



## **The South African War 1899-1902 Service Records of Other Ranks and NCOs**

Information From Archives M11

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Search No. 1.                      Service Records

Catalogue reference: WO 97

These records contain the attestation and discharge documents of soldiers who became either in- or out-pensioners of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Occasionally, it contains records of men who bought themselves out of their regiment or who applied unsuccessfully for a pension.

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Information that this source should reveal:

May include: Age, place of birth, physical description, any former service and occupation, next of kin, medical records, date of enlistment, postings, promotions, awards, leave, transfers and date of discharge as well as his intended place of residence. They often record details of wife and children.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

If a soldier died in service, was discharged by purchase or who only joined on a limited period engagement, his record is unlikely to have been kept.

If the soldier went on to serve, or reenlisted for service, during the First World War then his record will normally have been removed from this series and placed amongst those for the First World War. If this situation applies then consider applying for a search of those records – see M3 First World War Army Service - Other Ranks.

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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 soldier\*  
Both the first name and surname are essential to make a search feasible. Ideally any 'middle' names should also be included
- the name of at least one unit or regiment in which he served\*
- his service number, if known

- whether he died in service

Our normal fee for one search in the Service Records, providing the information detailed above is supplied, is £60.

Please note, however, if the soldier has a very common surname then the standard charge may not apply. We will only search for the name as it has been provided to us. If you wish a search to be undertaken on a variation of the soldier's name (such as with or without middle names, or middle names used as first names), the fee is likely to be higher. For example, if we have been asked to search for a Charles Marshall Burr, we would not search under the name Charles Burr. Likewise, if we were asked to search for a Fred Cheeseman we would not search under the name Frederick Cheeseman.

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Search No. 2. Royal Hospital, Chelsea: Disability and Royal Artillery Out-Patients, Admission Books

Catalogue reference: WO 116

WO 116 contains the registers of the award of out-pensions of the Royal Hospital Chelsea to soldiers discharged from either the regular army or the militia on the grounds of disability. WO 117 contains registers related to pensions awarded to soldiers for length of service.

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Information that this source should reveal:

Brief description of the pensioner is given, together with age, place of birth, particulars of service and the reason for discharge.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

An approximate date of the Pension Board is needed.

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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 soldier\*
- the name of at least one unit or regiment in which he served\*
- his service number, if known
- an approximate date of admission to pension\*
- whether he died in service

Our normal fee for one search in the Admission Books, providing the information detailed above is supplied, is £45.

Please note, however, if the soldier has a very common surname then the standard charge may not apply. We will only search for the name as it has been provided to us. If you wish a search to be undertaken on a variation of the soldier's name (such as with or without middle names, or middle names used as first names), the fee is likely to be higher. For example, if we have been asked to search for a Charles Marshall Burr, we would not search under the name Charles Burr. Likewise, if we were asked to search for a Fred Cheeseman we would not search under the name Frederick Cheeseman.

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Search No. 3. Local Armed Forces (for units raised locally in South Africa)

Catalogue reference: WO 126

This series contains enrolment forms completed by men who joined units raised in South Africa.

Catalogue reference: WO 127

This series of records comprises nominal rolls of some of the units raised in South Africa.

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Information that this source should reveal:

WO 126: These contain details of a man's age, nationality, and trade, the date and place of his enrolment (and, in some cases, his discharge) and the oath of allegiance.

WO 127: These often provide the dates of enrolment and discharge.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

Records are arranged alphabetically according to name of the locally raised unit so you must know the soldier's unit.

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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 soldier\*
- the name of the local unit which he served\*
- his service number, if known
- whether he died in service

Our normal fee for one search in the Admission Books, providing the information detailed above is supplied, is £45.

Please note, however, if the soldier has a very common surname then the standard charge may not apply. We will only search for the name as it has been provided to us. If you wish a search to be undertaken on a variation of

the soldier's name (such as with or without middle names, or middle names used as first names), the fee is likely to be higher. For example, if we have been asked to search for a Charles Marshall Burr, we would not search under the name Charles Burr. Likewise, if we were asked to search for a Fred Cheeseman we would not search under the name Frederick Cheeseman.

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Search No. 4.          Service in the Imperial Yeomanry

Catalogue reference: WO 128

These are the attestation and discharge documents of men who enrolled in the Imperial Yeomanry. An index to those has been published: *The Roll of the Imperial Yeomanry, Scottish Horse & Lovat Scouts: 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War 1899-1902* by Kevin J. Asplin. There is also privately owned website that includes a database of some 40,000 men who fought with the Imperial Yeomanry, Lovat Scouts and Scottish Horse during the Boer War of 1899 to 1902. The database, searchable alphabetically by surname, gives the names, ranks, numbers and units. The website can be found at:  
<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/KevinAsplin/home.html>

Catalogue reference: WO 129

This series of records consists of registers, casualty books and a nominal roll of officers who served in South Africa.

