

1. Records held for overseas events

Births, marriages and deaths registered by the British Forces and the British Consul or High Commission in the country where they took place, from 1849.

Deaths that occurred in the Boer War and both World Wars, and British Army Regimental records of births, baptisms and marriages, dating back to 1761.

Marine Births and Deaths, from 1837, which took place on British registered vessels.

Aircraft Births and Deaths, from 1948, which took place on British registered aircraft.

Civil Partnerships formed and registered by the British Armed Forces and the British Consul in the country where they took place, from 2005.

2. How to apply for an overseas event

You may place an order online for a full certificate of an overseas birth (which will include parents' details) a death certificate, a marriage or a civil partnership certificate.

A full list of overseas records held by GRO can be found at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). Applications made by telephone or post will incur an **additional administration charge** to cover the extra work of processing.

3. Q&A

Q1. What information will I see in an overseas index?

There is no standard format for an overseas index. They come in a variety of different formats, which have changed over the years.

Due to the variety in format of overseas records, it depends on the type of record the certificate is produced from.

Normally the format of a birth certificate will include a date and place of birth, the child's name and the parents' names and surnames.

For marriage certificates, if the marriage took place in a British Consul or was registered by the British Forces the certificate will usually take a format of date and place of marriage and the names and surnames of both parties. If, however, the marriage was one where a certificate was deposited with GRO records, then it will be a certified copy of the original documents i.e. the certificate issued by the foreign country, plus a translation, if applicable.

In respect of civil partnerships, if the civil partnership took place in a British Consul or was registered by the British Forces, the certificate will take a usual format of date

and place of civil partnership and the names and surnames of the partners. If, however, the civil partnership was one where a certificate was deposited with GRO records, then it will be a certified copy of the original documents i.e. the certificate issued by the foreign country, plus a translation, if applicable.

Death certificates will normally include date and place of death (in respect of war deaths, this may just state the country), name and surname of the deceased and often the age at death or date of birth.

A reference can show the type of index (Regimental / Army / Marine / Consular etc.) and can give a year, volume, and page number, but it can also be as simple as a name and a year, or a name and a page number, or even just a page number.

The following are a few hints and tips to ensure you are providing the correct information –

Regimental Birth Indexes – may show several index references for the same person. As a soldier moved from one regiment to another, he had to register himself and his family each time for pay purposes. If you find more than one index reference for same person, provide all references and we will produce the entry with the most information. There is no index for Regimental Marriages or Deaths. However, for Regimental Marriages, if a regiment and a year can be supplied, a search can be undertaken. If Royal Artillery, then a battalion or battery will be needed.

Chaplains Births – some references show a number of years instead of just one year. Please ensure you provide the full period to search. Example - Chaplains 1827 p.397 or Chaplains 1847- 49 p.45.

Marine Indexes – Reference may show just one year or a period of several years and the page number (e.g.:- 1837-62 p.43 or just 1972 p.78)

WW1 Army Death indexes – the volume will always show a letter, as well as a number, followed by the page number. The letters are A, C, E, F, G, I, M, N, and S. These relate to the book number – e.g.: A.1. p. 29 or B.3. p.32 etc. The majority start with the letter 'I'. The only letter for Army Officer deaths is the letter 'O' followed by a number, plus a page number.

Consular / High Commission – For these records, you will need to provide the country, the date the event was registered or a period you wish us to search. Some events are registered many years after the event took place.

Q2. Are all overseas births, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths, involving British nationals held in the UK?

No. Registering the event with the British authorities is not compulsory. It is not a service which everyone takes up.

Q3. I have a British passport, does this mean that my birth is registered or recorded in the UK, even though I was born abroad?

No. Having a British passport does not mean that your birth was automatically registered in the UK. Your birth may have been registered, by your parents, with the British authorities in the country of birth, but registering is not compulsory.

Q4. What if I am unable to provide an overseas index reference

For most records a GRO index reference is available, and an additional administration search fee is payable where a GRO index reference is not provided in your application and is publicly available.

Q5. Do I need to provide the year of registration of an overseas birth, marriage, civil partnership or death?

Please note that for overseas events, the date of registration with the British Authorities can often be many years after the event took place. Whilst we will search additional years following the stated year of birth, marriage or death, it may not be possible to locate the entry unless you can provide a year of registration.

Q6. What happens if I don't know where the overseas birth, marriage, civil partnership or death occurred?

When you get to the field asking for place of birth, marriage, civil partnership or death, type 'unknown'; a search will then be made throughout the overseas indexes. Unfortunately, if you do not know the place of event, we may not be able to narrow down the search to just one entry. For events that have taken place prior to 1984, you will need to confirm if there is a military connection or if it is a Consul/High Commission entry.

Q7. I am doing my family tree and there are some overseas connections, where do I start?

You can download a list of overseas events held by GRO via [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

Copies of the index to overseas events can be found at various libraries and record offices, as well as online via specialist websites. For a list of locations holding copies of the overseas index please visit [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

Once you have found an entry in the overseas index, it's quick and easy to [order a certificate online](#). If you don't have an index reference number, you can still order a certificate online and GRO will conduct the GRO index search on your behalf at a charge of £3.00.