

Veterans Research Worksheet

By Kim Alberg

The 4-page worksheet that follows can be used to guide students in their quest for details that will allow their veteran's story to unfold. It is best to encourage students to think of this worksheet as part scavenger hunt – the hunt for data and documents – and part graphic organizer, automatically grouping acquired information into specific aspects of the veteran's life prior to the commencement of the writing process. Because time and place play such large roles in both the types of records generated and the current availability of these records, students should be forewarned that each item on the worksheet will likely not be available for each veteran.

Each row on the first three pages of this worksheet includes space in a column to the far right for citing the source(s) used to gather the specific piece of information recorded on that row. As students record a new detail of their veteran's life, they should add a number in this source column, and then turn to page 4 of the worksheet to fully cite the source(s) used to acquire this information. Because it is sometimes difficult to retrace the path *back* to an original document, students should be advised of project expectations regarding source citations before beginning their research, allowing them to complete this component of the project from the very beginning. Page 3 of the worksheet addresses research related to specialized populations. Each section on this page includes additional information that is pertinent to the veteran's story along with some brief tips to guide further research.

Early in the process, students should also be alerted to the *probability* that they will discover conflicting information – alternate spellings of names, differing ages/years of birth, even variance in recorded race – at some point in their research. While this inconsistency may be frustrating for some

students, it nicely sets up “teachable moments” for assessing source reliability and for self-checking one’s work to ensure that the research trail hasn’t shifted to a different veteran with a similar name and background.

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SPECIALIZED RECORD SETS

MILITARY

CONFLICT: ___ CIVIL WAR (___ UNION or ___ CONFEDERACY) ___ WORLD WAR II

BRANCH: ___ ARMY ___ NAVY ___ ARMY AIR FORCES ___ MARINES OTHER:

TIP: Watch for terms like VOLUNTEER/USCT (African American)/SCOUT (Native American).

WOMEN WHO SERVED

SERVICE: ___ (ARMY, NAVY, CADET) NURSES CORPS ___ MARINE CORPS WOMEN'S RESERVE

___ WAACs (Army) ___ WAVES (Navy) ___ WASPs (Army Air Force) ___ SPARS (Coast Guard)

TIPS: Watch for surname changes if your female veteran ever married and set a goal to learn what job(s) your veteran performed for the military.

AFRICAN AMERICAN

CONDITION OF SERVITUDE: ___ FREE PRIOR TO 1865 ___ ENSLAVED PRIOR TO 1865

TIP: Look for your African American veteran on the 1860 USFC. If listed, they were free prior to the Civil War, leading your search towards documents of freedom ("free papers", manumissions, etc.). If not found in the 1860 USFC, they were likely enslaved at that time; search for documents of enslavement such as an enslaver's inventories, deeds, wills/probate, etc.

NATIVE AMERICAN

TRIBAL AFFILIATION: _____ ___ UNKNOWN

TIP: Use the 1900 USFC to determine if the veteran or a known ancestor/descendant was living IN INDIAN TERRITORY (OK) in 1900. If they were, check land allotment and "Enrollment Records" (Dawes Rolls, etc.). If they/their family members were LIVING ELSEWHERE, start your research with the U.S. Indian Census Rolls (1885-1940), specific tribal rolls, etc.

Source No. ↓	SOURCE USED EX. RECORD SET, TITLE OF PRINT RESOURCE	OTHER INFO EX. DATABASE, WEBSITE, AUTHOR
EX	<i>U.S., Veterans' Gravesites, ca. 1775-2019</i>	<i>Ancestry Library Edition</i>
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