

Vermont Military Records

By Scott Andrew Bartley

The interest to settle in Vermont was created by the many soldiers traveling across the state during their service in the French and Indian War, 1754-1763. The records from this war, however, are of little use for genealogical research in Vermont. It is not until the Revolutionary War that the researcher begins to benefit from the records created by the military.

Revolutionary War

The Revolutionary War produced many types of records, some of which have been lost over time. They can be kept at the federal, state, county, or town level. The lower two classes were militia records, which consist mainly of muster rolls for a group of men raised for a specific alarm that was sent out. Realize that Vermont was in a unique political situation; the Continental Congress considered it part of New York, but the state itself functioned like an independent republic. Even so, you will find records at both federal and state levels.

The state records for the Revolutionary War were burned on 31 August 1945 when the State Arsenal was struck by lightning. Fortunately, it is believed that most of the records destroyed were previously printed in *Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, 1775 to 1783* (John E. Goodrich, ed., Rutland, Vt., 1904). Several books have supplemented these records and are mentioned in the bibliography at the end of this article.

The federal records for Vermont focus on dispensation for service. The first round of compensation was for service in 1776. These are found in the state papers and are in response to disability claims filed by invalid officers and soldiers or claims filed by widows for the death of their husband. The records most sought are the pensions. There were several phases of pension offerings, mainly in 1789, 1818, 1832, 1836-1837, and 1853. Most of the early federal records were destroyed in the fires of 1800 and 1814, when the Capitol was burned. The large collection of records that survived have been microfilmed, indexed on microfilm (as well as in book and CD-ROM format), and abstracted in book form. These records can contain the complete service record in all states, residences at different petition dates, marriages, and names of children (occasionally birthdates).

The following are the key dates to keep in mind for various changes in the pension laws:¹

Date	Action
26 Aug. 1776	Invalid pensions for officers and soldiers, half-pay during disability, continental line.
24 May 1780	Widows and orphans of officers of Continental Army, half-pay for seven years, rescinded 29 July 1789.
21 Oct. 1780	Service pension for life for officers of Continental Army only, rescinded 4 Aug. 1790.
28 July 1789	Federal government assumes state invalid pensions, continental line.
3 Mar. 1804	Federal government assumes all of South Carolina invalid pensions, continental line.
3 Mar. 1805	Invalid pensions to those disabled sine the war for wounds incurred during the war, continental line.
10 Apr. 1806	Invalid pensions extended to volunteers, militia, and state troops.
1814	Military records destroyed when the Capitol was burned in 1814 during the War of 1812, including pension applications prior to 1814.

18 Mar. 1818	Service pension for "cont. Establish 'T'." Act of 1820 removed many.
15 May 1828	Service pension for officers and soldiers eligible for pension under resolution of 21 Oct. 1780, full pay for life.
7 June 1832	First service pension for all Revolutionary soldiers and sailors, continental and state. Widows and orphans entitled to balance of money due a pensioner.
4 July 1836	Widow's pension for widow of Revolutionary soldier, on pension rolls of 1828, married during last term of service or before 3 Nov. 1783.
7 July 1836	Pension for widow if married before 1 Jan. 1794.
3 Mar. 1837	Revolutionary widow entitled to pension even if remarried.
3 Feb. 1853	Revolutionary widow entitled to pension regardless of date of marriage.
5 Apr. 1869	Daniel F. Bakeman, last Revolutionary pensioner, dies.
11 Nov. 1906	Esther S. Damon, last pensioned Revolutionary widow, dies.

The government provided further incentive to serve by awarding bounty land. Under this act, each soldier qualified for land based on his service. The first bounty land act was passed in 1788 and the last in 1855. The federal land was granted in the present state of Ohio. Soldiers could settle their land, sell it themselves, or, under later acts, take the cash equivalent of its value. Most of these files were destroyed when the Capitol was burned in 1814. The files that survived were interfiled with the pension files before microfilming.

Another aspect to consider when searching in this time is the Loyalist contingent. These were the people who remained loyal to the British Crown. After the war, the Loyalists fled or were forced to leave the country. Most took refuge in Canada and some sailed back to England. Vermont was no exception to the rule. In fact, the state coffers were filled with the proceeds from the sale of land confiscated from "Tories." The bibliography does not fully explore the sources for this type of material; however, you will find two references.

