

# Military Conscription

**N.B.** *Being without indexes, it is only possible to search the conscription register by knowing the place of residence at the time of the call-up and the year of birth of the person enlisted. An exception is the conscription in the Guastalla district (those born between 1840-1880), in which it is possible to search with just the enlisted man's date of birth (the material from Guastalla is located in the headquarters of the Institute, so you do not need a reservation).*

The documentation regarding conscription is also available at the municipalities of the province, whose links can be found at <http://www.comuni-italiani.it/035/indirizzi.html> [1].

## Restoration

Obligatory military service for men was introduced by Napoleon I in 1802 in the territory of the Italian Republic, which included Reggio. After the Emperor's defeat and the return of the Este, compulsory conscription declined before being reintroduced to complement voluntary recruitment, with the edict of Francis V of 5 April 1849, which was followed by instructions from the Interior Minister on 19 June. Meanwhile, since 1848, the territory had been divided into the two provinces of Reggio and Guastalla, and divided into communities (municipalities) comprising several sections (fractions).

The municipalities were required each year to provide a contingent of recruits proportional to their population, which had to be made up of volunteers and, if there were not enough, of conscripts. To be called up, or rather, if they were *required*, men had to be aged between 20 and 26, which was lowered to 19 as of the 1855 conscription; conscripts were then divided into eight age groups (sovereign chirograph of 11 September 1854, no. 3799).

A Municipal Conscription Board was formed at each municipality chaired by the podestà or mayor, who had the task of creating lists of names for every age group drawn from the Civil Registries; within each list of the various age groups, conscripts were called up according to an order determined by drawing lots. In each province there was a Provincial Board of Conscription, chaired by the provincial delegate (current prefect), who had the task of examining the case of each conscript to ascertain their suitability for military service both from a physical point of view and from that of their personal situations, since there were many grounds for exemption.

The final lists were sent to the central board of conscription at the Interior Ministry in Modena, who reviewed them one last time and announced the day determined by the Minister for the random drawing of the individuals who were to make up the contingent. A second requisition was made to set up the reserves, called to service only when needed.

### UFFICIO PROVINCIALE DI COSCRIZIONE DI REGGIO 1849-1856

Facevano parte della **provincia estense di Reggio** i seguenti comuni, con le rispettive sezioni:

- Reggio Emilia con Bagnolo, Cadelbosco Sopra, Vezzano
- Busana
- Carpineti con Baiso, Viano
- Castellarano
- Castelnuovo di Sotto con Campegine
- Castelnuovo ne' Monti con Collagna, Vetto
- Ciano
- Correggio con Rio Saliceto

- Gattatico
- Montecchio con Cavriago, Sant'Ilario, Bibbiano
- Poviglio
- San Polo con Quattro Castella, Casina
- Scandiano con Albinea, Casalgrande
- Villa Minozzo con Ligonchio, Toano

La **provincia estense di Guastalla** era composta dai comuni e sezioni di:

- Guastalla
- Reggiolo
- Luzzara
- Novellara con Campagnola, Fabbrico
- Brescello con Boretto
- Gualtieri

Facevano all'epoca parte della **provincia estense di Modena**:

- San Martino in Rio
- Rubiera
- Rolo

### **Registri dell'Ufficio provinciale di coscrizione di Reggio**

**classi 1829-1836**

Si tratta delle liste di coscrizione delle comunità facenti parte della provincia estense di Reggio. Le indicazioni cronologiche scritte sulle buste si riferiscono agli anni di chiamata al servizio militare dei giovani nati vent'anni prima. Ad esse si aggiungono 2 bb. di atti riguardanti la Guardia nazionale mobile della provincia (1862-1866) per le quali si rimanda al capitolo sul Regno d'Italia.

Non si trova il materiale della provincia di Guastalla.

(Materiale conservato nella sede distaccata, che va prenotato secondo le norme al punto 5. del [Regolamento di Sala studio](#) [6] [5] [3] [2] )

## **KINGDOM OF ITALY**

With the Dictatorial Decree of 27 December 1859, no. 79, Luigi Carlo Farini, dictator of the provinces of Modena, had divided the province of Reggio Emilia into two districts: Reggio Emilia and Guastalla. These were divided into sub-districts, which were themselves divided into communes. The Guastalla district was abolished by Legislative Decree no. 1890 of 21 October 1926 (publication no. 2195).

