

British Army

Many of our ancestors fought in the various wars in which Britain has been involved. Whether it was The Great War, the Crimean or even the Wars of the Roses, warfare is a thread through the fabric of our past.

A Bit of History

Way back in 1537, a Royal Charter was granted by Henry VIII authorising the establishment of a “perpetual corporation for the defence of the realm to be known as the Fraternity or Guild of Artillery of Longbows, Crossbows and Handgonnes”. The British Army came into being and has continued to exist for nearly 500 years.

Since that time, different Regiments have developed as weaponry evolved. You might find that an ancestor was one of the last to ride a horse into battle or was one of the first tank drivers.

Army Ranks

Whatever your ancestor did in the Army, understanding the rank in which they served will help.

Officers

Field Marshal
General
Lieutenant General
Major General
Brigadier
Colonel
Lieutenant Colonel
Major
Captain
Lieutenant
Second Lieutenant
Cadet

Other Ranks

Sergeant Major
Warrant Officer
Staff Sergeant
Sergeant
Corporal
Lance Corporal
Private

Where are the Army records?

Whilst some records are held on various pay per view websites, the National Archives at Kew hold Muster rolls and Pay Lists from about 1730 to 1878. They also hold Royal Artillery records of service and papers from 1755 to 1917. First World War medal cards may also be seen for a small fee. For the service records of those who served in the Second World War, you will need to visit the Veterans Agency website and download the appropriate forms.

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If you are having problems in finding a particular Army record or are too far away to pop in to Kew and have a look, someone else might be able to help you. Register for FREE at <http://www.genealogy-specialists.com/> and post details of your ancestor. The members will be delighted to try to help. Also, if you have an Army record of your ancestor and have problems either reading the writing or understanding abbreviations and initials, post the details so that others can see if they can assist.

If you would like to discover additional information about the British Army and the conflicts in which they fought, listed below are some products that will certainly enable you to learn more, and all of them are available from [www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com). Just pop the reference number in the website search box to see the details.

- Aldershot Army Camp Map 1860 Ref: MMP-MP501
- Army Research-Other Ranks During the Napoleonic War Ref: BFHS-SH015
- A Succession of Titles of the Regiments & Corps of the British Regular Army Ref: VMS-16
- Dating Old Army Photographs Ref: FHP-183
- My Ancestor was in the British Army Ref: SOG-1195
- The Birmingham Territorial Units of the Royal Army Medical Corps 1914 -1919 Ref: MHD-M0244
- Tracing Your Second World War Ancestors Ref: CSB-60
- With the Flag to Pretoria 1899-1900 Ref: ARB-1204
- World War I Army Ancestry Ref: FHP-030
- 1890 Her Majesty's Army Ref: YBM-SKU32-Y002250

Parish Chest has a complete section that is dedicated to **Armed Forces** where you will find everything from Army Lists to WW1 Volunteers. Don't forget to use the website search box as well and pop in words such as **Army** or **Military**.