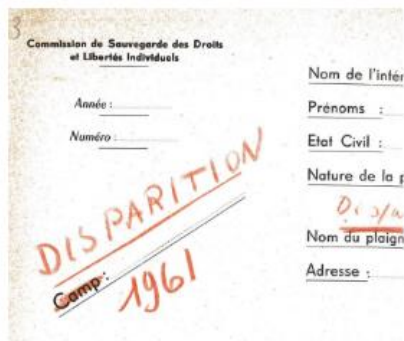


The missing of the Algerian War (1954-1962)



© Archives nationales

This guide is designed for anyone, historian or not, interested in understanding more about the fate of those reported missing during the Algerian War (1954-1962). It will assist in the search for information about how they went missing, improve knowledge of the subject and encourage further historical research.

To simplify access to the records conserved in France, documents are listed by category of missing person, rather than according to the location of the archives.

Contents¹

[Introduction](#)

[Beginning your research](#)

[Algerians reported missing in Algeria](#)

[Algerians reported missing in France](#)

[French civilians reported missing in Algeria](#)

[French military personnel reported missing in Algeria](#)

[Harkis and other irregular troops of the French armed forces reported missing in Algeria](#)

Introduction

This guide to research into persons who went missing during the Algerian War (1954-1962) follows on from the [declaration of the President of the French Republic on 13 September 2018](#) on the death of [Maurice Audin](#), in which he particularly encouraged “historical research into all those reported missing during the Algerian War – French and Algerians, civilians and military personnel”.

It provides the first ever overview of all the documents stored in archives across France that relate to people reported missing during the Algerian War and will direct you to the fonds most likely to correspond to your research. It is the archivist's job to **make records accessible to the public** (explaining what they contain and how they came to be produced). It is then up to the public to use these records to find the information they require. This guide has been compiled with this in mind.

The guide has been designed to be used equally by specialists and non-specialists. Even with the guide to assist you, **researching this subject remains challenging** and you may not find the information you seek, for a number of reasons:

- Some documents no longer exist.

¹ This text contains links, which lead to sites in French, with the exception of the website of French National Archives for which an English version exists

- There is no complete list of the names of those reported missing during the Algerian War. The government of the time never produced lists of this type, and the information that would be required is probably spread over several archives kept by many different institutions. Creating such a list today would require substantial historical research.
- The quality of the information in the documents calls for caution: details on a specific person may differ depending on the source consulted.

Some of the names in the archives may contain errors, or the same person's name may be spelt in different ways. These errors and spelling disparities are also found in the catalogues containing descriptions of the archives. This applies not only to Algerian names, for which there may at times be confusion between given name and family name, but also to names of European origin.

Under the leadership of by *Service Interministériel des Archives de France* (the Inter-Ministerial Service of the Archives of France), the **staff of various ministries worked closely** together to produce this guide: the *Archives Nationales* (French National Archives), the *Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer* (French National Overseas Archives), the *Archives de Paris* (Paris Archives) and the *Préfecture de Police de Paris* (Paris Police Force Headquarters), together with the Ministry for the Armed Forces (*Direction du Patrimoine, de la Mémoire et des Archives* – Heritage, Memory and Archives Department and *Service Historique de la Défense* – Defence Historical Service) and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (*Archives Diplomatiques* - Diplomatic Archives).

Definition

The “**missing persons**” referred to in this guide are **people whose whereabouts were unknown at the time of compiling the records**. Consequently, in addition to people whose bodies were never found, they also include people who subsequently reappeared or whose bodies were later discovered. Conversely, the guide does not cover those considered "victims" of the war in the general, wider sense (the wounded, economic victims, those suffering from psychological trauma, etc.).

Archives covered

This **guide covers archives currently available in France, but not those that may exist in today's Algeria**, the main collections being:

archives produced by the various civilian institutions in Algeria prior to independence (e.g.: prefectures, jointly administered municipalities and courts), currently stored at the [Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer](#) (French National Overseas Archives at Aix-en-Provence);

- archives produced by the various military institutions in Algeria prior to independence (e.g.: military staff, armed forces corps and gendarmerie units), currently held by the [Service Historique de la Défense](#) (Defence Historical Service at Vincennes);
- archives produced by institutions under the direct authority of the government in Paris (*Commissariat Central d'Alger* [Algiers Central Police Headquarters], *Service Régional de Police Judiciaire de Métropole* [Metropolitan Regional Judicial Police Service], *Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels* [Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms]), currently stored at [French National Archives](#) (*Archives Nationales*);
- archives relating to events that occurred in Paris (for example: the October 1961 demonstrations) now kept at the [Archives de Paris](#) (Paris Archives) and [Préfecture de Police de Paris](#) (Paris Police Force Headquarters);

- archives produced by departments answerable to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (e.g.: *Secrétariat d'État aux Affaires Algériennes* [Secretary of State for Algerian Affairs], French embassies and consulates in Algeria), which are now kept in the [Diplomatic Archives](#).

