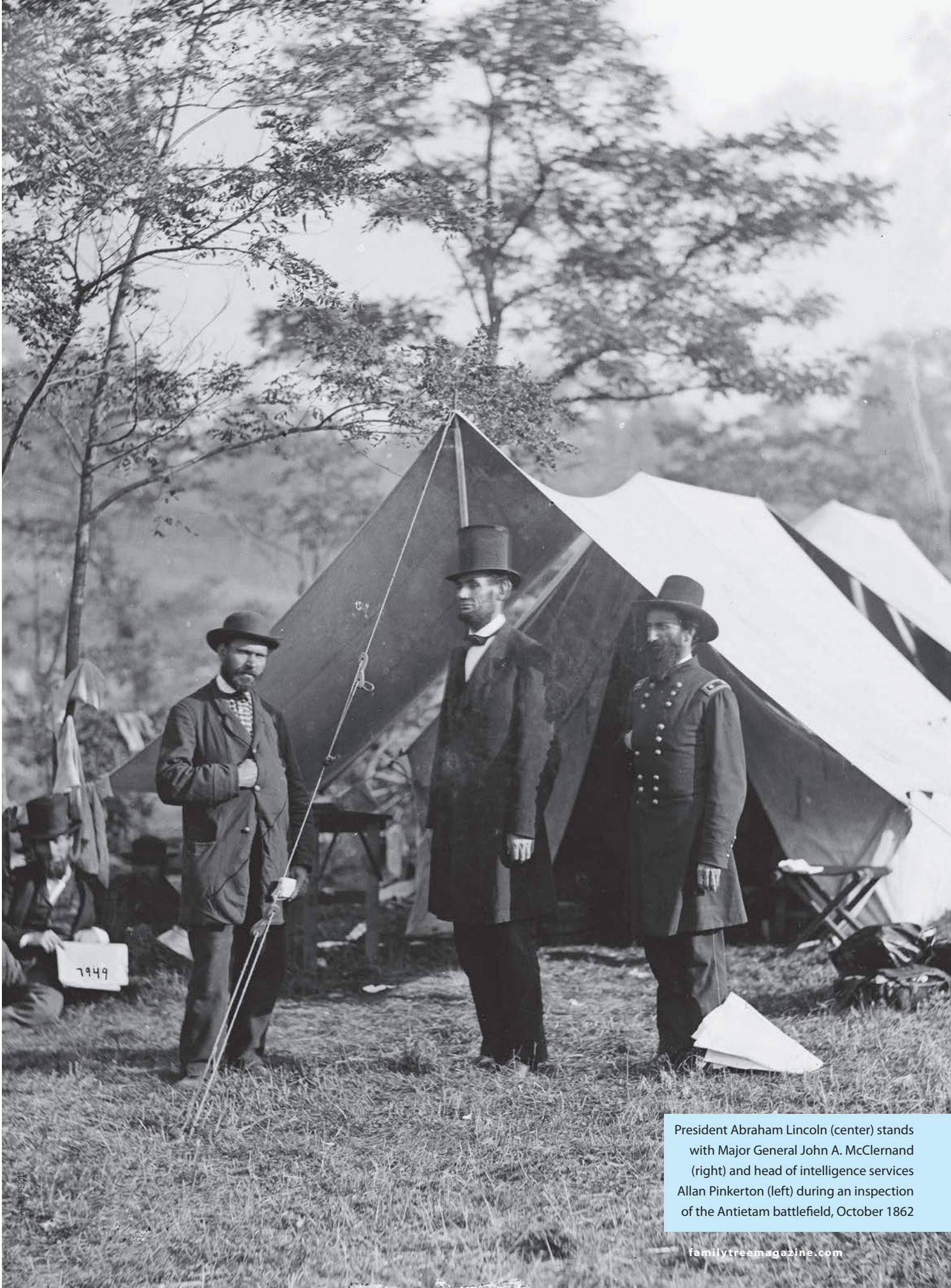
President Abraham Lincoln (center) stands with Major General John A. McClernand (right) and head of intelligence services Allan Pinkerton (left) during an inspection of the Antietam battlefield, October 1862

Military Records Checklist

Identify which US conflict(s) your ancestor may have served in,
then track your search for his or her service files.

