



GENIE BYTES

Volume 6, Issue 3

Grand Strand Genealogy Club

August 2025

Message from the Editors

Bonnie Kishpaugh & Ann Hamilton

Editor & Assistant Editor, Genie Bytes, GSGC Members of the Board

In this issue we continue our year-long war letters series with World Wars I and II. You'll continue to be amazed at the lengths to which enlisted men and their loved ones went to stay in touch.

A gigantic "THANK YOU" to Peggy, Nancy, Pat, Chris, and Susan for sharing their families' stories, memorabilia, and sacrifice (including all who served) for this wonderful free country we live in today. God Bless America!

Do you have any books, websites, or tidbits you would like to share for our upcoming issues of the war letters series for the Korean War, Vietnam, or beyond? You can send them to our club email address with *Newsletter* in the subject. Your help will make *Genie Bytes* as informative as possible for **all** members. ♦

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World War I (1917-1918)

Total U.S. Service Members (Worldwide)	4,734,991
Battle Deaths	53,402
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	63,114
Non-mortal Woundings	204,002

NOTES:

2. Exact number is unknown. Posted figure is median of estimated range from 600,000 – 1,500,000. – [America's Wars](#).

Communication During World War I

Ann Hamilton

Assistant Editor, Genie Bytes, GSGC Member of the Board

World War I. Gone are the bright-hued flags, and fifes, and trumpets. Gone is the formality of distinctively colored uniforms. These are replaced by rat-infested foxholes, olive drabs, and masks donned whenever two clanging metal objects sound the universal alarm for an attack by tear, chlorine, or mustard gas. This war seeks soldiers worldwide. It is fought on land and sea and in the air. It is deadly. 116,500 Americans alone die in quest of a lasting peace. Others succumb to "shell shock" or are maimed and spend the remainder of their lives viewing the world through barred windows. A brutal conflict is WWI.

Communication, then, to friends and family by the infantry, or "doughboys," is limited, at best. Foxholes, open to the elements, are not conducive to letter writing. No Club member has volunteered a letter that survived WWI. Nonetheless, simply because of the vast numbers of participants, the Postal Department distributes 35 million letters to American soldiers between 1917 and 1918.

Popular are postcards that are distributed widely and for free by nonprofit organizations. Anyone who wishes to communicate with someone in a foxhole or at home must follow certain rules in case mail falls into enemy hands.¹

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Communication between the Allied Powers and within the various military units of each is a different matter. They have at their disposal a tried-and-true method used by Cyrus, king of Persia in the sixth century BC, as well as turn of the 20th century's cutting-edge technology.

Cyrus used carrier pigeons to communicate with various parts of his empire. So, carrier pigeons of the Racing Homer breed are used to carry messages in World War I. Their job, transporting messages back to their home coop behind the lines, is very dangerous. Nearby, soldiers often try to shoot them down, knowing that released birds' cargo might well influence the outcome of a battle. Several pigeons, including two named G.I. Joe and Paddy, are awarded the Dickin Medal for their services in saving human lives.²

Runners are also used extensively throughout the war to go back and forth between local headquarters, but they are far from reliable. The sender does not know when the runners arrive or IF they arrive. The delay means the situation could change once the runner leaves the sender.

Less ubiquitous are the new technologies. Radios are few, expensive, quite large, and fragile. They are only available where telephone lines are laid. The lines can be buried and somewhat protected from artillery. But only by the defender of a tract of land. They are of little use to an attacker.³

In closing this description of this first world war and its effects on those who fought it, let me quote British poet Wilfred Owen who nearly completed two tours of duty before being killed.

"My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.*"

[It is sweet and proper to die for one's country.]

^{1,3}"World War I: Topical Reference Page." [Smithsonian National Postal Museum](#).

²"[War Pigeon](#)." Wikipedia. 23 May 2025. ♦



World War II (1941-1945)

Total U.S. Service Members (Worldwide)	16,112,566
Battle Deaths	291,557
Other Deaths in Service (Non-Theater)	113,842
Non-mortal Woundings	670,846
Living Veterans ⁵	389,000

NOTES:

5. Estimate based upon new population projection methodology. – [America's Wars](#).

Communication During World War II

Ann Hamilton

Assistant Editor, Genie Bytes, GSGC Member of the Board

Pigeons. Yes, during World War II, carrier pigeons were again successfully used by the Australian, French, German, American, and UK forces, to transport messages back to their home coop behind the lines. But, enough said about pigeons. They were just one item in an arsenal that included far more sophisticated options for officers and that will be the focus of the last article in this series in November. This article? It's about those in the military who didn't have an arsenal of options at their disposal. The enlisted men.

Not for the enlisted men who wanted encouragement, or cigarettes, or money, or food from family and friends, though. Letter writing and receiving were still their best options. Enlistees' mail was censored; but only for classified information, or things that could jeopardize the soldiers or their mission.

Despite the popularity of V-Mail, there was an enormous backlog of letters in envelopes that resulted in delivery delays of weeks and months and longer still. The problem and how it was solved was addressed in a 2024 Netflix film by Tyler Perry starring Kerry Washington entitled *The Six Triple Eight*. In the film, 855 black women under Charity Adams played by Washington, sort over 17 million pieces of mail ahead of schedule.¹

GSGC member Peggy DeVivo provides this photo of her father, Sgt. Harry Coard, seated in the middle atop a mountain of mail bags. Learn more about Sgt. Coard's role in distributing mail to enlisted men in Peggy's afterword.

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Another means by which enlisted men connected with the outside world was the AM radio. Radios were luxuries. The men gathered 'round those who had them on Saturday nights, listened to the hit songs of the day, and relived pleasant memories. This table top radio, photographed by me at the Rosie the Riveter Museum in Richmond, California, on September 18, 2014, is typical of those enlistees, including my father, held prized among his possessions.



Newspapers and magazines were a daily source of news for the home front—and enlistees, too, were they lucky enough to be stationary and to have subscriptions. Friends and family learned what was happening overseas through the news, but they also got a big dose of others' opinions by reading letters to the editor. These "letters" served as a regular format in which the general public could write in and share their take on the war. Some topics, such as married women joining or re-joining the workforce, were quite controversial.²

When encouraging and engaging folks on the home front to boost soldiers' morale, propaganda was one of the most effective formats to reach the masses. Government's theme was for folks to help war efforts in any number of ways. Posters, like this one, photographed by me a few years ago at a US Postal Service exhibit in Wilmington, NC, were ubiquitous.



In November's installment, discover the impact on the military of ENIAC, Colossus, and beyond.

¹"[Kerry Washington.](#)" *Wikipedia*. 1 Jun 2025.

²Phillips, Bethaney. "[Here's What Communication Looked Like During WWII.](#)" *We are the Mighty*. 4 Aug. 2022.

Afterword. Sgt. Coard was a postmaster and would drive a Jeep, leading the mail trucks to the camps. He said he'd call Mail Call right at meal time, and all the soldiers would go running and he and his staff would walk into the dining tent and have first choice at dinner, breakfast, or lunch.

He said Gen. Eisenhower told the soldiers, "Take all you can eat, but be sure to eat all you take. People at home are going hungry so we can eat."

He also said he was the last one to leave camp for the Battle of the Bulge to insure anyone who had a letter to mail could get it to him. Sgt. Coard said that basically he was left to turn off the lights. ♦

