

Overview: Historical Documents of Interest to Veterans

Military and Veterans Records at the National Archives

Military records can be valuable resources in personal and genealogical research. We are the official repository for records of the U.S. Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard and other government agencies. These records include [service records](#); textual documents including [unit reports and rosters](#); maps and plans; photographs; posters; motion pictures and sound recordings; and electronic records.

Most military records, including veteran's military service records, are [not online](#). However, **casualty reports**, **photos** and other selected military records are available in our collection of [Online Documents for Veterans](#).

Research on Veterans in Military Records

There is no simple explanation for how to begin research on veterans. Your path will depend on whether your research is personal, genealogical or historical in nature; and on aspects of the veteran's service such as: which branch of service, which conflict, what dates, whether Regular Army or a volunteer unit, whether they were an officer or enlisted personnel, and whether there was a pension application.

Research in Military Service Records

Military service records are the primary source of information on individual veterans. These include Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) for recent veterans, and compiled service records and pension files for older veterans.

- [Genealogy Research and Military Records](#)
- [An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service](#)
- [20th-Century Veterans' Service Records](#)
- [How to Request Copies of Military Service Records](#)

Research in General Military Records

Other military records such as after-action reports, ship deck logs, and [unit reports, rosters](#) and histories may also be of interest, but it is generally very difficult to locate information on individual veterans in these records.

- **[Online Documents for Veterans](#)**
Includes casualty reports, photos and other selected military records
- [General Research in Military Records](#)
- [Research on Specific Wars](#)
Records in the National Archives organized by particular wars and conflicts.
- [Cartographic and Architectural Records](#)
Information on various record groups containing ship plans, maps, and military blueprints.
- [Other Resources for Military and Veterans Research](#)
Links to Military Historical Centers and other sources for military research.
- [Getting Started with Archival Research at the National Archives](#)