



RESEARCHING MILITARY RECORDS AT THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Des Moines, Iowa

Presentation to the Des Moines Historical Society: May 20, 2013

The State Archives is located at the State Historical Building, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines. Visit www.iowahistory.org for information on holdings, hours and records requests guidelines or contact:

Jeffrey Dawson
Deputy State Archivist
(515) 281-7801
Jeffrey.Dawson@iowa.gov

The State Archives holds the records of the Iowa Adjutant General from the territorial period to 1915, which includes the military records from:

- The American Civil War
- The Spanish-American War
- The Mexican Border Incident
- World War I
- World War II

Major record series include correspondence, military reports, muster rolls, roster books, and volunteer enlistments. These records not only document Iowa's involvement in military affairs, but also contain the military service records of individual soldiers (however, little genealogical information is included in these records).

Other military records in the State Archives collections include:

- **Grand Army of the Republic Post Minutes & Roster Books**. These records hold information on Union soldiers who served in the Civil War from other states and later belonged to Iowa G.A.R. posts. An index to G.A.R. members and membership cards, compiled in the 1930s, are available on microfilm in the reading room at the State Historical Library, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines.
- **Bonus Board Case Files** which record military bonuses paid by the State Bonus Board for military service from World War I through Vietnam are being acquired by the State Archives. The case files also document each individual's military service.
- **World War I and World War 11 Casualty Files** which contain photographs and compiled service records of men who enlisted from Iowa and died during wartime are available.

- **Armed Forces Grave Registration Records** which contain information on all veterans of the U.S. military buried in Iowa. The series is arranged alphabetically by name and may include genealogical information (such as date and place of birth; names of parents, spouse, and other immediate family members) as well as data pertaining to military service and place of burial. The earliest graves registered are those of Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Iowa and the latest are for veterans who died in 1998.
- **Certificates of Service for the Civil War and Spanish-American War** are available from the State Archives for a \$25 fee.

For 20th century military service records of individuals who enlisted from Iowa, visit the National Archives and Records Administration's National Personnel Records Center Web site: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/>.

For pension records for federal military service contact the National Archives and Records Administration: www.nara.gov.

Other military records of units, organizations, and individuals are available in the Archives manuscripts and audio-visual collections.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC MILITARY RECORDS RESEARCH AT THE STATE ARCHIVES

CIVIL WAR ONLINE

Soldiers and Sailors System: www.itd.nps.gov/cwss

Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of Rebellion (6 volumes):

- IAGenweb.org/civilwar/books/logan
- University of Michigan Digital General Collection: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?page=simple&c=genpub>
- General index to pensions: Ancestry.com

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENTS

No records exist for soldiers who enlisted prior to Aug. 15, 1862

Information available for soldiers includes:

- County / state (or country) of birth
- Age / occupation
- Physical description
- Term of service
- Soldier's signature
- Signature of parent / guardian (if soldier is a minor)

MILITARY REPORTS

- Reports of battles and campaigns
- Casualty reports
- Reports of enlistments / promotions / elections
- Monthly returns of alterations in strength
- Miscellaneous reports
- Regimental histories

CORRESPONDENCE

- Incoming correspondence received from, or pertaining to, men who served in Iowa regiments.
- Letters cover a variety of subjects pertaining to military service and may also provide information where the soldier lives in later years.
- Occasionally they provide family information.

OATHS OF OFFICE

This series consists of the signed oaths of officers, which includes

- Name / residence / birthplace
- Military office/unit
- County and state where oath was taken

PERSONAL EFFECTS AND FINAL INVENTORY STATEMENTS

Generally includes

- Age / birthplace / residence
- Regiment / company
- Date / place of death
- Inventory of personal possessions including clothes, diaries, photographs, etc.

ROSTER BOOKS

This series was created by the U.S. War Department and includes

Name	Age
Place of Enlistment	Residence
Nativity	Rank
Date into quarters	Date of muster
Date of commission or warrant	Promotions
Date left service (where, why)	Casualties (nature, when and where)
Remarks	

CIVIL WAR – GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

Documents the military service of all veterans who belonged to an Iowa GAR post

Includes information on Civil War veterans who lived in Iowa following the war BUT who did not serve from Iowa.