The institutions that **produced these archives**, located at the time in both France and Algeria, are **shown on the interactive map** below, with links to their archive catalogues.



<https://livemap.getwemap.com/iframe.php?emmid=11464&token=at56a0ffab3b79a5.41970867#/search@42.575748684597556,4.264413397561071,5.35126268634512>

The guide lists the collections known to contain information about missing people. There may be other fonds: research could be extended to a large number of collections held in France, in public archives departments, the repositories of Public Prosecutor's Offices, the *Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire* (Regional Judicial Police Departments) and cemeteries in Greater Paris.

Some archive collections which may, in passing, contain information about missing persons are currently being classified and will be added to this guide as and when they are complete.

Beginning your research

1) Points to remember:

- in the majority of cases, records can be freely consulted, although some are [subject to legal restrictions](#) because they contain medical information, details of investigations by the judiciary police or facts relating to current court cases;
- most documents are not available online, because they are not in digital format;
- catalogues rarely contain lists of names.

2) You will find your search easier if, before you begin, you collect together the details you have in your possession, such as the person's given name and family name, date of birth, and whatever information, however vague, you may have about the circumstances of their disappearance.

3) This guide divides **missing people into five main categories**, created for the purposes of assisting you in your search. However, the categories do not each correspond to a particular fonds, and, in many cases, the terms used are not the same as those employed at the time by the authors of the documents.

The links in the text will take you to the description of the archives on the FranceArchives portal, from which you can access the website of the institutions where the documents are conserved. Fonds are listed in order of their helpfulness for research.

[Algerians reported missing in Algeria](#)

[Algerians reported missing in France](#)

[French civilians reported missing in Algeria](#)

[French military personnel reported missing in Algeria](#)

[Harkis and other irregular troops of the French armed forces reported missing in Algeria](#)

1. Algerians reported missing in Algeria

Definition

This category lists sources relating to Algerians reported missing in Algeria, i.e. those described in the documents as “French nationals of North-African origin” (“Français de souche nord-africaine”: FSNA), “North-African French nationals” or “French Muslims from Algeria” (“Français nord-africains”, “Français musulmans d'Algérie”: FMA) who disappeared in Algeria. It covers not only civilians and National Liberation Front (FLN) guerrillas but also military personnel (conscripts and volunteers) or harkis and other members of the French irregular forces, information about whom may also be found in the relevant sections.

Archives available

Most of the sources concerning the Algerians reported missing in Algeria are preserved in the [Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer](#) (French National Overseas Archives at Aix-en-Provence). There are no specific fonds dedicated to these missing persons: documents can be found in almost all fonds relating to the Algerian War, which are disparate by their very nature, with variations in standards of recordkeeping and content from one part of the country to another. In addition, in 1961 and 1962, thousands of files were transferred to metropolitan France in chaotic conditions, which explains why many of them have only been partially conserved.

The records at the *Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer* were created by the civilian authorities, both administrative and judicial. They cover three types of cases: investigations carried out on behalf of families who reported the disappearance of one of their members, investigations carried out as part of surveillance of “terrorist” activities and investigations carried out as part of criminal proceedings.

With the exception of the files on serious crimes and offences, which were the preserve of the courts, records of these investigations were created in all the different regional authorities: [jointly administered municipalities](#), [specialised administrative sections](#), [regional judiciary police departments](#), [North-African liaison offices at prefectures](#) and by the [civilian and military staff of the Governor General and then the resident Minister in Algeria](#).

The types of documents relating to these investigations were all very similar. They consist of letters reporting missing persons, briefing notes and intelligence reports, records and lists of names, police and gendarmerie reports, and occasionally files on specific individuals.

Among all these sources, files kept by the [Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire](#) (SRPJ) (Regional Judicial Police Departments) are particularly worth mentioning; they contain detailed documents such as police and gendarmerie reports and records. Only the [Algiers SRPJ](#) offers a comprehensive search facility with a chronological and alphabetical index of the victims of terrorist acts and a list of the names

of the people mentioned in files on such acts (list available at the Archives). The Oran and Constantine SRPJ's files were not retrieved when the archives were transferred.

In the case of the [courts](#), the files of which are currently being classified, it should be remembered that the *Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer's* collections only contain the files relating to criminal proceedings; records of court declarations of legal presumption of death were not transferred.

