



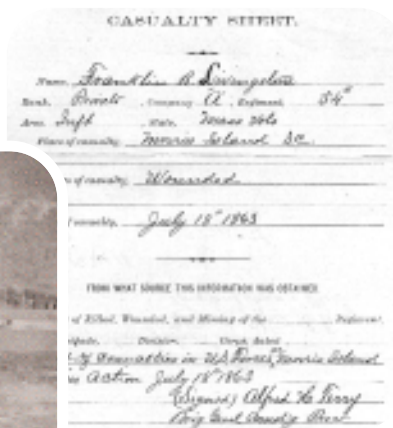
## FINDING INFORMATION ON PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN



# THE CIVIL WAR



Millions of Federal documents await discovery by researchers working on family histories, regimental narratives, or campaign and battle studies. The National Archives holds historical records created and maintained by the Federal Government. And in the case of Confederate records, those captured or copied by the Federal Government. It is rare for private letters, diaries, or photographs to be at the National Archives.



### ★ Getting Started: Possible Family Sources

Look to family resources such as personal letters, diaries, discharge papers, correspondence from the War Department, Navy Department, or Pension Office first to see if they provide the individual's unit or ship, dates of service, place of enlistment, or discharge. The largest number of individuals who served in the military during the Civil War did so in volunteer units, fewer served in the Union or Confederate Regular Army, Navy, or Marine Corps.

### ★ Volunteers (Union)

Compiled service records for Union Army volunteers consist of an envelope that may contain card abstracts taken from 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 National Archives does not maintain an overall name index for Union soldiers. However, there are microfilmed name indexes for each

state. 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 provide the soldier's name, rank, and the unit or units in which he served. If the soldier served in more than one unit, he should have a compiled military service record for each volunteer unit in which he served. Consult the "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" online at [www.itd.nps.gov/cvss/index.html](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cvss/index.html) for help in finding the unit in which the soldier served.

For compiled military service records that have not been reproduced on microfilm, researchers can view the original records at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. You may also request copies of these records by using a NATF Form 86, National Archives Order for Copies of Military Service Records, or order copies online at [www.archives.gov/order](http://www.archives.gov/order).

Carded medical records exist for many Union volunteer soldiers 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.

Most information taken from records relating to Union prisoners of war can be found in the individual's compiled military service record. More detailed records may be found in records of the Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners, which contain a variety of registers, rolls, lists, and reports relating to Federal prisoners of war, including information on paroled and exchanged soldiers.

### ★ Volunteers (Confederate)

Compiled military service records of men who served in the Confederate States Army consist of one or more card abstracts and sometimes one or more original documents. Each card abstract copies an entry in original records, such as Confederate muster rolls, returns, and descriptive rolls and Union prison and parole records.

All indexes and compiled military service records relating to service in the Confederate Army are on National Archives microfilm. This includes service records for Confederate generals and staff officers; non-regimental enlisted men; soldiers who served in units from each of the Confederate states, plus the Arizona Territory, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri; and units raised directly by the Confederate government. You can also consult the "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" online at [www.itd.nps.gov/cvss/index.html](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cvss/index.html) to help determine the unit

in which the soldier served. For records of state or local militia units never mustered into Confederate service, consult the state archives from where the unit served. Records relating to Confederate Naval and Marine personnel can be found on microfilm (M250).

If the Confederate soldier, sailor, or marine was captured during the war, consult prisoner-of-war records found on M598, *Selected Records of the War Department Relating to Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861–1865*.

### ★ Regulars (Union)

#### Regular Army Officers

For a history of military service of Regular Army officers, consult Francis B. Heitman's *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*.

The War Department did not maintain or compile personnel files for Regular Army officers until 1863. When researching the records for an officer's military service after 1863, consult the Commission Branch (CB) and Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch (ACP). All of the CB files have been reproduced on microfilm, and a select number of ACP files have been reproduced on microfiche. There are card indexes by name for both of these files.

