

Name Search Tips

Searching by Last Name

REQUIRED: You must key at least one letter into the last name search box. Either a complete last name or the first portion of it is acceptable. Then, click the SEARCH box to return a list of names that begin with the value you keyed. For example, if you key “SMI” (do not key the quotes), the resulting list of names will contain all database records with last names that begin with “SMI.” The more of the last name you key, the closer the search will come to finding your desired selection. Once you have found the name you are seeking, click on DETAILS behind the desired entry to view that individual’s database record.

NOTE: If the value you keyed does not exist on the database, no names will appear on the name selection list. Searches may be repeated as often as you require.

TIPS: If you are searching for a common name like Smith or Miller, you may want to include a search by first name (see below) to limit the names on the displayed list. If you are searching for a name that can be spelled a variety of ways (“Schaeffer” with its many optional spellings being a classic example), you may need to search multiple times with different last name search values. To the extent known, last names are maintained on the database with the spelling used at the time of the individual’s death, but that may not always be the case.

Searching by Last Name in Combination with First Name

OPTIONAL: You may additionally key any portion of the first name into the first name search box before executing the search. Should you enter a last name/first name combination that does not exist on the database, no names will display on the resulting names selection list. **TIP:** Inclusion of a first name in the search works best if you enter a complete last name. Mixing a partial last name search with a first name search may result a name selection list containing names outside your search parameters.

Displaying Multiple Database Records Simultaneously

After looking at a database record, you may click COLLAPSE to hide the current display and proceed to a new search. However, to display multiple database records simultaneously (handy when viewing family members), execute another search as explained above without collapsing the current display. Both records will display, and you can scroll between them. There is no limit to the number of database records you can display simultaneously.

Database field descriptions

Soldier Name

The name of individual maintained in the format last name [comma & space] first name [space] middle name/initial. Whenever possible, the surname will reflect the spelling found on the individual’s tombstone, which is not necessarily the name by which he or she was known in life or how the name was spelled. In the event of multiple names, the individual’s alias or significantly different spelling may be present in the separate alias/alternate spelling(s). In addition, additional information regarding name variations may be available in the military and/or family and personal data fields. Note that some men

served under and/or are buried by their middle names, but if known, the first name is present in this field. Nicknames are included in double quotes whenever known.

Principal Regiment

The name of the regiment in which the veteran served or, in the case of veterans who served in multiple regiments, the regiment this file's creator deemed to be the principal regiment, usually the longest term of service. (Other regiments are listed elsewhere on the screen and further detailed in the military data field.)

Note that all federally mustered cavalry and artillery regiments from Pennsylvania had two names, the first being what they were called in the field and the second how their rosters are sequenced for historical reference, e.g., 21st Pa Cav (182nd Pa), officially, the "21st Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry, 182nd of the Line," which is to say Pennsylvania's 182nd federally mustered regiment of any kind and its 21st cavalry regiment. Pennsylvania also had thirteen infantry regiments with multiple names.

If the value is "Civ," it indicates the individual was a civilian.

"U.S.C.T." = United States Colored Troops.

A "U.S." designation (e.g., 1st U.S. Cav) refers to a member of the standing army, generally referred to as the "regular army."

A state designation (e.g., 87th Pa Inf) refers to a volunteer regiment intended to exist only for the duration of the war. Volunteer regiments comprised approximately 95% of the Federal military force.

1st Co – Highest Rank

The company of the principal regiment the veteran joined at muster-in but not necessarily the only or last company in which he served in that regiment. (See Military data for additional information concerning company transfers.)

Each regiment was organized with a staff and ten companies if infantry or twelve for artillery and cavalry regiments (called "batteries" in the artillery). Company identifications used were "A" through "K" in infantry regiments with artillery and cavalry regiments extending that to "M," although higher designations were sometimes utilized. The company designation of "J" was never used because in writing it was too easily confused with "I." Companies were commanded by a captain unless attrition had devolved command onto a lower ranking officer.

Values used in this field:

"Stf" = Staff position, i.e., the veteran initially served with the regimental staff, not a company. The staff was manned by the regimental officers, medical personnel, the highest ranking non-commissioned officers such as sergeant major, the chaplain, and the regimental band. A colonel commanded a regiment unless attrition devolved command onto a lower ranking officer.

"Un" = Unassigned. Excess recruits often were not assigned to a company and deployed as needed. These veterans often later reported they had served with a company, suggesting that much of their military time was spent with that company even though they were never officially assigned to it.

“(2x)” - Regiments that served throughout the war shrank in size over time, forcing consolidation into fewer companies (generally five), although occasionally an entire regiment may have needed replacement. The smaller regiment would then be called a “battalion” (e.g., 87th Pennsylvania Battalion”). Many of these battalions added replacement companies during the war’s final months and applied the same identifications as the companies they were replacing, thus bringing the unit back to regimental strength and returning them to regimental strength. “(2x)” indicates the veteran served in the second organization of that company and will be found on a separate roster from the first company organization.

