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## Great-Grandpa Was a Soldier

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# Great-Grandpa Was a Soldier

– How can I find out more?

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

From the late 1600s until 1901, Sweden had its very own system of recruiting soldiers. In Swedish it is called *Indelningsverket*, which has been translated as “The Allotment System.” In short it meant that a group of farms (a *rote*) hired a young man to be the soldier for them. His salary was the use of a cottage and some farming land, some foodstuffs in kind and a small sum of money. Maybe he could also borrow a horse or a pair of oxen when he needed to. The *rote* farmers took care of the farming when the soldier had to go to war. If he died, his family had to move elsewhere, as the new soldier for the *rote* needed the cottage.

During the centuries it is estimated that almost 500,000 men were soldiers for the various *rotar*, which means that most families have one or more soldiers among their ancestors.

## Swedish Military Records

The Swedish army and navy kept detailed records about their soldiers and boatsmen, but how can you access them?

First a little about the most common types of records. The basic record is the *Generalmönsterrulla* [General Muster Roll, GMR], which was rewritten every three years in peacetime. In the GMR you can find information on when the soldier was enrolled and when he was discharged, his height, marital status, age, and from where he came. During the later 1800s his previous name<sup>1</sup> is listed and also his exact birth date and parish of birth. During earlier times one only gets to know that he

was an *östgöte* or *småläanning*<sup>2</sup>, which is not much help when you try to trace him. His patronymic is probably missing, but genealogy is not supposed to be easy, or it would not be a sport.

Other than the GMR there are many other kinds of rolls, kept on the company level, like *brödrullor* (bread rolls), *sjukrullor* (sick rolls), and *straffrullor* (penal rolls). There are also *orderböcker* (command books) and *husesynsprotokoll* (inspection minutes) from soldiers' cottages. All the original records are kept in the *Krigsarkivet* (War Archives) in Stockholm.

The GMRs and lots of other military records are microfilmed, and can be bought on microfiche from SVAR<sup>3</sup> in Sweden. The Family History Library [FHL] in Salt Lake City has most of the records too.

## Finding great-grandpa?

From earlier research you know that great-grandfather was named Sven Ring and that he lived in Ringarum parish in Östergötland. You also know that he served for the *Andra Livgrenadjärregementet* [2nd Regiment of Life Grenadiers].

## Help from the Mormons

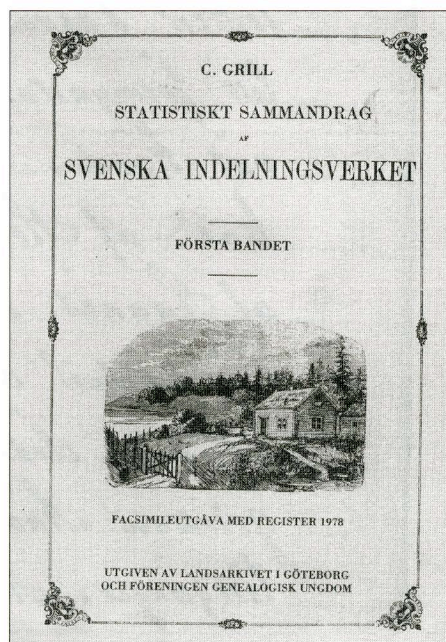
In the FHL catalog you go to, for instance, the “Place search” and enter “Ostergotland”, and then go down the page to “Military records” and Bingo! there you have the GMR for the *Andra Livgrenadjärregementet*.

A normal regiment in the old days consisted of 1,200 men, divided into 8 companies, so do you have to read through all 1,200 individuals? No,

the companies were made up by soldiers from the same area, a *härad* [legal district] or two, and the name of the company often pointed to that area. But that still leaves 150 men to look through. Is there no extra help in finding great-grandpa?

## What is Grill?

Yes, there is a most useful book called *Statistiskt sammandrag af svenska indelningsverket* [Statistical Digest of the Swedish Army System] by Claes Grill, first published in 1855-1858 in four volumes. This work, usually just called *Grill*, was thus printed while the system was not much changed from the way it was in the late 1600s.



Grill has been reprinted in two volumes during the 1970s, and again in the 1980s. When you want to use Grill, be sure to get hold of one of the reprints, as they contain a most

useful parish index which is lacking in the original.

The FHL catalog has the following call number for the reprint:

**948.5 M27g v. 2**, but it is not available on microfilm. They do have the original on microfilm: **FHL Film 84652**, but then you miss the parish index.



*A soldier's cottage in Mark härad, Västergötland (From Indelningsverkets soldater i Örby socken 1681-1901 [1991])*

## How to use Grill

Now, your ancestor was the soldier *Sven Ring* from Ringarum in Östergötland. This is what you do:

### Step 1

Find Ringarum in the parish index in the front of the first Grill volume.

