

Researching Your First World War Family

April 2015 Version

Data sources compiled by Rev Garry A Ketchen

(1) Your family history

Ask family member's about your WW1 ancestors. Look out for: pictures of family in uniform, medals [especially those with George V on them], silver war badge & certificate, memorial/death plaques, memorial scrolls, discharge papers, pay/service books, military dog tags, military Bible etc....Remember to check marriage certificates if they were married during the war and the birth certificates of any children born in that era as they sometimes quote military service details.

(2) Helpful research tools when researching a casualty

Websites:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Website: www.cwgc.org

Scottish National War Memorial: www.snmw.org

Australian War Memorial: www.awm.gov.au

Auckland War Memorial Museum: <http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com>

Canadian Virtual War Memorial: www.veterans.gc.ca

American Battle Monuments Commission: www.abmc.gov

Books/Papers/CD-Roms

Soldiers Died in the Great War & Officers Died in the Great War [can be found in book form, CD-ROM or on www.Ancestry.co.uk or www.Findmypast.co.uk]

Casualty lists in newspapers [Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News, Edinburgh Evening Dispatch, Leith Observer, West Lothian Courier, Linlithgow Gazette, Times etc...]

Minor Service & Marine returns at Register House, Edinburgh.

Numerous Rolls of Honour which can be found in library, bookshops or online.

School and Company registers and history books.

(3) Military Service Records: Army [Most destroyed during blitz in 2nd World War**]**

Other Ranks:

WO363 [Burnt Records]: National Archives, Kew, www.Ancestry.co.uk & www.Findmypast.co.uk

WO364 [Un-burnt Records from Ministry of Pensions]: As above

PIN 26 [Ministry of Pensions]: Small collection only available at National Archives, Kew

WO96 [Militia Records]: National Archives, Kew & www.Findmypast.co.uk

WO97 [Army Service Records pre 1914]: National Archives, Kew & www.Findmypast.co.uk

British Army Honourable Artillery Company: www.Findmypast.co.uk

WO400 [Household Cavalry]: National Archives, Kew

Guards Regiments [Grenadier, Coldstream, Scots, Welsh, Irish]: write to;
Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London SW1E 6HQ

Some Soldier's Wills on www.Scotlandspople.gov.uk under Wills and Testaments section.

Pension Cards: www.westernfrontassociation.com. A manual look up for a fee. Cards will be digitalised eventually.

Officers:

WO339 [Regular Army to 1922]: National Archives, Kew

WO374 [Territorial Force to 1922]: National Archives, Kew

Army Lists: National Archives, Kew & now online at the National Library of Scotland:
www.nls.uk/family-history/military-lists

Women's Service:

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps Service Records, 1917-1920 [WO398]: National Archives, Kew & www.Ancestry.co.uk

Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service & (Reserve) [WO399]: National Archives, Kew

Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment: www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War

Other Nations:

Canadian Army Service Records & Circumstances of Death Registers:
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/cef/index-e.html

www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx

New Zealand Army Service Records:
<http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/Cenotaph/locations.aspx>

Australian Army & Naval Service Records: www.naa.gov.au

Medals:

WO372 [WW1 Medal Index Cards]: National Archives, Kew & www.Ancestry.co.uk
& transcription version on www.Findmypast.co.uk

The First World War Campaign Medal Rolls: www.Ancestry.co.uk & CD-Rom from www.naval-military-press.com

SWB Rolls: National Archives, Kew & www.Ancestry.co.uk & transcription on www.Findmypast.co.uk

UK, Citations of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, 1914-1920: www.Ancestry.co.uk & www.Findmypast.co.uk

London/Edinburgh/Belfast Gazette: www.gazettes-online.co.uk

Other Army Medal Rolls that are on www.Ancestry.co.uk & www.Findmypast.co.uk:

Royal Artillery Military Medals 1916-1993

UK, Military, Campaign Medals and Award Rolls, 1793-1972

UK, Victoria Cross Medals, 1857-2007

(4) Military Service Records: Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service & Royal Air Force

Some RFC Service Records and Medals can be found under WO363 , WO364, WO339, WO374 & WO372. Now on www.Findmypast.co.uk

Some RNAS Officers Service Records found in ADM273 & some RNAS files found under Register of Seaman's Services in ADM18: National Archives, Kew [internet download too]

Some RNAS Medals found in Royal Navy Officers Medal Roll 1914-1920: www.Findmypast.co.uk

Some RNAS may also be found in the UK, Naval Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1972: www.Ancestry.co.uk

If person served in RAF then records most likely found in:

AIR76 Officers: National Archives, Kew [& www.Findmypast.co.uk]

AIR78 & 79, Other Ranks: National Archives, Kew [& www.Findmypast.co.uk]

RAF Muster Roll 1918: www.Findmypast.co.uk

RAF Officer Lists: Online at the National Library of Scotland: www.nls.uk/family-history/military-lists

Women's Service:

AIR80 Women's Royal Air Force: National Archives, Kew [internet download too]

Other helpful RFC/RNAS/RAF resources:

Great Britain, Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificates, 1910-1950: www.Ancestry.co.uk

Royal Air Force Museum: www.rafmuseum.org.uk: casualty cards now online.

