

Searching for information: your options

Our Search Service

We offer paid searches in all The National Archives records, in order to comply with our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The searches will be done in a prompt and professional manner and will reflect the expertise of The National Archives in the field of historical records. If you wish us to do the search we shall provide the information within eighteen working days of receipt of payment.

Our charge is based on £15 per 15 minutes but please contact us for the full cost of your particular search before sending us any money.

Independent Researchers

There are many independent researchers whom you can hire to carry out research for you. These researchers may charge significantly less than our 'full cost recovery' service. I enclose a list of some who undertake research in your area of interest. These lists are also available at our web site (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/irlist/>)

Our On-Site Services

You are welcome to visit us - we can help you to do the search yourself, and admission is free. Anyone over 14 is eligible to become a reader. You only need a reader's ticket if you wish to access original documents. Please bring two forms of identification; one to prove identity (e.g. a full driving licence, passport or credit card, and one to prove your current address (e.g. a utility bill issued within the last three months). You do not need a reader's ticket to consult material which is available online, on microfilm, microfiche or published.

Please bring a pencil and notebook. Pens and scanners are not allowed in the reading rooms. Free security lockers are available. No animals are admitted to the building except guide dogs and hearing dogs. The café, bookshop and museum are open to the public. Improvement to our services, including critical building work, will continue until late spring 2008.



Response Form

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY POST TO: RECORDS ENQUIRIES, THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, KEW, RICHMOND, SURREY, TW9 4DU

Please supply a full quote of the cost for undertaking the following search(es):

Search (for details see attached research notes)	Please tick
1. Officers' Service Records	
2. Commissioned Officers' Services	
3. Officers' Survey Returns	
4. Summaries of Confidential Reports	
5. Passing Certificates	
6. Full and Half Pay Records	
7. Commission and Warrant Books	

The Research Notes specify what information we need from you for a search to be carried out. Please note that if you are unable to supply the information marked * in the Research Notes, then the quotation will be for a higher fee than normal search fee quoted in the Research Notes.

Please fill in the boxes below, as appropriate. If you have additional information which you think might aid our search, please use the Additional Information box.

Full name of Officer	
Approximate dates served	
Rank	
Date of Promotion	
Ship(s) he served on	

Additional Information

Please write your details in BLOCK CAPITALS:

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	
VAT Registration Number (see Note)	

Note: The fees quoted in the Research Notes include VAT at the standard rate. If you are resident outside the European Union, we will quote fees without VAT, when we send the full quotation.

If you are a VAT registered trader within the European Union, we will quote fees without VAT, as long as you supply your VAT registration number.

Research Notes

Royal Navy Officers, 1660-1945

Search No.1 Officers Service Records, 1756-1931

The National Archives series reference ADM 196

This is the main source for service records of both commissioned and warrant officers in the Royal Navy. It consists of overlapping sets of service records and because of this it is sometimes possible to find more than one record per individual.

You can carry out this search yourself and download an image for only £3.50: visit Documents Online, available on our web site at: <http://www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Please note the online search facility only covers ADM 196 service records. All other material described on this search form will require a manual search and the published search fee will be applicable

Information that this source should reveal:

Surviving information differs from register to register. However, they should include:

date and place of birth; dates of commissions and promotion; details of ships served on; details of rewards or distinctions; dates of retirement and death.

They may also provide wife's name, date and place of marriage; father's name, occupation and address.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Although ADM 196 covers the period 1756-1931, service records of Royal Navy officers only began to be systematically kept from the 1840s.

Records of service for commissioned officers who joined the Royal Navy up to May 1917, and warrant officers up to 1931 can be found in ADM 196.

If the officer joined the service after these dates, then his records are still in the custody of the Ministry of Defence. You will need to contact:

For Retired officers:

The Directorate of Personnel Support (Navy), Navy Search, TNT Archive Services, Tetron Point, William Nadin Way, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 0BB. Tel: 01283 227913 Fax: 01283227942

For Officers under 60:

Naval Secretary (OMOBS), Room 169, Victory Building, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LS.

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- approximate dates of service*
- ship(s) served on

Our normal fee for one search in the Officers Service Records, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £45.

Search No.2 Commissioned Officers' Services, 1660-1746

The National Archives series reference ADM 10

This series contains some early service records for officers commissioned into the Royal Navy.

Information that this source should reveal:

Usually such returns will provide the following type of information:

names of ships served; dates served on each ship.

Some returns may provide an officer's age and address.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Officers' service records were not kept systematically after the end of the seventeenth century. Consequently, service records do not survive for all commissioned and warrant officers' ranks.

Some survive in ADM 10 for 1660-1688 and are arranged in name order for the following ranks:

Admirals, captains (although also includes those with dates of seniority up to 1746), commanders, lieutenants

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- approximate dates of service*
- ship(s) served on

Our normal fee for one search in the Commissioned Officers' Services, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £45.

