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## Militia and Military Records

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### 226 Research Guide

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This research will help you find militia and military records at the Archives of Ontario.

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All descriptions for records mentioned in this guide are available in our online Archives Descriptive Database. You will find the database and all guides mentioned in this guide in the “Accessing Our Collection” section of our website.

## THE RECORDS

Beginning in 1793, all able-bodied citizens between the ages of 16 and 50 (with the exception of religious pacifists and some public officials) were required to enrol in the militia. Men reporting for militia duty were listed on annual muster rolls. Militia units were organized on a county basis. This system was replaced in 1855 with an active volunteer militia. It became the basis for the Canadian army.

### Militia Records

**Muster rolls:** The Archives has *some* muster rolls and militia records and published transcripts of muster rolls. Check the manuscript card catalogue (available on microfiche in the Archives’ Reading Room) under “military”, “militia” or the county name.

**Men of Upper Canada: militia nominal rolls, 1828-1829** (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1995): This volume reproduces the province-wide 1828-1829 muster roll — the most complete that was undertaken (the original records are held by Library and Archives Canada as RG 9, Series 1-B-2, vols. 29-31). [Click here to access the Library and Archives Canada Website](#). For areas where the roll was not completed or has disappeared, the book provides other muster

rolls or assessment rolls from the same period. This book is available for reference (non-circulating) in the Archives Reading Room.

***First battalion, Incorporated militia records, 1838-1843:*** This battalion, raised in Gore District, was one of four raised in 1838 following the 1837 Rebellion. Its members were drawn from militia ranks. They volunteered for a two-year extended service. All four regiments were disbanded in 1843.

The Archives has microfilmed copies of records from this battalion, including attestations (enrolment papers) for the 1840-1842 volunteers and administrative records. Originals are at the Hamilton Military Museum. See Inventory D 15 *First battalion, Incorporated Militia collection* in the Archives of Ontario's Reading Room or contact the Hamilton Military Museum for more information.

## Military Records

### Before World War I:

- ***British military records, "C" Series, 1767-1896:*** These records have information on British soldiers and sailors who served in North America, including in some cases, information on their post-military careers. They are available on microfilm in the Archives' Reading Room, and at Library and Archives Canada. [Click here to access the description for \*\*\*British military records, "C" Series diffusion material \(D 2\)\*\*\* for more information.](#) [Click here to access the Library and Archives Canada.](#)
- ***Board of Claims for War of 1812 losses records, 1813-1848:*** This Board adjudicated claims for civilian losses during the War of 1812. These records are available on microfilm in the Archives of Ontario's Reading Room, and at Library and Archives Canada. [Click here to access the description for \*\*\*Board of Claims for War of 1812 losses diffusion material \(D 1\)\*\*\* for more information.](#) [Click here to access the Library and Archives Canada.](#)
- ***Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment) records, 1863-1953:*** This regiment was established in 1863 as the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Volunteer Regiment and was mostly comprised of volunteers from Hamilton and Wentworth County. The records from this regiment are available on microfilm in the Archives' Reading Room. They include various lists of volunteers, administrative records and records documenting the regiment's involvement in local community life. Check Inventory D 18 *Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment) collection* in the Reading Room for more information.

### War of 1812 records:

- [Click here to check \*\*\*Research Guide 213\*\*\* for information about the Archives' records on the War of 1812.](#)

## World War I:

- **War diaries, 1914-1918:** These diaries document the war experience of soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during World War I. They are available on microfilm in the Archives' Reading Room, and at Library and Archives Canada; they are also available online on the Library and Archives Canada Website. [Click here to access the Library and Archives Canada Website](#). There is no surname index and you must know the rank, regiment and theatre of war for the individual you are researching. [Click here to check the description for the \*war diaries \(D 24\)\* for more information](#).
- **Services files, 1914-1918:** These files consist of up to two or three dozen forms, dealing with enlistment, training, medical and dental history, hospitalization, discipline, pay, medal entitlements and discharge or notification of death. These files are currently being digitized and made available on the Library and Archives Canada Website. [Click here to access the Library and Archives Canada Website](#).

Library and Archives Canada's website has a database and information on other records pertaining to World War I Canadian soldiers.

## World War II:

- **Ontario overseas deaths, 1939-1947 (RG 80-21):** These registrations document the deaths of Ontario residents overseas (mostly during military operations) during and immediately after World War II. The records are indexed in *Overseas Death of Ontario Servicemen and Servicewomen, 1939-1947* (Toronto, Ontario Genealogical Society, 2006). A copy of this 2-volume publication is available in the Archives' Reading Room.

Microfilmed copies of these records are available in the Archives' Reading Room and through the Microfilm Interloan Service. Check the Deaths binder of Inventory 80 *Records of the Office of the Registrar General* in the Archives' Reading Room or, [click here to access the Vital Statistics pages on the Archives' website for microfilm reel listings](#) (this page can be found in the "Accessing Our Collection" section of our website).

These records are also available online, on the ancestry.ca and Family Search Websites. [Click here to access the ancestry.ca Website](#). [Click here to access the Family Search Website](#).

- **Military service files** are held by Library and Archives Canada. Files for military personnel who died in service from 1939 to 1947 are indexed on the Library and Archives Canada website and available on the ancestry.ca website. Other services files have not been digitized. [Click here to access the Library and Archives Canada Website](#). [Click here to access the ancestry.ca Website](#).

## Other Sources

**Land records:** Disbanded British soldiers who had served in Upper Canada and militia members who had served in time of war or invasion could be entitled to a land grant. Check Guide 215 or [click here to view the description for the Fenian and South African land grant records, 1901-1922 \(RG 1-99\) for more information.](#)

**Military records collection, 1759-[197-] (F 895):** This is an artificial collection that the Archives created to put together various militia and military records. It includes militia personnel and casualty lists, general orders and commissions, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, pamphlets and records on various topics related to the military. [Click here to access the Military records collection, 1759-\[197-\] \(F 895\).](#)

**Home District Marriage Register, 1816-1830 (RG 80-27-1, volume 6):** This register contains an oath of allegiance made and signed by Colonel Richard Beasley and men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of York Militia, dated 1812. This entry is at the end of the register.

A published transcription of the register, including the War of 1812-related entries, can be found in *The Marriage Registers of Canada West/Upper Canada*, Compiled by Dan Walker, et al. (Delhi, Ont.: Norsim Research and Publishing), 1995-1999, vol. 11. A copy of this publications is available in the Archives of Ontario 's reading room.

**Records of individual and families:** These may contain records about military or militia service. [Click here to search the Archives Descriptive Database for more information.](#)

## MAKING CONTACT

### Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your military and militia records research for you, our reference archivists are waiting to assist you. You may telephone or write to them by mail or email or — best of all — visit the Archives of Ontario.

### Contact us

Telephone: 416-327-1600 Toll free (Ontario): 1-800-668-9933  
 Fax: 416-327-1999  
 Email: [Click here to email the Archives of Ontario](#)  
 Address: Archives of Ontario, 134 Ian Macdonald Blvd., Toronto, ON M7A 2C5

## **Website**

For information about the Archives' holdings, as well as access to research guides and other customer service materials available through the Archives of Ontario. [Click here to visit our website.](#)

## **Customer Service and Research Guides**

The Archives of Ontario has published a series of in-depth research guides on a variety of specific topics. For more information, please see "Research Guides and Tools" under "Accessing Our Collection" on the home page of the Archives website.

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