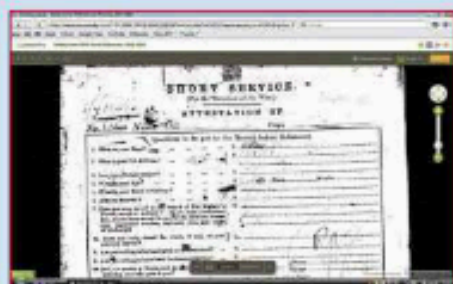
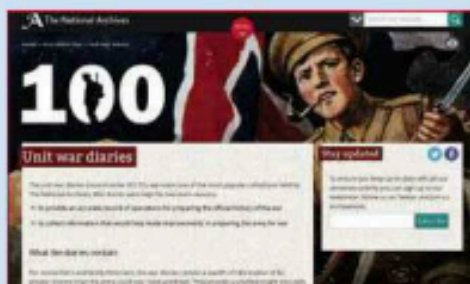


TOP TIPS: RESEARCHING MILITARY ANCESTORS

Were your ancestors British Army soldiers in World War I? If so, there are many sites to help trace their actions



Service records: Just over a third of service records for soldiers in World War I have survived. On Ancestry they are divided into two collections, British Army WWI Pension Records 1914-1920 and British Army WWI Service Records 1914-1920, but on Findmypast they are simply found under British Army Service Records 1914-1920.



Army diaries: The National Archives is currently digitising World War I army service diaries. These can be freely consulted at the archive or downloaded for a fee from its website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/centenary-unit-war-diaries/. While they will usually not name individual soldiers, they will help to explain the actions they were involved in.



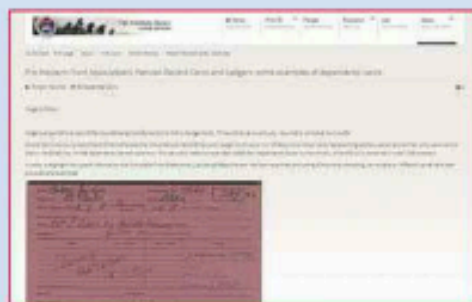
Meritorious service: If your relative was promoted as an officer, or mentioned in dispatches for a commendation, he may have had an entry published in the London Gazette. This can be freely searched online at www.thegazette.co.uk. Medal Index Cards can also be viewed on Ancestry and The National Archives websites.



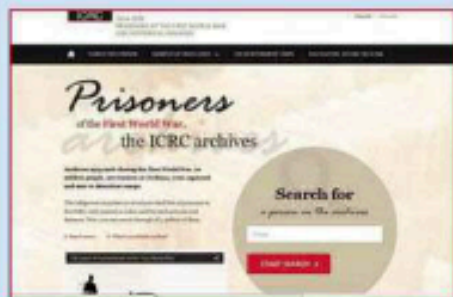
Injured soldiers: Throughout the war casualty lists were issued by the War Office. Initially produced as daily lists, from mid-1917 the information was released on a weekly basis. TheGenealogist.co.uk hosts the collections in a searchable database, which not only includes those injured, but also the names of those killed or taken prisoner of war.



Protecting casualties: To protect injured soldiers who were sent home to recuperate (or after discharge from service) from being accused of cowardice for not being at the front, a Silver War Badge was issued identifying their status. The awards can be searched on Ancestry via the UK, Silver War Badge Records, 1914-1920 collection.



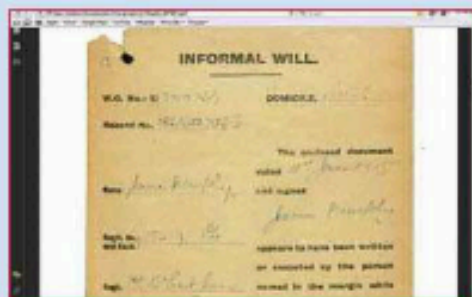
Pensions applications: The Western Front Association holds a collection of 6 million pension records application cards, detailing the requests for pensions by discharged soldiers, and for those who were killed in the conflict, their dependants. The association operates a fee-based look-up service (an initial search costs £25) via www.wfa.org.uk/wfapen.



Taken prisoner: If your ancestor was a military or civilian prisoner of war, the International Red Cross may have a record concerning him, now freely accessible via <http://grandguerre.icrc.org>. PoW databases for officers are also available on FindmyPast and Ancestry; for civilians interned at Ruhleben, visit <http://ruhleben.tripod.com>.



War graves: Most service personnel killed in service throughout the two world wars were subsequently buried in graves and cemeteries now under the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Its website at www.cwgc.org allows you to locate where your relative was buried or, if no body was recovered, where commemorated.



Soldiers' wills: If your soldier ancestor or relative was killed in World War I, he may have left a will in his pocket service book. These have now all been made available online. For those in English and Welsh regiments visit <https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk>, for Scotland visit ScotlandsPeople, and for Ireland visit <http://soldierswills.nationalarchives.ie>.