

NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL
MARITIME ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY

INFORMATION SHEET 66

**TRACING YOUR SEAFARING ANCESTORS
IN THE ROYAL NAVY**

RECORDS OF ROYAL NAVY SERVICE

Historical records of all pre-First World War naval records for commissioned ranks and non-commissioned ranks prior to 1891 can generally be found at:

The National Archives

Ruskin Avenue
Kew
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 4DU

Telephone: 020 8876 3444

Email: enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Available records are outlined in detail in *Tracing Your Naval Ancestors* by Bruno Pappalardo, published in 2003 by the National Archives ISBN 9781903365373.

Commissioned Ranks

Service Records

Certificates of Service, 1802-1894, give details of the service of warrant officers and ratings applying for superannuation (ADM 29).

Similar certificates of service usually accompany the Passing Certificates of lieutenants, 1854-1897 (ADM 13), engineers, 1863-1902, and officers qualifying for warrants, 1851-1902 (ADM 13).

Service Registers

Service Registers for Officers, were developed by the Admiralty during the mid-19th century. These take the form of a page recording each officer's career and often, though not always, record his entire career from entry to retirement and death. The Service Registers provide the most complete and convenient source of information about an officer's career. Most of the series cover from 1840 to the 1920s with deaths amended in the 1950s (ADM 196). Some volumes in the later period are subject to extended closure. Other Service Registers can be found for Engineers, Surgeons, Boatswains and Carpenters, and for Royal Naval Reserve Officers (ADM 240).

Navy Lists

The researcher interested in the service of a commissioned officer, or occasionally a warrant officer (heads of specialised technical branches of the ship's company), would be advised to

consult the Navy Lists. Published continually from 1814, these contain seniority lists of officers that are keyed to lists of ships of the Royal Navy with the officers appointed to them.

During the two World Wars much of the usual information was omitted from the published editions of the Navy List and confined to the Confidential Editions of Service use only, now held in the National Archives (ADM 177).

More Recent Records

Records of commissioned officers who entered the service between 1916 and 1950, who are either deceased or aged 61 or over, are retained at:

The Navy Records Centre*

Director of Naval Personnel,
Navy Search,
TNT Records Management,
PO Box 7814,
Tenton Point,
William Nadin Way,
Swadlincote,
Derbyshire DE11 1EG

Tel: 01283 227912 or 227913

Fax: 01283 227942

email: navysearhpgrc@tnt.co.uk

Records of commissioned officers who are currently serving, or who are retired and aged 60 or under, are retained at:

Director of Naval Personnel*

Mail Point G2
West Battery
Whale Island
Portsmouth
PO2 8DX

Telephone: 023926 28672

Fax: 023926 28660

Royal Naval Ratings

Service registers of most ratings joining the Royal Navy between 1853 and 1923 are now available online www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/royal-navy-service.asp and contain information such as date of birth, physical appearance, occupation and ship or ships served on. However these details are only recorded up to 1928. For service between 1928 and 1972 records are held by:

Director of Naval Personnel

Navy Search
TNT Records Management
Tetron Point
PO Box7814
William Nadin Way
Swadlincote
Derbyshire
DE11 1EG

Tel: 01283 227913
Fax: 01283 227942

Records of non-commissioned ranks who enlisted as Regular Service entrants between 1924 and the outbreak of the Second World War are also retained at the address above as are records of non-commissioned ranks who enlisted as Regular Service entrants from the outbreak of the Second World War up to the present day, including National Servicemen who enlisted between 1945 and 1950.

** The Navy Records Centre, the Department of the Naval Secretary, and Naval Pay & Pensions (Accounts) are not open to members of the public.*

The Ministry of Defence will normally only release the information given in service records to the subjects of those records, or to their next of kin; and it may charge a search fee, which cannot be refunded.