

Military and Conscription Records

This can be a very useful source if you only know the province or even the region of origin of your ancestor and if you know that he was born after 1855.

Military and conscription records contain very precious genealogical information. They provide not only vital information on your ancestor but also physical information.

Conscription records also called *registri di leva* or *Liste di estrazione di Leva* list all Italian male-born from approximately 1855 (the imposition of the draft – conscription of all 18-years old males – dates back 1865), by year of birth, for each military district. The introduction of these records varies from one area to the other, but mostly they started around 1873, thus including all males born in 1855. However, there are lists that date back to 1750.

There are two copies of them; one is held in the military archive of each military district and there it remains, the other is initially held by the *Procura della Repubblica* (Country Court at province level) and after 75 years, it is sent to the State Archive of the main province. Remember all documents held by the State Archive are available for public consultation.

Researching conscription records in the main provinces of the region of origin can be a unique way to start your research that otherwise would have been impossible (as far as town halls and parishes are concerned, you **MUST** know the comune of origin of your ancestor).

These records contain personal data that cannot be found in any other source, such as:

- Height
- Size of the chest
- Color and form of hair, face, nose, and chin
- Eye color
- Skin color
- Condition of the teeth,
- Birthmarks, if any

In addition, you will be able to find the following vital information:

- Draftee's full name
- His parents' names
- His place of birth
- His profession
- His education (whether he was able to read and write or not)
- Ability to perform military services
- Date the service began

Among the **military records**, you can find:

Registro dei fogli matricolari (Record of the draftee curriculum) records all the developments in the military career, from promotions to changes in the status. Many of those who had already migrated to other countries and were called to serve the Italian army during the World War I chose not to return and were labeled deserters on their military curriculum

With the *foglio matricolare*, another record rich in genealogical information, called *foglio di congedo illimitato* (discharge record) through which a person was discharged from military service. It contains a lot of information that was already states in the conscription record, such as vital information, the parents' names, and description of the physical appearance.

Arruolamento e prima venuta alle armi (conscription and first mobilization) documented when a person was drafted and the length of his service with information also on war campaigns and medals awarded.

If conscription records date back 1865, military services can be found before. Unfortunately, given the fragmentation of the Italian peninsula before the unification, there was not a common procedure in recording military curriculums.

Most of these records have been microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS Church), and these reproductions are available to at the church's family history centers (FHC) throughout the United States and Canada.