

Australian prisoners of war

Second World War, Europe

This sheet is for people seeking information about Australian servicemen who were imprisoned in Europe during the Second World War.

How to get started

Basic biographical information about all Australian servicemen and women is available on the World War 2 Nominal Roll, <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au>. The Nominal Roll will indicate if the individual was a prisoner of war.

If the serviceman you are interested in died during the war, you will find him on the Memorial's Roll of Honour database, <http://www.awm.gov.au/roh/>. The Roll of Honour provides details such as unit, date and place of death.

The published registers listed below are arranged by name under each nationality, and they list: camp location, service number, POW number, name, rank and unit.

- *Prisoners of war: Naval and Air Forces of Great Britain and the Empire 1939-1945* (Polstead, Suffolk: J B Hayward/Imperial War Museum, 1990)
- *Prisoners of war: Armies and other land forces of the British Empire 1939-1945* (Polstead, Suffolk: J B Hayward/Imperial War Museum, 1990)

Please be aware not all prisoners of war are listed in these volumes.

Other useful sources include,

- Oliver Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the sands of time: RAF Bomber Command prisoners-of-war in Germany 1939-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2003)
Contains an annotated list of all Bomber Command airmen taken prisoner of war as well as information on the POW camps, repatriation, stories of capture, escape, etc.
- Statements by repatriated or released Prisoners of War (RAAF) taken at No 11 PDRC, Brighton, England, 1945, **AWM54 779/3/129 Parts 1-30**
Information on these standard forms include circumstances of capture, events subsequent to capture and during internment including conditions and medical treatment.

Location and types of POW camp

If you are interested in more specific information about prisoner of war camps, you can move on to the following resources:

- *Catalogue of camps and prisons in Germany and German-occupied territories 1 Sept–8 May 1939, 1945*, 2 vols (Arolsen, West Germany: International Tracing Service, 1950)
Contains an index to camp names in volume 2. Includes map and map coordinates for each camp.
- Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, *KL's (Konzentrationslager): Axis concentration camps and detention centres reported as such in Europe*, Revised edition (Hounslow, Middlesex: World War II Investigator, 1986)
As well as locations of camps, this book provides information about types of camps, camp organisation and administration. Camps are listed by country (and region for Germany) and alphabetically by name.
- A map of the German prisoner-of-war camps operated in the Second World War, <http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/pow/pdf/page758.pdf>

The prisoner of war experience

Use the Memorial's website to identify other relevant resources which provide details on conditions in camps and treatment of prisoners.

- Books database, <http://www.awm.gov.au/firstopac/>
To locate memoirs of prisoners of war search using the keywords 'personal narratives prisoners 1939-1945'.
- RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>
Lists details of Official Records held in the Memorial and in the National Archives of Australia. Files held include statements by escaped or repatriated prisoners of war and reports on conditions in camps. You can search by using the keywords prisoners with relevant dates. Refine your search by using keywords like escaped, repatriated, the names and/or locations of camps, the names of countries where individuals were captured, and the names of individuals. Remember to try truncated searches: escap* brings up escape, escapes, escapees etc.
- Collection Search, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp>
The Memorial's collections of photographs, film, sound records, art, private records and military heraldry and technology items can be searched using this database.
- Ephemera, <http://www.awm.gov.au/findingaids/index.htm>
Finding aids to holdings of items such as concert and sporting programs, newsletters, escape maps and cards from prisoner of war camps

Suggested search terms:

surname of the prisoner

name of a camp

prison% (this term searches for prison, prisoner, prisoners)