

ARMY

National Archives Building, Washington, DC

Records Relating to U.S. Volunteer Soldiers

The place to start researching a volunteer soldier's service is the compiled military service record. The compiled service records, available for both volunteer enlisted men and officers, consist of an envelope that may contain card abstracts taken from records such as: muster rolls, returns, pay vouchers, orders, and other records that relate to the individual soldier. Information in the service record may include references to mustering-in, mustering-out, wounds, hospitalization, absence from the unit, capture and imprisonment by the enemy, courts-martial, and death.

The general name index and compiled service records for Revolutionary War soldiers are available on National Archives microfilm publications M860, *General Index to Compiled Military Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers*, and M881, *Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War*. Both of these microfilm publications are available through the NARA Microfilm Rental Program. (For more information about this program, see www.archives.gov/research/order/renting-microfilm.html.) The indexes to the War of 1812, early Indian Wars, Mexican War, Spanish-American War, and the Philippine Insurrection are on microfilm, but the compiled military service records for these conflicts are not. The Philippine Insurrection is the last conflict in which the War Department compiled military service records for volunteers.

The Civil War is more complicated for the National Archives does not maintain an overall general name index for Union soldiers. However, there are microfilmed name indexes for each state. **Note: The state where the sol-**

Left: A group of volunteer officers pose for a picture during the Civil War. (111-B-5299)

dier joined may be different from the state in which he lived at the time. Most of the compiled military service records for Union soldiers are not available on microfilm. For records of state or local militias or National Guard units that were not Federalized, consult the state archives from where the unit served.

Begin researching volunteers by consulting the appropriate name indexes available on National Archives microfilm. The index cards are arranged alphabetically by the individual's last name and show the soldier's name, rank, and the unit or units in which he served. If the soldier you are researching served in more than one unit he should have a compiled military service record for each volunteer unit in which he served. In some cases, there are cross-references to names that appear in the records under various spellings. For a listing of microfilm publications relating to name indexes and compiled service records, consult the National Archives' *Microfilm Resources for Research: A Comprehensive Catalog* (2000). The *Military Service Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications* (1985) is also a very good resource to consult.

You can also consult the name database found on the "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" online at www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html. For more information on the "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" see page 45.

For compiled military service records that have not been reproduced on microfilm, researchers can request to see the original records at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. Researchers unable to come to Washington, DC, may request copies of these records by using NATF Form 86, National Archives Order for Copies of Military Service Records. You can also order copies of these records online at www.archives.gov/research_room/orderonline.html. After utilizing the compiled military service records consult the pension file. For additional information on these records consult the description of pensions on page 35 of this reference information paper.

For medical information concerning volunteer soldiers who fought in the Mexican and Civil Wars, consult carded medical records found in RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917, entry 534. These cards relate to volunteers admitted to hospitals for treatment and may

include information such as name, rank, organization, complaint, date of admission, hospital to which admitted, date returned to duty, deserted, discharged, sent to general hospital, furloughed, or died. This series is arranged by state, thereunder by the number of the regiment (cavalry, infantry, and artillery are filed together under the common regiment number), and then by initial letter of surname. For example, the First Pennsylvania Cavalry is filed under "1 Pennsylvania" along with the First Pennsylvania Infantry, First Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery, First Pennsylvania Light Artillery, and First Pennsylvania Reserves.

Carded medical records of volunteers who served in the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, however, are filed with the individual's compiled military service record.

Revolutionary War, 1775–83

- Compiled Military Service Record
- Pension File/Bounty Land Warrant File

War of 1812, 1812–15

- Compiled Military Service Record
- Pension File
- Bounty Land Warrant File

Early Indian Wars

- Compiled Military Service Record
- Pension File
- Bounty Land Warrant File

Mexican War, 1846–48

- Compiled Military Service Record
- Pension File
- Bounty Land Warrant File

Civil War (Union), 1861–65

- Compiled Military Service Record
- Pension File
- Carded Medical Records

Spanish-American War, 1898

- Compiled Military Service Record (includes carded medical records)
- Pension File

Philippine Insurrection, 1899–1902

- Compiled Military Service Record (includes carded medical records)
- Pension File

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 127–150.

Heitman, Francis B. *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During The War of the Revolution, April 1775, to December 1783*, Washington, DC: The Rare Book Shop Publishing Co., 1914.

Neagles, James C. and Lila L. Neagles. *Locating Your Revolutionary War Ancestor: A Guide to Military Records*, Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers, 1983.

Note: The National Archives does not alter records or compiled military service records. It is not unusual to have a soldier's name spelled differently on various cards within the same compiled military service record.

Records Relating to Regular Army Service

Enlisted Men

Unlike the compiled service records for individuals who served as volunteers, the War Department did not compile military service records for those who served in the Regular Army. The place to start researching enlisted men is the Regular Army Enlistment Papers, 1798–1912, RG 94, entry 91. This series is arranged alphabetically by name of soldier and generally shows the soldier's name, place of enlistment, date of enlistment, by whom enlisted, age, place of birth, occupation, personal description, regimental assignment, and certifications of the examining surgeon and recruiting officer. Soldiers usually have multiple enlistment papers if they served two or more enlistments.

