

U.S. Military Records by Conflict

The types and availability of military records vary by conflict. This overview outlines the basics to aid in researching ancestors who served.

Major United States Conflicts

Many of the provided links direct to databases you may need to access from a library location. Some collections are available through more than one database with varying levels of access (indexes, digitized images, etc.).

Revolutionary War | 1775-1783

Revolutionary War records have been microfilmed and many are available online. [Loyalist records](#)¹ exist too!

- [Compiled service records](#)² – complete for every member of Continental Army and state troops
- [Pension and bounty land warrant applications](#)³ – land was primarily granted in Ohio; some records destroyed in a fire
- [Pension payment ledgers](#)⁴
- [Muster rolls, payrolls, and other personnel records index](#)⁵

War of 1812 | 1812-1815

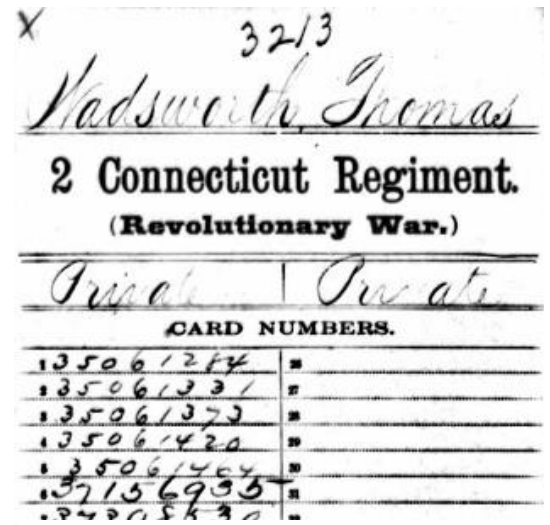
Not all records have been microfilmed or digitized.

- [Compiled service records index](#)⁶ – service records are not complete; not all have been microfilmed
- [Pension application files index](#)⁷
- [Bounty land warrants](#)⁸ – land was granted in Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, and Missouri

Mexican War | 1846-1848

- [Compiled service records](#)⁹
- [Pension files index](#)¹⁰
- Bounty land applications – have not been microfilmed or digitized and must be [ordered from the National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#)¹¹

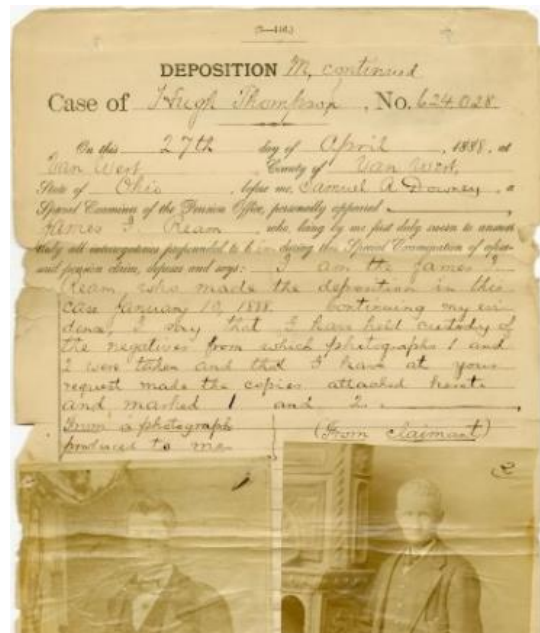
Tip: FamilySearch has compiled [a thorough overview](#)¹² of U.S. military records including research strategies, a detailed guide to records for each conflict ranging from Colonial Wars to Vietnam, etc.



Compiled service record for Thomas Wadsworth, Revolutionary War

Civil War | 1861-1865

- Indexes of [Union](#)¹³, [Union colored troops](#)¹⁴, and [Confederate](#)¹⁵ compiled service records
- [Index of all soldiers and sailors](#)¹⁶ and [Prisoners of War](#)¹⁷
- Pension records – the Federal government offered pensions to Union soldiers ([index](#))¹⁸. Confederate soldiers could apply for a pension with their state (see their state's archives for these records)
- [1890 "Union Veterans Census"](#)¹⁹ – a special schedule accompanied the 1890 federal census
- Burials – search the [Nationwide Gravesite Locator](#)²⁰ (Union and Confederate) or [headstone records](#)²¹ (Union)
- [Draft Registrations](#)²² and [Register of Enlistments](#)²³



Document from Pension File for Jane Thompson, Civil War

Spanish-American War | 1898

- [Compiled service records index](#)²⁴
- [Unit histories and rosters](#)²⁵
- [Pension files index](#)¹⁸

World War I | 1914-1918

- Service records – many destroyed in a fire; can be [ordered from the National Personnel Records Center \(NPRC\)](#)¹¹
- [Casualty index](#)²⁶ – provides name, rank, and means of death for American soldiers
- [Draft registration cards](#)²⁷
- Pension records – can be [ordered from NPRC](#)¹¹
- [Burials](#)²⁸ – search for burials of soldiers who died on foreign soil

World War II | 1939-1945 (United States involvement began in 1941)

- Service records – many destroyed in a fire; can be [ordered from NPRC](#)¹¹
- [Enlistment records index](#)²⁹ – incomplete
- Draft registrations – [1942 \(fourth registration\)](#)³⁰; [1940-1947 "Young Men" \(multiple registrations\)](#)³¹
- [Burials](#)²⁸ – search for soldiers who died on foreign soil

Korean War | 1950-1953

- Personnel records – can be [ordered from NPRC](#)¹¹
- Draft records – can be [ordered from NPRC](#)¹¹ (World War II veterans were not required to sign up)
- [Battle Deaths](#)³² and [Dead and Army wounded](#)³³ indexes; [list of casualties](#)³⁴ by home state
- [American prisoners of war](#)³⁵, [repatriated prisoners of war](#)³⁶, and [missing in action](#)³⁷ indexes

Vietnam War | 1964-1972

- Personnel records – can be [ordered from NPRC](#)¹¹
- Discharge records – veterans could register their discharge at a local courthouse; visit courthouses or search [FamilySearch](#)³⁸ for digitized courthouse records
- Casualties – search the [casualty records index](#)³⁹, the [National Archives](#)⁴⁰ (deaths, MIA, or POW), and the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#)⁴¹ (MIA); the [Nationwide Gravesite Locator](#)²⁰ (burials); visit, [request a rubbing](#)⁴² of, or [view and search](#)⁴³ the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall
- [Awards and Decorations of Honor](#)⁴⁴

Tip: Copies of records can be [ordered from the National Archives](#)¹¹. If requesting records for an individual who left service less than 62 years ago, you must have consent from the veteran or [next-of kin](#)⁴⁵.

For general military record information, check out our [U.S. Military Records: A Beginner's Guide](#)⁴⁶