V (as in Victory!) Mail

Nancy Engle

Member, GSGC

Afterword by Ann Hamilton

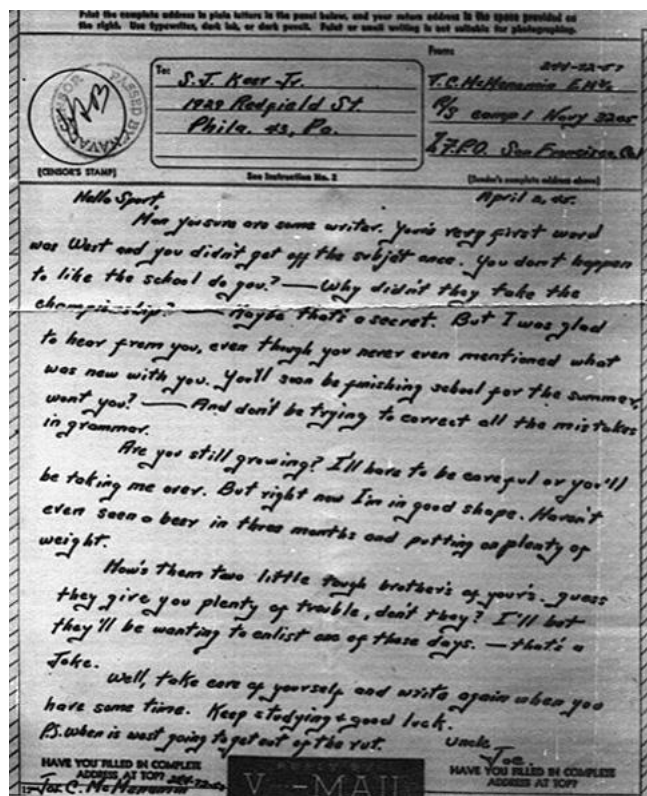
V-Mail was used during World War II as an inexpensive and efficient way for servicemen to send and receive correspondence from family and friends back home while serving abroad. As Shannon Sharkey writes in *History Magazine*, the letter was written on a special form provided free of charge by the government. It could be a maximum of 700 typed or 300 written words. Once

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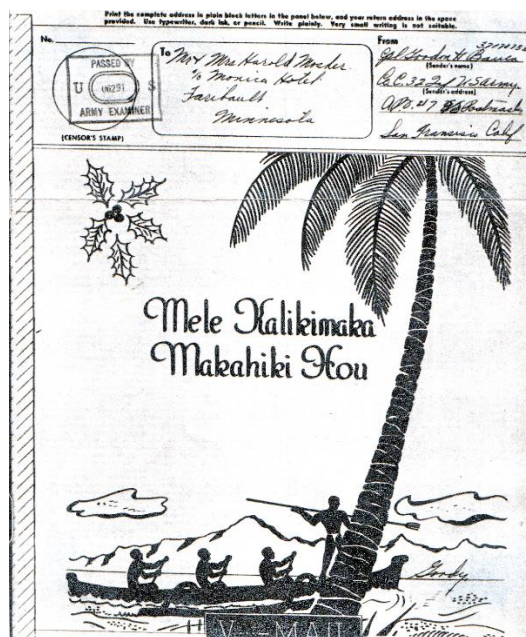
At the time, my father was stationed at RS Camp Navy #3205 on Manus Island, Admiralty Islands, in the South Pacific. According to his journal notes, it was a Seaplane Base, and the letter was sent from there via FPO San Francisco.



¹Sharkey, Shannon. "Pigeon Post and Victory Mail." *History Magazine*, Feb./Mar. 2010, p. 11.



Afterword. V-Mail was so popular that when the holidays rolled around even V-Mail Christmas cards were available. See below one my father, then living in snowy Minnesota, received from one of his friends stationed in Hawaii. ♦