Rimbo (B) I: 108; II: 15;  
III: 25; IV: 44

Ringarum (E) I: 157; III: 36;  
IV: 47

Rinkaby (L) I: 217; II: 193

Rinkaby (T) I: 126; II: 72;  
IV: 17

Rinna (E) I: 162; II: 60;  
IV: 15

Ripsa (D) II: 41; IV: 11

Runtuna (D) I: 120; II: 41;  
III: 34; IV: 11

Rute (I) III: 45; IV: 48

Rya (L) I: 198; II: 195; IV: 35

Ryd (R) I: 141; II: 105; IV: 23

Ryd Västra se Västra Ryd

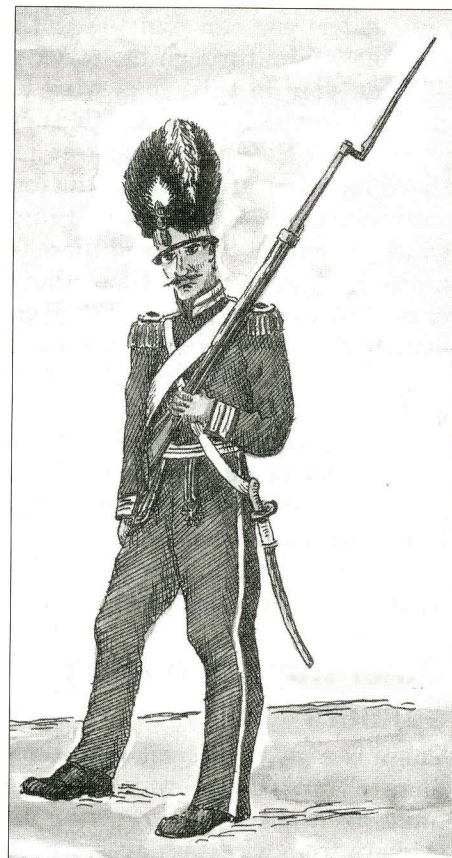
Ryd Östra se Östra Ryd

Ryda (R) I: 141; II: 106; IV: 25

Ringarum (E)<sup>4</sup> has three references, and you start by looking up page 157 in the first volume.

### Step 2

Härad. Socken. Rosthålls-stammar och Compani-nummer.		Summa.							
Östergötlands Län.		No 1. Lif-Companiet.	No 2. Justus Compani.	No 3. Insköpnings Comp.	No 4. Vestmanslängs C.	No 5. Bergslags Comp.	No 6. Vifolka Compani.	No 7. Skenninge Comp.	No 8. Vadsena Comp.
156	<b>Östkind</b>	Jonsbergs kapell Isnäs 1. Gåsåker 2. Broxvik 3.	3						
		Häradshammar Lönå 4. Sånby 6. Sörbyholm 7. Lundby 8. Hyllinge 9, 10.	6						
		Quarsobo Peysgården 5.	1						
		Ö. Husby Veckelsta 11. Tuna 12. Jämjö 13, 14.	4						
	<b>Björkekind</b>	Ruddby Hageby 15.	1						
		Konungssund Grinnaby 16.	1						
		Tåby Stensva 17. Fyrby 18. Almsta 19. Alm* 20. Ljunga 21.	6						
		Å Lönneberga 23.	1						
		Ö. Ny Örtonta 24, 25.	2						
	<b>Hammarkind</b>	Rönö kapell (Cathrina) Mörje 26.	1						
		Skälteik Degerhof 27. Askesum 28.	2						
		Ringarum Gusum 29. Friarum 30. Fastebo 31.	3						
Börum (St. Per) Norrnn 32. Borrum 33.		2							
Mogata Åskog 34. Sörby 35. Ösby 36, 37. Åsen 38. Holmby** 39. Rullersta 40.		7							



*A Life Grenadier in his uniform, model 1815.*

Here you find first the name of the *härad* (legal district), Hammarkind, then the parish, and within the parish the names of three *rotar*, and you recognise that Sven Ring lived at Fastebo, and thus had number 31.

The next question is which company did he serve in? Follow the Ringarum line to the right, until you come to the number of soldiers for the parish. then follow that column upwards until you reach the company names. Sven Ring was soldier #31 of the *Lif-Companiet* (Life Company), which incidentally was commanded by the colonel himself.

### Step 3

The first part of the information for each regiment has a very short history of it, where you can find name changes, and changes from cavalry to infantry, etc. In short the following picture tells the story of the *Andra Livgrenadjärregementet*. The regiment started as the *Östgöta Kavalleriregemente* [f.d. means *före detta* (previous)] Cavalry. In 1770 they changed the name to Cuirassiers, and in 1791 the regiment was de-horsed, no more use for so many cavalry soldiers, and united with the *Första Livgrenadjärregementet*, the former Östgöta Infantry Regiment. The regiment, as a former cavalry regiment, only numbered 1,000 men, from Östergötland and Kalmar län.