Researchers should also consult M233, *Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798–1914*. The register of enlistments is arranged chronologically and thereunder alphabetically by first letter of surname. The regis-

ter usually shows the individual's name, military organization, physical description, age at time of enlistment, place of birth, enlistment information, discharge information, and remarks. For more detailed information concerning service consult the unit muster rolls arranged by arm of service, thereunder by regiment number, then alphabetically by company, troop or battery, and thereunder chronologically. The muster rolls are found in RG 94, entry 53, Muster Rolls of Regular Army Organizations, 1784–October 31, 1912.

For medical information, consult carded medical records found in RG 94, entries 529 and 530 covering the years 1821–85 and 1894–1912 respectively. These cards relate to Regular Army personnel admitted to hospitals for treatment and may include information such as name, rank, organization, age, race, birthplace, date entered service, cause of



Recruits wait while clerks fill out Army enlistment papers, ca. 1898. These papers are found in entry 91, Enlistment Papers, Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office. (111-SC-113512)

admission, date of admission, hospital to which admitted, and disposition of the case. Entry 529, covering the years 1821–85, is arranged by the number of the regiment (cavalry, infantry, and artillery are filed together under the common regiment number) and then by initial letter of surname. For example, the First Cavalry is filed under the number “1” along with the First Infantry and First Artillery. Regimental designations are followed by Ordnance, Engineers, Signal Corps, Scouts, and miscellaneous (including Recruits, Prisoners, Service Troops, and General Mounted Service). Entry 530, covering the years 1894–1912, is arranged by arm of service, thereunder by number of regiment, and thereunder by initial letter of surname. Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery regiments are followed by Coast and Field Artillery batteries, Philippine Scouts, Prisoners, Engineers, Ordnance, Signal Corps, Service School Detachment, Navy Marines, Transports, men on duty at West Point, the Hospital Corps, miscellaneous (including recruits, discharged soldiers, ex-volunteers, unassigned persons and civilians). For information on other records related to Regular Army enlisted men consult the sections on returns, Army courts-martial and pensions found later in this reference information paper.

Regular Army, (Enlisted Men)

- Enlistment Papers, 1798–1912
- Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914 (M233)
- Carded Medical Records
- Court-Martial Records
- Pension File
- Unit Returns
- Post Returns

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 109–122.

Officers

When researching Army officers, researchers should first consult Francis B. Heitman's *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, two volumes (Washington, DC: GPO, 1903). Volume one contains a register of Army officers providing a brief history of their service. Volume two contains a "chronological list of battles, actions, etc., in which troops of the Regular Army have participated and troops engaged." Heitman's has been reproduced on M1858.

The War Department did not maintain or compile personnel files for Regular Army officers until 1863. Prior to that date, records concerning officers can be found in several different series in RG 94. The best (AGO) place to start is the series of letters received by the Adjutant General's Office. The registers have been reproduced on M711, *Registers of Letters Received, Office of the Adjutant General, 1812–1889*. The letters are found on M566, *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1805–1821*; M567, *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1822–1860*; and M619, *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1861–1870*.

When researching the records for an officer's military service after 1863, consult the Commission Branch (CB) and Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch (ACP) records both found in RG 94, entry 297, Letters Received, 1863–94. There is a card index arranged by name of officer for each of these files. CB files are reproduced on M1064, *Letters Received by the Commission Branch of the Adjutant General's Office, 1863–1870* and a select number of ACP files have been reproduced on National Archives microfiche M1395, *Letters Received by the Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch, 1871–1894*. For service after 1894, consult M698, *Index to General Correspondence of the Adjutant General's Office, 1890–1917*. The index provides document file numbers to RG 94, entry 25, Document File, 1890–1917.

If the officer attended West Point consult M688, *U.S. Military Academy Cadet Application Papers, 1805–1866*, and M91, *Records Relating to the U.S. Military Academy, 1812–1867*.

For information on other records related to Regular Army officers consult the sections on returns, Army courts-martial, and pensions found later in this reference information paper.

Regular Army (Officers)

- Francis B. Heitman's *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*
- AGO Letters Received, 1805–89
- CB and ACP Files, 1863–94
- AGO Doc File, 1890–1917
- Pension File
- Court-Martial Files

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 109–122.

Cullum, George W. *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York Since its Establishment in 1802*. Multiple volumes for various years.

Adjutant General's Office, *Official Army Registers*. Washington, DC. Multiple volumes for various years.

Hamersly, Thomas H.S. *Complete Regular Army Register of the United States: For One Hundred Years, (1779 to 1879)*. Washington, DC: T.H.S. Hamersly, 1881.

Powell, William H. *List Officers of the United States Army From 1779 to 1900*. New York: L.R. Hamersly & Co., 1900.

Powell, William H. *Records of Living Officers of the United States Army*. Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersly & Co., 1890.