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A Tribute to My Dad

Patricia Maldoven

Member, GSGC

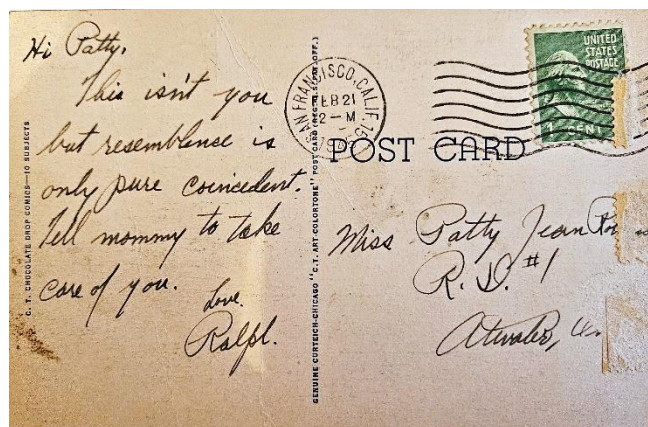
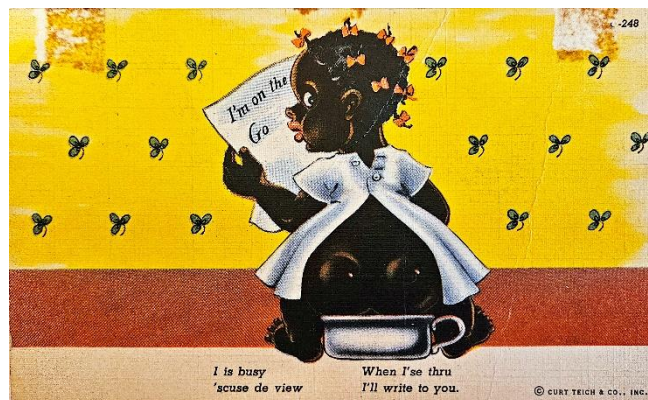
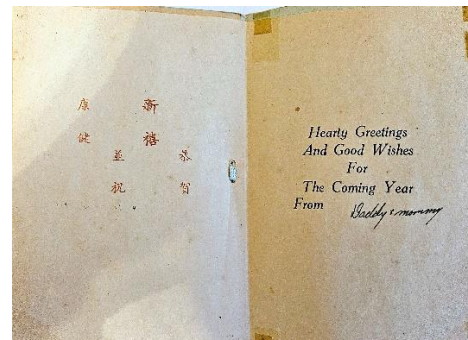
Afterword by Ann Hamilton

My Dad, Ralph Robinson, was a Navy veteran. He was born August 27, 1921, in Atwater, Ohio, the fourth of five children. He grew up on a large farm and spent most of his life farming and working in the steel mill in Alliance, Ohio. After high school he married Catherine, the farm girl next door and his high school sweetheart, on August 30, 1941. They bought a 102-acre farm in Marlboro, Ohio. Before they could make the farmhouse livable, Dad was drafted into the Navy.

Dad served in the US Navy from January 4, 1944 to January 15, 1946. During that time, he served on bases in the Great Lakes, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Maryland, Florida, the Solomon Islands, and finally in the Pacific Ocean, on the U.S.S. ICS (L) (3) #96. His highest rank was EM3c (T) (LC) or Electrician's Mate 3rd class. Dad received the Point System, Asiatic Pacific Area Medal, American Area Medal, and Victory Medal. My family does not know what happened to his medals. My thought is they may have been lost to arson in the 1990s when my parents' Florida vacation home was set afire by a teenager.



While Dad was in the Navy, Mom and I lived with Mom's parents on their farm in Atwater, Ohio. I was the only child/grandchild at the time and was between the ages of one and three. I have two cards I received from Dad during his service: a postcard dated 2-15-1945 showing a child on a pot and a "Greetings from Hong Kong" card without a dated or postmarked envelope. The latter, I believe, is a Christmas card from 1944 or 1945; the former, encouragement [and a laugh] as I learned the potty process.



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Over the years my brothers and sisters and I have asked Dad about the war but he never wanted to talk about it. After Mom died in 2005, my sister and I visited Dad in Florida. We somehow got on the subject of the war. Dad told us a few things about life on the ship in the Pacific Ocean--such as what it was like to sleep in a hammock in rough seas. He talked briefly about his ship going to Japan after the bomb was dropped and seeing the human and landscape devastation. It was horrible and brought back bad memories. He didn't continue.

Dad passed away July 13, 2013. Aside from farming, Dad loved ice cream, country music, wrestling, and cars. We all gathered for his 90th birthday and played a game similar to Monopoly. The squares contained information about different family members. If you got the right answer, you got a cookie. One question was about cars. We were mesmerized. Dad could remember the year, make, model, and color of every car he ever owned. He had a few physical issues with age but his mind was still very sharp. He was a patient, gentle soul. I see my brothers and sisters having the same attributes. Me too, I hope.