One last factor is that some missing persons may, in fact, have been placed under house arrest or interned in camps. In some cases, this may explain why their track was lost, in others, the corresponding records may have helped in qualifying them. For the most part, the records that cover people either interned or under house arrest are the same as those covering missing persons, with the exception of court archives. To locate these records, you should consult judiciary police department records and the archives of jointly administered municipalities or specialised administrative sections in areas where there were internment and transit camps.

At [French National Archives](#) (Pierrefitte-sur-Seine), the **reports of attacks** on property and people perpetrated in the Algiers *département* sent daily by the Inspector General of the Greater Algiers police district to the office of the Algiers Chief of Police at times contain details of abductions or bodies discovered, making them a useful source of information. They are organised into two series, one arranged by [category of offence \(January to June 1962\)](#) and the [other by date \(November 1961 to June 1962\)](#).

The archives of the [Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels](#) (Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) created by decree of the President of the French Council on 7 May 1957 to investigate tortures, disappearances and other abuses allegedly perpetrated by France during the conflict, and operational until 1 February 1963, are another essential source. They contain minutes of meetings held between September 1958 and July 1962, general investigations (in particular regarding the relations with the relevant authorities as well as detentions without trial and house arrests, prisons, the workings of the justice system, missing persons, violence, torture and reprisals, and general reports) and some 2,300 [individual files](#) (list available at the archives) compiled for each of the cases reported to the Commission (including missing person reports of all types, which account for around 11% of cases from 1958 onwards).

The [Service Historique de la Défense](#) (Defence Historical Service at Vincennes) has records of investigations concerning people reported missing between 1960 and 1962, listed in alphabetical order and compiled by the [Cabinet of the Ministry of Defence](#) (series GR R). Further information is available in the archives of the [Etat-major Interarmées en Algérie](#) (Armed Forces General Staff in Algeria) which has gathered together a collection of records of abductions and abuses perpetrated by the FLN on French people of North-African origin during the period 1956-1963 (sub-series GR 1 H). The archives contain record sheets, gendarmerie records and reports, notes, correspondence and photographs. The same sub-series contains archives from detention centres in Algeria (hostels, sorting and transit centres and military internment camps) which can provide information on what happened to missing persons. Lastly, gendarmerie archives contain files created during efforts to trace missing persons in response to requests from the Red Cross or the *Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels* (sub-series DE 2007 ZM 4). Collections of gendarmerie reports organised by unit can also provide information about disappearances and abductions. (To search these records, you will need to know the family name of the person concerned, when and where they went missing.)

For further information

[Medical records of the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#): a collection of records from Algeria's military hospitals spanning the period 1954-1967. These consist of admissions registers and patient files

specific to the individual military hospitals and may be used to trace people admitted for treatment or who passed away, in Algeria's military hospitals only, during the Algerian War.

*Fonds des **Morts pour la France*** (Archives on people officially declared "Killed fighting for France") (1954 to 1991 "Opération Daguet" [Gulf War]):

This collection is primarily housed at the [Centre des Archives du Personnel Militaire](#) (Military Personnel Archive -CAPM) at the *Service Historique de la Défense* in Pau. Records consist of a file for each person containing all the documents required to obtain the distinction "*Mort pour la France*": identification documents (copy of the service record, copies of identity documents), documents proving that the person died or was reported missing while fighting for France (detailed report on the death, death certificate) and the correspondence exchanged with the family for the purposes of obtaining the "*Mort pour la France*" distinction.

These files relate not only to French people, but also to Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans.

*Fonds des **Archives Matriculaires Étrangères*** (Foreign Military Personnel Records) at the [CAPM](#), *Service Historique de la Défense*:

The CAPM in Pau houses all the military personnel records for Algerian volunteers and conscripts who served in the French army from 1870 onwards. These documents provide information about how they were recruited, their military careers, any injuries they sustained, the decorations they were awarded, etc. They consist of registers and service number records, together with bundles of so-called "appended" documents compiled and collected by the recruitment offices throughout the military careers of conscripts and professional soldiers.

2. Algerians reported missing in France

Definition

This category lists information sources relating to Algerians reported missing in France, i.e. those described in the documents as "French nationals of North-African origin" ("Français de souche nord-africaine": FSNA), "North-African French nationals" or "French Muslims from Algeria" ("Français nord-africains", "Français musulmans d'Algérie": FMA) reported missing in metropolitan France in connection with the Algerian War. Separate entries are made for Algerians reported missing in Algeria.