- Membership Cards
- Photographs
- Post records: GAR Preliminary Guide

IOWA NATIONAL GUARD

Military personnel files, ca. 1876-ca. 1950. For records after 1950, contact the Iowa National Guard:

www.iowanationalguard.com, (515) 252-4582.

Correspondence, 1876-1918

SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

Adjutant General records

- Muster rolls
- Roster books
- Military reports
- Correspondence

WWI BONUS CASE FILES

Iowa created a Bonus Board to pay a bonus to all Iowa veterans for service during WWI

Information recorded on bonus applications includes:

- Date / place of birth
- Legal residence prior to entering service and length of time at residence
- Name / place of employment prior to service
- Marital status
- Residence of parents when soldier entered service
- Date mustered into service and date discharged
- Current address

WWI – CASUALTY FILES

Created by the War Records Division of the Iowa Historical Department following the war for all Iowans who died in U.S. military service during the war. Includes

- Individual note cards
 - Name / date / place of birth
 - Regiment/company
 - Father's name
 - Date / place of death
 - Burial location
- Photographs

RECORDS OF GOVERNOR

Council of Defense

- Fundraising organizations (Liberty Loan, Red Cross, War Savings Stamps)
- Secret Service (Correspondence, reports of special agents)
- Survey Committees (Coal Price Survey; Corn, Wheat and Seed Survey & Milk Survey; Manpower)

WORLD WAR II

Military records at the State Archives include

- WWII Bonus Case Files
- WWII Casualty Files
- WWII War Records Files

WWII BONUS CASE FILES

Bonuses for wartime service were to be paid to all Iowa veterans. Information recorded on each application includes

- Date / place of birth
- Residence for 6 months prior to entering service
- Date of entry into service and date of discharge
- List of military / naval organizations with which the applicant served
- Dates of foreign service
- Current address

WWII CASUALTY FILES

This series was also created by the War Records Division of the Iowa Historical Department. Individual folders were created for each Iowan who died in U.S. military service during the war. Items include

- WWII Honor Roll forms to be completed by the next of kin
- Photograph
- Newspaper clippings
- Telegrams and letters received by the family from the military
- Any other documents or photos that the family wished to have included in the casualty file

WWII WAR RECORDS FILES

These records were also created or compiled by the War Records Division of the Iowa Historical Department.

- County newspaper clippings
- Des Moines Ordnance Plant
- War industry reference files
- WACs – Fort Des Moines (photographs that appear to have been mailed to newspapers across the U.S. and still have cut lines attached)

OTHER RELATED MILITARY RECORDS

Records of Veterans Affairs Commission

- Armed Forces Grave Registrations identify the grave sites of U.S. veterans buried in Iowa
- 275,000 veterans beginning with soldiers from the Revolutionary War to 1998
- Information from grave registrations can reveal
 - Biographical/genealogical information
 - Information pertaining to military service
 - Burial information

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Manuscripts

- Personal papers (diaries, correspondence of military personnel serving 1830-present)
 - Listing available at http://www.iowahistory.org/libraries/research_collections/special_collections/manuscript_collections_dm.html

Photographs

- Portrait file (alphabetical by name)
 - <http://www.iowahistory.org/libraries/collections/des-moines-center/photograph-collections/index.html>

Boxed collections

- General subject file (arranged by subject heading)

REQUESTING AND USING MATERIALS AT THE STATE ARCHIVES

Hours:

12:30-4:30 PM Tuesday-Wednesday

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday

Closed Mondays

The archives research collections are available for public use through a combined library and archives reading room on the 2nd floor of State Historical Building in Des Moines.

The collections are available for use only in the reading room—they cannot be checked out for use elsewhere. Some duplicated materials are available on interlibrary loan to cooperating libraries. There is also information on microfilm available for interlibrary loan and purchase.

Archives reference staff provides assistance to researchers in the reading room by directing them to pertinent collection guides, recommending sources of information, retrieving the requested materials and filling reproduction orders.

Staff is not able to conduct detailed research for patrons. The State Historical Society maintains a list of professional researchers who provide services for a fee to those unable to come in person to the reading room.

The State Historical Society of Iowa provides access to collections at no cost to patrons. Fees are charged for duplication and special services associated with use of the collections.