Afterword. Yes, Pat's dad "was a patient, gentle soul." His communication with his daughter reveals a few more admirable character traits. Her dad thought of home and family during the holidays and maintained family unity by including "mommy" when he signed the card--although in Hong Kong he was so very far away. As far as potty training, well, he cloaked an 'oft times disagreeable process in humor and, I'm sure with a twinkle in his eye, further distanced himself from it by referring to himself as "Ralph" rather than daddy and by leaving the "taking care" to mommy. "Ralph" is definitely a dad worth a tribute! ♦

A Letter from a Lucky, Loving Son

Chris Angle Davis

Member, GSGC

Afterword by Ann Hamilton

Forward. This letter was written by my father Judson Fralick Angle Jr. to his mother Charlotte and father Judson Sr. three months into his WWII service in the Navy [at Fleet training, Norfolk, VA]. You can tell how homesick he was and how grateful he was for the \$5.00

they sent him [a lot of money in 1943]. Once out to sea, there were few letters, as my father was a torpedo man special class on destroyers involved in top secret work with underwater ordnances. He loved the Navy, but refused to speak of the death he witnessed. I encourage others to contact the US Government to request any and all service records. I received a treasure trove of documents [medical, academic tests, muster roles, leaves, transfer orders, awards, and discharge papers] tracing his time in the Navy. My father was an excellent artist and always drew pictures on his letters home.

Wednesday 3 Feb, 1943

"Dear Mother and Dad:

Yesterday, I received your beautiful card and it was sure swell of you both to send such a lovely card and thanks a million from the bottom of my heart. I am the luckiest sailor in the whole US Fleet to have a mother and father like you two, you are the best in the world. I guess I am a lucky guy anyway.

I got the five bucks O.K. and I had to buy a few toilet articles and some writing paper and it will last me until I get my pay before I leave to get my railroad ticket for when I get my leave from the Navy. So, when the time comes, I will be all set to come home. When my leave comes up it will start on a Monday at 6:45 in the morning so I can get home in 3 hours.

Today, we started our tenth week with three more to go, that's a sure fact cause 12 weeks is the scheduled time of our training. I sure wished I could be home for your birthday Ma, but I'll be home in 3 weeks.

The time sure flies down here and soon I will have 3 months of service in the Navy. Tonight, I have Patrol Guard duty for 2 hours and I have to watch for fire and see that everything is O.K. around our Battalion buildings. Well, I will sign off for now.

Your loving Son Jud XXXX

PS I hope I get that box today."

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Afterword. Jud's gratitude and guilelessness are shown in his choice of effusive words and phrases like "swell" and "luckiest" and "thanks a million" and "bottom of my heart" and "best in the world." However, the cartoon figure and spicy acronym [S. M. R. L. H. or Soldiers Mail Rush Like Hell] show he's at home with his crew mates, too. It's nice to be reminded of a time when it was easier to be both. ♦

A Telegram and A Slap!?

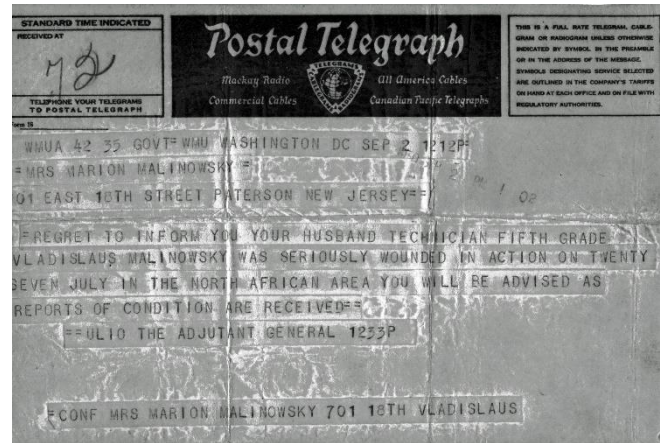
Susan Malinowski

Member, GSGC

Forward and Afterword by Ann Hamilton

Foreword. Susan affords us a preview of our communication focus in November: the telegram as the principle means of notification for family members of the injured and dead since WWII. And, why due to one woman's efforts it no longer is.