Archives available

At the [Archives de Paris](#) (Paris Archives) the main sources of information are the archives of the General Courts of Seine *département* (later Paris). As they handle crimes and offences of all types, it is rare that cases of Algerians who went missing in France are covered by specific documents.

For example, the High Court Prosecutor's office archives contain:

- Records specifically related to missing persons and, in particular, to deaths over which it was decided to [take no further action](#) concerning French Muslims from Algeria, Algerians or French people and occurring between 1960 and 1962 in the Seine *département*. Most of those whose records are in this collection, compiled by the *Archives de Paris* in the 1990s, have North-African family names.

It is important to supplement searches of these records with an examination of the main collection (references [2582W](#) and [2752W](#)) from which the files were taken (1947-1962). These

contain police reports, autopsy reports from the coroner's office and occasionally personal belongings found on the victims. These documents were passed to the Prosecutor's office, where it was decided not to take any further action or to instigate an official enquiry. Files can be accessed via an [alphabetical list of deaths](#), suicides, attempted suicides, bodies found and bodies recovered during the period 1947-1970. Records are classified by type and by year, and then arranged in alphabetical order. They give details of the victim's family name and given name, the date the body was discovered or when the suicide attempt took place and Prosecutor's office number or official enquiry number, depending on whether or not an enquiry was conducted.

- [Registers](#) listing the cases referred to the investigating magistrate containing, in the order in which they were recorded, the names of plaintiffs and defendants, the reasons for the investigation, the dates of indictments, the name of the investigating magistrate, the dates of orders and summonses, verdicts (which often also include sentences) and the date the case was referred to the Chief Public Prosecutor. A [specific register](#) was opened during the events in Algeria. It records all cases involving people of North-African origin.

The *Archives de Paris* contain several records of [cases that were dismissed](#). There are numerous records of assaults and homicides where either the perpetrator or the victim was Algerian. These can be accessed via the registers mentioned above and the lists of cases dismissed by the courts.

At the [Archives Nationales](#) (Pierrefitte-sur-Seine), the archives of the [Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels](#) (Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) created by decree of the President of the French Council on 7 May 1957 to investigate tortures, disappearances and other abuses allegedly perpetrated by France during the conflict provide information, in particular, on arrests and [people reported missing in France following the demonstrations that took place in Paris on 17 and 18 October 1961](#) (list available at the Archives).

Information about Algerians reported missing in metropolitan France can also be found in the records of the Ministry of the Interior's [Commission de Vérification des Mesures de Sécurité Publique](#) (Public Safety Measures Oversight Committee). This committee was created by ordinance on 7 October 1958 and concerns measures to be taken with regard to people considered a public safety hazard for their assistance to the "rebels" in the *départements* in Algeria. Its main function was to issue recommendations on expulsions, internments and house arrests prescribed by order of the Ministry or the Prefecture. In addition, it was responsible for making regular inspections of internment camps. Missing persons reports could be lodged with this committee, which could also launch investigations. Its archives consist of minutes of meetings and case files arranged in alphabetical order (1958-1962).

The archives of the Ministry of the Interior's *Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale* (Directorate-General for Internal Security) are another invaluable source of information. In particular, they contain [3,800 records of investigations by the judiciary police into the subversive activities of "North-African French nationals" or "French Muslims from Algeria" in metropolitan France](#). In 125 cases, the victims concerned were unidentified. The files contain telephone messages and telegrams from the *Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire* (SRPJ) reporting the offence, investigation forms, SRPJ investigation reports, photographs, interview and search reports and copies of documents seized and placed under police seal.

Other collections worth consulting are those at the ***Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris*** (Paris Police Headquarters Archives). These include the Algerian archives of the [Paris police chief's office](#), the archives of the [Service de Coordination des Affaires Algériennes](#) (Algerian Affairs Coordination Department), [files on investigations into homicides or attempted homicides](#) and [mortuary registers](#).

But there are no records specific to Algerians reported missing within the jurisdiction of the Seine *département*.

For further information

The records of the *Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire* kept in the archives of the different *départements* provide a useful complement to the records of the Ministry of the Interior at the *Archives Nationales*, and those at the Préfecture de police de Paris (Paris Police Headquarters).

Other useful sources include the [administrative records and individual files from the internment camps at Vadenay, Thol, Saint-Maurice and Larzac](#) (1958-1962) which can be found in the *Archives Nationales* (at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine).

See also, at the [Archives de Paris](#), files on proceedings that resulted in convictions in cases judged by the [Magistrates' Courts](#), Courts of Appeal or [Criminal Courts](#), together with the sentences delivered and rulings made. Records of official declarations of death may also be found here in the archives of the civil courts.