Search No.3 Officers' Survey Returns, 1741-1903

The National Archives series references ADM 9 and ADM 11

The series ADM 9 contains returns made to three surveys of officers' services conducted in 1817, 1828 and 1846, by sending circular letters to officers requiring them to furnish summary details of their services.

The series ADM 11 includes some original returns of officers' services including surgeons and chaplains. It also includes analyses of officers' services.

Information that this source should reveal:

Usually returns in ADM 9 will provide the following type of information: names of ships served; dates served on each ship. Some returns may provide an officer's age and address.

Returns in ADM 11 will usually provide the following type of information: names of ships served; dates served on each ship.

The analyses of returns in ADM 11 sometimes contain the following information: age, date of seniority, names of ships served on and time served.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Survey returns do not survive for all commissioned and warrant officers' ranks. The officer concerned must have been alive when the survey was undertaken. The officer was required to send a return. Not all did and others have been lost. Others never received or neglected to return their forms. The accuracy of some returns may be questionable as some officers compiled their returns from memory, many years after they last served.

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- approximate dates of service*
- ship(s) served on

Our normal fee for one search in the Officers' Survey Returns, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £60.

Search No.4 Summaries of Confidential Reports, 1893-1943

The National Archives series reference ADM 196

These reports are assessments of officers' suitability for promotion and can be used to supplement service records as described in Search No.1, above.

ADM 196 contains confidential reports for captains 1893-1943; commanders 1908-31; lieutenants and sub-lieutenants 1885-1928; mates and acting mates 1913-30; gunners 1881-1912; and paymasters 1884-1939.

Information that this source should reveal:

These records provide dates of promotion, remarks about suitability for promotion, and may give dates of marriage, retirement and death.

Factors affecting success of a search:

You need to know the officer's rank and the date they were promoted to it. This 'date of seniority' can be found in the Navy List, or from service records. The National Archives does not hold confidential reports for every officer rank.

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- date of promotion*

Our normal fee for one search in the Summaries of Confidential Reports, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £60.

Search No.5 Passing Certificates, 1660-1902

The National Archives series references ADM 6, ADM 13, ADM 106 and ADM 107

Many officers at the beginning of their careers would have been expected to take a form of qualifying examination for their respective rank. This was to ensure that they had the relevant skills and experience to carry out the duties expected of them.

Passing certificates for the following officer ranks are available in ADM 6, ADM 13, ADM 106 and, ADM 107:
lieutenants 1691-1902;
boatswains 1810-13 and 1851-87;
carpenters 1856-87;
gunners 1731-1812 and 1856-87;
masters 1660-1830;
pursers, later known as paymasters, 1813-20 and 1851-89;
surgeons 1700-1800;
engineers 1863-1902.

Information that this source should reveal:

Lieutenants' passing certificates will provide:
dates served on board ships; names of ships and rating; date they passed the exam. They may also contain baptismal certificates.
Other officers' passing certificates may just indicate that the officer has been found suitable to undertake the duties required of that rank and the date of examination.

Factors affecting success of a search:

There are gaps in the series of passing certificates. Some series of passing certificates are not indexed by name. The date of an officer's first commission or warrant at their particular rank (a date of seniority).

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- date of promotion*
- approximate dates of service
- ship(s) served on

Our normal fee for one search in the Passing Certificates, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £45.

Search No.6 Full and Half Pay Records

The National Archives series references ADM 22, ADM 24 and PMG 15

Full pay registers in ADM 22 and ADM 24 record salary payments made to officers on active duty between 1795 and 1905.

If an officer was not on active sea service, that is 'unemployed', he would have been paid half pay, a sort of retainer fee for possible future service. Half pay could also be considered to be a pension being paid to those officers who were no longer fit for service. Half pay registers for 1693 to 1924 are in ADM 25 whilst those for October 1836-March 1920 are in PMG 15.

Information that this source should reveal:

Full pay records note the amount of wages paid to officers, the names of ships they were serving on and the dates of service on them.

Half pay records note when payments were made, usually to either the officer's agent or to his own address. These records might also provide an officer's date of death.

Factors affecting success of a search:

It is useful to know when an officer joined and left the service.

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- approximate dates of service*
- ship(s) served on

Our normal fee for one search in the Full and Half Pay Records, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £45.

Search No.7 Commission and Warrant Books

The National Archives series reference ADM 6

A commission or warrant was the official method of appointing an officer to a ship, and on every successive appointment.

This series contains records of commissions for 1695-1846 and warrants for 1695-1849.

Information that this source should reveal:

These records would indicate when a commission or warrant was made and the name of the ship that the officer was to join.

Factors affecting success of a search:

These records are mainly complete.

Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:

In order to carry out a search for our normal fee, the following information is required:

- the full name of the officer*
- their rank*
- approximate dates of service*
- ship(s) served on

Our normal fee for one search in the Commission and Warrant Books, providing the information requested above is supplied, is £45.
