

U.S. Military Records

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Whenever possible, you want to collect the military records of your ancestors because they may contain additional genealogical information and they might help you piece together a great story about your family.

There are several places to go for military records. Some are free and others are not. However, there are free options, even at the pay to play websites.

What Information Do You Know About Your Military Ancestor?

It is best if you have your ancestors **full name, where and when he/she was born, when they enlisted or what (if any) conflict they were involved in.** Other information, like close family is helpful.

You Need to Know

In 1973 a fire at the National Personnel Records Center destroyed many of our military records. Here are excerpts [from this NARA article](#) helps you to understand why you might not find the records you seek.

“The estimated loss of **Army** personnel records for those discharged from **November 1, 1912, to January 1, 1950**, was about 80 percent. In addition, approximately 75 percent of **Air Force** personnel records for those discharged from **September 25, 1947, through January 1, 1964** (with names alphabetically after Hubbard, James E.) were also destroyed in the catastrophe.

However, in the years following the fire, the NPRC collected numerous series of records (referred to as **Auxiliary Records**) that are **used to reconstruct basic service information.**” (Source: National Archives and Records Administration article noted below.)



(National Archives photo)

Go here to read the full article [“Archives Recalls Fire That Claimed Millions of Military Personnel Files.”](#)



GenealogyTV.org



YouTube.com/GenealogyTV

Ancestry

For many, Ancestry may be the first place you find military records and frankly it is the easiest. A popular and easy record to find is the Military Draft Registration Cards (pictured).

Ancestry acquired most of its military records from the National Archives and Records Administration. You may find them there too, but searching for them on Ancestry is much easier due to their indexing and search algorithms.

You will want to note everything on this card. Often, field #7 shows a relative and their relationship. In this case, it is William Miller's mother in field #8. With the information on this card, may help you to find more records.

SERIAL NUMBER 2536	1. NAME (Print) William Alfred Miller		ORDER NUMBER 137A
2. ADDRESS (Print) Rt 1		Warrenton Warren D.C.	
3. TELEPHONE no	4. AGE IN YEARS 27	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Warren Co	6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. R. S. Miller		8. RELATIONSHIP OF NEXT PERSON Mother	
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON Rt 1		Warrenton Warren D.C.	
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME Employed at present			
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. Form 1 (over) 16-17100 William Alfred Miller Sergeant			

Free Military Collections on Ancestry

Ancestry has many records you can search for free, without a paid subscription. [Here is the entire list of free records at Ancestry.](#) Below are some of the free records I found specific to U.S. Military Service, but this is not the entire list, just the ones I found. Finding your ancestor even an index, may provide clues that there are more records to seek. If you find your ancestor in one of the indexes and Ancestry indicates they have more behind the paywall, you can start a free trial to find them. [Go here for a free trial subscription at Ancestry.](#) You may also find them at the [NARA website](#) for free, but it may be more challenging to find.

- [U.S., Civil War Jewish-American Veterans, 1861-1865](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., Compiled Military Service Records for American Volunteer Soldiers, Mexican War, 1845-1848](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Descriptive Lists of Colored Volunteer Army Soldiers, 1864](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Compiled Military Service Records for American Volunteer Soldiers, Mexican War, 1845-1848](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Compiled Records from Various Societies, 1875-2010](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., Japanese Americans Relocated During World War II, 1942-1946](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., Navy Casualties Books, 1776-1941](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Returns from Military Posts, 1806-1916](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles, 1790-1844](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Spanish American War Volunteers Index to Compiled Military Service Records, 1898](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., World War I Civilian Draft Registrations, 1917-1918](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., World War I Mothers' Pilgrimage, 1929](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [U.S., World War I Naval Deaths, 1917-1919](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., World War I Troop Transport Ships, 1918-1919](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., World War II Japanese-American Internment Camp Documents, 1942-1946](#) **FREE**
- [U.S., World War II United News Newsreels, 1942-1946 \(Free\)](#) **FREE**
- [Alabama, U.S., National Guard Index Cards, 1897-1924](#) **FREE INDEX**

- [California, U.S., World War I Death Announcements, 1918-1921](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [California, U.S., World War I Soldier Citations, 1918-1921](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [California, World War I Soldier Photographs, 1917-1918](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [DeKalb County, Georgia, U.S., Confederate Enlistment Index, 1861-1863](#) **FREE**
- [Web: Kansas, U.S., World War II Selective Service Index, 1940-1946](#) **FREE**
- [Web: Kent County, Michigan, U.S., World War I Veterans Census Index, 1917-1919](#) **FREE**
- [Kentucky Soldiers of the War of 1812](#) **FREE**
- [Kentucky in the War of 1812](#) **FREE**
- [Minnesota, U.S., Spanish American War Muster Rolls and Casualty Lists, 1898-1899](#) **FREE INDEX**
- [Mississippi Territory in the War of 1812](#) **FREE**
- [Missouri National Guard, the Mexican Border, 1916](#) **FREE**
- [Web: Oklahoma, U.S., Confederate Pension Index, 1915-1955](#) **FREE**
- [Web: U.S., Marine Corps Casualty Indexes, 1940-1958](#) **FREE**

