

## Military Research: Naval and Merchant Seaman Muster Rolls

We find a lot of our US ancestor's genealogy from the Armies that fought from the Indian Wars through Desert Storm. We know Army records are found from a variety of sources. Navies, on the other hand, are a lot more elusive. It is not only our own United States Navy that played a role in our country's history, but other navies too. Before the United States constituted its own Navy, Great Britain, Spain, France and others controlled the seas. Sailors might have joined of their own free will or be conscripted by force. You also have the merchant marine or civilian sailors that served on those ships that moved the people and goods across the oceans. One of the issues leading to the War of 1812 was the conscription of the United States sailors by Great Britain. Great Britain said that these men were British subjects that had defected to the United States and the Royal Navy was entitled to take them back regardless of their nationality. We know what happened next.

Our rivers were the main highways in early American history. Barges and later steamships plied these waterways to move goods and people. I have attempted to identify those sources where an ancestor might have owned or served on these vessels.

The following resources are an attempt to locate information on our ancestors who might have served in the Navies or Merchant Marines. Resource guides are available to aid you, especially if your ancestor served in a Navy other than the United States. I have mostly focused on the European navies. However, East Asia is more problematic because a lot of countries did not have established Navies until the last 100 years or so. The Chinese are the exception in their cultural history dates back several thousand years and had ships plying the seas. Japan came into their own in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century when they modernized their armed services. For the most part, eastern Asia was dominated by European countries until WW2 when Japan conquered most of the Pacific Rim before being defeated.

### United States Navy

Search Ancestry's Card Catalog – Put the search word “Navy” in the Title block and you will get a list of databases and books. (Requires a subscription or use your ABQ library card online from the Main Library website.)

Similar to Ancestry, you can search familysearch.org. From the top menu, select “Search” and then the sub-menu “Wiki” or “Books”. Enter Navy on the search bar and you will find a list of resources. (This is free).

U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958, Ancestry.com:

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1089>

Here are three resource links from the National Archives:

1) <https://research.archives.gov/id/594996>

2) <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/024.html>

3) <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2013/12/02/know-your-records-u-s-navy-muster-rolls-and-personnel-diaries/>

Fold3: [https://www.fold3.com/title\\_829/wwii\\_navy\\_muster\\_rolls#overview](https://www.fold3.com/title_829/wwii_navy_muster_rolls#overview)

Note: You can also find ancestors by browsing Fold3 by engagement period.

Family Search Wiki: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/U.S.\\_Navy](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/U.S._Navy)

Legacy Tree Newsletter (3 links): [http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy\\_news/2016/09/5-more-us-military-records-for-genealogy-you-might-not-know-about.html](http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy_news/2016/09/5-more-us-military-records-for-genealogy-you-might-not-know-about.html)

[http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy\\_news/2016/07/6-military-records-for-genealogy-that-you-might-not-know-about.html](http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy_news/2016/07/6-military-records-for-genealogy-that-you-might-not-know-about.html)

[http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy\\_news/2016/03/researching-female-ancestors-in-naras-military-records.html](http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy_news/2016/03/researching-female-ancestors-in-naras-military-records.html)

## **Merchant Marines**

A useful guide for researching Merchant Marine Genealogy:

<http://www.genealogyandfamilyhistory.com/researching-merchant-mariners/>

National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/178.html>

Merchant Marines: <http://www.usmm.org/contact.html>

Legacy Tree Newsletter (Two links): [http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy\\_news/2017/01/going-deeper-into-us-maritime-records-.html](http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy_news/2017/01/going-deeper-into-us-maritime-records-.html)

[http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy\\_news/2017/01/going-deeper-into-us-maritime-records-pt2-deserters-casualties-and-shipwrecks.html](http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy_news/2017/01/going-deeper-into-us-maritime-records-pt2-deserters-casualties-and-shipwrecks.html)

## **American Rivers**

US Migration Rivers and lakes: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/US\\_Migration\\_Rivers\\_and\\_Lakes](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/US_Migration_Rivers_and_Lakes)

Cincinnati and Hamilton County – Inland Rivers Library:

<http://www.cincinnati.library.org/main/inlandrivers.html>

For historical information about what boats plied the American Rivers. See Riverboat Dave's web site:

<http://www.riverboatdaves.com/riverboats.html>

This web site is dedicated to Steam Boats. A lot of information, but you will have to drill down into the web site to find more historical and database information. <http://www.steamboats.org/index.php>

## British Navy and Merchant Marine

United Kingdom Merchant Marine:

[https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_Kingdom\\_Merchant\\_Navy\\_Seamen\\_Records\\_\(FamilySearch\\_Historical\\_Records\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_Kingdom_Merchant_Navy_Seamen_Records_(FamilySearch_Historical_Records))

A United Kingdom Mariner's Genealogy Website: <http://rmhh.co.uk/mariners.html>

Guides to the UK National Archives:

UK Merchant Marines: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-seaman-serving-1858-1917/>

UK Births, marriages and deaths at sea or abroad: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/birth-marriage-death-sea-or-abroad/>

Family Search Wiki:

British MM: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/British\\_Merchant\\_Marine](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/British_Merchant_Marine)

