

Over There: World War One Genealogy

Presented by Ron Darrah

A. The United States in WW1

April 6, 1917-November 11, 1918
24 million men registered for service
4, 355,000 men and women served in the military
126,000 died from combat, accidents, and disease
234,000 wounded
\$33,000,000,000 U.S. War Cost

B. War Preparations

Needed to identify potential personnel
Needed to create military structure
Needed to manufacture material
Needed to create transport system
Needed to mobilize public opinion

C. First Step: Draft Registrations

Birth Dates: Sep. 13, 1872- Sep 12, 1900
Four separate drafts
24 million men completed draft cards
Cards online at Ancestry.com & others
Active Military and Merchant Marine exempt
Check draft card database even if no WW1 family

D. Records and Sources

(Army records at National Archives mostly burned or drowned;
Navy, Marines, Coast Guard OK)

Might Need to Seek Alternate Sources:

Family Keepsakes
Adjutant General and Other State Records
Compiled Unit, Service, and Personal Histories
Newspapers
Army & Navy Military History Institutes
Veterans Online sites
National Cemetery Indexes

E. American Foreign Service

Many Americans volunteered before U. S. entry
Foreign records in foreign archives
Check both sides of military—Many Europeans immigrated to U. S. later

F. Merchant Marine Service

Large numbers in service on cargo ships
Many casualties
Records generally in National Archives
Many private records in state, local, private collections

G. Military and Civilian Women in Support Roles

Navy Yeomen (11,000)
Women Marines (300)
Army Reconstruction Aides (2,000)
Army Signal Corps (450)
YMCA Staff (4,000)
Red Cross Volunteers (12,000+)
Salvation Army (200)

H. Sampling of Other Sources

Aliens Could Speed Up Citizenship
1930 Census
Bonus Records
Allotments and Insurance
Military Reunions
Local Newspapers; specialized papers and magazines
Spanish influenza effects

I. New Sources Appear Regularly

Monitor Blogs and Magazines
Revisit websites regularly; check data catalogs

J. Expand Search Topics and Time Range

Treaty of Versailles June 1919 (Harsh Terms)
U. S. Army in Russia 1920
Frank Buckles, last U.S. veteran, died February 2011
Many personnel served in WW2

Over 24 million Men and Women Created Records...
...It's up to you to Bring 'Em Home.

GOOD LUCK!

Questions?