The archives of cemeteries in Paris and the surrounding municipalities are also worth consulting. Burial records give the date of the death or burial, the dimensions and location of the tomb within the cemetery, the place of death (district or municipality) and the age of the deceased. In certain cases, they say where the body came from (coroner's office, for example) and, if it was exhumed, where it was subsequently sent. These registers can be accessed online via the *Archives de Paris* website, for the period 1804-1968.

3. French civilians reported missing in Algeria

Definition

This category contains sources of information regarding "French nationals of European origin" (FSE) who went missing in Algeria, with the exception of military personnel, who are listed separately. Civilians of other nationalities may also be included here.

Archives available

The [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) has just over [3,200 files on individuals](#) reported missing in Algeria during the final months of French rule and the initial months of independence (1962-1965). These individual files, which are kept at La Corneuve and Nantes, originated with the [Secrétariat d'État aux Affaires Algériennes](#) (Secretariat of State for Algerian Affairs) and the *Direction des Conventions Administratives et Consulaires* (Administrative and Consular Conventions Directorate) which took over its responsibilities, and with French [embassy](#) and [consular](#) departments in Algeria. These files, which were compiled from 1962, contain search records and investigation reports produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross following a special mission carried out in Algeria between March and August 1963 to trace detainees or people reported missing, together with various exchanges of correspondence.

In addition to the records listed above, the *Centre des Archives Diplomatiques* (Diplomatic Archives Centre at La Courneuve) has a [collection of telegrams](#) written between July and September 1962 which may contain information about people who went missing in Algeria, and [missing persons investigation records for French nationals](#) prepared for the Franco-Algerian talks of 30 November to 4 December

1962. There is also a [general missing persons file](#) within the social affairs archives of the *Sous-direction Afrique du Nord* (North African Division) and two boxes of consular affairs records from the *Direction des Conventions Administratives et Consulaires* on [requests received to trace and provide information about individual missing persons](#).

At the [Archives Nationales](#) (Pierrefitte-sur-Seine), the archives of the [Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels](#) (Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) created by decree of the President of the French Council on 7 May 1957 to investigate tortures, disappearances and other abuses allegedly perpetrated by France during the conflict, and in operation until 1 February 1963, are another essential source of information. They contain minutes of sessions between September 1958 and July 1962, general investigations (in particular regarding the relations with the relevant authorities as well as detentions without trial and house arrests, prisons, the workings of the justice system, missing persons, violence, torture and retaliation, and general reports) and some [2,300 individual files](#) (list available at the Archives) opened for each of the cases reported to the Commission (including missing person's reports of all types, which account for around 11% of cases from 1958 onwards).

Reports of attacks on property and people perpetrated in the Algiers *département* sent daily by the Inspector General of the Greater Algiers police district to the office of the Algiers Chief of Police at times contain details of abductions or bodies discovered, making them a useful source of information. They are organised into two series, one arranged [by category of offence \(January to June 1962\)](#) and the other [by date \(November 1961 to June 1962\)](#).

At the [Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer](#) (French National Overseas Archives at Aix-en-Provence), information about French civilians of European origin who went missing in Algeria may be found in amongst almost all the records relating to Algeria. As for the other categories of missing persons, there are no specific records or files exclusively dedicated to such people. Records come from the various civilian authorities that worked right across Algeria. They are therefore an excellent complement to the archives produced by the military authorities.

The types of documents found in the files of the various authorities are to a great extent identical from one level of government to the next ([jointly administered municipalities](#), [specialised administrative sections](#), Southern Territories *départements*, sub-prefectures, [North-African liaison services](#) within the prefectures and the [civilian and military general staffs of the Governor General's office and then the resident Minister in Algeria](#)). The documents are letters reporting about disappearances and arrests and paperwork about investigations carried out on behalf of families, made up of briefing notes and intelligence reports, records and lists of names, and police and gendarmerie reports. In the archives of the three [North-African liaison services for the Algiers, Oran](#) and [Constantine](#) regions, there are instructions and general circulars as well as weekly reports written by the investigating department. Files on missing persons compiled by the civilian staff of the successive Governors General of Algeria and then the resident Minister for the period 1956-1962 mainly contain missing person's reports, briefing notes and intelligence reports, together with lists of names and enquiry reports, which are a useful complement to information found in military headquarters records. These archives should be used in conjunction with those of the [Ministry of the Sahara](#), in which you can also find missing person's reports and documents about attempts to trace people on behalf of their families (briefing notes and intelligence reports together with lists of names where available).

[Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire](#) (SRPJ) records are another major source of information. They consist of files in conjunction with either terrorist surveillance operations or attempts to trace missing persons on behalf of their families. They contain briefing notes and intelligence reports, lists of names

and police and gendarmerie reports. However, it should be noted that the internal referencing system (individual files and catalogues), which provides easier access to records, was only transferred in the case of the [Algiers SRPJ](#).

Lastly, individual files on criminal proceedings relating to acts classified as terrorism or other crimes and offences dealt with by the [courts](#) may mention instances of missing persons. This archive collection is currently being classified.

At the [Service Historique de la Défense](#) (Defence Historical Service in Vincennes), some of the records compiled either by [military units stationed in Algeria](#) (sub-series GR 1 H) or by the [Ministry of Defence's central administration departments](#) (series GR R) mention this type of missing persons. In the archives of the Algiers and Oran army corps there are files on the cases of French people of European origin who were abducted or went missing in Algeria. These files contain record sheets, gendarmerie records and reports, memos, correspondence and photographs. It will be useful to cross-reference these with the various collections of gendarmerie reports, missing persons report files and statements on investigations requested by the *Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels* kept in the archives of central command and the [individual gendarmerie units in Algeria](#) (sub-series GD 2010 ZM 4).

Other resources available in the reading rooms at Vincennes (sub-series GR 1 H) include [intelligence and investigation files on military personnel and civilians](#) reported missing contained in the archives of the offices of the Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in Algeria and press cuttings about missing persons, assassinations and the release of civilians and military personnel in the archives of the government general delegation in Algeria.

At the [Division des Archives des Victimes des Conflits Contemporains](#) (Archives of Victims of Contemporary Conflicts, in Caen), in sub-series AC 34R, you will find individual files created during the process of updating the public records for French nationals of European origin whose families applied to have them classified as "Morts pour la France" (Killed fighting for France).

For further information

The [Sous-direction des Pensions \(Pensions Division\) of the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#) keeps copies of files on compensation paid to civilian victims (for example, victims of terrorist attacks) within the archives of the former *Directions Interdépartementales des Anciens Combattants* (Interdepartmental Veterans' Affairs Directorates) disbanded in 2010, and in particular those civilian victims of the events in Algeria who lodged applications with this authority. However, only a small percentage of this corpus of documents relates to these victims. Searches can be carried out based on the family name, given name and date of birth of the person concerned.

The [archives covering "repatriates"](#) held at the *Office National des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre* (National Office of Veterans and War Victims, Ministry of the Armed Forces) may also contain information about missing persons and/or their widows and heirs, in cases where they have applied for the benefits for which repatriates were eligible. This particular fonds consists of the archives of the *Agence Nationale d'Indemnisation des Français d'Outre-mer* (National Agency for the Compensation of French nationals from the Overseas *Départements*, ANIFOM) and the *Bureau Central des Rapatriés* (Central Repatriates Office, BCR), formerly known as the *Service Central des Rapatriés* (Central Repatriates Department).

[Hospital medical records in the archives of the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#) may offer another avenue for research. These contain chronological records of admissions to the military hospitals in Algeria as

well as patient records from these hospitals (accessed using the name of the hospital followed by the family name of the patient), plus the files on those who passed away.

Lastly, the [Justice Militaire \(Military Justice\) archives at the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#) should also be mentioned among the resources available, although they are of only passing interest. They contain the files of legal proceedings instigated before the three permanent armed forces courts at Algiers, Oran and Constantine, which had the authority to judge cases involving both military personnel and civilians during the Algerian War. Of course, if the particular missing person was not the subject of legal proceedings, they will not appear in the records.

4. French military personnel reported missing in Algeria

Definition

This category lists sources of information about French military personnel of all ranks reported missing in Algeria. For harkis and other irregular troops, there is a separate specific category.

Archives available

The French army deployed vast numbers of troops in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. From 1955 onwards, it called up conscripts in addition to its regular troops, and as a result over 1.5 million French nationals were mobilised during the Algerian War.

Records concerning French military personnel reported missing are mainly conserved at the [Service Historique de la Défense](#) (Defence Historical Service - SHD, in Vincennes). However, the SHD does not have a specific fonds for such persons: with the exception of a few files, documents are dotted across a number of different fonds and often mixed in with files about prisoners and deserters.

