

Genealogy Research in Military Records

On April 16, my Sweetie Bev and I attended a Family Discovery Day in Grand Forks, sponsored by the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). The workshop offered several sessions on family history research including one on military records. Since the past couple articles were on Veterans oral histories, I thought some of you might be interested to find out about ancestors who spent time in the military. Here are some records that may be available. The compiled service records consisting of muster rolls, pay vouchers, and could give you information on rank, unit, dates of service and medical information. Pension records may also be available on Veterans surviving spouses and other heirs. Here is where you could find marriage certifications, birth and death records, discharge papers and other supporting papers. Bounty Land files contain information on land given to Veterans for service between 1775 and 1855. If you have ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, early Indian Wars or the Mexican War, they may have been given land title for service. So where do I go to find these records, you ask. Older records, Revolutionary War to 1912 are stored in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. More recent records are stored at the National Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO. You can request information by going to eVetRecs at <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html>. There may be a cost at both locations and it may take a couple months to get the records.

Ancestry.com is another method to use to find military records. All of our local libraries have subscriptions to ancestry.com and you can do searching for military records as well as many other records. Ancestry.com is a subscription based source with prices starting from \$19.99 for a monthly membership to \$199 annual membership. I've found many Navy muster rolls for my career Navy uncle. Al was quite a character who could tell stories for hours. He and his wife Minnie are buried at Ft Sheridan, near Chicago.

If you don't want to pay for searches and don't have a library near you, you can try the LDS church's site familysearch.org. They may not have as many records as ancestry.com but are at no cost. I searched for my uncle there and didn't find anything. However, I searched for my father and found many records, including his draft registration card for WWII when he was 46 years old. You can also find family trees that others have compiled from which you may learn a lot more about your family.

If you get hooked on Genealogy, there is a full-day workshop on September 24 at Horizon Middle School in Moorhead. You can find more information at heritageed.com.