# *For Those Who Served: Military Research from Colonial Conflicts to World War II*

## *Class 5: World War I and World War II Veterans*

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## *Did they serve?*

- WWI – age range between 17 and 40 years
- WWII – age range between 18 and 64 years (as prescribed by drafts)

## *Types of Records:*

- Draft Registration Cards
    - WWI
        - First Registration - June 5, 1917: For men aged 21 to 31 (born between June 6, 1886 and June 5, 1896).
        - Second Registration - June 5, 1918: For men who had turned 21 since the previous registration (born between June 6,1896 and June 5, 1897).
        - August 1918 - An additional registration was done for men who turned 21 that year.
        - Third Registration - September 12, 1918: For men aged 18 to 21 and 31 to 45 (born between Sept 11, 1872 and Sept 12, 1900).
        - The Armistice occurs on November 11, 1918.
        - Can be found on FamilySearch (as well as Ancestry.com) - https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/1968530
    - WWII
        - 1st Draft – Oct. 16, 1940: Men born between Oct. 17, 1904  and Oct. 16, 1919.
        - 2nd Draft – July 1, 1941: Men born between Oct. 17, 1919 and July 12, 1920. Including those who forgot to register in 1940.
        - 3rd Draft – Feb. 16, 1942: Men born between Feb. 17, 1897 and Dec. 31, 1921.
        - 4th Draft – Apr. 27, 1942: Men born between Apr. 28, 1877 and Feb. 16, 1897 ("The Old Man's Draft")
        - 5th Draft – June 30, 1942: Men born between Jan. 1, 1922 and June 30, 1924.
        - 6th Draft – Dec. 11-31, 1942: Men born between July 1, 1924 and Dec. 31, 1924. And those reaching an 18th birthday on or after Jan. 1, 1943.
        - Special Draft – Nov. 16 to Dec. 31 1943. Men born after Dec. 31, 1898 and before Jan. 1, 1926.

- - Old Man's Draft (4th Registration) can be found on FamilySearch (as well as Ancestry) – https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/1861144
  - Draft Cards for Young Men 1940-1947 on Ancestry.com - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2238/
- Census Records
  - 1930 U.S. Federal Census asked if resident was a veteran of the U.S. military or naval forces mobilized for a war and expedition, and to notate what war.
  - Connecticut Military Census of 1917 – https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/3741249
- Enlistment Records
  - World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946 on Ancestry.com - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8939/
- Official Military Personnel Files
  - Located at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri
  - Files include Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy – these are the service records
  - On 12 July 1973, fire destroyed 80% Army records and 75% Air Force records – Navy and Marine service records survived without damage!
    - Army: Enlisted men (1912-1960) and Officers (1917-1960) compiled service folders destroyed
      - Note: Did not impact records for retirees and reservists who were alive on 12 July 1973.
    - Air Force: compiled service folders (75% destroyed)
      - Surnames starting with "Hubbard" and through the end of the alphabet.
    - Approximately 6.5 million burned and water damaged records were recovered
  - The NPRC established a "B" registry file (Burned files) and "R" registry file (Reconstructed files)
  - For civilian Official Personnel Folders (OPF's), follow instructions at https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/opf
- Record Groups at the National Archives (Washington, D.C.)
  - Record Group 26 – U.S. Coast Guard
  - Record Group 41 – U.S. Merchant Marines
  - Record Group 111 – Office of the Chief Signal Officer
  - Record Group 112 – Office of the Surgeon General
  - Record Group 153 – Office of the Judge Advocate General
  - Record Group 391 – U.S. Army Mobile Units
  - Record Group 395 – U.S. Army Overseas Operations

- Muster Rolls
    - U.S., Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958 - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1089/
    - U.S., World War II Navy Muster Rolls, 1938-1949 - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1143/
    - Navy Muster Rolls Pre-1940 - https://www.archives.gov/research/military/navy/muster-rolls
    - United States, Enlisted and Officer Muster Rolls, 1916-1939 - https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/3346936
- World War II Cadet Nursing Corps Card Files, 1942-1948 - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2251/

## *Additional Records to Request and Research:*

- Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214)
    - Discharge paperwork issued upon release which summarizes a soldier's service.
    - For WWI records, these are usually available through state archives or state adjutant general's office (if not transferred).
    - For WWII records, you can request a copy from state adjutant general's office.
    - May also be filed at local town hall level.
- Military Service Abstracts
    - New York, U.S., Abstracts of National Guard Service in WWI, 1917-1919 - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9281
- Morning Reports
    - Fold3 has the digitized records 1912-1939 - https://www.fold3.com/publication/1141/us-morning-reports-1912-1939
    - Many WWII morning reports in the National Archives catalog - https://catalog.archives.gov/id/85713825
    - On microfilm at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri
- Unit Rosters
    - Monthly personnel rosters were created at the company level
    - Rosters list the name of individual, service number, rank, and other grade information
    - Copies of most monthly rosters can be found at the National Archives in St. Louis, Missouri
        - 1912-1943
        - 1947-1959
        - Records were destroyed for units serving in World War II from 1944-1946
- Final Pay Vouchers
    - Final payment to soldier and/or family
    - Alternative record for the DD214 (Report of Separation)
    - Usually the only surviving record from the 1973 fire

- Award Citations
    - Awarded for acts of gallantry in action
    - Known as General Orders
    - Record Group 407 – Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1905-1981 – NARA Archives II (College Park, Maryland)
    - Search for General Orders in World War II Operations Reports (1940-1948) - https://catalog.archives.gov/id/305275
    - Medal requests - https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/awards-and-decorations
- Unit Histories
    - A record of the important events and activities of a military unit
    - Highlight significant battles
    - Specific soldiers who acted during certain engagements are named
    - May include information about soldiers killed in battle as well as promotions
    - WWI -https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_World_War_I_Unit_Histories
    - WWII - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_World_War_II_Unit_Histories
- Newspapers
    - Search for articles in local, national, and international newspapers for stories about a veteran's service (whether an award was issued, famous battle, injury or fatality)

## *Online Resources:*

10 Million Names - https://10millionnames.org

ABMC: American Battlefield Monuments Commission – www.abmc.gov

American Ancestors – www.americanancestors.org

DANFS: Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships – www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs.html

FamilySearch Wiki – World War I - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/World_War_I_United_States_Military_Records,_1917_to_1918

FamilySearch Wiki – World War II - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/World_War_II_United_States_Military_Records,_1941_to_1945

Field of Honor (Belgium and Holland WWII) http://www.fieldsofhonor-database.com

GenealogyBank.com www.genealogybank.com/

Find a Grave – www.findagrave.com

Fold3 – www.fold3.com

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Library and Archives Canada – www.bac-lac.gc.ca

National Archives www.archives.gov

National World War I Museum – Online World War I Service Databases - https://www.theworldwar.org/research/military-records

Newspapers.com https://www.newspapers.com/

US Army War College - http://usahec.polarislibrary.com/polaris/Search

WWII Casualties - www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/navy-casualties

WWII Memorial Registry - www.wwiimemorial.com/Registry/Search.aspx

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