Fold3 (Paid and Free options)

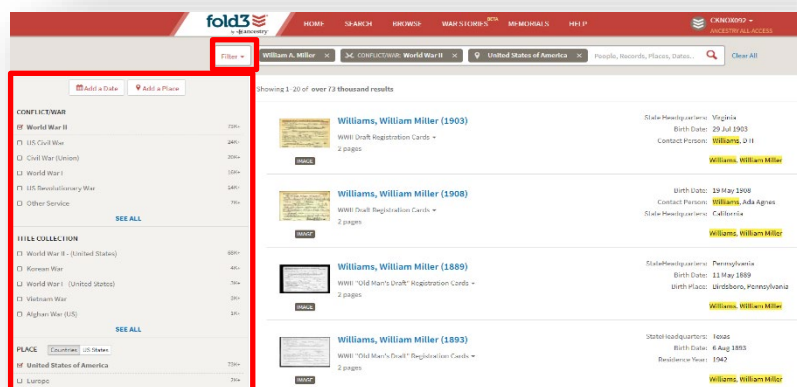
Fold3 is owned by Ancestry. If you already have the **Ancestry All Access** membership, you already have access to Fold3 as part of your subscription. Here is a [Free 7 Day Trial](#) to Fold3 (affiliate link).

The nice thing about Fold3 is that it is neatly organized by country, war, and is searchable by name.

Once you have drilled into a record set (military conflict like WWII), then you can search by name.

Pay attention to the number of results at the top of the page. In this example, there are 73 thousand results when searching for William A. Miller in the U.S. WWII records. Use the filters on the left side to help filter down further.

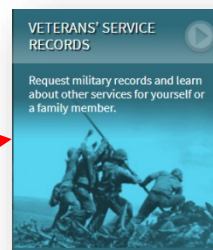
If you are an Ancestry member, using their military records search may be faster to find what you seek.



National Archives and Records Administration (Free)

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is free for anyone to access. It is located at <https://www.archives.gov/>. Remember the .gov part.... because Archives.com is owned by Ancestry and is a completely different website.

As soon as you arrive at the NARA website, you'll see a thumbnail that says Veterans' Service Records.



Once on the Veterans page, look for the box that says [Research Using Military Records](#), then [What's Available Online](#).

Once on the Online Veterans and Military Documents page, look to the right side where it says "On This Page." There you can find hyperlinks to the military conflicts you may want to research. Jump to the conflict and see what they have to offer. In this case, we are looking at the files

On This Page

[Current Era and General Military Records](#)
[Vietnam Conflict Era](#)
[Korean War Era](#)
[World War II Era](#)
[World War I Era](#)
[Spanish-American War Era](#)
[Civil War Era](#)
[American Revolutionary War Era](#)

for [World War II Prisoners of War Data File, 12/7/1941- 11/19/1946](#).

Once you find a record, click the [paper icon](#).

Clicking on the paper icon noted above, for this record set, this is the results.

In this case, William A. Miller was a Prisoner of War in Stalag 7A in Moosburg, Germany during WWII. He was captured in France and was originally from North Carolina. The good news for him is he was liberated by the U.S. Military forces.

Field Title	Value	Meaning
SERIAL NUMBER	20453240	20453240
NAME	MILLER WILLIAM A	MILLER WILLIAM A
GRADE_ALPHA	PFC	Private First Class
GRADE_CODE	7	Second Lieutenant or Nurse or Dietitian or Physical therapy aide or Private First Class or Ensign or Second Class, Seaman
SERVICE_CODE	1	ARMY
ARM OR SERVICE	INF	Infantry
ARM OR SERVICE_CODE	10	INF: INFANTRY
DATE_REPORT_DAY (DD)	07	07
DATE_REPORT_MONTH (MM)	08	08
DATE_REPORT_YEAR (Y)	4	1944
RACIAL_GROUP_CODE	1	WHITE
STATE_OF_RESIDENCE	46	North Carolina
TYPE_OF_ORGANIZATION	740	Branch Immaterial/Infantry Division Band/Dental Corps/Medical Department
PARENT_UNIT_NUMBER	120	120
PARENT_UNIT_TYPE	06	Group/Regiment/Commands/System
AREA	76	European Theatre: France
LATEST_REPORT_DATE: DAY (DD)	30	30
LATEST_REPORT_DATE: MONTH (MM)	07	07
LATEST_REPORT_DATE: YEAR (Y)	5	1945
SOURCE_OF_REPORT	1	Individual has been reported through sources considered official.
STATUS	8	Returned to Military Control, Liberated or Repatriated
RETAINING_POWER	1	GERMANY
CAMP	013	Stalag 7A Moosburg Bavaria 48-12 (Work Camps 3324-46 Krumbachstrasse 48011, Work Camp 3368 Munich 48-11)
REP		
POW_TRANSPORT_SHIPS		

Deceased Ancestor's Information

Name | Alternate Name

First Names: Last Names:

Search with a life event:
 Birth | Marriage | Residence | Death | Any

Birthplace: Birth Year (Range): From To

Search with a relationship:
 Spouse | Father | Mother | Other Person

Restrict records by:
 Location: Type: Batch Number | Film Number

Country: State or Province:

Type:
 Birth, Baptism, and Christening
 Marriage
 Death
 Census, Residence, and Lists
 Immigration and Naturalization
 Military
 Probate
 Other

Match all terms exactly

FamilySearch

The best way I have found to search for U.S. Military records on FamilySearch is to:

- Go to the Search tab at the top of the screen and drop down to Records.
- Click on the map for the U.S. and just select United States.
- Enter the name of the person you are researching and any vital information you have.
- Before clicking Search, scroll down to "Restrict records by:" and select "Type."
- Then check Military
- Then Search
- You will likely need to filter your results on the left side to narrow the total number of records.

How to Obtain Copies of Military Records (Fee)

Ordering service record copies may provide additional information for your family history. Shown below is an Honorable Discharge record, including the soldiers signature and thumbprint (in this case).

[For more information about ordering records online.](#)

Ordering Military Service Records Veterans' Service Records, WWI - Present Pre-WWI Service Records

Other Resources

- Another excellent and organized place to look for U.S. military records online is at the [FamilySearch Wiki U.S. Military Records page](#).
- Also see, [U.S. Army of Military History](#).
- You may find your ancestor buried in one of the [National Cemeteries](#).
- Look for Gold Star Mothers who visited the graves of their fallen sons after WWI. Here is an episode I did about the [Gold Star Mothers](#).
- [FamilySearch has U.S. Headstone Applications 1925-1949](#)

**ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
HONORABLE DISCHARGE**

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL KNOX JOHN A	2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 34 964 747	3. GRADE TEC/5	4. JAN OF SERVICE MD	5. COMPONENT AMS
6. ORGANIZATION 55TH EVAC HOSP	7. DATE OF SEPARATION 26 DEC 45	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION SEPARATION CENTER FORT BRAGG N C		
9. PLACEMENT ADDRESS FOR WAIVER PURPOSES 911A MAIN ST TARBORO N C EDGEcombe CO	10. DATE OF BIRTH 27 NOV 16	11. PLACE OF BIRTH TARBORO N C		
12. HEIGHT FROM ANKLE TO FINGER TIPS (MILLIMETERS) (MILLIMETERS) SER 9	13. HAIR COLOR BLUE	14. EYES BROWN	15. AGE 5-9	16. SEX M
17. NO. EMPLOYED (5-55,010)	18. MENTAL STATUS X	19. U.S. CITIZEN Y	20. OCCUPATION AND NO. PROJECTIONIST MOTION PICTURE	21. OTHER INFORMATION X
MILITARY HISTORY				
22. DATE OF RECEPTION 23 MAR 44	23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 23 MAR 44	24. SERVICE CENTER/STATION/DETACHMENT PORT BRAGG N C	25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE PORT BRAGG N C	
26. REASON FOR SEPARATION OPERATOR POWER PORTABLE (846)	27. LENGTH OF SERVICE 1	28. COMPONENT AND GRADE EDGEcombe CO N C	29. GRADE SER 9	30. DATE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE 21 JAN 45
31. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. GENERATOR	32. NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS 1	33. NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS AND DATES OPERATOR POWER PORTABLE (846)	34. NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS AND DATES 85 30 CAL RIFLE M-1	35. NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS AND DATES CENTRAL EUROPE
36. ACHIEVEMENTS AND DISTINCTIONS BRASS CAMPAIGN MEDAL WITH 1 BRONZE SERVICE STAR, GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL SO 45 HQ 55 EVAC HOSP 11 MAY 45, VICTORY MEDAL				
37. NUMBER RECEIVED IN ACTION NONE				
38. LATEST REGISTRATION NUMBER 11APR44 15APR45 20NOV44 TY 26NOV45				
39. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE 0 9 24 0 11 10	40. SERVICE RECORD NUMBER TECHNICIAN	41. DATE OF SEPARATION 11 DEC 45	42. GRADE U S	43. DATE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE 20 DEC 45
44. REASON FOR SEPARATION NONE				
45. REASON FOR SEPARATION CONVENIENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AN 615-566 15DEC44 RNL-2 THE REACTIVATION				
46. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED NONE				
PAY DATA				
47. DEDUCTION FOR PAY ADVANCE NONE	48. PAY GRADE TEC/5	49. PAY RATE \$ 6.90	50. PAY DATE 21 JAN 45	51. PAY METHOD PAY BY
52. PAY METHOD PAY BY				
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54. PAY METHOD PAY BY				
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100. PAY METHOD PAY BY				

88. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)
 NO TIME LOST UNDER AW 107
 LAPD BUROK ISSUED
 ASR SCORE 67 (2 SEPT 45)

89. SIGNATURE OF SIGNED BEING SEPARATED
 J B COLLIER

90. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature)
 J B COLLIER
 1ST LT INF

91. SIGNATURE OF SIGNED BEING SEPARATED
 J B COLLIER

92. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature)
 J B COLLIER
 1ST LT INF