There are **three main sources** of information about military personnel reported missing:

- [Gendarmerie reports](#): reports made by gendarmerie units based in Algeria between 1954 and 1962 contain information about the circumstances of abductions reported to the authorities, which was not always the case, and about the discovery of bodies. Gendarmerie reports are filed by brigade and in chronological order (sub-series GD 2010 ZM 4) within the overall gendarmerie archives produced during the conflict. They amount to more than 17,000 boxes. There is no general index by name that can be used to locate a report about a specific person. Consequently, in order to make searches in this collection, it is vital to know the person's family name, when and where they disappeared. Gendarmerie reports may also have been placed in files transferred to the military staff.
- [Intelligence bulletins](#): intelligence bulletins come mainly from the *Deuxièmes Bureaux* (intelligence agencies within the military general staffs) and the *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage* (External documentation and Counterintelligence Department – SDECE). They are stored under various headings in the Algeria sub-series (sub-series GR 1 H). They were compiled using information collected from informers and obtained by interrogating prisoners, defectors and occasionally French prisoners who had been released. There are also summaries of declarations made by the rebel authorities (in particular announcements of executions) and letters sent by the FLN (National Liberation Front) to the families of missing persons. Press cuttings are also included. Overall, the information is sketchy

and of highly variable quality. To be of use, these documents will need to be cross-referenced. Given how fragmented the files are, this may well be a long and painstaking process.

- Reports made to superiors (from the local chain of command through to the staff of the Minister of Defence): reports made to central command can be found in the archives of [territorial units](#) (sub-series GR 1 H) or the [office of the Minister of Defence](#) (series GR R). From 1957 onwards, the military staff of the French armed forces in Algeria did in fact put in place a complete system of records for missing personnel, resulting in the production of individual files and lists of names. This information was to be entered into a missing persons file with the information fed back to units and *deuxièmes bureaux* (in particular in the form of a collection of photos of missing persons). Nonetheless, the information that has been kept appears incomplete, in terms of both the number and content of the files. Not all lists are of the same quality, and they need to be systematically cross-referenced. From 1962, the escalation in the number of short-term disappearances made it particularly difficult to keep track. As the command structures in Algeria were dismantled, the files gradually ceased to be updated, and were subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The archives of the [Centre des Archives du Personnel Militaire](#) (CAPM) in Pau are another useful source of information in complement to these records. In them, you will find the files of officers who left the ranks of the military after 1971 (the records of those who left before this date are conserved at Vincennes), the military records for French volunteers and conscripts and the army and joint unit archives. While these archives contain information about people reported missing, they are not arranged in ways making them easy for the general public to consult and there are no standard search tools for them. For the moment, you can contact the CAPM to identify the relevant fonds and arrange to obtain access.

At the [Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer](#) (French National Overseas Archives at Aix-en-Provence), information about military personnel who went missing in Algeria may be found in amongst almost all the records relating to Algeria. As for the other categories of missing persons, there are no specific records or files exclusively dedicated to such people. Records come from the various civilian authorities that worked right across Algeria. They are therefore an excellent complement to the archives produced by the military authorities.

The types of documents found in the files of the various authorities are to a great extent identical from one level of government to the next ([jointly administered municipalities](#), [specialised administrative sections](#), [North-African liaison services](#) within the prefectures and the [civilian and military staffs of the Governor General's office](#)). They consisted of notification letters about missing persons, briefing notes and intelligence reports, records and lists of names, police and gendarmerie reports, and occasionally files on individuals.

The only files that contain more detailed documents are those from the [Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire](#) (SRPJ), which are a major source of information, and [court](#) files relating to serious crime and offences which are currently being classified.

Last but not least, there are files relating to French military personnel among the missing person's files created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held at the [Centre des Archives Diplomatiques in La Courneuve](#).

For further information

The [Sous-direction des Pensions](#) (Pensions Division) of the Ministry of the Armed Forces keeps copies of files on compensation paid to civilian victims of the events in Algeria, as well as records about the military victims if they or their family were eligible for French armed forces or disability pensions. From either of these collections, you might be able to identify a missing person and/or his widow, orphans or ascendants, or pick up the trail of someone believed missing.

Archives of [Military Justice at the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#): this collection consists of the files of the French military courts in operation during the Algerian War. It is impossible to carry out a search using the name of a missing person; the name of the accused in cases brought before the military courts is required, who may be either civilians or members of the armed forces.

Archives of [Ministry of the Armed Forces medical records](#): a collection of records from Algeria's military hospitals spanning the period 1954-1967. The archive contains admissions registers and patient files from each military hospital. These records can be used to trace people who were admitted for treatment or who died, in Algeria's military hospitals only, during the Algerian War.