“Civ” – Identifies the individual as a civilian.

“n/a” – The military unit was a small one containing only one company and therefore had no company designations.

The highest rank the veteran attained while serving with the principal regiment but not necessarily the only rank held or the one held at muster-in or muster-out. (See Military data for more information on promotions and demotions in the principal regiment and ranks held in other regiments, where applicable.)

Enlistment Date – Type

The date on which the veteran enlisted or was conscripted for military service.

This is not the date in which a recruit entered the U.S. Army nor is it the date they assumed a rank or assignment to a company and regiment. Those events occurred on the muster date. Enlistment and muster were two different events, although they often occurred on the same date. Note that while men conscripted by the states in 1862 frequently show separate draft and muster dates, those federally drafted from mid-1863 forward virtually never display a separate draft date. Federally drafted recruits were assigned to the volunteer army, not the regular army, which was all volunteer.

The type of enlistment. Possible values are “volunteer,” “drafted,” or “substitute,” the latter referring to someone who agreed to serve in a conscript’s place and most often paid to do so. If known, the name of the conscript contracting the substitute will be shown in the military data field.

Age Started and Actual Age

The veteran’s actual age at enlistment with the principal regiment retrieved or calculated from sources such as tombstones, obituaries, death certificates, baptismal records, pension records, censuses, and at times educated guesswork.

Determining actual ages for those born in the nineteenth century is hit or miss at best as there existed no requirement to record births, and available reports of birth dates are often unreliable, including those mentioned above. The result is that nearly 50% of actual ages shown in this database disagree with recruits’ stated ages at enlistment. Many a man could not tell you the exact date of his birth. The educational level of the individual appears to be directly proportional to the accuracy of the reported birth date.

Muster Date

The date on which the veteran mustered into service, federal service in the case of volunteer regiment recruits or state service for militiamen. Only upon muster-in did a recruit receive a rank, become a member of a company and regiment, and, if a federal muster, start accruing federal pay.

Departure Date – Type

The date the veteran left active service with the principal regiment. This is often the same as the discharge date, but it may uniquely reflect the date of a transfer, wounding when the veteran never returned to duty with the principal regiment, capture, death, or any other reason the individual departed the principal regiment.

With reference to the Date left Svc with Reg't field, this is the reason the veteran left service with the principal regiment. Note that the use of "injury" in this field refers to a non-battle related injury.

Discharge Date – Type

The date the veteran formally discharged from the principal regiment.

Note that compiled military service records not infrequently report multiple discharge dates. There also can be a variance between discharge and muster-out dates, but only one date is used here.

The type of discharge. Values are "honorable," "dishonorable," and "surgeon's certificate," i.e., a medical discharge that by definition was honorable in nature.

Other Regiments

Regiments in which the veteran served other than the principal regiment, if any. Details of these service terms (and the principal regiment as well) can be found in the Military data field.

Compiled military service records provide the basic source of all military data.

VRC – The Veteran Reserve Corps, initially called the Invalid Corps, was a military organization to which Union soldiers were transferred when they were physically incapable of performing field duty but able to execute less physically arduous tasks such as clerical, nursing, or guard duties, etc.

Military Data

A summation of the veteran's military service taken from primary and solid secondary source materials, principally the veteran's compiled military service records, pension records, and other primary military source documents as needed. The quantity of data presented varies widely depending on the information that is available.

NOTE: Military data from second-hand sources such as obituaries and locally written histories is largely avoided as they are generally unreliable and often contain tales more fiction than truth. Those sources' shortcomings are at times pointed out in this field.

Terms routinely used in this field:

CMSR – Compiled Military Service Records – A summation of military data for every veteran who mustered into federal service during the Civil War and the single best available source of veterans' military experiences. They are physically located at the National Archives in Washington DC, although CMSRs for black troops, Confederate

troops, Federal border state troops, and a tiny fraction (as of 2021) of other Union soldiers can be accessed online at Fold3.com.

ARIAS –Archives Records Information Access System – Primary historical documentation once maintained by the state of Pennsylvania but now found on Ancestry.com. Pennsylvania residents may access the file with a free account. (See www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx for information on how to do this.) Both federal and state mustered veterans' records are available, but the quantity of data varies, and you may find duplication or even triplication of records. There is one record per term of service and is not limited to the Civil War.

Bates –Samuel Penniman Bates' *History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-1865*. This work contains rosters and capsule histories for every Pennsylvania Civil War regiment both federal and state mustered, although data for state mustered veterans is minimal. It also includes U.S. Colored Troops formed principally with Pennsylvanians. It is a good starting point and quick reference for researching Pennsylvania's Civil War veterans, although the data it provides is limited.

