

## **BASIC MILITARY RESEARCH**

Craig Roberts Scott, CG  
229 Danagher Ct.  
Holly Springs, NC 27540  
crscott@HeritageBooks.com

### **HOW TO SEARCH**

#### **Step One:**

Answer the following questions: (1) What is his name; his full name?; (2) Whose side was he on; did he fight for both?; (3) What state did he serve from?; (4) Was he a volunteer or a regular? Was it Army, Navy or Marine Corps? Was it State Troops or County Militia?; (5) Was he an officer or an enlisted man? Or was he a contractor/ teamster/sutler?; (6) What do you know about him that would make him unique?; (7) Was he a prisoner of war?; and (8) Did he survive the war? (9) Where did he live before and after the war.; and (10) who was his wife, or did he have more than one? Is there a lineage society that might include your ancestor's service as a part of its eligibility requirements? Do the application papers of other relatives help you with your search?

Do not be concerned that you cannot answer all of these questions; but you need to at least have a name.

#### **Step Two:**

Did he get a pension? Find his pension or the pension of his heirs. Look for bounty land. Look for information in the pension about service. What units did he serve with? Was he a substitute for someone else? Is there information relating to pensions that can be found outside of the pension file? Have you looked at the pension office ledgers? Have you found the last payment or the final payment? Is there pension office correspondence not in the pension application file? If the soldier did not survive the conflict can you locate a widow or orphan five year half-pay pension? Have you looked at pension office vouchers? Find the names of comrades and look at their pensions also. Fold3.com and Ancestry.com may be of help.

#### **Step Three:**

Look up your ancestor in the appropriate microfilmed index to Compiled Military Service Records. If you cannot find him, you might have the wrong state. Or he might have been in the Regular Army. Records for enlisted Regular Army soldiers have not been compiled.

Trace you ancestor through the entire war; don't stop just because you found a unit that he belonged to. It is possible that your ancestor served with more than one unit during the war. Also it is possible that the service of you ancestor was in a local militia unit and the records may not be a part of the federal collection of records. Check for records in the appropriate state archives, state library or state adjutant general office.

Fold3.com and Ancestry.com may also be of help here.

#### **Step Four:**

Did he apply for bounty land? Locate his bounty land files, his unindexed bounty land (for wars before 1855) or his homestead exemption files (after 1862). If his land is located in the federal domain but not where you would expect it be, was Bounty Land Scrip issued. The Bureau of Land Management website may be of help here.

#### **Step Five:**

**Analyze** the information that you have found. Is there information about being a prisoner or casualty, a hospital patient, a court-martial, or death? These events provide the basis for further research. Remember that each record should lead you to another record. Every index card represents an original record. Find material about the captains, the regimental commanders, the battles and the campaigns. Check what the local paper was reporting on the war. Put your ancestor in the context of his time.

The following is a list of microfilm publications and finding aids that will be helpful to you in your searches that are **not in the Military Service Records Microfilm Catalog**:

#### **Revolutionary War**

- M 1051 Index to Compiled Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers who Served With the American Army in Georgia Military Organizations. No date. 2 rolls DP
- M 926 Letters, Returns, Accounts, and Estimates of the Quartermaster General's Department, 1776-1783, in the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War. 1 roll DP

#### **Civil War**

##### **RG 109 War Department Collection of Confederate Records**

- M 345 Union Provost Marshal's File of Papers Relating to Individual Civilians. 300 rolls DP
- M 346 Confederate Papers relating to Citizens or Business Firms. No date. 1158 rolls DP
- M 409 Index to the Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-1865. 1861-1865. 34 rolls DP
- M 410 Index to the Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant General and Inspector General and by the Confederate Quartermaster. 1861-1865. 41 rolls DP
- M 416 Union Provost Marshal's File of Papers Relating to Two or More Civilians. No date. 94 rolls DP
- M 437 Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-1865. 1861-1865. 151 rolls DP
- M 469 Letters Received by the Confederate Quartermaster General. 1861-1865. 14 rolls DP
- M 474 Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General. 1861-1865. 164 rolls DP
- M 522 Letters Sent by the Confederate Secretary of War. 1861-1865. 10 rolls DP
- M 523 Letters Sent by the Confederate Secretary of War to the President. 1861-1865. 2 rolls DP
- M 524 Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Secretary of War. 1861-1865. 1 roll DP
- M 618 Telegrams Received by the Confederate Secretary of War. 1861-1865. 19 rolls DP
- M 627 Letters and Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General. 1861-1865. 6 rolls DP
- M 628 Letters and Telegrams Sent by the Eng. Bureau of the Confederate War Department. 1861-1864. 5 rolls
- M 823 Official Battle Lists of the Civil War, 1861-1865
- M 900 Letters and Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Quartermaster General. 1861-1865. 8 rolls DP