5. Harkis and other irregular troops of the French armed forces reported missing in Algeria

Definition

From the end of 1954, the French army sought to recruit auxiliary troops locally to prevent Algerian independentists from gaining ground. Most of these forces were harkas (Algerian units in the French army), established from April 1956 onwards and attached to a French army unit or geographical area. It is difficult to put an exact figure on the number of harkis (members of harka units), because the French army did not always enter them in the records. Other irregular troops were mobilised in addition to the harkis: mobile rural police units, known as mobile security groups from 1958 (referred to as rural guards or *goumiers*), *mokhaznis*, tasked with protecting the specialised administrative sections and urban administrative sections, territorial units, which became reserve units in 1960, and self-defence groups.

It is impossible to put a figure on the number of people who went missing from among the irregular troops because the information in the archives is extremely sketchy and sometimes even contradictory.

Archives available

At the [Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer](#) (French National Overseas Archives at Aix-en-Provence), information about harkis and other irregular troops who went missing in Algeria may be found in amongst almost all the records relating to Algeria. As for the other categories of missing persons, there are no specific records or files exclusively dedicated to such people. Records come from the various civilian authorities that worked right across Algeria. They are therefore an excellent complement to the archives produced by the military authorities.

The types of documents found in the files of the various authorities are to a great extent identical from one level of government to the next ([jointly administered municipalities](#), [specialised administrative sections](#), [North-African liaison services](#) within the prefectures and the [civilian and military staffs of the](#)

[Governor General's office](#)). They consisted of notification letters about missing persons, briefing notes and intelligence reports, records and lists of names, police and gendarmerie reports, and occasionally files on individuals.

The only files that contain more detailed documents are those from the [Services Régionaux de Police Judiciaire](#) (SRPJ), which are a major source of information, and files [court](#) files relating to serious crime and offences which are currently being classified.

At the [Service Historique de la Défense](#) (Defence Historical Service in Vincennes), some of the records created either by [military units stationed in Algeria](#) (sub-series GR 1 H) or by the [Ministry of Defence's central administrative departments](#) (series GR R) mention missing persons. Within the Algeria series, archives that could usefully be consulted relate to losses among French forces, FLN (National Liberation Front) prisoners and deserters. These records may contain intelligence memos and bulletins, investigation logs or lists of names or numbers of people reported missing. However, the lists do not always make a distinction between French military personnel of European origin and harkis. It is only by their family names that it is possible to tell them apart. It also appears that when harkis were abducted or went missing, the military unit to which they were attached was not always informed, unlike French military personnel of European origin for whom the units were always informed.

The archives of [gendarmerie units stationed in Algeria](#) are another source of invaluable information about harkis who went missing. These archives contain, among other things, sets of reports arranged in chronological order by brigade. Using the name of a missing person, if you have a location and even an approximate date it is possible to locate the police report concerning the particular disappearance. Gendarmerie archives also contain files on missing harkis created in response to efforts to trace missing persons at the request of the *Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuelles*.

In sub-series AC 34R, the [Division des Archives des Victimes des Conflits Contemporains](#) (in Caen) has a number of individual files compiled during the process of updating the civil registry records for French irregular and auxiliary troops and members of the non-military police forces killed or reported missing.

At the [Archives Nationales](#) (Pierrefitte-sur-Seine), the archives of the [Commission de Sauvegarde des Droits et Libertés Individuels](#) (Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) include reference files, general reports and individual files (which contain various reports produced by authorities such as the police, gendarmerie and Coroner's office; list available at the archives). These may include information about irregular troops.

For further information

The [Sous-direction des Pensions \(Pensions Division\) of the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#) keeps copies of files on compensation paid to civilian victims of the events in Algeria, as well as records about the military victims if they or their family were eligible for French armed forces or disability pensions. From either of these collections, you might be able to identify a missing person and/or his widow, orphans or ascendants, or pick up the trail of someone believed missing.

[Archives covering "repatriates"](#) at the *Office National des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre* (Ministry of the Armed Forces): two collections of archives, one dealing with compensation for the assets of repatriates (known as the ANIFOM collection) and the other relating to aid given to families as part of various measures taken to support repatriates, can be used to identify a missing person and/or their widow and heirs.

Archives of [Military Justice at the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#): this collection consists of the files of the French military courts in operation during the Algerian War. Searches cannot be carried out via the name of a missing person; the name of defendants in cases brought before the military courts is required, and these may be either civilians or members of the armed forces.

The [medical records of the Ministry of the Armed Forces](#): a collection of records from Algeria's military hospitals spanning the period 1954-1967. The archives contain admissions registers and patient files from each military hospital. These records can be used to trace people who were admitted for treatment or who died, in Algeria's military hospitals only, during the Algerian War.

Not found what you were looking for?

Try carrying out a blanket search of [all archives relating to missing persons of the Algerian War](#).

See also: [records about Maurice Audin and his fate](#).