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Information that this source should reveal:

Both series may include: Age, place of birth, physical description, any former service and occupation, next of kin, medical records, date of enlistment, postings, promotions, awards, leave, transfers and date of discharge, intended place of residence.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

Service number is needed but this can often be found from the book or website referred to above.

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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 soldier\*
- the name of the unit which he served
- his service number
- whether he died in service

Our normal fee for one search in these two series of records, providing the information detailed above is supplied, is £45.

Please note, however, if the soldier has a very common surname then the standard charge may not apply. We will only search for the name as it has been provided to us. If you wish a search to be undertaken on a variation of the soldier's name (such as with or without middle names, or middle names used as first names), the fee is likely to be higher. For example, if we have been asked to search for a Charles Marshall Burr, we would not search under the name Charles Burr. Likewise, if we were asked to search for a Fred Cheeseman we would not search under the name Frederick Cheeseman.

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Search No. 5. Campaign Medal Rolls for South Africa

Catalogue reference: WO 100

These records contain the original lists submitted by regiments and units of those officers and men who were entitled to campaign medals and clasps.

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Information that this source should reveal:

Details of recipients who served in the infantry, artillery, cavalry, the Guards regiments, the Imperial Yeomanry and locally raised units and were entitled to:

- The Queen's South Africa Medal
- The King's South Africa Medal

They also contain details of those soldiers entitled to one or more clasps.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

Name of regiment has to be provided before any search can be undertaken.

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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 soldier\*
- the name of the unit which he served\*
- his service number
- whether he died in service

Our normal fee for one search in these two series of records, providing the information detailed above is supplied, is £45.

Please note, however, if the soldier has a very common surname then the standard charge may not apply. We will only search for the name as it has been provided to us. If you wish a search to be undertaken on a variation of the soldier's name (such as with or without middle names, or middle names

used as first names), the fee is likely to be higher. For example, if we have been asked to search for a Charles Marshall Burr, we would not search under the name Charles Burr. Likewise, if we were asked to search for a Fred Cheeseman we would not search under the name Frederick Cheeseman.

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Search No. 6. Gallantry Awards

Catalogue reference: ZJ1 (London Gazette)

Awards were announced in *The London Gazette*.

Catalogue reference: WO 32

Registered files of the War Office.

Catalogue reference: WO 108

Correspondence and papers of the War Office relating to the South African War of 1899-1902.

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Information that this source should reveal:

ZJ 1: Entries for the Victoria Cross will include citations.

WO 32: Some recipients of the Victoria Cross are listed as are the names of some other ranks who were Mentioned in Despatches.

WO 108: Recommendations for awards 1901-1902.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

Firm evidence needed that a soldier was given a gallantry medal.

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

Our normal fee for a search in these records is £45.

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Search No. 7. Distinguished Conduct Medal: Submissions to Sovereign 1855-1909

Catalogue reference: WO 146

This series contains the submissions made to the sovereign for the issuing of the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Information that this source should reveal:  
Contains lists of names of those awarded the DCM.

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Factors affecting success of a search:  
Arranged chronologically, a high likelihood of finding information if it is known that the man received a medal.

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Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:  
Our normal fee for a search in these records is £30.

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Search No. 8                      Records relating to the campaign in South Africa

Catalogue reference: WO 108

Correspondence and papers of the War Office relating to the South African War of 1899-1902.

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Information that this source should reveal:  
Details relating to the conduct of the military campaign, nominal rolls of casualties arranged by locality and regiment, register of soldiers' graves as well as lists of war graves.

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Factors affecting success of a search:  
Substantial information relating to the South African campaign but there is not likely to be much detail on an individual's career in the army.

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Details required to carry out a search, and our Charge for a search:  
A date is required to undertake this search. Our normal fee for a search in these records is £60.

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Search No. 9.                      Additional Sources

List of Soldiers buried in Cape Colony

Catalogue reference: DO 119/1479

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Information that this source should reveal:  
Names of soldiers who were buried in Cape Colony.

Factors affecting success of a search:

This list only covers one part of the South African theatre of military operations.

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

Our normal fee for a search in these records is £30.

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Search No. 10. Selected War Pensions Awards Files for Service Prior to 1914

Catalogue reference: PIN 71

War pensions award files for service before 1914.

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Information that this source should reveal:

Files contain medical records (in some cases including X-rays), accounts of how and where illnesses or injuries occurred and men's own accounts of incidents they were involved in. Conduct sheets are included recording place of birth, age, names of parents and siblings, religion, physical attributes, marital and parental status.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

Only a small selection of files has been kept.

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

Our normal fee for a search in these records is £45.