

# Researching World War Veterans

Special Collections Division  
Akron-Summit County Public Library  
60 S. High Street, Akron, Ohio 44326  
speccollections@akronlibrary.org

The United States joined the World Wars from 1917 to 1919 and again from 1941 to 1945. For many who served, this was the first time they saw Europe or Asia. The wars redrew maps, shifted power and changed the way millions of people viewed themselves and the world. Discovering more about ancestors who served during the Great War and World War II can provide an interesting aspect to your family history. Many of the books on the World Wars can be found in our Military section in **aisle 10B**.

When researching a person who died while serving in the military, keep in mind some practical considerations. Prior to 1920, the bodies of fallen soldiers generally were not returned home for burial but were buried near the battlefield or in a consolidated "American Cemetery." After 1920, the surviving family members were asked if they wanted the body returned for burial. In these cases, obituaries appeared in the newspaper and funerals occurred many weeks after the date of death to allow time for the body to travel back to the United States. Additionally, in many cases only federal government records will be available. For example, death certificates are state records, and in Ohio they were not issued for deceased soldiers returned home for burial. Federal Casualty Lists served as death records.

## Getting Started

- *The Great War: A Guide to Service Records of all the World's Fighting Men & Volunteers* (1998) **aisle 10B**
- *Official Roster of Ohio Soldiers Sailors and Marines in the World War 1917-18* (1918) **aisle 10B**.
- *World War II Military Records* (2003) **aisle 6B & 10B**
- *Touchstones: A Guide to Records, Rights & Resources for Families of American World War II Casualties* (1997) **aisle 10B**

## Additional Resources

- *Bringing History Home to Granger* (1995, 1996) **aisle 3B**.
- *Honor Roll of Ohio of the World War- Stark County* (1919) **aisle 4A**.
- *The 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in World War II* (1948) **aisle 10B**
- *State Summary of War Casualties [Ohio]* (1946) **aisle 10B**
- *A History of Wayne County in the World War and in the Wars of the Past* (1919) **aisle 4A**.
- *Information about People who served in World War II from Hudson, Ohio* (2003) **aisle 4A**.
- *Military Veterans of Paulding County Ohio* (1994) **aisle 3B**.
- *WPA Summit County Cemetery Maps* (1939) **Map Case**.
- *Summit County Veterans Burial Card File (WWI)* **Archival Collection, 7 A 8**
- *Summit County Veterans Grave Registration Cards (WWI)* **Archival Collection, 9 A 4**
- *Burial Reports (May 1941-September 1995)*, **Archival Collection, In process**

## Electronic Resources

- Selected World War I records on-line <http://archives.gov/research/arc/topics/ww1.html>.
- *World War I Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages* (1999) Prologue  
<http://archives.gov/publications/prologue/1999/summer/gold-star-mothers-1.html>
- *They Answered the Call* (1998) Prologue  
<http://archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/fall/military-service-in-world-war-one.html>
- Military Resources: World War I  
<http://archives.gov/research/alic/reference/military/ww1.html>
- World War II Honor List of Dead and Missing Army and Army Air Forces Personnel  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/ww2/army-casualties/index.html>.
- State Summary of War Casualties from World War II for Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Personnel <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/ww2/navy-casualties/index.html>.
- Casualties from the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor  
<http://www.nps.gov/usar/ExtendWeb1.html>.

## Military Records

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, St. Louis (NPRC-MPR) is the repository of millions of military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services during the 20th century. On July 12, 1973, there was a fire on the top floor of the NPRC-MPC. Many records prior to 1960 were destroyed. Personnel records can be reconstructed through the use of pay vouchers and medical admissions records but you should provide as much information as possible about the service member.

- For veterans and next of kin of deceased veterans, use Electronic Veteran Records (<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html>) to request military records.
- If you are not the next of kin, use Standard Form 180 (<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>) to request military records.

Records of the Quartermaster General – Graves Registration Service held by the National Archives in Washington, D.C. contain burial information for those American Service Members who died in theatres of war. For more information see <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/092.html#92.9>.