

INTRODUCTION

There are many resources available for those interested in Swedish military history. Sweden is considered a peaceful country and has not been engaged in any military conflict since 1814. However, between the 1500s and 1814, it was a history of wars. Between 1563 and 1814, Sweden fought wars with Denmark, Norway, Russia, Poland, and Prussia. So, if you have Swedish heritage, you may find someone in your ancestry who served in the Swedish military.

The original Swedish military documents are found at the War Archives in Stockholm. Today, many military documents are digitized and available online.

CONSCRIPTION METHODS

The method of military conscription in Sweden from the 16th century to today can be broken down into the following categories:

1. Older allotment system (*utskrivning*) before 1682
2. Late allotment system (*indelningsverket*) 1682-1901
3. Conscription (*bevärigen*) introduced in 1812 – supplement to allotment
4. Universal military service 1901 – 2010
5. All-volunteer military from 2010 to 2017
6. Universal military service 2017

THE EARLY ALLOTMENT SYSTEM 1540s - 1682

Before 1682, soldiers were recruited involuntarily. The parish minister created a list of all the fit men in the parish between 15 and 60. These men gathered at a designated place, and the king's representative arbitrarily inducted every tenth man into the infantry and Navy. The cavalrymen were recruited voluntarily by a system called (*rusttjänst*), which allowed farmers to provide the cavalryman in the province with a horse. The conscription records are called *Roterings- och utskrivningslängder*, digitized on Riksarkivet¹ and Family Search².

THE LATE ALLOTMENT SYSTEM (INDELNINGSVÄRKET) 1682-1901

In 1682, the Swedish Armed Forces were reorganized, and the *indelningsverket* or allotment system, a system of organizing and financing the Swedish armed forces, was introduced. The three major forces were the infantry, cavalry, and Navy. This system lasted until 1901.

CONSCRIPT SYSTEM (BEVÄRINGEN)

A new system called (*bevärigen*), conscript was introduced in 1812. This was a forerunner of universal military service. At this time, the military officials felt that the allotment system was insufficient to provide the total demand for soldiers. This system was introduced as a supplement to the allotment system. All men between the ages of 21 and 25 were required to register.

¹ <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/arnesomrade?infosida=arnesomrade-militaria>

² <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/399593?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

UNIVERSAL MILITARY SERVICE (ALLMÄN VÄRNPLIKT)

Universal military service was adopted in 1901 and lasted until 2010.

ALL-VOLUNTEER MILITARY

Between 2010 and 2017, universal military service was abandoned and was replaced by an all-volunteer Armed Forces.

UNIVERSAL CONSCRIPTION

In 2017, universal military conscription was reintroduced for both men and women.

THE LATE ALLOTMENT SYSTEM (*INDELNINGSVÄRNET*) 1682-1901

SOLDIERS, CAVALRYMEN, AND BÅTSMÄN

The soldiers in the allotment infantry regiments were organized by a system called *rotering*. Several farms made up a rote, and these farmers were contractually responsible for recruiting and supporting the soldier. The soldier was given housing (*soldattorp*), some land, food, and allowance. The soldier was required to go to war or perform public service when summoned. If the soldier died or was discharged, his wife and children were required to move to make a place for the new soldier. A soldier was called a *soldat* or *knekt*.

The cavalry was recruited differently from the infantry. Instead of rotes, a *rusthåll* was used. A *rusthåll* was usually a large farm or an estate. A *rusthållare* was similar to a rote farmer in the infantry, but a *rusthållare* had a personal contract with the Crown whereby he was contracted to provide the cavalryman a horse, housing (*ryttartorp*), uniform, and land. A cavalryman was called a *ryttare*.

The Navy personnel or *båtsmän* were recruited similarly to the infantry. Several farmers along the coastal areas formed a rote and were required to recruit a båtsman and provide him with housing (*båtsmantorp*) and a uniform.

VÄRVARDE – ENLISTED

Only a few regiments were enlisted. These were primarily guards, artillery, and garrison. These men were paid cash salaries. These regiments were located mainly in the cities and forts. Some of the enlisted regiments had their own parishes.

MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The basic unit of the Swedish army before 1900 was the regiment. A regiment generally comprised between 1000 and 1500 men, including officers and “rank and file” soldiers. Each regiment was divided into smaller units called companies. Most army regiments had eight companies of roughly equal numbers of men. The primary military unit of the Swedish navy was the “*båtsman* company.” A *båtsman* company had approximately the same number of men as an army company, typically between 100 and 200, but in a couple of instances, there were nearly 300 men.

MILITARY NAMES

When a man joined the military, he was given a unique soldier name. The reason is that there could not be multiple "Johan Anderssons". The soldier's name could be based on a personal character, such as Stark (strong), Rapp (quick), or a military term. Often, it was based on the place where the soldier served. People who served at the same location were often given the same military name. When a person was discharged from the military, some reverted to using their patronymic name, and others retained the military name. This was purely the individual's choice.