Writes Susan, "I thought you might be interested in a copy of the telegram that my mom received after my dad was wounded in WWII in North Africa. My dad was with General Patton and he was in the same ward as the boy whom Patton famously slapped. He witnessed the incident. Thanks be to God; he survived his injuries and came home. Unfortunately, my mother's brother, Charles Hengeveld, 19, did not come home. But this is how wives and mothers were notified. No cell phone calls, no texts, just a telegram. My mother was only married 10 months when my father was drafted."



Afterword. For those of you who are intrigued by Patton the slapper, read this excerpt from "Slap Heard around the World: George Patton and Shell Shock" by Alexander G. Lovelace as printed in the 1 Sep 2019 issue of *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters*.

"On a hot August day in 1943 along the northern Sicilian coast, Lieutenant General George Patton slapped a soldier. Arriving at the 15th Evacuation Hospital for an inspection, the general moved along the ward. There he met "the only arrant coward" Patton claimed to have seen in his army 'sitting, trying to look as if he had been wounded.' When Patton asked about his injury the soldier replied he 'just couldn't take it.' As one of the doctors remembered, 'The General immediately flared up, cursed the soldier, called him all types of a coward, then slapped him across the face with his gloves, and finally grabbed the soldier by the scruff of his neck and kicked him out of the tent.' A week later, Patton repeated the scene at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital (also in Sicily) where he slapped another seemingly uninjured private."

There is, as you will discover in our November presentation, more than one memorable tale about North Africa. ♦

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Did You Know?

According to the May 2025 issue of the *American Legion Magazine*, Henry Howard's *A tribute to the "Hello Girls"* article reveals the 223 "Hello Girls" of World War I have finally received their recognition. Thanks in part to support from The American Legion, the female Signal Corps switchboard operators received a Congressional Gold Medal designation late last year. They were not officially recognized as veterans until 1977.

(In 2017 the book *The Hello Girls: America's First Women Soldiers* by Elizabeth Cobbs was published. In 2018 both a documentary film *The Hello Girls* was released and the musical *The Hello Girls* had its world premiere in New York City.) ♦

About General George S. Patton's prayer that changed the world? Read [The True Story of "The Patton Prayer"](#) by Fr James Hugh O'Neill on how General Patton enlisted the entire Third Army to pray for fair weather. ♦

On 12 July 1973, fire swept through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, destroying as many as 18 million military personnel files. Fear not. You can still locate records for documenting WWII service. Draft cards, enlistment records, casualty and POW records, burial records, and other resources are available on sites like the National Archives, Fold3, Ancestry, MyHeritage, and FamilySearch. ♦

**Have a tip/tidbit you'd like to share? Please submit it to genieclub2002@gmail.com – Subject: "Tip/Tidbit." We'd love to hear from you. **

Featured Books

Dudek, Debra M. *World War I Genealogy Research Guide: Tracing American Military and Non-Combatant Ancestors Includes a Guide to Canadian Great War Military Research*, 3rd Edition. Self-published, Debra M. Dudek, 2024. Researching your World War I ancestors is easier than you think even if your ancestor's official military records were destroyed in the National Personnel Records Center fire. This guide outlines a straightforward strategy to find military service information from a variety of online resources and physical depositories. Special topics include women's records, a state specific resource guide, naturalization records, alien registration files, Canadian military

research, and a quick guide to international World War I military service records. ♦

Passey, Cheri Hudson. *Genealogy in Reverse: Finding the Living. A Practical Guide for All Genealogists* Genealogical Publishing Company, Paperback, 2025. According to Marian B. Wood, an author, Cheri has lots of hands-on experience searching for living family members of US Army soldiers who were missing or killed in action, with the goal of ultimately identifying and repatriating any remains identified via DNA testing. Now she's written a handy how-to guide to give other genealogists a head start. Especially if you've never tried to trace a living relative before, or haven't tried recently, this book is for you. Congratulations Cheri! ♦

Knox, Deborah Johnson. *World War II Military Records: A Family Historian's Guide*. Mie Publishing, Paperback, 2003. According to Amazon "this book provides strategies for uncovering the details of family members' experiences during World War II. Divulged are the keys to discovering personnel and medical records, casualty reports, WWII draft registrations, burial sites, military honors, and unit and ship histories. Information is included on using many different types of resources, including military, state, and federal records; service numbers; national cemeteries; and division reunion associations." ♦