The first Italian law on obligatory conscription is from 1862 (Law no. 696 of 13 July 1862) and refers to the regulations already adopted by the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1854 (Law 1676 of 20 March 1854). There was still, however, a militia formed by volunteers, the National Guard, established in 1848 in the Kingdom of Sardinia, which then extended to the whole Kingdom of Italy in 1861. Within this, there were detachments called the mobile National Guard, whose aim was to support the army in military operations and public security wherever necessary. The Guard was divided into battalions and it was up to the prefects to establish the permanent rolls of the battalions within the provinces, and to determine contingents by municipality, while the military authorities were to decide where to gather battalions upon call-ups. In 1862 the Inspectorate General of the National Guard of the Kingdom was attached to the Interior Ministry. The National Guard was disbanded in 1876 with the establishment of a Territorial Militia and a Municipal Militia.

Operations related to military service were carried out by mutual agreement with the Prefecture of Reggio Emilia and the Provincial Governor of Guastalla.

The municipal conscription offices, based on the data from the Civil Registry, would compile the conscription lists of young men who had reached the right age for military service, usually 20 years of age. Those conscripts who, for any legitimate reason, could not undertake military service before conscription closed for their age group, were deferred to the top of the list (first candidates) of the following conscriptions until the motive for deferral no longer existed. The conscription lists were drawn up in duplicate, with one copy being kept at the Town Hall and the other sent to the Conscription Board, a department of the Ministry of War based at the Prefecture and at the Sub-Prefecture.

The Conscription Board was presided over by the prefect (or sub-prefect), representing the Minister of War, and consisted of one or more provincial councillors, one or more military representatives, a representative of the Carabinieri, and a conscription commissioner who was a prefectural appointment. These were at the head of the Conscription Office of the district, located at the Prefecture and Sub-Prefecture, and under the control of the prefect, but reporting to the Ministry of War. This office was in charge of the organisational and administrative operations of conscription. It was then up to the Board, which might include a military doctor, to draw lots for the district (a number that identified the enlisted in order to establish their position at the time of actual conscription) and undertake a psycho-physical fitness examination of the young men conscripted according to their year of birth (their cohort).

The data concerning these operations were transcribed into registers, called "extraction lists". Not all those registered on the conscription lists and extraction lists were sent for military service: There could be exemptions, usually for family reasons, or due to being temporarily unfit, and therefore deferred to another conscription (reviewable), or permanently unfit (rejected). Anyone who did not show up for conscription was considered a draft dodger.

The enlisted were divided into two categories. The first included, according to the extraction number, all those who were intended to make up the enlistment number that each district had to provide by law; the remaining men were included in the second category. A third category comprised those who were exempted from military service. During the First World War, those who would normally be exempt were also called up. Later on, the Legislative Decree of 20 April 1920 determined that anyone suitable for military service in the army was to be enlisted in a single category.

With the consolidated law on recruitment of the royal army drawn up during the lead-up to World War I (Royal Decree of 24 December 1911, no. 1497) it was determined that the extraction number be noted on the conscription list next to the name and, as a result, the use of extraction lists declined. In 1927 (Royal Decree of 5 August 1927, no. 1437, publication no. 1693), there is no longer even mention of the use of extraction, but anyone eligible was enlisted directly after the definitive lists were read by the president of the Conscription Board.

In addition to the lists, registries summarising the decisions of the Board were drafted, which included the results of the transactions described above and a copy of which was sent to the Ministry of War. As with the extraction lists, these were no longer compiled from 1912 onwards.

Important changes to the system of conscription were made during fascism. With the Royal Decree of 27 May

1923, no. 1309, the provisions of which came into effect at the opening of the conscription of those born in 1904, all relations with the Prefecture came to an end. The prefect was replaced by the President of the Court as head of the Conscription Board. It was ruled that the conscription offices, one per provincial capital, would have responsibility for the entire province, and they would be governed by the conscription commissioners, civil employees of the Ministry of War, without any relationship with the prefect. The commissioner also served as secretary of the Conscription Board. They were given purely administrative duties, corresponding to the prefect and sub-prefect's responsibilities that did not require collective decisions of the Board or of the Conscription Commissions. It was also decided that mobile conscription commissions could be established by the Conscription Board, which had the task of going to every district capital to carry out medical examinations of the enlisted. Later, with the Royal Decree of 2 January 1927, no. 1 (publication no. 50), all sub-prefectures were abolished (the documentation produced by the one in Guastalla had already ceased in 1922), and the country was reorganised into provinces, leading to areas no longer being divided into districts.

With the Royal Decree of 13 November 1870, no. 6026, military districts were established as a recruiting organ instead of the previous local and provincial military commands. The province of Reggio Emilia was at the time part of the Military District of Parma along with Modena. In 1873 (Law no. 1592 of 30 September 1873) all the provinces of Emilia were assigned to the district of Bologna. With Law no. 3750 of 22 March 1877, the creation of one district per province was instituted. Based on the documentation that the municipal conscription offices were sending, the military districts, after having given a serial number to each soldier, undertook the compilation of serial rolls, a veritable compendium of the military life of those enlisted by category. The same information, albeit summarised, was reported on the serial forms. The rolls, in turn, summarised the information contained on the serial forms, produced and maintained by the districts.

Municipalities also maintained serial rolls, i.e. lists of young men who, for each age group, had been declared fit for military service. They were kept updated with details sent by the districts and military bodies to which soldiers belonged. They were divided into cohorts and served to take into account, in parallel with the District, the subjects eligible for military service from the date of enlistment to the disbandment of the cohort to which they belonged, based on the criterion of residence, with the aim of allowing any call-ups or for any possible general mobilisation. The State Archives only keep the serial rolls produced by the municipality of Reggio Emilia related to the 1840-1880 cohorts. Those produced by the districts are kept by the State Archives of Modena.

1. The **conscription lists** were structured as follows: progressive order number of the conscript for each municipality, surname and name, paternity and maternity, date and place of birth, residence, employment status of the conscript and his father, particulars of the conscription, extraction number, special marks, decisions by the Conscription Board and the conscript's situation. There is a list of conscripted first candidates at the end. Personal data are found in the conscription lists but not always the data relating to enlistment because the boxes for the Board's decisions were often left blank.

**The conscripts are recorded in alphabetical order and divided by municipality.**

2. The **extraction lists** were structured as follows: extraction number of the conscript, surname and name, paternity and maternity, date and place of birth, residence, employment status of the conscript, particulars of the conscript, personal marks, decisions by the Conscription Board (able-bodied or not, deferred, failed to report for duty, etc. and date of conscription with their assignment to their relevant category), and the conscript's situation (the starting date for the district, assigned corps, serial number, etc.). Extraction lists were compiled until 1911 (those born in 1891).

Personal data and the military history of conscripts can be found in the extraction lists.

**Conscripts were registered in order of the extraction number and divided by district.**

3. **Summary logs of the Board's decisions** contained the number of the decision, the district and the municipality of the conscript, surname and name, extraction number, and the Board's decision. The Board registers were drawn up until 1911 (those born in 1891).

**Conscripts were registered in order of the decision number and divided by district.**

4. **Admission rolls produced by the municipality** were divided by category and structured as follows: in alphabetical order according to a serial number for each cohort, the names of the people enlisted (those who were actually dispatched to military service) with their parentage and date of birth, the date and nature of the enlistment, the date of the call to arms, bearing in mind that, at the time of enlistment, it was possible for men to delay their military service up to 26 years of age, while volunteers were enlisted in the roll of the conscription cohort in which they enlisted with due recall to the roll of their conscription cohort; if they were laggards or defectors, the corps of assignment and discharge, any changes to their service (temporary or permanent), the rank attained during their military career, the date of their discharge, any transfer to mobile or territorial forces, and if their conscription was cancelled.

**The enlisted were registered in alphabetical order and divided by district.**

#### **COMUNE DI REGGIO EMILIA, Ufficio di leva**

**1860-1900**

Liste di leva classi 1840-1880  
Ruoli matricolari comunali classi 1851-1880  
(Materiale conservato nella sede distaccata, che va prenotato secondo le norme al punto 5. del [Regolamento di Sala studio](#) [6] [5] [3] [2] )

#### **DISTRETTO MILITARE della PROVINCIA DI REGGIO EMILIA**

**1874-1943**

Ruoli matricolari classi 1874-1943  
(Mancano i Ruoli del 1876)  
**N.B.** Sono conservati nell'[Archivio di Stato di Modena](#) [4]  
(as-mo@beniculturali.it) e vengono ancora implementati con successivi versamenti.

#### **PREFETTURA DI REGGIO EMILIA, Guardia nazionale mobile**

Guardia nazionale mobile della provincia di Reggio Emilia. 1 b.  
Guardia nazionale mobile della provincia di Reggio Emilia. 1 b.