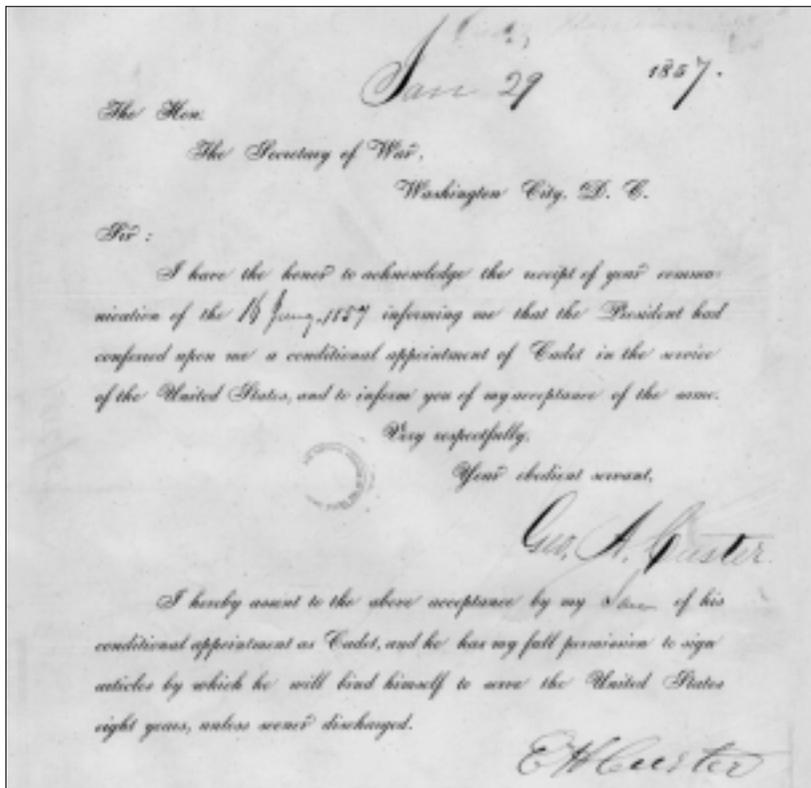
Powell, William H. *Officers of the Army and Navy (Volunteer) Who Served in the Civil War*. Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersly & Co., 1893.

Powell, William H. *Officers of the Army and Navy (Regular) Who Served in the Civil War*. Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersly & Co., 1892.

Returns

Other records that may be of interest to researchers are Army post returns and Regular Army unit returns. Returns for many military posts, camps, and stations are reproduced on National Archives microfilm publication M617, *Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800–1916*. Returns generally show units stationed at the post and their strength, the names and duties of officers, the number of officers present and absent, and a record of events. For researchers working on enlisted men the returns generally do not single out enlisted men by name but rather provide general information about the unit.

Returns for Regular Army units are reproduced on microfilm and can be found on M665, *Returns From Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June*



George A. Custer's acceptance of appointment to West Point. In addition to Custer's signature, note his father's signature at the bottom consenting to the acceptance. (RG 94)

1821–December 1916; M744, *Returns From Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833–1916*; and M727, *Returns From Regular Army Artillery Regiments, June 1821–January 1901*. There are also returns found on the following National Archives microfilm publications: M690, *Returns From Regular Army Engineer Battalions, September 1846–June 1916*; M691, *Returns From Regular Army Coast Artillery Corps Companies, February 1901–June 1916*; M727, *Returns From Regular Army Artillery Regiments, June 1821–January 1901*; M728, *Returns From Regular Army Field Artillery Batteries and Regiments, February 1901–December 1916*; M851, *Returns of the Corps of Engineers, April 1832–December 1916*; and M852, *Returns of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, November 1831–February 1863*. These monthly returns of military organizations report stations of companies and names of company commanders, unit strength, including the number of men present, absent, sick, on extra duty or daily duty, in arrest or confinement, and significant remarks. For additional information on records related to posts and units consult RG 391, *Records of United States Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821–1942*; RG 393, *Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920*; and RG 395, *Records of U.S. Army Overseas Operations and Commands, 1898–1942*.

Army Courts-Martial

Court-martial records are a great source of information not only for a particular individual but also for providing insights into the trials and tribulations faced by soldiers. Records related to the proceedings of U.S. Army courts-martial, courts of inquiry, and military commissions can be found in RG 153, *Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army)*.

To find an individual's case file in the early date span first consult M1105, *Registers of the Records of the Proceedings of the U.S. Army General Courts-Martial, 1809–1890*. The registers provide case file numbers to a subseries covering the years 1809 to 1894. The other subseries covers the years 1894–1917. An index for 1891–1917 is found in RG 153, entry 17. Both of these subseries are filed by case file number in RG 153, entry 15A. These records are located in the Old Military Records section at the

National Archives Building in Washington, DC. Only a few select cases have been reproduced on microfilm. Court-martial files covering the years 1917 to 1938 (RG 153, entry 15B) are located in the Modern Military Records section of the National Archives in College Park, Maryland.

Additional Sources of Information

Plante, Trevor K. "The Shady Side of the Family Tree: Civil War Union Court-Martial Case Files," *Prologue*, Winter 1998, Vol. 30, No. 4.



Union soldiers from the Army of the Cumberland awaiting court-martial. (111-B-2738)