



<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/highland003/id/38346/rec/4>

If you are interested in researching the military service of your ancestors, the Library can help.

A good place to start is by looking at this [chart](https://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2014/04/23/what-war-did-my-ancestor-serve-in/) (<https://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2014/04/23/what-war-did-my-ancestor-serve-in/>) to ascertain what wars they may have fought in.

Many service records have been digitized and are available via Ancestry.com and other services. Use your library card to access [Ancestry Library Edition](https://hplibrary.org/databases) (<https://hplibrary.org/databases>). Ancestry has 638 collections in its “Military” category from the United States and other countries. Ancestry also has some service records for other countries.

Records of the United States Armed Forces are part of the official history of the United States. [The National Archives \(NARA\)](https://www.archives.gov/research/military) (<https://www.archives.gov/research/military>) in Washington DC holds records from the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812. The [National Personnel Records Center \(NPRC\)](https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center) (<https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center>) in St. Louis holds

military records generally from World War I to the present, depending on the service branch.

Service records are not open to the public until 62 years after separation from the military. A large percentage of veterans' records were lost in a fire at the St. Louis NPRC in 1973.

Of particular note, the National Park Service has created the [Soldiers and Sailors Database](https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>) of those who served in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. Additional links provide information on regiments and battles.

If you are researching an individual who served in the United States armed services, correspondence and other family papers may be located in repositories such as the Highland Park Archives and Local History Collections housed at the Highland Park Public Library.

For example, long time Highland Park City Clerk John Finney served in the 65th Illinois Volunteer Infantry ("Scotch Regiment") and served three years in the Civil War theater. His letters home are available digitally via the Illinois Digital Library (<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/highland003/id/41652>) and Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la/item/d1064a62d50da0f64170a1e68ac9a24d?q=john%20finney>.)

Biographies of other Highland Park Civil War veterans can be found on the library website [here](https://hplibrary.org/civil-war-veterans-highland-park) <https://hplibrary.org/civil-war-veterans-highland-park>.

Records of distinct installations like forts and bases are also part of the National Archives. While the records of Fort Sheridan and its soldiers

are part of the National Archives and the United States Army War College Library and Archives (<https://arena.usahec.org/web/arena>), the Highland Park Public Library Archives and Local History collection does hold rare images of people, horses and events at the Fort.



<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/highland003/id/339>)

The Highland Park Army and Navy Center, established during the war, provided one of the prototypes for the United Service Organizations (USO.) A rare book describing the club's history is in the collection and available digitally on the IDA and DP.LA ; *The Highland Park Army and Navy Center* by Blanch Mason Tellis and Jessie Orton Jones (<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/highland003/id/339>) or (<https://dp.la/item/4aece02d4ef68c1787676d327524c962?q=highland%20park%20army%20and%20navy%20center>)

Papers from people involved in this and other service organizations are also in the collection, including a letter from a mother thanking a local volunteer for helping to care for her wounded son. A World War I soldier describes the war theater in a letter home. The records of the local defense league provide information about local residents serving

overseas. The collection also copies of Franz Stuppi's family exit papers from the Royal Archives of the Kingdom of Prussia located in Berlin, Germany, which were obtained by the Historical Society in the 1960s.

The names on war memorials, census and draft records, and other documentation represent lives of people who served and gave their lives to protect the United States. Although it takes time and effort to find service records of past generations, it is well worth it as it can lead you to fascinating discoveries.