Scotland MM: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Scotland\\_Merchant\\_Marine](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Scotland_Merchant_Marine)

Wales MM: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Wales\\_Merchant\\_Marine](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Wales_Merchant_Marine)

Merchant Marine Research Guide: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/researchers/research-guides/research-guide-c1-merchant-navy-tracing-people-crew-lists>

Where to find Royal Navy Service Records: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/research/tracing-your-family-history/tracing-your-royal-naval-history/where-to-find-royal-navy-service-records>

Royal Navy Research Guide: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/researchers/research-guides/research-guide-b1-royal-navy-tracing-people>

The following website is a part of the "Forces War Records" (a subscription based entity). But this portion appears to be a free forum separate from the "Forces War Records". It might be of some use, but read the "read-me" section here. <https://www.british-genealogy.com/threads/83285-FWR-Members-Please-Read>

Here's the main page. British-Genealogy.com: <https://www.british-genealogy.com>

Royal Naval Social History - Circa 1793 - 1920+ <http://www.pbenyon.plus.com/Naval.html>

## Spain Military Records

Family Search Wiki: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Spain\\_Military\\_Records](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Spain_Military_Records)

Ancestry.com: <http://search.ancestry.com/Places/Europe/Spain/Default.aspx>

This is a compendium of Spain's Genealogy web sites (mostly derived from a list from familysearch.org, Ancestry.com, and others.) <http://forebears.io/spain>

This is a Spanish Navy Wikipedia historical article containing information that might lead to other resources: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish\\_Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Navy)

## **Dutch Navies and Merchant Marines**

Naval history of the Netherlands: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_Netherlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_history_of_the_Netherlands)

Genealogical research – World War II merchant navy: <https://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/military-history-collections/contents/genealogy/ww-ii-merchant-navy>

Netherlands Naval links to other military resources: <http://www.netherlandsnavy.nl/Links.htm>

Family Search Wiki: [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Netherlands\\_Military\\_Records](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Netherlands_Military_Records)

## **German Naval and Merchant Marines Records**

A lot of German military records can be found in the Parish registers. A better historical review can be found here for both army and naval records. [http://www.genealoger.com/german/ger\\_military.htm](http://www.genealoger.com/german/ger_military.htm)

This is a historical article about the early German Imperial Navy from Wikipedia. It has background information to help in your search. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_German\\_Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_German_Navy)

Here is another Wikipedia article about the WW2 German Navy. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kriegsmarine>

This is a National Archives PDF document "SELECTED GERMAN DOCUMENTS FROM THE RECORDS OF THE NAVAL RECORDS COLLECTION OF THE OFFICE OF NAVAL RECORDS AND LIBRARY, 1897-1917" : <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/captured-german-records/microfilm/m2089.pdf>

## **Chinese Military Records**

This link is about finding Chinese military records (general). [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/China\\_Military\\_Records](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/China_Military_Records)

The following link provides an overview how to find Chinese genealogy. It doesn't provide any information about finding a military ancestor, but it is useful for Chinese Genealogy. <http://houseofchinn.com/ChineseGenealogy.html>

Chinese-American Ancestry Resources: <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/chinese-american-guide>

## **Japanese Military Records**

The following information will be more generic than specifically for Military Research.

Rootsweb Japanese Genealogy Web Sites: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jpnwgv/GenSites.html>

Wikipedia – A history of the Japanese Navy:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_Japanese\\_Navy#Development\\_of\\_Shogunal\\_and\\_Domain\\_naval\\_forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Japanese_Navy#Development_of_Shogunal_and_Domain_naval_forces)

Ancestry.com Data Collections: <http://search.ancestry.com/Places/Asia/Japan/Default.aspx>

Japanese-American Genealogy: <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/japanese-american-guide>

## ABQ Library Resources

*Just a few of the books found at the ABQ Main Library*

- 1) **Tracing Your Naval Ancestors** by Bruno Pappalardo 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Stacks: R941 pappalardo

Royal Navy Ranks and descriptions with resource lists.

- 2) **Naval pensioners of the United States, 1800-1851** by Lloyd de Witt Bockstruck, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Stacks, 973.5 Bockstruck

As the introduction states, prior to 1799, individual states were responsible for funding naval pensions. Under the acts of 2 March 1799 and 23 April 1800, the pension fund was established from prizes taken at sea and administered separate and apart from the general pension system of the United States. The Secretaries of the Navy, Treasury and War oversaw the pension fund, and required to present a annual report to Congress.

- 3) **Scottish Maritime Records, 1600-1850, A Guide for Family Historians.**: David Dobson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Stacks R941.1 Scotland (Plastic Folder with several other small Scottish books).

## The Fyddeye Guide to America's Maritime History

By Joe Follansbee

The Fyddeye Guide to America's Maritime History is a one-of-a-kind directory for tall ships, lighthouses, historic warships, maritime museums, and other attractions you can visit today that preserve, protect, and interpret our nation's maritime history. Use the Guide to plan a family trip, map out a heritage travel experience, research your local history, or find a heritage organization to help you discover the sea captain in your family tree. The Guide covers maritime history attractions in the Lower 48 states, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

This book is available on Amazon.com and other libraries.

Here's a YouTube promotional video. You might find it entertaining.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Hibetz8gI>