GENERAL MUSTER ROLLS (*GENERALMÖNSTERRULLORNA*)

The general muster rolls (*generalmönsterrullorna*) are the primary records one uses to research Swedish soldiers who served in the military between the 1680s and 1880s. The muster rolls were kept by the respective regiments every three to five years. In these rolls, you will find information about all soldiers and officers, regiment by regiment, company by company.

In the general muster roll, one can follow soldiers and officers from when they entered the service until discharge. Types of information you will find in the muster rolls include the soldier's name, both their soldier's name and patronymic, birth date or age, number of years in the service, height, and marital status. One learns if the soldier was promoted, and sometimes, one learns about special recognitions. The reason for his discharge is often stated at the end of the soldier's career.

RESEARCH YOUR SWEDISH MILITARY ANCESTOR

One usually learns that one's ancestors were in the military from church book records such as household, marriage, or death. Titles such as *soldat* (sold.), *knekt*, and *grenadjär* (*Gren.*) identify the person as belonging to the infantry. Cavalry titles include *ryttare*, *hussar*, and *dragon*, while the title *båtsman* indicates one's ancestor was in the Navy. One must locate the regiment and company to find your ancestor in the Swedish general muster rolls.

IDENTIFY THE REGIMENT AND COMPANY

Two sources can be used to identify the regiment and company names: the publication *Statistical Digest of the Swedish Army System* or Grill and the Central Soldier's Registry. (<https://www.soldatreg.se/sok-soldat/>).

STATISTICAL DIGEST OF THE SWEDISH ARMY SYSTEM (GRILL)

The publication "Statistical Digest of the Swedish Army System" by Claes Lorentz Grill (1817-1907) will help you find the regiment and company. Many researchers refer to this work as the "Grill." This work was produced in four volumes from 1855 to 1858 and is accessible on ArkivDigital, Family Search, and Riksarkivet.

1. "Rusthålls-regementene" (1855) – Cavalry regiments
2. "Rothålls-regementene" (1856) – Infantry regiments
3. "Båtsmans-kompanierne" (1858) – Navy companies
4. "Extra roteringen" (1857) – Extra districts

CENTRAL SOLDIERS REGISTRY (CENTRAL SOLDATREGISTRET)

The Central Soldiers' Register is a free searchable database of about 500,000 soldiers who served between 1682 and 1901. < <https://www.soldatreg.se/sok-soldat/>> You can search by soldier name, family name, parish, birth year, death year, regiment, and company. Among the results include regiment, company, and soldier number. Since this is a more straightforward search than the Grill, I recommend searching this site first to find the regiment and company for your ancestor. If you are not successful, then use the Grill.

INDEXES – GENERAL MUSTER ROLLS IN ARKIVDIGITAL

ArkivDigital completed the indexing of the general muster rolls for 1660-1887 in October 2023. In total, there are 4,368,285 searchable posts in the index. The general muster rolls in this series include the allotment (*indel*) infantry and cavalry and enlisted (*värvade*) regiments.

The following information is searchable in the general muster rolls index:

- First name and last name
- Birth date, birth year, and age (in cases where these are mentioned)
- Birthplace (if noted)
- Muster year
- Regiment
- Company
- Number and allotment place
- Rank
- Service years

To search the general muster rolls, log in to app.arkivdigital.se, select Index search, and choose General muster rolls under index source.

CASE STUDY – SEARCH FOR GENERAL MUSTER ROLL FOR SOLDIER

To illustrate this, we will search for the general muster roll for Jan Andersson Fräs, who is from Barkargårdet in Stora Tuna parish in Kopparberg county. All examples are shown using the application, ArkivDigital. The steps for locating a general muster roll for a soldier are:

1. Begin with the household record. The household record gives you the parish and place in the parish, such as the name of the torp or farm. Sometimes, you will find a soldier number, regiment, and company name. In the household record for Jan, we see that he resides at Barkargårdet, and his soldier number is 41. There is also an abbreviation, Gust, next to his soldier number³.
2. Search for the general muster rolls in ArkivDigital.
 - Go to Index search.
 - Under Index source, Select general muster rolls.
 - Enter Jan Fräs 41 in the simple search box and click search
 - You will see eight matches from 1845 to 1866
 - All are muster rolls for Jan Fräs from enlistment to discharge.

³ Viewed in ArkivDigital Stora Tuna (W) AI:19b (1835-1844) Image 391 / Page 389

CASE STUDY – SEARCHING IN THE GENERAL MUSTER ROLLS FOR CAVALRYMAN

For those interested in searching for a cavalryman, the search for the general muster roll is similar to that for a soldier. However, often, you will find more information about the horse than the cavalryman. You will see separate muster records for the cavalryman and horse at some musters. To illustrate, we will look for *hussar* Lars Fäldt from Vintrosa Parish in Örebro county.