**F. D. ÖSTGÖTA KAVALLERI-REGE-MENTE,**  
från 1770 Cuirassierer, afsatt 1791, och förändrades till Infanteri, mot hästvakans-afgifts erläggande af de rustande — först på 50 år, och efter denna tids förlopp ytterligare på 5 och sist på 25 år eller tills år 1871 — var från 1791 förenadt, under en gemensam Chef, med Östgöta Infanteri, och kallades **Lif-Grenadier-Regementets Rusthålls-Division**, hvarestefter denna organisation år 1816, samtidigt med Brigadindelningens införande, upphörde, och detta Regemente blef kalladt  
**ANDRA LIF-GRENADIER-REGE-MENTET.**  
Det är indelt på 1000 nummer i Östergötland och en del af Småland (Linköpings och Calmare län), har N:o 5 vid Infanteriet, räknas till Konungens Lif- och Hustrupper samt till 2:a Militär-distriktet, och är indeladt uti 8 Companier, som förut.

### Step 4

Since you now have your Sven Ring as soldier #31 of the *Lif-Companiet* of the Second Regiment of Life Grenadiers (*Andra Livgrenadjärregementet*) you can find the GMR and follow him through his service.

When you do this, it is wise to check a Swedish history<sup>5</sup> and find out which years Sweden was at war, as the rolls often are missing during wartime, and you may not find him when you expect to. Instead there is a new soldier, and sometimes there is a note that he succeeded Sven Ring, and sometimes not. The easiest way to find out when Sven Ring died is to check the probate index for the *härad* (legal district) where he lived.

If you do not find the notes about your Sven under #31 in the GMR, look around under neighboring numbers, as those could have changed a little during the centuries.

### Other ways of finding soldiers

There is a great interest in the soldiers in Sweden too. Several projects have been started to register all soldiers from a certain area. These projects are called *Soldatregister* and they work together to build a national *Soldatregister*. A CD was published a few years ago with the current

material, and it has also been put on the Internet, but removed again, due to security reasons. Its is still hoped that the *Soldatregister* will be back on a more secure server.

Questions about the *soldatregister* can be sent to  
CENTRALA SOLDATREGISTRET  
Garnisonsmuseet  
Box 604  
541 29 SKÖVDE, SWEDEN.  
E-mail: <bjorn.lippold@p4.mil.se>

### Anbytarforum

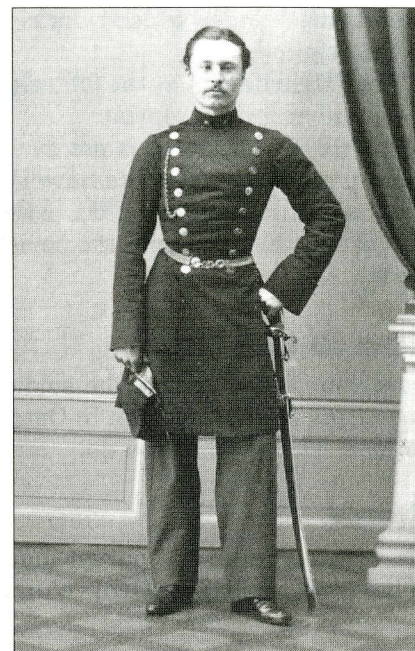
It is also possible to post a query on the Swedish site *Anbytarforum* (The Ancestor Exchange), where discussions in English are welcome. The address is

<http://genealogi.aland.net/discus/>

In the lefthand column there is a link to instructions in English on how to use the *Anbytarforum*.

### Endnotes

1. When Per Andersson enlisted in the army, he was most often given a specific *soldatnamn* (soldier's name) by his officers. The name could be of many kinds, the object was to give the man a name that was unique for him, so he was not confused with 20 other Anderssons.



Lieutenant Gottfrid Lindbäck, ca 1865.

2. The origin given as *smålännig* means that the man was born in the province of Småland. In the same way an *östgöte* was born in Östergötland or a *dalkarl* in the province of Dalarna.
3. SVAR is a branch of the Swedish *Riksarkivet* (National Archives) and they produce microfiche and sell them to the public. The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center is its American agent. The SVAR web site can be found at <http://www.svar.ra.se/>. Unfortunately it is only in Swedish.
4. The letters that follows the parish names in this picture [Ringarum (E)] are the *länsbokstäver*, code letters for the various *län* in Sweden. See SAG's back cover for a map of the *län*.
5. Two good books about the history of Sweden are:  
Scott, Franklin D.: *Sweden – The Nation's History*.  
Nordstrom, Byron J.: *The history of Sweden*.

A link to a good web site on The Allotment System is found on the Web Site Page, page 14.