

Guide to finding US Military Records

If you want recent records you need to be either the veteran or a very close relative.

The New York State Military Museum is part of the New York National Guard. Therefore as a general rule, we do not have access to records pertaining to the US Army, Air Force, Marines or Navy. For these records you need to submit [Standard Form 180](#). This is a three page form. Instructions are on page one. Page two is where you enter data about the veteran, and page three instructs you where to mail it. Most records requests go to #14 on page 3, The Records Center in St. Louis.

Please note that on 12 July 1973 a [fire destroyed most of the World War One and World War Two records](#). Although many records were burned most were damaged by water. Efforts to salvage these records are ongoing. This means that there is a very good chance that you will not be able to find personnel records for the soldier you are looking for. It is always a good idea to check by submitting [Standard Form 180](#). As the efforts to restore these records continue it may be worthwhile to re-submit SF 180 again after a few years.

To find records by conflict: (please note that these are specific to New York): Each of these conflicts has a more detailed research guide which can be [found on the museum's website](#). Please note that these are New York specific.

Revolutionary War: Two resources are [New York in the Revolution as colony and state](#), and it's [Supplement](#)

The War of 1812: Please see New York State Archives [War of 1812 Abstracts of Payrolls for New York State Militia \("Payroll Cards"\)](#) and, [War of 1812 Certificates of Claim and Related Records](#)

The Mexican-American War: For the soldiers who served in the 1st Regiment, New York Volunteers see this collection at the NY State Archives: [Documentation Relating to Pension Claims, First N.Y. Regiment Volunteers, Mexican War](#).

The American Civil War: There are two different databases you can search [Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database](#) published by the National Parks Service; and, [www.CivilWarData.com](#) (There is a \$25/year charge to use this database.

The Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War: The two main resources are at the New York State Archives [Abstracts of Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War, and China Relief Expedition Military and Naval Service](#) and, [Abstracts of Muster Rolls for National Guard and Naval Militia Units Mustered into Federal Service during the Spanish-American War](#)

Mexican Border, 1916: The New York State Archives' Abstracts of Muster Rolls for [National Guard Units Mustered into Federal Service during the 1916 Mexican Punitive Campaign](#).

World War One: New York State Archives' [New York State Adjutant General's Office Abstracts of World War I Military Service](#). This will allow you to search by name. Another collection of note is the [New York State Education Department Division of Archives and History World War I Veterans' Service Data and Photographs](#).

World War Two: You need to submit [Standard Form 180](#)

To find records by branch of service:

For personnel records you will probably be forwarded to the Records Center in St. Louis. These places may have information, including duty rosters, after-action reports, etc.

US Army

[The Army Heritage & Education Center](#)

950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle, PA 17013

(717) 245-3971

[US Army Center of Military History](#)

103 Third Avenue

Ft. McNair, DC 20319-5058

Voice: 202.685.2704

Fax: 202.685.4570

US Air Force:

HQ USAF HOH

[Air Force Historical Support Division](#)

2822 Doherty Dr., SW, Suite 404

Joint Base Anacostia Bolling

Washington, DC 20373-5899

AF.HO.AFHSO.Research@us.af.mil

US Marine Corps:

Marine Corps History Division

2044 Broadway Street

Quantico, VA 22134

<https://www.usmcm.edu/>

US Navy:

The Naval Historical Center

Naval Historical Center

805 Kidder Breese Street SE

Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060

<http://www.history.navy.mil/>

US Coast Guard:

National Coast Guard Museum Association
78 Howard St., Suite A
New London, CT 06320
860-443-4200
<https://www.coastguardmuseum.org/>
Email: info@coastguardmuseum.org

US Military Museums

There are many military museums throughout the US. These can be museums for a particular unit, branch, fort, ship, etc. These may not have any personnel information but are good places for background information. There are also many other state military museums.

To search for Images see [Sources of U.S. Military Images: Major Repositories](#)

If you cannot find information on a particular soldier after reviewing these resources, the best advice is to look for information on the unit where the soldier served. You could also try searching for the unit's commanders, who may have written memoirs or books about the war.

In addition to the above resources, a good place to search is [WorldCat](#), which is a database of thousands of library catalogs. However, this is more of a discovery database since you will not be able to borrow from it directly.

You might also be able to find unit histories at [The Internet Archive](#).

Other possible resources are the local (to the soldier/unit) historical societies and public libraries. Local newspapers also had many "local interest" stories about men and women when they enlisted, were promoted, died, etc.

There are also two great newspaper databases:

[NYS Historic Newspapers](#)

[Fulton History](#) (This database also covers the whole state)

Finally, all NYS residents have access to different [research databases through the NYS Library](#)