1. Begin with the household record. The household record gives you the parish and place in the parish, such as the name of the torp or farm. Lars's household record shows that he resides at Säby ägor, and his military number is 54
2. In this case, We will use the Central Soldier register to identify the regiment and company.
3. Go to <https://www.soldatreg.se/sok-soldat/>
4. Click on Sök i soldatregistret
5. Click on the British flag for English
6. Enter Fäldt in the soldier's name field and Vintrosa in the parish field.
7. Click the search button.
8. There are two matches for Lars Fäldt
 - a. One with soldier number 54 for the years 1829 to 1835
 - b. One with soldier number 70 for the years 1835 to 1855
 - c. Both records are for the same regiment and company -Livregementets husarer regiment and the Örebro company.
9. Search in the general muster rolls in ArkivDigital
 - a. Go to Index search.
 - b. Select Quick find: general muster rolls.
 - c. Go to advanced search.
 - d. Lif-Regementets-Husar-Corps is sometimes called Livregementets husarer. The letters f and v are often interchanged.
 - e. Enter Livregementets husarer in the regiment box.
 - f. Enter Örebro on the page content/Company box.
 - g. Click *Search*.
 - h. Open the book for 1832 and then search for cavalryman #54. You will find the record at the following reference: Generalmönsterrullor - Livregementets husarer (R) 828 (1832-1835) Image 1060 (AID: v376234.b1060, NAD: SE/KrA/0023)

NAVY DOCUMENTS (*FLOTTAN*)

To research a person who served in the Navy (*flottan*), one begins by looking at what is available in the archive, Rullor flottan 1635-1915. The seamen (*båtsmännen*) have their own series of records, Rullor båtsmanskompanier (volumes IV: 1-79). In this series, you will find different records regarding the seamen, including the general muster rolls. The seamen's muster rolls are organized similarly to the muster rolls for soldiers.

Many other records exist in the archive, such as Rullor Flottan 1635-1915. The archive is divided into several diverse record series such as rolls for companies in Karlskrona, Stockholm, and Göteborg (Rullor Karlskrona, Stockholm och Göteborg), rolls for non-commissioned officers (*Underofficersrullor*), rolls for the company of young sailor boys (*Rullor skeppsgossekompanier*), rolls of seaman companies (*Rullor matroskompanier*), rolls of the companies in Finland (Finska rullor), rolls for navigators and civil workers in the pilot service (*Lotsrullor*) as well as a large number of various rolls for officers and crew at the Stockholm station.

CASE STUDY – SEARCH FOR NAVY SEAMAN (BÅTSMAN)

One usually finds out that one's ancestor was a Navy seaman from the household records in the church books. We will search for the boatman roll for the Navy seaman Sven Lindström, who is living at Karamåla in Jämshög parish in Blekinge county, and we also see Båtsman #501 next to his name in the record⁴.

1. To identify the batsman company, go to the publication "Statistical Digest of the Swedish Army System" by Claes Lorentz Grill (1817-1907 or the Grill.
2. To search for the military record.
 - a. Select archive search.
 - b. Select archive type and select the printed literature archive.
 - c. Search in the parish register: Tryckt litteratur GrillReg:1 volume.
 - d. Search for Jämshög, and you will see "III 14 which directs us to page 14 in the volume Grill: III⁵.
 - e. Go to Grill III and page 14.
 - f. The batsman company is shown at the top of the page: No 6 Sjette Blekinges Indelta Båtmans-Compani.
 - g. Go to archive search and enter rullor flottan in the archive holder box.
 - h. Open rullor flottan 1635-1915.
 - i. Filter *rullor båtsmankompanier*: Blekinge.
 - j. Since these books are not indexed, you will have to search each company for batsman #501.
 - k. You will find the first muster record for him at this reference: Rullor Flottan 1635-1915 IV:7 (1831-1833) Image 2680 (AID: v398534.b2680, NAD: SE/KrA/0503036)

CASE STUDY – SEARCH FOR NAVY SEAMAN (BÅTSMAN) IN THE LATE 1800S

For those interested in researching Navy seamen (båtsmän) in the late 1800s, the boatman rolls (båtsmansrullorna) are an absolute goldmine. In the late 1800s, a little book was created for each sailor. These books contained much more detailed information than the general muster rolls, thus allowing one to follow the sailor's military career easily. These records have been indexed by name, and you can search for them by name in ArkivDigital's index, boatswain active list.