#### Regular Army Enlisted Men

The War Department did not compile military service records for Regular Army enlisted men. Start by consulting Regular Army enlistment papers, which generally show the soldier's name, place of enlistment, date of enlistment, by whom enlisted, age, place of birth, occupation, and personal description.

Also consult M233, *Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798–1914*, which provides the individual's name, military organization, physical description, age at time of enlistment, place of birth, enlistment information, regimental assignment, and discharge information. For more detailed information concerning service, consult individual unit muster rolls.



Carded medical records may relate to Regular Army enlisted personnel admitted to hospitals for treatment and may include information such as name, rank, organization, age, race, place of birth, date the soldier entered service, cause of admission, date of admission, hospital to which admitted, and disposition of the case.

#### Navy Enlisted Men

Useful sources to consult for Navy enlisted men include pension files, rendezvous reports, keys to enlistment, and muster rolls.

Pension files related to Navy enlisted men may provide leads such as dates of service and the ship(s) or duty station(s) on which the sailor served. Your next step is to search rendezvous reports. A rendezvous was the recruiting station where the men signed up to enlist in the Navy. Officers kept a record of each man enlisted known as the "rendezvous report." These records usually provide name of recruit, date and term of enlistment and rating, previous naval service, place of residence, place of birth, occupation, and personal description. The index to Civil War rendezvous reports as well as the weekly returns of enlistments at Naval rendezvous ("Enlistment Rendezvous") are available on microfilm (T1099 and M1953).

Keys to and registers of enlistment returns in the records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel show names of men enlisting at rendezvous or on board vessels, enlistment data, and a summary of service.

Navy muster rolls and pay rolls are useful for tracking service. Muster rolls generally show the name of the enlisted man, the station or ship on which he was serving, his dates of service, and, in some cases, the station or ship from which he had transferred. Pay rolls generally show the name of the enlisted man, his station or rank, date of commencement of his service, and terms of service.

For medical information, consult the medical journals of shore stations and the medical journals of ships found in records of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (Navy).

#### Useful Guides

- Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putnam Beers, *The Union: A Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, reprinted 2004).
- Henry Putnam Beers, *The Confederacy: A Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, reprinted 2004).
- *A Guide to Civil War Maps in the National Archives* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1986).
- RIP 109: *Military Service Records at the National Archives* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2007).

#### National Archives Contact Information

*Military Service Records and Pension Files:*  
Textual Reference (Old Military)  
National Archives  
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20408  
E-mail: [Archives1Reference@nara.gov](mailto:Archives1Reference@nara.gov)

*Still Pictures and Cartographic (specify the branch):*  
Special Media Division  
National Archives at College Park  
Room 3320  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
E-mail: [stillpix@nara.gov](mailto:stillpix@nara.gov), [carto@nara.gov](mailto:carto@nara.gov)

For a list of all National Archives locations:  
[www.archives.gov/locations](http://www.archives.gov/locations)

National Archives and Records Administration, 2009



### Navy Officers

Begin research on U.S. Navy officers by consulting the *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900*, edited by Edward W. Callahan and the *General Register of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, 1782–1882*. Pension files may also provide leads such as dates of service and the ship(s) or duty station(s) on which the officer served.

Additional information can be found in abstracts of service records of naval officers (“Records of Officers”) on microfilm (M330). For a list of officers on board naval vessels during the Civil War, consult the lists of officers of vessels of the United States Navy, which is also reproduced on microfilm (M1328).

### Marine Corps Enlisted Men

Service records for enlisted marines who served during the Civil War may include: enlistment and reenlistment papers, descriptive lists, conduct records, notice of discharge, and military history. A typical Civil War–era service record contains only an enlistment paper and a small typed sheet prepared years after service showing: name, rank, date of enlistment, place of enlistment, period of enlistment, and remarks such as date and place of discharge or date and place of death if it occurred while in service.

To track a marine’s service, consult the monthly U.S. Marine Corps muster rolls reproduced on microfilm (T1118). A muster roll generally shows the name of ship or station and, for officers and enlisted men, name, rank, date of enlistment or reenlistment, and if applicable, date of desertion or apprehension, and date of death or discharge.