Featured Websites

Family Tree Magazine has an article on [How to Read WWI Draft Registration Cards](#) which can reveal an extensive amount of information about your ancestor! ♦

[Using World War II Draft Registrations for Genealogy Research](#) is an extensive detailed guide from Family Tree Magazine. ♦

A registration known as the *Old Man's Draft* during World War II may contain valuable information for men between ages 45 to 65. These records can be found on [FamilySearch](#), [Ancestry](#) and [Fold3](#). ♦

Call for Genie Jar Donations

Members of the GSGC last met solely in person in March of 2020. Expenses such as maintenance of our website and Zoom subscriptions as well as payment of speakers and the *Ancestry* subscription for Chapin Library continue. Please help us. Mail your check or money order to Grand Strand Genealogy Club, 6529 Valene Court, Myrtle Beach, SC, 29572. Thank you, in advance, for continuing to support YOUR GSGC! ♦

State Guides

Washington, DC

(Source: State Guide Washington, DC by Koch, A. Originally published in the Jul/Aug 2024/Vol.25, Issue 4, P. 33 of *Family Tree Magazine*)

Founded: 1790

First federal census: 1790 (as Maryland/Virginia)

Birth and death records begin: 1874

Marriage records begin: 1811/1874

Contact for vital records:

Office of Public Records. ♦

Wisconsin

(Source: State Guide Wisconsin by Genett-Smiths, A. Originally published in the Jul/Aug 2024/Vol.25, Issue 4, P.37 of *Family Tree Magazine*)

Statehood: 1848

First federal census: 1820 (as Michigan Territory)

Birth and death records begin: 1852 (county); 1907 (state)

Marriage records begin: 1852 (county); 1907 (state)

Contact for vital records:

WI Dept. of Health Services. ♦

Dear Miss Genie

No questions received this quarter. ♦

**Do you have a question for Miss Genie? Why not send it to her at genieclub2002@gmail.com – Subject: "Miss Genie." She would love to hear from you. **

SOUTH CAROLINA GRAND STRAND GENEALOGY CLUB (SCGSGC)

OFFICERS

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► Become involved. Shadow a Board member. We welcome you. ◀

Lanyards (\$5 ID Badge Holder + 2 Ribbons. Additional Ribbons \$.25 each) – See Marie Peacock or email the Club at genieclub2002@gmail.com to order

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GSGC MONTHLY MEETINGS

PLACE: CHAPIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY/VIA ZOOM

TIME: 10 A.M.

PRESENTATIONS: (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

- August 9: How to Find Family in Land Records — Gail Reynolds
- September 13: GSGC Genealogy Fair
- October 11: Problem Ancestor Live

GENEALOGY MEETINGS/CONFERENCES

Discover Your Past: Fraternal Organizations: Records and Resources – October 2, 2025. Fraternal memberships

are an often-overlooked part of our ancestors' lives. Archivist and genealogist Kris Rzepczynski explores the secret societies and their records, particularly the Masons and the Grand Army of the Republic. Registration is required for this free virtual program. Check the Avon Lake Public Library for details. ♦

Spirit of St. Louis: Military & Civilian Records at the National Personnel Records Center – November 19, 2025.

Tina Beard will describe the types of information to be found in these records and how you can access them in person. This is a free virtual webinar presented by Legacy Family Tree Webinars. Check their website for details and registration. ♦

** Please visit [ConferenceKeeper](#) for the most complete "Calendar and Collection of Genealogy Events" on the Internet. This is your chance to attend a meeting virtually you may have been unable to attend onsite because of its distance or cost. **

MEETINGS

2nd Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at:

Chapin Library (*FamilySearch* Affiliate Library)

400 14th Avenue North, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

Meetings held both at Chapin Library and via ZOOM

Email - genieclub2002@gmail.com

Website - www.scgsgc.org

GENIE BYTES NEWSLETTER

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Note: Please send your questions/suggestions/feedback to genieclub2002@gmail.com - Subject: "Newsletter."

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