War of 1812

The War of 1812 records for the state suffered the same fate as those from the Revolutionary War; the muster rolls were published before the records were burned. I mention this war because it marks the start of excellent enlistment records on the federal level. If the soldier you are researching was a regular enlistment, and not from a state militia, he will have an entry that can include the following information (sample entry):

#1054 Lamphier (Lampfear, Lampfier, Lamphear), John; Pvt. 11USI; Capt. Valentine R. Goodrich; 5'8"; blue eyes; brown hair; light complexion; age 36; cooper; born in Connecticut (*Note: Most list town of birth*); enlisted 1 (or 24) June 1812 in Swanton for five years. (Source: "Records of men enlisted in the U.S. Army prior to the peace establishment, May 17, 1815" [microfilm])

While these enlistment records have been microfilmed, the pension files have not. An index to the pension files is listed in the bibliography below. The original records must be viewed in person at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C.

Records from smaller wars and peacetime records are also available. Please check the bibliography for more information.

The Civil War and Beyond

Volumes upon volumes of records are available for the Civil War and the more modern wars that followed. These records are easily found. Most of the federal records are at the National Archives. It is best to check one of the many research guides for them. The collection of the original state records is part of the Records of the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. The collection includes the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Vermont Militia (bulk 1838-1844), Civil War (bulk of entire collection), Vermont National Guard, and the Spanish-American War. These are all housed at the [General Records Center](#) in Middlesex (1078 US Route 2, Middlesex, VT, (802) 828-3280), though you will need to view the microfilm because of their condition. The State of Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services web page contains a [link](#) that allows you to download an Acrobat file of a finding aide for this collection. ²

Access to twentieth century military records are restricted for the most part to the soldier or anyone the soldier designates, due to the Privacy Act of 1974.³

The soldier can visit [Vermont Veterans Affairs](#) (118 State St., Montpelier, VT, 05620-4401, 802-828-3379/888-666-9844) to access these records.

The office is arranged in an organized manner with easy access to service records, and card file indexes are maintained. Each card includes name, rank, branch, address, Social Security number, date of birth, date enlisted, organization, date of discharge, address out, and education. The cards do not give parentage. The vital records department sends a annual list updating the status of soldiers. Most of the index cards are white. Blue cards signify the soldier was killed in action and pink cards show that the soldier was wounded. The cards are broken down into war and peacetime as follows:

World War I	1917 - 1919
World War II	7 Dec. 1941 - 31 Dec. 1946
Korea	27 June 1950 - 31 June 1955
Korea Peacetime	1 Feb. 1955 - 4 Aug. 1964
Vietnam	5 Aug. 1964 - 7 May 1975
Vietnam Peacetime	8 May 1975 - 1 Aug. 1990
Desert Storm	2 Aug. 1990 - present ⁴
"Out of Staters" ⁵	

The information on the cards is derived from the "DD214" files, the complete service record of each soldier. The cards and files, though restricted, are on microfilm at the General Service Records Center in Middlesex. There is another card file labeled "National Guard, 1950s to 1986 'Northfield' file" with a note that many "P" cards were burned. It is not known exactly what Northfield file cards are, but the National Guard records and more cards can be found at Camp Johnson (see below for location). The Veterans Affairs office also handles the [Veterans Memorial Cemetery](#) in Randolph. The "201" file lists all burials since the cemetery opened in 1993. These burials are also kept on an office database.

The records rarely used by the office are stored in the basement. All of these records have been microfilmed and are kept at the General Service Center. Records before World War I are available to the public. This is an inventory of the records found there:

Civil War Graves Registration card file (includes name, social security number, address, next of kin, birth, death, burial [date & place], cause, grave location, enlistment, discharge, organization, sources [on back], condition of stone)

World War I Graves Registration card file (includes name, social security number, address, next of kin, birth, death, burial [date & place], cause, grave location, enlistment, discharge, organization, sources [on back])

Form 100 (National Guard): "Report of National Guard Duty Performed" (These are not closed by the Privacy Act of 1974. They are arranged by year and then by regiment, 1917-1919, 1928-1953, and have been slightly fire damaged.)

Militia Cards (Vermont State Guard), 1900s - 1940s (includes name, age, residence, company, enlistment, discharged, prior service)

The majority of the Vermont National Guard records after 1950 can be found at Camp Johnson (789 Vt. National Guard Rd., Colchester, VT, 05446, 802-338-3135). Other records found there include service records, index cards to service records, and the "NGB22" discharge papers. These files are under the same restriction as those with the Veterans Affairs office.