### Marine Corps Officers

To verify service of a marine officer, consult the *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900*, edited by Edward W. Callahan. Marine Corps muster rolls, Navy logbooks, Navy courts-martial files, and pension file records can also provide additional information on Marine Corps officers.

### ★ Participation in the Military

Records showing service (record of events) of Union volunteer and Confederate unit activities are available on separate microfilm publications (M594 and M861, respectively).

Many Civil War reports, correspondence, and telegrams are reproduced in *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* and the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. Additional records relating to various armies, corps, divisions, and brigades that were not published may be found in the records of U.S. Army Continental Commands and the War Department Collection of Confederate Records.

### ★ Decklogs

U.S. Navy logbooks typically provide information on a ship’s performance and location, weather conditions, personnel, supplies received, and miscellaneous observations. Consult the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* for brief histories of U.S. Navy vessels. This multivolume

publication contains a brief history of each vessel and provides statistics such as: type or classification, tonnage or displacement, length, beam, draft, speed, complement, armament, and class. For brief histories of Confederate vessels, consult volume II of the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. Appendix II provides information on “Confederate Forces Afloat.” For records relating to Confederate vessels, consult the Confederate “Vessel Papers” and the subject file of the Confederate States Navy, both reproduced on microfilm (M909 and M1091, respectively).

### ★ Pension Files

The National Archives has pension applications for veterans, their widows, and other heirs, based on service in the Armed Forces of the United States. These Federal pensions are based on Union and not Confederate service. Pension files, including application files, often contain valuable personal information on soldiers, sailors, and marines not found in other records. These files often contain supporting documents such as discharge papers, affidavits, depositions of witnesses, narratives of events during service, marriage certificates, birth records, other documents submitted as evidence of identity and service, and records of action taken on the claim.

The Civil War pensions are arranged numerically by application, certificate, or file number. A name index can be found on T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*, or you can look up a pension by unit using T289, *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*. Researchers can view pension files in person at the National Archives Building or may request copies by using a NATF Form 85, National Archives Order for Copies of Federal Pension or Bounty Land Warrant Applications. You can also order online at [www.archives.gov/order](http://www.archives.gov/order). Digitized and searchable copies of both pension indexes are now available online through NARA partnerships with *Ancestry.com* (T288) and *Footnote.com*



APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONES					
To the Quartermaster General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.					
I hereby certify that the following is a list of unmarked graves of soldiers, sailors, and marines for which headstones are to be furnished and delivered at Government expense, freight prepaid, to national cemeteries or national landing facilities, and set up as follows:					
(Please list the names of those persons other than the applicant, whose names have given the government address and the location from the latest available information.)					
NAME	REGIMENT	DATE OF SERVICE	DATE OF DEATH	PLACE OF DEATH	DATE OF BURIAL
Leather, David	1st	1861-1862	1862-1862	Union	1862-1862
Dwyer, James	3	1861-1862	1862-1862	Union	1862-1862
James, John	6	1861-1862	1862-1862	Union	1862-1862
John, William	11	1861-1862	1862-1862	Union	1862-1862
John, William	11	1861-1862	1862-1862	Union	1862-1862
John, William	11	1861-1862	1862-1862	Union	1862-1862

(T289). Both companies continue to update their web sites with records reproduced from the National Archives relating to military service of Civil War volunteers and regulars. Please check these sites for their latest offerings. These fee-based sites are available for free at National Archives facilities.

If the pension was still active in 1934, the file will still be in the legal custody of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Send a Freedom of Information Act request to Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (20M33), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420.

Confederate pensions are not at the National Archives. To locate pensions based on Confederate service, contact the state where the veteran lived after the war. Descriptions of state pension laws and addresses and telephone numbers of state archives that hold these records are available on the National Archives web site [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

### ★ Court-Martial Files

Records relating to the proceedings of U.S. Army courts-martial, courts of inquiry, and military commissions can be found in Record Group (RG) 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army). Navy and Marine Corps court-martial records are found in Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Navy), RG 125. In some cases you can find references to Confederate courts-martial in RG 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, but there is no corresponding series of detailed trial transcripts. Usually court-martial orders or special orders ordering the trial to take place are all that is left.