Name and birth/death years	French and Indian War (1754–1763)	American Revolution (1775–1783)	War of 1812 (1812–1815)	Indian Wars (1815–1858)	Mexican-American War (1846–1848)	Civil War (1861–1865)	Spanish-American War (1898)	Philippine-American War (1899–1902)	World War I (1917–1918)	World War II (1941–1945)	Korean War (1950–1953)	Vietnam War (1964–1973)
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COMMON MILITARY ACRONYMS

A

AAA — Anti-aircraft Artillery
AB — Air Base
Abn. — Airborne
AD — Active Duty or Armored Division
AFB — Air Force Base
Armd. — Armored
Arty. — Artillery

B

BB — Battleship (USN)
Bde. — Brigade
BG — Bombardment Group
Bn. — Battalion
Bty./Btry. — Battery

C

Cav. — Cavalry
Co./CO — Commanding Officer
CONUS — Continental United States
Corp./Cpl. — Corporal
CV — Carrier

D

DD — Destroyer (USN)
Det. — Detachment
DOS — Date of Separation

E

EAD — Entered Active Duty (date)

F

FA — Field Artillery
FG — Fighter Group

G

G.I. — Government Issue
Gp. — Group

I

Inf. — Infantry

N

NAS — Naval Air Station
NMCB — Naval Mobile Construction Battalion

P

PCS — Permanent Change of Station
Pfc. — Private First Class
Plt. — Platoon
PO — Petty Officer
Pvt. — Private
PW/POW — Prisoner of War

Q

QM — Quartermaster

R

Rcn. — Reconnaissance
RCT — Regimental Combat Team
Regt. — Regiment

S

Sgt. — Sergeant
Sig. — Signal
SN — Service Number
SSN — Social Security Number
Sq. — Squad or Squadron

T

TAD — Temporary Additional Duty
TAFMS — Total Active Federal Military Service (date)
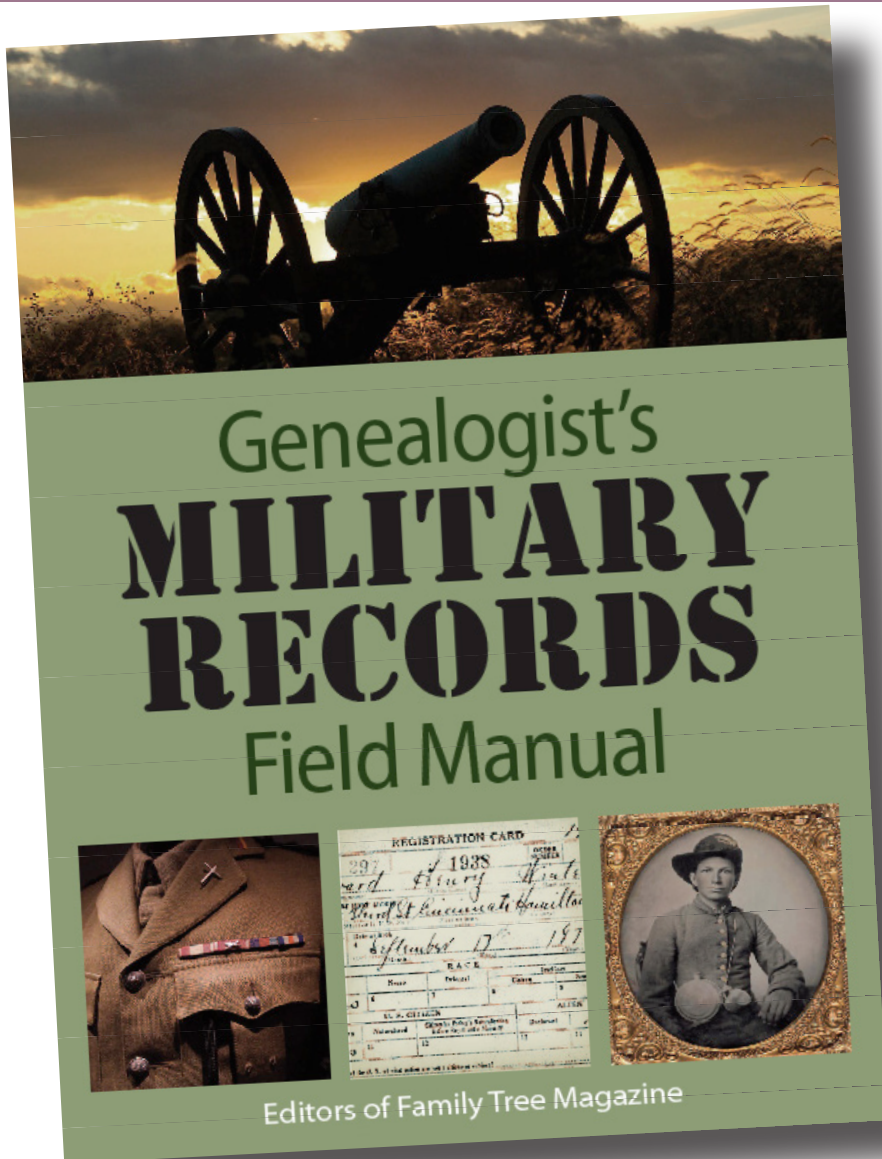**TCG** — Troop Carrier Group
TDY — Temporary Duty

U

USA — United States Army
USAAC — United States Army Air Corps
USAAF — United States Army Air Force
USAF — United States Air Force
USMC — United States Marine Corps
USN — United States Navy

W

WIA — Wounded in Action

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MILITARY
RECORDS
Field Manual

Editors of Family Tree Magazine

- guides to specific conflicts

- sample records

- key websites