Bibliography ⁶

Many of the books listed below have been reprinted at least once. The original publication and the last one known to the author are given. The two exceptions are the Camp Johnson and O'Connor reprints. Camp Johnson has reproduced several titles by photoreproducing the book on 8½ x 11 paper with a plastic permabinding. The O'Connor reprints are the work of Tony O'Connor (Civil War Enterprises, 93 Leo Lane, Newport, VT, 05855, 802-766-4747). More information on the O'Connor reprints can be found on his [website](#) or by [email](#).

General

Alice E. Bennett, *Record of the Soldiers of the Civil War, Spanish American War, and the World War from the Town of Manchester, Vermont* (Rutland, Vt., 1925).

Peter H. Haraty, Burton M. Rubenstein, Terrill G. Bourcius, Edmund A. Bemis Jr., and Roger A. Newton, *Put the Vermonters Ahead: A History of the Vermont National Guard, 1764-1978* (Burlington, Vt., 1979?).

Martha T. Rainville, *Vermont National Guard: POW - MIA, You are Not Forgotten* (Winooski, Vt., 1999).

Virgil D. White, *Index to Mexican War Pension Files* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1989).

Virgil D. White, *Index to Old Wars Pension Files, 1815-1926* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1987, in 2 volumes).

Virgil D. White, *Index to Volunteer Soldiers, 1784-1811* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1987).

Virgil D. White, *Index to Volunteer Soldiers in Indian Wars and Disturbances, 1815-1858* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1994, in 2 volumes).

Revolutionary War

A Census of Pensioners for Revolutionary or Military Service: With Their Names, Ages, and Places of Residence Taken in 1840 (Washington, D.C., 1841), reprinted many times (Baltimore, Md., 1996, bound with index, 1965).

Murtie June Clark, *The Pension Lists of 1792 - 1795* (Baltimore, Md., 1991).

Peter Wilson Coldham, *American Loyalist Claims, Volume I* (Washington, D.C., 1980).

Walter H. Crockett, *Revolutionary Soldiers Buried in Vermont* (Montpelier, Vt., 1903-1904), reprint (Baltimore, Md., 1973).

DAR Patriot Index (Washington, D.C., Centennial ed., 1990, in 3 volumes).

Digest Summary and Alphabetical List of Private Claims which have been Presented to the House of Representatives from the First to the Thirty-first Congress exhibiting the Action of Congress on each claim with References to the Journals, Reports, Bills, &c., elucidating its progress (Washington, D.C., 1853), reprint (Baltimore, Md., 1970 in 3 volumes).

Carleton Edward Fisher and Sue Gray Fisher, comps., *Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of the Revolutionary War - Vermont* (Camden, Me., 1992).

John E. Goodrich, *Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, 1775 to 1783* (Rutland, Vt., 1904). [also Camp Johnson reprint]

Frank Johnson Metcalf, et al., *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives* (Washington, D.C., rev. ed., 1976).

Mary Greene Nye, *State Papers of Vermont, Volume Six: Sequestration, Confiscation, and Sale of Estates* (Montpelier, Vt., 1941).

Pension List of 1818 (Washington, D.C., 1820), reprinted (Baltimore, Md., 1955).

Pension Roll of 1835 (Washington, D.C., 1835, in 3 volumes), reprinted (Baltimore, Md., 1968, in 4 volumes).

Rejected or Suspended Applications for Revolutionary War Pensions, Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1852 (Washington, D.C., 1852), reprinted (Baltimore, Md., 1969).

Revolutionary Pensioners. A Transcript of the Pension List of the United States for 1813 (Washington, D.C., 1813),

reprinted (Baltimore, Md., 1959).

Revolutionary Pensioners of 1818 (Washington, D.C., 1818), reprint (Baltimore, Md., 1959).

Craig R. Scott, *The "Lost" Pensions: Settled Accounts of the Act of 6 April 1838* (Lovettsville, Va., 1996).

Virgil D. White, *Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1990-1992, in 4 volumes).

Virgil D. White, *Index to Revolutionary War Service Records* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1995, in 4 volumes).

War of 1812

Byron N. Clark, ed., *A List of Pensioners of the War of 1812* (Burlington, Vt., 1904), reprinted (Baltimore, Md., 1996).

[Note: This is from a manuscript by William G. Shaw regarding volunteers from the Burlington area. It contains several appendices including abstracts of payroll records.]

