



Enlisted Service in the Regular Army, 1789–1914

Congress established the War Department on August 7, 1789 (1 Stat. 49), which marked the beginning of the Regular Army. The War Department did not create compiled military service records (CMSRs) for Regular Army enlisted soldiers. Regular Army enlistments are recorded in the registers of enlistment and the enlistment papers.

Registers of Enlistment

These records were created from enlistment papers, muster rolls, and other sources. With the exception of pensions, these records may be the only source on enlisted men during the 19th century. The registers may show when and where the soldier enlisted, the period of enlistment, the place of birth, the age at enlistment, civilian occupation, a physical description, and the unit to which he was assigned.

___M233, *Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798–1914*. 81 rolls. DP. Arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by the first letter of the soldier's surname.

Enlistment Papers

These records are arranged alphabetically by name with the exception of the series for Indian Scouts, which are arranged by file number. They show the soldier's name, place of enlistment, date of enlistment, age, occupation, personal description, and the unit to which he was assigned. Enlistment papers for individuals who served two or more enlistments are sometimes consolidated. These records have not been microfilmed or digitized.

- Regular Army, 1789–1894
- Regular Army, 1894–1912
- Indian Scouts

Unit and Post Returns, 1800–1916

The unit and post returns generally do not give information on individuals, but can tell where a unit was stationed and what it was doing at a particular time.

Post Returns

Post returns identify the units stationed at a post and their strength. They provide the names and duties of officers, the number of officers present and absent, and a record of events.

___M617, *Returns from United States Military Posts, 1800–1916*. DP. 1,550 rolls. Arranged alphabetically by post and then chronologically by date.

Unit Returns

Unit returns usually include the names of company commanders and other officers; unit strength, including men present, absent, sick, on extra duty, and in arrest or confinement; and remarks.

___M665, *Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821–December 1916*. DP. 300 rolls. Arranged numerically by infantry, 1st–45th, and then chronologically.

___M727, *Returns from Regular Army Artillery Regiments, June 1821–January 1901*. DP. 38 rolls. Arranged numerically by regiment, and then by date.

___M744, *Returns from Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833–1916*. DP. 117 rolls. Arranged by cavalry, 1st–17th, and then by date.

___M728, *Returns from Regular Army Field Artillery Batteries and Regiments, February 1901–December 1916*. DP. 14 rolls. Arranged by battery, 1st–30th, or by regiment, 1st–9th, and then by date. Prior to June 1907 the Field Artillery unit was called a battery; after that date it was called a regiment. After 1901 these returns list all officers by name.

___M691, *Returns from Regular Army Coast Artillery Corps Companies, February 1901–June 1916*. DP. 81 rolls. Arranged by military unit and then by date. This series includes Regular Army Coast Artillery Corps companies as well as bands, mine planters, and provisional regiments.

___M690, *Returns from Regular Army Engineer Battalions, September 1846–June 1916*. DP. 10 rolls. Arranged by battalion, 1st–3rd, by band, and then by date.

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