- M 901 General Orders and Circulars of the Confederate War Department. 1861-1865. 1 roll DP
- M 921 Orders and Circulars Issued by the Army of the Potomac and the Army and Department of Northern Virginia, C. S. A 1861-1865. 4 rolls DP
- M 935 Inspection Reports and Related Records Received by the Inspection Branch In the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. No date. 18 rolls DP
- M 1091 Subject File of the Confederate States Navy, 1861-1865. 61 rolls. DP [Record Group 45]
- T 455 Reference File Relating to Confederate Organizations from the State of Georgia. 1 roll
- T 456 Reference File Relating to Confederate Medical Officers. 3 rolls

#### **RG 94 Records of The Adjutant General's Office**

- M 565 Letters Sent by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series). 1800-1890. 63 rolls DP
- M 619 Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series). 1861-1870. 828 rolls DP
- M 661 Historical Information Relating to Military Posts and Other Installations. 1700-1900. 8 rolls DP
- M 711 Registers of Letters Received, Office of the Adjutant General. 1812-1889. 85 rolls DP
- M 725 Indexes to Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1846. 1861-1889. 9 rolls DP
- M 744 Returns From Regular Army Cavalry Regiments. 1833-1916. 117 rolls DP
- M 823 Official Battle Lists of the Civil War. 1861-1865. 2 rolls DP
- M 852 Returns of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, Nov. 1831 - Feb. 1863. 1831-1863. 2 rolls DP
- M 1017 Compiled Service Records of Former Confederate Soldiers who Served in the 1st Through 6th U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiments. 1864-1866. 65 rolls DP
- M 1064 Letters Received by the Commission Branch of the Adjutant General's Office. 1863-1870. 527 rolls DP
- M 1523 Proceedings of U.S. Army Courts-Martial and Military Commissions of Union Soldiers Executed by U.S. Military Authorities. 1861-1866. 8 rolls DP
- M 1659 Records of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (Colored), 1863-1865. 1863-1865. 7 rolls
- T 32 Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received. 1805-1889. 6 rolls

#### **RG 249 Records of the Commissary General of Prisoners**

- M 1303 Selected Records of the War Department Commissary General of Prisoners Relating to Federal Prisoners of War Confined at Andersonville, Georgia, 1864-1865. 6 rolls DP

#### **RG 153 Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army)**

- M 1105 Registers of the Records of the Proceedings of the U.S. Army General Courts-Martial. 1809-1890. 8 rolls DP

#### **Finding Aids:**

- PI 144 War Department Collections of Revolutionary War Records, 1949
- NM 68 Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners, 1966 (RG 249)
- PI 101 Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records (RG 109), reprinted by Iberian Press, Athens, Ga.
- PI 17 Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Adjutant General's Office (RG 94)

- I 14     Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury (Revised) (RG 217),  
reprinted by Willow Bend Books, Westminster, Md.

## **Other References:**

### **Revolution**

- . 1976. Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives  
(Arlington, Va.: National Genealogical Society Special Publication No. 40)
- . DAR Patriot Index, Centennial Edition, Volumes I, II, III. (Washington: National  
Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Centennial Administration)
- . DAR Patriot Index, Millennium Edition, Volumes I, II, III. (Washington: National  
Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Millennium Administration)
- Mark Mayo Boatner, Encyclopedia of the American Revolution. (New York: David  
McKay Company)
- F. S. Heitman, Historical Register of the Officers of the Continental Army
- Howard H. Peckham, The Toll of Independence, Engagements & Battle Casualties  
of the American Revolution. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).

### **Civil War**

- War of Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 vols.
- War of Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies,
- C. E. Dornbusch, Military Bibliography of the Civil War, 4 volumes.
- Mark Mayo Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary.
- E. B. Long, The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861 - 1865.
- C. D. Cowles, The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War.
- F. B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the U. S. Army from its Beginning  
September 29, 1789 to March 2, 1903.
- Official Army Register of the Volunteer Force of the US Army for the Years 1861-65, 8 vol.

### **Archives publications**

*National Archives, Microfilm Resources for Research, A Comprehensive Catalog*, National Archives and  
Records Administration, Washington, D.C., 2000, ISBN 1-880875-22-5.

Eales, Anee Bruner and Robert M. Kvasnicka, *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives  
of the United States*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., 2000,  
ISBN: 1-880875-21-7.

Fox, Cynthia G. and Constance Potter, *Military Service Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives  
Microfilm Publications* (National Archives Trust Fund Board, National Archives and Service  
Administration, Washington, D.C., 1985, ISBN 0-911333-07-X.

Munden, Kenneth and Henry Putney Beers, *The Union, A Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil  
War*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., 1998, ISBN 0-911333-46-0.

Beers, Henry Putney, *The Confederacy, A Guide to the Archives of the Confederate States of America*,  
National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., 1998, ISBN 0-911333-18-5.