Fleet Air Arm Museum: www.fleetairarm.com

RFC website: www.theaerodrome.com

Books:

Airmen Died in the Great War by Chris Hobson

The Sky Their Battlefield by Trevor Henshaw

(5) Military Records: Royal Navy

Royal Navy Ratings' Service Records & Royal Naval Officers' Service Records: National Archives, Kew, www.Ancestry.co.uk & www.Findmypast.co.uk

Royal Naval Officer' Service Records, First World War and Confidential Reports 1893-1943: National Archives, Kew, www.Ancestry.co.uk & www.Findmypast.co.uk

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Service Records: National Archives, Kew [Internet download too] & www.Ancestry.co.uk

Royal Navy Officer Lists: Online at the National Library of Scotland: www.nls.uk/family-history/military-lists

RN Medals found in Royal Navy Officers Medal Roll 1914-1920: www.Findmypast.co.uk

RN may also be found in the UK, Naval Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1972: www.Ancestry.co.uk

Royal Naval Division Service Records: National Archives, Kew and www.Findmypast.co.uk

For RND Medals also look in WO372 [WW1 Medal Index Cards]: National Archives, Kew & www.Ancestry.co.uk

Women's Service:

Women's Royal Naval Service Index 1917-1919: National Archives, Kew [Internet download too] & www.Ancestry.co.uk

Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Service Records, 1894-1929: National Archives, Kew

(6) Military Records: Royal Marines

Royal Marines Service Records: National Archives, Kew & www.Findmypast.co.uk

Royal Marine Officers 1793-1925: National Archives Kew [Internet download too]

Royal Marine Medal Rolls: National Archives, Kew [Internet download too] & www.Findmypast.co.uk

(7) Naval casualties [*over and above CWGC website]:**

Naval casualties: www.Findmypast.co.uk

Royal Naval Division casualties: www.Findmypast.co.uk & www.Ancestry.co.uk

UK, Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll, 1914-1919: www.Ancestry.co.uk

The Cross of Sacrifice: Five volume set that covers Naval casualties
www.naval-history.net has a First World War sections that lists casualties

Books:

British War Ships 1914-1919, by F.J. Dittmar & J.J. Colledge

British Vessels Lost at Sea 1914-18, published by His Majesty's Stationary Office

British Merchant Ships Sunk by U-Boats in World War One, by A.J. Tennent

(8) Merchant Navy

***Fact: It is easier to find out details about a Mercantile Marine casualty than about one who survived.

First World War Mercantile Marine Medals and British War Medal [1914-1925]: National Archives, Kew [Internet download too]

Registry cards of Merchant Seaman employed between 1918-1941: National Archives, Kew [Internet downloads too] ****Note that registry records between 1913 & 1917 have not survived.

Agreements and crew lists 1861-1934 [BT99] ***Note: searchable by a Ship's official number only.
Crew Lists 1861-1913: www.Findmypast.co.uk

Merchant Navy Seaman 1835-1941: www.Findmypast.co.uk

White Star Line Officer's Books 1868-1934: www.Findmypast.co.uk

***Marine Returns at Register House lists casualties.

(9) Transcript and other records recently added on www.Findmypast.co.uk

Birmingham Pals 1914-1918

Birmingham Employers ROH 1914-1918

1st Bradford Pals (16th West Yorkshire Regiment)

Edinburgh Pals (15th & 16th Royal Scots Regt)

Glasgow Pals (1914-1918)

Liverpool Pals (1914-1918)

Salford Pals (15th, 16th & 19th & 20th Lancashire Fusiliers)

South Downs Battalions (11th, 12th & 13th Royal Sussex)

23rd Battalion (1st Sportsman Battalion) Royal Fusiliers 1914-1918

Royal Fusiliers, Stockbroker's Battalion 1914-1918

Australian Imperial Force Nominal Roll 1914-1918

Australian Imperial Force Embarkation Roll 1914-1918

Royal Artillery Attestations 1883-1942

Welsh Guards 1914-1918

British Red Cross Register of Overseas Volunteers, 1914-1918

(10) Filling out the story

International Red Cross Prisoner of War Records: <http://grandeguerre.icrc.org/>

Prisoner of War interview reports 1914-1918 [WO161]: National Archives, Kew [Internet download too]

Regimental War Diary WO95: National Archives, Kew [DVD and Ancestry.co.uk too]

Army Division/Regimental Books: 9th Scottish Division, Royal Scots, Guards, KOSB etc],

Naval/Airforce websites & books, Great War Maps, Birth, Marriage & Death certificates & Census returns.

Numerous Naval/Airforce websites & books that give details about ships/squadrons etc

Great War Maps

The Great War Forum: <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php>

The British & Commonwealth Military Badge Forum: <http://www.britishbadgeforum.com>

The British Newspaper Archive: www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Birth, Marriage & Death certificates and also Soldier's Wills

Census returns

(11) Sharing Information

Edinburgh's War: www.edinburghs-war.ed.ac.uk

Scotland's War: www.scotlands-war.ed.ac.uk [to be launched August 2014]

The Scottish War Memorials Project: <http://warmemscot.s4.bizhat.com>

The Scottish War Graves Project: <http://scottishwargraves.phpbbweb.com>

The Scottish Military Research Group: <http://www.scottishmilitaryresearch.co.uk>

Rev Garry A Ketchen: edinburghsgreatwarroh@gmail.com