

INTRODUCTION

Several changes have occurred since the 1985 revision of General Information Leaflet (GIL) Number 7, *Military Service Records in the National Archives of the United States*. This reference information paper (RIP) replaces GIL 7 and updates much of its content. For example, some records listed under the Coast Guard section of GIL 7 as residing in the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, are now found in the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Also the National Personnel Records Center recently released to the public nearly 1.2 million official military personnel files of former U.S. Navy and Marine Corps enlisted personnel who served in the military between 1885 and 1939.

Computer technology has also greatly changed how researchers can conduct research on military service records at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). You can now order copies of military service records and pension and bounty land records online from the National Archives where before it required mailing in a form. Now veterans and their next of kin can order copies of military personnel files from the National Personnel Records Center online. For those conducting Civil War research, you can go to the National Park Service's "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" online and conduct a name search for those who served during the conflict. At least one Internet site provides access to Federal Civil War pension indexes for a fee. Likewise the Veterans Administration now provides a searchable database for finding veterans buried in national cemeteries on their web site. Several web sites provide databases or information that can assist researchers in gaining access to NARA records and in some cases copies of NARA records are available on these sites as well.

Each section of this reference information paper contains additional sources of information such as published articles, books, or finding aids and, in some cases, links to Internet sources. For records relating to service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard there are quick reference guides that provide consolidated lists or “hot spots” to search when conducting research on those particular records. In the case of military records for service in the Army there is a further breakdown for volunteers and regulars and for enlisted men and officers. After the various services there are descriptions of different types of records such as pensions, bounty land files, headstones and burials, medals, and discharges. This reference information paper provides information on online sources throughout the finding aid in addition to a consolidated section on web sites relating to military service records at the National Archives.

Records at the National Archives are arranged by the creating agency or office in groupings called *record groups* (RG). For example, RG 127 is the Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, and RG 94 is the Records of the Office of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s–1917. Under the record group is the *series*, a body of records that are related chronologically (Civil War compiled military service records) or by subject (headstone applications for private cemeteries).

The National Archives and Records Administration has microfilmed over 3,000 series of Federal records that contain a wealth of valuable information for scholars and other researchers. These publications are cited in this RIP by the publication number (such as M260 or T1099) and the series title (*Records Relating to Confederate and Naval Marine Personnel* or *Index to Rendezvous Reports, Civil War, 1861–1865.*)

For additional information beyond the scope of this RIP consult the *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* (2000). There is a section on military records containing chapters on: records of the Regular Army; service records of volunteers; naval and marine service; pension records; bounty land warrant records; and other records relating to military service.

Additional Sources of Information

Eales, Anne Bruner and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds. *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*. Third edition, Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000.

Johnson, Lt. Col. Richard S. *How to Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military: Armed Forces Locator Directory*. San Antonio, TX: MIE Publishing, 1995.

Neagles, James C. *U.S. Military Records: A Guide to Federal and State Sources, Colonial America to the Present*. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, 1994.

Plante, Trevor K. "An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service," *Prologue*, Fall 2002, Vol. 34, No. 3.

Internet Sources

The following web sites are useful places to begin your research:
www.cyndislist.com. Provides information on various genealogical topics.
www.Ancestry.com. Some parts of this web site are by subscription.
www.heritagequest.com. Web site is by subscription through libraries.
www.footnote.com. Web site is a partially fee-based site.

All these web sites are available on public access computers at the National Archives research facilities.

For information on civilian records consult RIP 110, *Using Civilian Records for Genealogical Research in the National Archives, Washington, DC, Area*, prepared by Constance Potter.