

# Australian prisoners of war

## Second World War, prisoners of the Japanese

### Finding basic details

The following details about an individual will help to find additional information:

- Full name
- Unit
- Service number
- Country where he/she was captured/imprisoned
- Names of people or places associated with imprisonment, e.g., name of medical officer, camp name, prisoner-of-war ship.

Major sources include:

- Personal service record  
Request a copy of a Second World War Service Record from the National Archives of Australia, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/army-wwii.aspx>.
- Department of Veteran's Affairs World War 2 Nominal Roll, <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au>  
Includes unit name, service number and whether or not the person was a prisoner of war.
- Australian Military Forces Prisoners of War and Missing in the Far East and South West Pacific Islands  
This official record has been digitised and is available at <http://www.awm.gov.au/awm232/>
- Roll of Honour, <http://www.awm.gov.au/roh/>  
Records the names of service men and women who died during or as a result of service with Australian military forces.
- Casualty lists  
A list of AIF casualties in Malaya, Java, and Timor, as known by 2nd Echelon AIF Malaya. Arranged alphabetically and by service number. (Includes force and fate). Official record AWM54 171/11/2
- Casualty information on prisoners of war, Burma-Thailand and Japan. Official record AWM127 77

### Which prison camps were they in and what were the camps like?

Search the following databases on the Memorial's website using as search terms:

- name of unit
- name of camp
- name of force (such as A Force, Ramsay Force)
- name of country (remember that some countries now have a different name – Taiwan was still called Formosa during the war)

**Books database, <http://www.awm.gov.au/firstopac/>**

Look especially for published unit histories. Some of these contain sections on the experiences of those members of the unit who were taken prisoner-of-war, often with lists of names.

**Collections Search, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp>**

To find photographs and private records, search by names of individuals, camps, name of unit or service (e.g., RAAF, RAN, nurses)

A general search, such as *prison%* with *Second World War* from the Conflict pull-down menu, can also be useful.

## **Official records, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>**

RecordSearch is a joint database for the Memorial's official records collection and the National Archives of Australia. The National Archives also holds files relating to prisoners of war.

To locate records relating to your prisoners search by name of country, camp, unit or service, or prison\* and relevant date range.

Some examples of types of official records:

- Series AWM127 contains some nominal rolls, such as those for individual units, groups of nurses, or specific camps.
- War crimes and trials. Affidavits and sworn statements, various items in AWM54 1010/\*.
- To locate items in this series, search RecordSearch using individual names (surname and prison\* or prisoner of war) as keywords with AWM54 1010/\* in the Reference number field
- War crimes and trials. Control copy of evidence. Synopsis of evidence. Index of names. AWM54 1010/1/8.
- Alphabetical list of names (not listed individually on RecordSearch) of those giving evidence. Includes name, rank, number, unit, list of prisoner-of-war camps in which they were held, dates and synopsis of evidence.

## **Ephemera, <http://www.awm.gov.au/findingaids/index.htm>**

The Research Centre holds collections of ephemera, some of which relate to Second World War prisoners of war, such as concert programs (from the Souvenir collection)

## **Location of camps**

- Frances Worthington Lipe. *Japanese prisoner-of-war camps during World War II, 1941-1945: known locations of camps where American, British, Dutch, Australian, Canadian, Indian and other allied military and civilian personnel were imprisoned by the Japanese* (Brownsville, Tex.: Medical Research Committee of American Ex-prisoners of War, 1983?) AWM Map Collection G7720.S7
- General diagram of railway between Thailand and Burma and brief list showing prisoner-of-war camps (about Oct 1943). Official record AWM54 469/4/1
- Sketch map of part of Burma, Thailand showing location of F and H Force Camps and Halts - Apr-Dec 1943. Official record AWM54 469/5/13

## **Further information**

- Ambon, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/ambon.asp>
- Borneo (Sandakan), <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/borneo.asp>
- Burma–Thailand Railway, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/thailand.asp>
- Hainan Island, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/hainan.asp>
- Japan, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/japan.asp>
- Java and Timor, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/java.asp>
- New Britain and New Ireland, [http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/new\\_britain.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/new_britain.asp)
- Senior Officers' Party, Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan, [http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/senior\\_officer.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/senior_officer.asp)
- Singapore (Changi and Singapore Island), [http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/singapore\\_changi.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/singapore_changi.asp)
- Sumatra, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/sumatra.asp>
- Prison ship, [http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/prison\\_ship.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/prison_ship.asp)