Prowell – George Reeser Prowell's *History of the 87th Pennsylvania Volunteers*. A regimental referenced here only for veterans of the 87th Pennsylvania Infantry. Prowell's history contains a roster that mirrors the one in Bates except that Prowell chose to omit the names of deserters. Variations between those two rosters may be noted here.

Bookmark

The identification code of the veteran's bookmark at times found as a cross reference in his compiled military service records.

Bookmarked records are filed separately from a veteran's other military documents and are housed at the Military Reference Branch at the National Archives in Washington DC and are nowhere - as of 2022 - available online. These documents generally include post-military correspondence to and from the veteran. The topics are often mundane in nature (e.g., a veteran applying for a replacement discharge paper) but can contain significant details not found elsewhere. They can be tricky to find because veterans' names are not used to identify the files but are cataloged using the identification code or codes seen here. There may be multiple id values as files were routinely reorganized, consolidated, and renumbered. If seeking these documents at the National Archives, make separate requests for each code.

YCHC File No.

YCHC File No – This field contains the file number referencing this veteran and/or his family located in the library of the York County History Center (erstwhile York County Historical Society and York County Heritage Trust).

Birth Date – Birth Place

The veteran's date of birth either as stated or calculated. The full date is presented if known, but month and year or year alone are commonly used as well. If followed with an asterisk [e.g., May 2, 1843*], the birth date was calculated using the death date and a stated age at death in years, months, and days, a figure then often used but that cannot be considered universally reliable.

Sources include pension and military records, obituaries, death certificates, and locally written histories. Many a man's birth year had to be assumed here by using his stated age at enlistment because no other source of birth

information was located. Note that nearly half the time, stated enlistment ages do not agree with stated birth dates.

Determining actual birth dates for those born in the early to mid-nineteenth century is often like trying to snatch a rainbow from the sky. Birth records were not then required, and census records regularly report ages across various enumerations that are mathematically invalid with each other. Obituaries routinely could only report a person's age at death as "about" so many years. Unlike today, tombstones in that era are not reliable for birth dates, and death certificates, initiated statewide in Pennsylvania only on January 1, 1906, are no more reliable. The fact is that many of that time, particularly those with little or no education, did not know exactly when they were born because there was then almost no reason to provide proof of age on a daily basis.

Birth place is the reported location of the veteran's birth either by county and state, country, or just state. Sources include death certificates for both the veterans and their children, obituaries, military and pension records, censuses, and various post-war accounts.

PLEASE NOTE: As a group, sources for nineteenth century birth locations are unreliable. It is almost the norm to find multiple birth locations reported for one person, often within the same set of documents and surprisingly by the individuals themselves. Keep in mind that Pennsylvania did not require the creation of formal birth (and death) certificates until January 1, 1906. Any birth data, therefore, is iffy at best.

If born in Pennsylvania, every effort was made to include the birth county in the format e.g. of "York Co., PA". A value of blank or "unknown" indicates no birth location could be determined. Otherwise, only the state or country is present. Also note that for reasons of clarity, "West Virginia" is used for those born in what now is that state despite the fact it did not then exist.

See also the Family Data field. It may additionally contain more specific birth location data and may note reports of multiple birth locations.

Marital Status

The veteran's marital status at the time of his enlistment with the principal regiment.

This data usually is found in pension files, obituaries, or genealogies, but many a wife is referenced as a family contact when a soldier was hospitalized during the war and that may appear in the compiled military service records.

Description

Physical description of the individual in terms of height, hair color, and eye color. Note that additional physical characteristics such as scars or tattoos and complexion for black soldiers may be found in the family/personal data field.

Not every soldier has a physical description in his military records. That was the tendency with recruits from the very early days of the war, the 1862 drafted regiments (unless the individual deserted), and militia regiments. In addition, officers' physical descriptions generally went unrecorded unless they previously had served at a non-commissioned rank.

The veterans' compiled military service records, company descriptive lists, pension records, and veteran home records provide the principal sources. In the case of those with multiple enlistments, this information could

come from any of those events. Reports of height often vary between sources, either by error or the fact that young recruits sometimes grew after enlisting, and old men tend to lose height late in life. Military records routinely report height to the quarter inch, but ¼” and ½” here have been omitted, and ¾” is rounded up. Eye colors like blue, gray, light, and even hazel were terms often used to describe the same individual as were black, brown, and dark. As of mid-2022, there are no green-eyed individuals on file.

