



## British Army Service: Officers 1757-1913

### The crucial information needed for a search in the archives

The National Archives holds records which might contain the information you require and we can:

- Either search for it on payment of a fee and supply you with the information (if found)
- or
- Enable you to search for the information in other ways.

Please send as much information as you can. The following details (including the source of the information) are particularly important:

- The full name of the officer\* .....
- The units in which he served (at least one is essential)\*  
.....
- The time period during which he served\* .....
- Did he die in service?.....

If you have all of the information marked with an asterisk\*, the standard charges for our searches will apply and these are shown on this leaflet. If you do not have this information, the standard charges will not apply, as the search time will increase by a large amount, and therefore the search will require a very high fee to be paid. Please contact us if you still want to proceed: [enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

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### 1. *The Army List*

Standard charge: £30

#### Published books

These records are usually the best starting point for research for officers: a search here would normally be required as a pre-requisite for undertaking a search amongst the surviving service records (see 2 below) unless you already have details of the individual's unit in your possession.

There are a number of different types of *Army List*, namely: Yearly, Half Yearly, Quarterly and Monthly. There was also a list called '*Hart's Army List*' which was produced between 1839 and 1915.

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Information that this source should reveal:

*The Army List* contains the names of all officers serving in the British Army at the time of publication. The list will tell you what unit the individual was serving in at the time of publication, together with the date of his commission. *Hart's Army List* may provide additional service details.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

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 must be known.

For common names, the unit details are essential but if you have something that will set your officer apart from all others, it may be possible to proceed.

If the name is an uncommon one, it may be possible to find the individual without the unit details.

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## 2. Surviving Service Records

Standard charge: £120

Catalogue references: *see below*

There are a number large number of different sources containing information about officers' services. The key ones that will be searched as appropriate are:

WO 19/1-5 Royal Garrison Regiment

WO 25 (Selected pieces) Various Service Returns and Records of Service for Medical Officers and Field Officers (Major and Above).

WO 31 Commander in Chief's Memoranda. Useful for biographical information about an officer on his initial commission.

WO 54 Board of Ordnance Records. For selected Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer officers only.

WO 61/61-76 Commissariat Department

WO 68 Militia Records, selected pieces and units only.

WO 76 Officers' Regimental Records; not all regiments survive.

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Information that this source should reveal:

Surviving information may include:

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age</li><li>• Place of birth</li><li>• Physical description</li><li>• Any former service and occupation</li><li>• Next of kin</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical records</li><li>• Date of commission, postings, promotions, awards, leave and transfers</li><li>• Date of discharge, and address</li></ul> |
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Not all information is always recorded.

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Factors affecting success of a search:

The search may not be successful for a number of reasons: the record may not survive, the specific individual cannot be identified or the record is incomplete.

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