Herbert T. Johnson, *Roster of Soldiers in the War of 1812-14* (St. Albans, Vt., 1933). [also Camp Johnson reprint]

Virgil D. White, *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1989, in 3 volumes).

Civil War

"A Volunteer," *The Second Brigade; or, Camp Life* (n.p., 1864). [O'Connor reprint]

G. G. Benedict, *Vermont in the Civil War. A History of the part taken by the Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the War for the Union* (Burlington, Vt., 1886, 2 volumes). [also O'Connor reprint]

George N. Carpenter, *History of The Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Boston, 1886). [O'Connor reprint]

Geraldine Francis Chittick, *In the Field, Doctor Melvin John Hyde, Surgeon, 2nd Vermont Volunteers* (Newport, Vt., 1999).

Howard Coffin, *Full Duty: Vermonters in the Civil War* (Woodstock, Vt., 1993).

C. E. Dornbusch, *Regimental Publications & Personal Narratives of the Civil War: A Checklist. Volume One: Northern States, Part III: New England States* (New York, 1961).

E. M. Hayes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment, Vermont Volunteers, with Biographical Sketches of the Officers who fell in Battle and a Complete Roster* (n.p., 1870). [O'Connor reprint]

William C. Holbrook, *A Narrative of the Services of the Officers and Enlisted Men of the 7th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers (Veterans), from 1862 to 1866* (New York, 1882). [O'Connor reprint]

Theodore S. Peck, *Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers and lists of Vermonters who served in the Army and Navy of the United States during the War of the Rebellion, 1861-66* (Montpelier, Vt., 1892). [also O'Connor reprint]

Ralph Orson Sturtevant, *Pictorial History [of the] Thirteenth Regiment Vermont Volunteers, War of 1861-1865* (n.p., 1910).

Report of the Adjutant & Inspector General of the State of Vermont (Montpelier, Vt., annually 1862-1866).

Otis F. R. Waite, *Vermont in the Great Rebellion containing historical and biographical sketches, etc.* (Claremont, N.H., 1869). [O'Connor reprint]

Aldace F. Walker, *The Vermont Brigade in the Shenandoah Valley, 1864* (Burlington, Vt., 1869). [O'Connor reprint]

Spanish American War

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World War I

John T. Cushing and Arthur F. Stone, eds., *Vermont in the World War, 1917-1919* (Burlington, 1928).

Herbert T. Johnson, *Roster of Vermont Men and Women in the Military and Naval Service of the United States and Allies in the World War, 1917-1919* (Rutland, Vt., 1927). [also Camp Johnson reprint]

World War II

Additions and Changes to The Roster of Vermonters, WWII, 1941-1945 (Montpelier, Vt., 1976).

Reginald M. Cram, Fred E. Steele III, Arthur R. Greenleaf, Keith T. Murray, *Roster of Vermonters in Uniformed Service of the United States During The Second World War, 1941-1945* (Montpelier, Vt., 1972, in 2 volumes).

Dorothea Haddad, "Vermont WWII Women Veterans," (manuscript, 1997), listed by town.

Historical and Pictorial Review 43rd Infantry Division [172nd Infantry] (Camp Shelby, Miss., 1942).

Joseph E. Zimmer, *The History of the 43D Infantry Division, 1941-1945* (Baton Rouge, n.d.).

Korea Conflict

Reginald M. Cram, *Roster of Vermont Vermonters who served in the Korean War, 1950-1955* (Winooski, Vt., 1978).

Vietnam War

Donald E. Edwards, *Roster of Vermonters who served in the Vietnam War, 1964-1975* (Winooski, Vt., 1986).

Desert Storm

"*And There I Was ...*" *The Vermont Army National Guard in Operation Desert Storm, 1990-1991* (Winooski, Vt., 1991?).

¹. Taken from Arlene Eakle and Johni Cerny, *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy* (Salt Lake City, 1984), p. 267, credited to Harold I. Meyer, 1958.

². According to an old record found during research, medical records for Civil War veterans who were wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg are stored at the Waterbury Library. There is no more information at this time. It likely refers to the public library in Waterbury.

³. This act affects these records because they constitute a "system of records" that can be accessed by an alphabetical index or a unique number that identifies an individual.

⁴. The Office of the President of the United States has not officially declared an end to "Desert Storm."

⁵. This file gives the Name, Branch, War, and Social Security information for those requesting the data and now live in Vermont but served from another state.

⁶. The Rosters from the Korean Conflict onward only contain Name, Rank, Branch, and Town to conform to the privacy laws.