1. Gather as much information as you can about potential soldiers/sailors from your family tree. Make a list of males (including collateral family) born between 1820s and 1840, note where they were living at the outbreak of the war, and as with all genealogy research, note the various spellings of the name.

2. Search the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System: www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm. *Tip: Spelling counts.*

3. While you are on the NPS website, read up on the regiment. Click on the link to the regiment under soldier's name. There will be a brief history with places/dates of service, and another link to the roster (alpha.).

4. Many regimental histories are published online. Do a Google search on the name of the unit and look for those sites that are well-sourced. Some will provide company rosters as well as histories. Also try various search terms on the names of battles or place names.

5. Explore the *Official Records* (OR) of the war at either Cornell University's Making of America website or Ohio State University's eHistory website: http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/waro.html, or http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/records/. Best success searching by the name of the military unit (*tip: spelling out the number and using a hyphen*), name of the battle, place names, or unit officers' names. Look for reports of battles, correspondence regarding the military unit, places where they were assigned, etc. Use the Table of Contents to prioritize your search results, identifying volume numbers that deal with specific places and dates.

6. While you are at the eHistory site, check out the Atlas that was created to accompany the OR. Here you'll find battlefield maps and some illustrations of military equipment and uniforms.

7. Check online databases for finding military service records: www.fold3.com, and www.ancestry.com. Ancestry focuses on indexes to records while Fold3 will have images of service cards and documents. Both are subscription sites: Ancestry.com (library edition) is available free onsite at the Camarillo Public Library; Fold3 is available free at Family History Centers.

8. Pension records are another valuable source for information about an ancestors' service. Indexes to these files are found on Ancestry.com and Fold3.com. Each accesses a different set of index cards, so check both websites, if possible, to verify your information. To order a pension file, go to the National Archives website at http://www.archives.gov/research/military/genealogy.html. Scroll down to find "Pension records…" and select type of order (online or downloading form).

9. Search online cemetery databases, such as Gravesite Locator (www.gravelocator.cem.va.gov) specifically for soldiers, or Find A Grave (www.findagrave.com).