### ★ Federal Draft Records

Civil War draft records can be found in the records of the Provost Marshal General’s Bureau, 1863–65. Enrollees had their names placed on consolidated lists, the principal records of the Washington, DC, HQ office of the Provost Marshal General’s Bureau. Most are bound volumes arranged by state, thereunder by enrollment or congressional district, and thereunder by class. The lists do not include information about the men’s families, and many of the consolidated lists are not complete. Records of district level offices, such as correspondence, descriptive books, medical registers, and records relating to enrolled men, drafted men, recruits, substitutes and deserters, are located at various National Archives regional facilities depending on the state where the draft took place.

### ★ Burial Records

Card records of headstones provided for deceased Union Civil War veterans, ca. 1879–1903, have been reproduced on microfilm (M1845) and include the name, rank, company, and regiment or vessel of the veteran, the name and location of the cemetery, and the date of death. Another series to consult is the applications of headstones in private cemeteries, 1909–24. Many of these applications relate to veterans buried prior to 1909.

### Confederate

There is no master index or list of Confederate burial locations. For locations of Confederates buried in Northern states consult M918, *Register of Confederate Soldiers, Sailors, and Citizens Who Died in Federal Prisons and Military Hospitals in the North, 1861–1865*. The burial lists generally offer an individual’s name, rank, company, regiment or vessel, date of death, and number and location of grave.

### ★ Women

There are several series relating to Union and Confederate regimental and hospital nurses, laundresses, and spies, including a series of carded service records of Union hospital attendants, matrons, and nurses. It is estimated that several hundred women served as men during the Civil War for both the Union and Confederacy. Compiled military service records for these individuals are filed under the male aliases that the women took on while they served. In some cases, the compiled military service records and pension files identify soldiers as women serving as men, but in many cases, they do not. There are also select files relating to civilian women tried by military commissions (Union) found in Army Judge Advocate General records.

### ★ African Americans

In 1863 the U.S. Army began to organize regimental units of African Americans as the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Both freemen and former slaves served in these regiments as enlisted men. All the service records for USCT artillery and cavalry units have been microfilmed. Eventually, all USCT infantry units will be as well.

Some reports relating to slaves who entered Union lines (contraband) can be found in records of U.S. Army Continental Commands. Following the Civil War, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned

Lands provided assistance to tens of thousands of former slaves and impoverished whites in the Southern states and the District of Columbia. All of the state field office records have been reproduced on microfilm as well as records of assistant commissioners and superintendents of education. Bureau records include series relating to the issuance of food and clothing, operation of hospitals and temporary camps, promotion of education, legalization of marriages, supervision of labor contracts, investigations of racial confrontations, settlement of freedmen on abandoned or confiscated lands, and assistance provided to African American soldiers and sailors and their heirs to secure back pay, bounty payments, and pensions.

### ★ Scouts, Spies, Detectives, and Guerrillas

A limited number of reports, accounts, and related records for Union scouts, guides, spies, and detectives can be found in records of the Provost Marshal General’s Bureau (Civil War).

For Confederate scouts, spies, detectives, and guerrillas, consult the case files of investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette Baker on microfilm (M797). Records relating to Confederate sympathizers and guerrillas can also be found in Union Provost Marshal files reproduced on microfilm (M345 and M416). Additional Provost Marshal files are located within various Union geographic command records in the records of U.S. Army Continental Commands.

### ★ Special Media

The Cartographic unit has approximately 8,000 Civil War maps, charts, and plans. Many of these maps relate to military operations and installations and were produced during the war for use by military forces or to accompany official reports. There is also a large collection of manuscript, annotated, and published maps relating to battlefields and military campaigns used in compiling the *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.

The Still Pictures unit has Civil War photographs taken by or under the direction of Mathew B. Brady. Many of the pictures cover military land and naval engagements; fortifications; weapons; military transports; officers; soldiers; sailors; and prominent civilians.

