

Handout for Researching WWI Veterans

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Conscription Key Dates

- May 18, 1917:* Selective Service Act of 1917 aka Selective Draft Act enacted. Allowed conscription: all males aged 21 to 30 were required to register
- June 5, 1917:* First draft registration day (48 states, Washington, DC). All men between ages of 21 and 30
- July 1917:* Registration for Puerto Rico, Alaska, and Hawaii; beginning of round ups of alleged draft evaders
- June 5, 1918:* Those who turned 21 after June 5, 1917
- August 1918:* Law amended to expand the age range to include all men 18 to 45, and to bar more volunteering. A supplemental registration on August 24, 1918, for those becoming 21 years old after June 5, 1918.
- September 12, 1918:* Men aged 18 through 45.

Did They Serve?

Registration cards: Tells you the person registered

Did they serve?

- Family lore
- Photographs, medals, other souvenirs of service
- Search for list of men ordered to report, muster rolls, rosters, morning reports, passenger lists for those sent overseas
- Search for state-level records: honor rolls, questionnaires, veteran censuses
- WWI Jewish servicemen questionnaires
- Search veterans' benefits records (burials, applications for benefits, applications for medals)
- Newspapers

Tips for Finding Honor Rolls

- Some available through Ancestry, Family Search, Fold3
- Search google.com
- Search: hathitrust.org
- Search terms
 - World War Honor Roll <state or county> American expeditionary forces
 - World war 1917 <state or county> official roster
- Example titles:
 - *In the World War, 1917-1918-1919, Cass County, North Dakota*
 - *An Honor roll containing a pictorial record of the gallant and courageous men from Brown County, So. Dak., U.S.A., who served in the Great War, 1917-1918-1919*
 - *The official roster of Ohio soldiers, sailors, and marines in the World War, 1917-1918*

Order of Battle

3 Volumes available on the web – search “Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War”. Available at Google Books, <https://www.history.army.mil>, FamilySearch.org

- 1st volume: Organization and overview: Armies
- 2nd volume: Divisions (<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1117637.pdf>)
- 3rd volume: Directory of Troops

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Other sources of info on activities of units

- Battle Participation of Organizations of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, Belgium and Italy
https://www.google.com/books/edition/BATTLE_PARTICIPATION_OF_ORGANIZATIONS_OF/8krCJspoJEkC?hl=en&gbpv=0
- The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I, https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/077/77-2/cmhPub_077-2.pdf
- Center for Military History has a page of links with great resources:
<https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/WWI.html>
- Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service 1917-1919 (multiple volumes available on the internet in various locations)
- American Expeditionary Forces, Infantry
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/American_Expeditionary_Forces,_Infantry
- AEF Table of Organization 1917-1919:
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/American_Expeditionary_Forces_Table_of_Organization,_1917-1919
- Records of the AEF (WWI): <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/120.html>

Unit Histories

Links to unit histories (NOT COMPLETE):

- <http://www.worldwar1.com/dbc/unithistories.htm>
- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_World_War_I_Unit_Histories

Search on unit, try various combinations

- For example: 329th infantry aef 1917-1919 or 329th field artillery aef 1917-1919, Twenty-Eighth division (spell out numbers)

For Aerosquadrons: Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service, 1917-1919

Newspapers and memoirs

Search on:

- Person's name
- Camp names
- Units

Photos/Image searches

- Battles (maps, locations where person was stationed)
- Uniforms
- Insignia
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_formation_of_the_United_States_Army_during_World_War_I)
- Weapons (artillery)
- Vehicles (trucks, planes, train cars, ships)

Sites to search

- Library of Congress
- Google (images)
- Internet Archive
- Hathitrust

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Final Pay Vouchers from NARA

<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>

Veterans' Organizations

American Legion

40 and 8 Society: The Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses

More resources

- Free WWI Genealogy Research Guide: <https://doughboy.org/education/wwi-genealogy-research-guide/>
- Lots of good general info on WWI <https://doughboy.org/education/>
- WWI resources by state or territory <https://www.theworldwar.org/research/military-records#us>
- Various Jewish archives have records on veterans from their regions
- Military grave locator: <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>
- For information on service members buried in overseas cemeteries. Can filter by conflict <http://www.abmc.gov/>
- Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I) at the National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/120.html>

Summary

Check the main genealogy web sites: FamilySearch.org (free), Ancestry.com (free at library), Fold3.com (free at library) and browse their catalogs for WWI/Military info, MyHeritage.com is limited for US Military records

Dig deeper: Explore the Order of Battle to learn where your soldier served, search for unit information on the web, search for photos

- Hathitrust.org
- Internet Archive (archive.org)
- Books.google.com
- Library of Congress (loc.gov)
- National Archives (nara.gov)
- Image searches
- Newspapers