Height: The veteran’s height preferably at the time of his enlistment with the principal regiment, but that figure is frequently unavailable. Sources ideally are his compiled military service records, but often the only report of height comes late in life in pension reporting or soldiers home records. The army kept heights to the ¼, ½, and ¾ inch, but ¼ and ½ are dropped here and those with ¾ are rounded up to the nearest inch. Also note that many veterans’ records contain multiple reports of height, and they frequently do not agree. Be aware that many underage boys entered the army at a particular height and then grew, so their enlistment height may be less than the figure reported in their pension applications decades later. Meanwhile, others who had reached their mature height by the time of enlistment shrank as they reached old age.

Hair Color: The veteran’s hair color preferably at the time of his enlistment with the principal regiment, but that value is frequently unavailable. Sources ideally are his compiled military service records. By the time a veteran applied for a pension or entered a soldiers home facility, he likely was gray-haired, so that value is not used. When multiple reports of hair color are found, it is not uncommon for them to disagree.

Eye Color: The veteran’s eye color preferably at the time of his enlistment with the principal regiment, but that value is frequently unavailable. Sources ideally are his compiled military service records, but on the presumption that eye color does not change with age, pension and soldiers home records are also used. However, when multiple reports of eye color exist, it is not unheard of to find a brown-eyed private suddenly becoming blue-eyed or vice-versa. P.S. Not one green-eyed soldier has ever been found.

Home in 1860

The veteran’s home location according to the 1860 census, if available.

Nearly twenty percent of veterans listed here are not found in the 1860 census, in which case home location may be determined from a variety of sources such as statements in pension files, entries for other censuses, family histories, draft registration records, obituaries, et. al., with “Unknown” displaying if all that fails. In addition, the 1860 Census Value field will then contain the value 0. The location field always contains the state name for those born in states other than Pennsylvania and Pennsylvanians whose specific locations are unknown.

NOTE: Locations are posted as they existed in 1860. For example, in 1860 the village of Quarryville, Lancaster County, was an unincorporated area of Drumore Township (and in 1883 part of East Drumore Township when that township was created). In 1892, the village incorporated and became the separate political entity it is today. Therefore, the home location for a resident of Quarryville listed here will be “Quarryville, Drumore Twp., Lancaster Co.” ALSO NOTE: For reasons of clarity, West Virginia is used for those living in what now is that state despite the fact it was then Virginia.

Occupation

The veteran’s occupation at the time of enlistment with the principal regiment.

Subsequent occupations may also be listed if known. Sources are principally the censuses, compiled military service records, and pension records. The ARIAS file may also contain an occupation.

1860 Value

The veteran's family financial worth according to the 1860 census.

That census includes two monetary figures for each family: the value of real estate and value of personal estate. This figure shown here is the sum of those two values and includes values listed for every family member shown.

\$0 – The veteran was not found in the 1860 census.

\$1 – The veteran was found in the 1860 census but no valuation is present.

Family/Personal Data

The veteran's personal and family history. Wherever possible, the veteran's parents, siblings, wife, and children are listed, including children's birth dates and daughters' married names.

Data is gleaned from military and pension records, obituaries, letters, death certificates for both veterans and their families, post-war historical accounts, censuses, and tombstones. Pension records provide the most definitive source for genealogical data, but not every pension contains that information, and not every veteran applied for a pension. Due to the impossibility of individually researching every family in depth, privately created family trees are consulted in full knowledge that many contain errors, but I have tried to select those that appear well researched. In many cases, I note the presence of possible factual irregularities. Despite that, it is likely that some errors are reflected here and will be changed if proper documentation is provided.

More so than veterans' military data, genealogical information can and does undergo updating because new information comes online daily. Be aware that reported birth dates for veterans' children are only a little more accurately reported than for veterans themselves. Death certificates, tombstones, and obituaries of that era are iffy sources for birth dates and birth locations.

POSSIBLE VALUES FOUND

“?” The presence of this value within the text indicates uncertainty about the specific data displayed. This is frequently because the source document was difficult to read, questions about spellings, or when reported birth dates appear to be illogical.

“*” When used immediately behind a birth date, it indicates that date was calculated from the death date using the stated age at death. Keep in mind, however, that stated ages at death were often inaccurate and should never be taken as definitive.

“No obituary was found online” indicates that no obituary was located in any online newspaper archive and does not necessarily mean that no obituary exists. Online newspaper archives are updated constantly, so the disclaimer might no longer be valid by the time you read the record. However, as of early 2022, south-central Pennsylvania's archival newspapers are well covered.

As in the military data, “CMSR” equals compiled military service records and “ARIAS” indicates the Pennsylvania Archives' Civil War card file.

Death – Burial Location

Date the veteran died.

Sources for death date are far more reliable than date of birth as reports of deaths are typically contemporaneous with the event.

The veteran's burial location.

The cemetery is listed if known; otherwise, only the location is used, and "unknown" is commonplace. All national cemetery burials are listed as "National Cemetery" with the specific name included thereafter.