#### **PREFETTURA DI REGGIO EMILIA, Ufficio di leva** **1860-1900**

Registri dei comuni del circondario di Reggio Emilia:  
- mandamento I di Carpineti (Carpineti; Casina)  
- mandamento II di Castellarano (Baiso; Castellarano)  
- mandamento III di Castelnovo ne' Monti (Castelnovo ne' Monti; Vetto)  
- mandamento IV di Castelnuovo di Sotto (Cadelbosco; Campegine; Castelnuovo di Sotto; Gattatico)  
- mandamento V di Correggio (Bagnolo in Piano; Correggio; San Martino in Rio)  
- mandamento VI di Collagna (Busana; Collagna; Ligonchio; Pieve San Vincenzo poi Ramiseto)  
- mandamento VII di Montecchio (Bibbiano; Cavriago; Montecchio; Sant'Ilario d'Enza)  
- mandamento VIII di Reggio Città  
- mandamento IX di Reggio Campagna  
- mandamento X di Rubiera (Casalgrande; Rubiera)

- mandamento XI di San Polo d'Enza in Caviano (Ciano; Quattro Castella; San Polo d'Enza in Caviano; Vezzano sul Crostolo)
- mandamento XII di Scandiano (Albinea; Scandiano; Viano)
- mandamento XIII di Villa Minozzo (Gazzano; Toano in Cavola; Villa Minozzo)

Liste di leva	classi 1840-1880
Liste di estrazione	classi 1840-1880
Sommari delle decisioni del Consiglio	classi 1840-1880

(Materiale conservato nella sede distaccata, che va prenotato secondo le norme al punto 5. del [Regolamento di Sala studio](#) [6] [5] [3] [2] )

### **SOTTOPREFETTURA DI GUASTALLA, *Ufficio di leva* 1860-1900**

Registri dei comuni del circondario di Guastalla:

- mandamento di Guastalla (Guastalla, Gualtieri)
- mandamento di Brescello (Brescello, Boretto)
- mandamento di Luzzara (Luzzara)
- mandamento di Novellara (Novellara, Campagnola, Rio Saliceto, Fabbrico)
- mandamento di Poviglio (Poviglio)
- mandamento di Reggiolo (Reggiolo, Rolo)

Liste di leva	classi 1840-1880
Liste di estrazione	classi 1840-1880
(Manca il reg. della classe 1871)	
Sommari delle decisioni del Consiglio	classi 1840-1880
(Manca il reg. delle classi 1840-1843 e 1868)	

**N.B.** I registri di Leva dal 1901 (classe 1881) in poi sono conservati unitamente a quelli del circondario di Reggio Emilia.

### **PREFETTURA DI REGGIO EMILIA, *Ufficio di leva* 1901-1923**

Registri dei comuni dei circondari di Reggio Emilia e di Guastalla

Liste di leva	classi 1881-1903
Liste di estrazione	classi 1881-1903
Sommari delle decisioni del Consiglio	classi 1881-1903

(Materiale conservato nella sede distaccata, che va prenotato secondo le norme al punto 5. del [Regolamento di Sala studio](#) [6] [5] [3] [2] )

**MINISTERO DELLA GUERRA, *Ufficio di leva per la* 1924-1936  
*provincia di Reggio Emilia***

Registri della provincia di Reggio Emilia formata dai comuni dei due circondari uniti, ad eccezione di Gazzano che decadde al ruolo di frazione.

Liste di leva classi 1904-1916

**REGISTRI DEI RIFORMATI 1894-1937**

Questi registri sono raccolti in buste, come segue:

- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati, elenchi B-C. 1 b. classi 1874-1899
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati già rivisitati, elenco C. 1 b. classi 1874-1898
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati. 1 b. classi 1876-1887
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Riformati. 1 b. classi 1876-1895
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati. 1 b. classi 1876-1883; 1882-1895
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati. 1 b. classi 1880-1894
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati. 1 b. classi 1882-1895
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Riformati. 1 b. classi 1886-1894
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati. 1 b. classi 1886-1894
- Circondario di Reggio Emilia, Nuova visita riformati, 1 b. classi 1892-1894
- Comuni vari, Riformati, elenchi B-C. 3 bb. classi 1874-1899
- Comuni vari, Riformati per statura. 1 b. classi 1876-1917
- Circondario di Guastalla, Rivisitati. 1 b.



**Collegamenti**

- [1] <http://www.comuni-italiani.it/035/indirizzi.html>
- [2] <https://archiviodistatoreggioemilia.beniculturali.it/index.php?en/117/regulations-for-the-study-room>
- [3] <https://archiviodistatoreggioemilia.beniculturali.it/index.php?en/117/regulations-for-the-study-room>
- [4] <http://www.asmo.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/268/ricerche-per-corrispondenza>
- [5] <https://archiviodistatoreggioemilia.beniculturali.it/index.php?en/117/regulations-for-the-study-room>
- [6] <https://archiviodistatoreggioemilia.beniculturali.it/index.php?en/117/regulations-for-the-study-room>