

Finding someone who served in the Army in the First World War



How to find First World War databases on www.Ancestry.co.uk:

1. From the Home Page select the **Card Catalog**.
2. Enter terms such as 'WWI' or '1914' etc in the **Keywords** box (Note the I in WWI is a capital i).
3. Select **Europe** in the **Filter By Location** section on the left of the screen.
4. To filter further select **United Kingdom** in the **Filter By Location** section.
5. Click on the **Title** of the **Collection** required.
6. Enter search criteria in boxes and click on Search or browse the database using drop down boxes on the right as required.

The following databases of Army records are available to search on www.Ancestry.co.uk:

British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920
British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards 1914-1920
British Army WW1 Pension Records 1914-1920
UK, Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947
UK, Memorial Books WWI and WWII 1914-1945
UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War
UK, Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947
UK, De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1921
England, The National Roll of the Great War, 1914-1918
UK, Silver War Badge Records 1914-1920
UK, Memorial Books WWI and WWII 1914-1945
UK, Citations of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, 1914-1920
UK, Victoria Cross Medals, 1857-2007
The Great War 1914-1918 Magazine

The following databases are available to search on www.Findmypast.co.uk:

De Ruvigny's Roll 1914-1918
Distinguished Conduct Medal Citations 1914-1920
Manchester City Battalions
Manchester Roll of Honour
National Roll of the Great War 1914-1918
Oldham Employers' Roll of Honour 1914-1920
Oldham Pals 1914-1920
Prisoners of War 1914-1918
Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919
Swansea Pals (14th Welsh Regiment), 1914-1915
Gillies Archive plastic surgery pioneers 1917-1925



Case study: Harry Lawrence Picking

Harry Lawrence Picking is commemorated in the churchyard at East Hanningfield. He served with the 20th Royal Fusiliers and was posted missing after 9 months voluntary active service in France in 1916 (T/Z 151/73, Monumental inscriptions for East Hanningfield).

A search of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website shows that Private Harry Lawrence Picking died aged 18 on 20 July 1916. His service number was 8202 and his Regiment was the Royal Fusiliers. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

From www.Ancestry.co.uk we can find the Medal Roll Index card for Harry L Picking of the 20th Royal Fusiliers, No, 8202. This shows that he was first sent to France on 15 November 1915 and that he was presumed dead (PD) 20 July 1916. He was awarded the 1914-1915 Star which was awarded to all soldiers who served abroad between 1914 and 1915, the British Medal and the Victory Medal. A search of the [UK Soldiers died in the Great War](#) database finds that he enlisted at Colchester.

From [The Long, Long Trail](#) website which gives the history of regiments involved in the First World War (www.1914-1918.net/royalfus.htm), the 20th Battalion was known as the 3rd Public School Battalion, formed on 11 September 1914 by the Public Schools and University Men's Force. It was part of the 98th Brigade, 33rd Division on 26 June 1915 and was sent to France in November 1915 (which tallies with information from Harry's Medal Roll Index card) and was transferred to the 19th Brigade 33rd Division. The 19th Brigade fought at the second Battle of the Somme in July 1916. On 20 July the 33rd Division attacked High Wood. It was presumably during this action that Harry Picking was killed. A detailed account of the battle is available at http://www.ww1battlefields.co.uk/somme/high_wood.html

Ancestry provides links to entries for Harry Picking in the 1901 and 1911 census and to his entry in the birth certificate indexes. The 1911 census shows Harry aged 13, living at Botley House, East Hanningfield with his father Harry and mother Emily who were the village schoolmaster and schoolmistress. He had 3 sisters, Emily, Dorothy and Isabel and a younger brother Geoffrey. His grandfather James Dance also lived with them. The parish register for East Hanningfield records that Harry was born on 26 February 1898 and baptised on 15 May 1898. (www.essexancestors.co.uk D/P 250/1/9 Image 33)

A search on Seax, the Essex Record Office's online catalogue, found several items of interest. Microfilm copies of the log book of the school showed that Harry Picking senior was appointed headmaster of the school in December 1893 and worked there until his death in 1920. A sale catalogue for Botley House, giving a description of the house, is dated 1920 when the house was sold after Mr Picking's death.