⁴ Viewed on ArkivDigital. Jämshög (K) AI:7 (1833-1845) Image 86 / Page 80 (AID: v95924.b86.s80, NAD: SE/LLA/13196)

⁵ Viewed on ArkivDigital. Tryckt litteratur (o) GrillReg:1 Image 380 / Page 35 (AID: v792967.b380.s35)

One usually finds out that one's ancestor was a Navy seaman from the household records in the church books. We will search for the boatman roll for the Navy seaman Eric Eliasson Borgström, who is living at Kärrabol in Jämshög parish in Blekinge county. We also see Båtsman #243 next to his name in the record.

1. Go to index search.
2. Select the *boatswain active list* under the index source.
3. Use advanced search and enter Eric in the first name, Bergström in the last name, and 243 in the Boatswain number and click search.

20TH-CENTURY MILITARY RECORDS SEARCHING FOR A *STAMKORT* OR *DRAFT CARD* IN ARKIVDIGITAL

A compulsory draft system was implemented in Sweden in 1901. During the 1900s, many males served in the military. Archive Digital has added conscription cards or service cards (*stamkort*) for all who were enrolled in military service between 1902 and 1950. The *stamkort* includes personal information such as name, birth date, enrollment date, and information about his military service.

SEARCH FOR THE MILITARY ENROLLMENT NUMBER OR DRAFT NUMBER IN THE HOUSEHOLD/CONGREGATION RECORD

You will find a person's military enrollment number or service draft number in the household record in the *värnpligtsförhållanden* column. A conscription number is a three-part number in the SSS RR/YYYY format. SSS is the draftee's personal number, RR is the roll-keeping area or (*rullföringsområde*) in the enrollment area, and YYYY is the year of enrollment. The enrollment year may be two or four digits.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

Search for the service card for Ture Ansgarius Norden, born on April 10, 1892, in Byarum parish in Jönköping county. His military enrollment number in the household records is 283 19/1911. His personal number is 283, and his year of enrollment is 1911. To find his *stamkort*, we need to identify what roll-keeping area "19" represents.

SEARCH METHOD

1. Go to ArkivDigital.
2. Access index search.
3. Select *military service cards*.
4. Select advanced research
5. Enter Ture Ansgarius in first name.
6. Click on Search
7. Review the index record
8. Click on the link to see the record

WHERE ARE THE RECORDS?

Original records

- War Archives in Stockholm

Online sites

- <https://arkivdigital.net/> \$Subscription site.
- Swedish National Archives <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/> Free.
- <https://www.familysearch.org/> - To view images, one needs to visit a Family History Library or Center. Free

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

BOOKS

- Johansson, Carl-Erik, *Cradled in Sweden*, 2002.
- Skogsjö, Håkan, *Explore Your Swedish Heritage*, 2020.
- Wolfe, Lars Ericson, *Soldatforska! Hur jag finner mina militära förfäder*. 2013.

ONLINE RESEARCH RESOURCES

- **Hans Högman's Swedish Military and Genealogy Site** – Excellent site in Swedish and English. Extensive information in English. Bookmark this site if you are serious about Swedish military research.
 - <http://www.hhogman.se/military.htm>
- **Family Search Wiki**
 - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Sweden_Military_Records
 - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Swedish_Army_Records_for_Family_History_Research
- **Central Soldiers Registry** - <https://www.soldatreg.se/sok-soldat/>
- **Boatsmen in Blekinge** – A PDF file in English giving information about boatsmen in Blekinge. <http://www.blekingesf.se/wp-content/uploads/Boatsmen.pdf>

ARKIVDIGITAL MILITARY RESEARCH BLOGS

- **Military Rolls (1620-1723)**
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/military-rolls-rullor-1620-1723/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/research-soldiers-in-the-general-muster-rolls-example-jan-fras/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/statistical-digest-of-the-swedish-army-system-grill/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/general-muster-rolls/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/general-muster-roll-column-headings/>
- **Naval (Flottan)**
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/navy-flottan-documents-an-overview/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/boatman-rolls-batsmansrullor-a-unique-source/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/naval-ship-muster-rolls-skeppsmonsterrullor/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/name-index-for-boatman-rolls-batsmansrullor/>
- **Military Pension Records**
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/soldier-pension-documents-pensioner-olof-ceder/>
 - <http://blog.arkivdigital.net/more-military-pension-documents-in-arkivdigital/>

- **Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers' Service Records**
<http://blog.arkivdigital.net/armys-pension-funds-list-of-qualifications-armens-pensionskassas-meritband/>
- **Great Northern War Documents**
<http://blog.arkivdigital.net/swedish-soldiers-captured-at-poltava-what-can-one-discover-about-them/>
- **Military Service Cards (Stamkort) Indexes**
<http://blog.arkivdigital.net/military-service-cards-stamkort-search-index/>
<http://blog.arkivdigital.net/additions-to-the-military-service-cards-stamkort-index/>
- **General Muster Rolls Index**
<https://www.arkivdigital.net/blog/general-muster-rolls-2/arkivdigitals-general-muster-rolls-index-is-now-complete>