



## The National Archives

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### **Thousands of naval WWI service records go online**

A fantastic new online resource for people tracing their family's WWI naval roots is being launched by The National Archives.

From today (*Tuesday, November 4*), family historians will be able to search and download the service records of 40,000 members of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR). Previously these documents were only accessible to those visiting The National Archives in Kew.

The digitised documents provide a range of information on each individual, including name, division, date of birth, former occupation, ships and units served in, and period of service. The records also help bring to life the individuals, with details such as height, hair colour and eye colour, along with remarks about character and ability. Very occasionally a record may reveal the person's place of birth.

Included among the thousands of records are those of the famous war poet, Rupert Brooke, and Lieutenant General Bernard Cyril Freyberg, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1916 after being transferred to the British Army.

Individuals using these records (contained in ADM 337) online will be able to search by name, service number, RNVR division and date of birth.

Records are held for ratings (seamen who did not hold a commission) who joined between 1903 and 1919, and officers who signed up between 1914 and 1922. The officers' records include details of promotions, honours and awards from World War One.

The RNVR was formed in June 1903 by the 'Naval Forces Act 1903'. Volunteers joining up agreed to serve 'either ashore or afloat' and therefore performed a wide range of duties.

At the outbreak of World War One, volunteers reported to their divisional headquarters. Some men were drafted into ships of the fleet, but many were ordered to join the Royal Naval Division.

The records can be found at  
[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/rnvr.asp](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/rnvr.asp)

For more information on tracing your World War One ancestors visit  
[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/militaryhistory](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/militaryhistory)

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### **Notes for editors**

**The National Archives** is a UK government department and executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. As the official archives of the UK government, it preserves and protects one of the most important collections in the world, holding public records dating back almost 1,000 years.

The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

### **The vision of the National Archives is to:**

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone