

Researching Australian military service South African War (Boer War), 1899-1902

Overview

Australian military history overview: Australia and the South African War, <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/boer.htm>.

Nominal Rolls

There are a number of lists of names and other information relating to contingents that provide limited information about some of those who served.

The Memorial's Boer War nominal roll, <http://www.awm.gov.au/nominalrolls/boer/>, has been compiled using P.L. Murray's *Official records of the Australian contingents to the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1911) as a major source. This book has a brief history of each contingent, lists men serving in each contingent (not all names are included, others are spelt incorrectly), and gives some information about officers. Many men enlisted in England or South Africa and so are not within the intended scope of the volume. The volume has no contents list or index.

Other lists of those who served in the Boer War

General	<p>Oz–Boer database, http://members.pcug.org.au/~croe/ozb/ozb_1st.htm</p> <p>Australians serving in the Boer War, http://www.perthdps.com/military/index.html</p>
Officers and those who remained in the army after the war	<p>"Record of war service" in <i>The military forces list of the Commonwealth of Australia</i>. Later titled <i>Officer's list of the Australian Military Forces</i>. The Research Centre hold lists from 1912.</p>
Nurses	<p>Australian nurses in the Boer War, http://users.westconnect.com.au/~ianmac5/readroom.htm</p> <p>Rupert Goodman, <i>Our war nurses</i>. (Bowen Hills, Qld: Boolarong Publications, 1988).</p> <p>Sheila Gray, <i>The South African war 1899–1902: service records of British and colonial women</i>. (Auckland, NZ: S. Gray, 1993).</p>
Known unit or contingent	<p>Reading list Australians in the South African War, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/bibliographies/boer.htm</p> <p>Search RecordSearch, http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx, by name of unit or contingent and relevant dates for official records. There are some unit Nominal Rolls in official records series AWM1 or AWM3. You can request these files at the Research Centre information desk. RecordSearch also lists Nominal Rolls held by the National Archives of Australia.</p> <p>Some nominal rolls exist in private papers and these can be found by using the Collections Search, http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp.</p> <p>Search library catalogues for books on specific units, such as George Newbury, <i>The Australian Commonwealth Horse</i>. (Adelaide, SA: the author, 1990).</p>

Personal service records

The Boer War was fought between 1899 and 1902 and spans the pre- and post-Federation period. Therefore, records may be held by State government archives, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/addresses_aust.asp, or by the National Archives of Australia, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx>. As a general guide, the colonial period records are held in State government archives, and post-Federation records are held by the National Archives, although there may be exceptions to this.

If your individual was serving in the Boer War with the forces of another country please see our information sheet Personal service records - countries other than Australia, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/overseaspsr.asp>.

Those who died while serving

The 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. The Roll of Honour introduction provides detailed information about Roll of Honour eligibility, <http://www.awm.gov.au/roh/intro.asp#eligibility>.

The Commemorative Roll, <http://www.awm.gov.au/croll/>, commemorates Australians who died during or as a result of wars or warlike operations in which Australians have been on active service but who were not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour. The Commemorative Roll introduction provides detailed information about Commemorative Roll eligibility, <http://www.awm.gov.au/croll/intro.asp#eligibility>.

The Australian war graves in South Africa, <http://www.hagsoc.org.au/sagraves/nmcdm/nmcdm-search.php>, was created by the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra to support family historians whose field of study takes in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. It is a searchable database of information from Australian Boer War memorials.

Alexander M. Palmer's *The Boer War casualty roll 1899–1902* (Perth, WA: A. M. Palmer, 1999) includes an alphabetical listing of those who were wounded or taken prisoner as well as those who died.

Where they served

P L Murray, *Official Records of the Australian contingents to the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne, Vic: Government Printer, 1911) has an overview of the service of each Australian contingent.

Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War : the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 2002). Appendix 3 lists Australian contingents in South Africa and gives a condensed history of each contingent's participation in the conflict.

The Research Centre has a number of reading lists, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/bibliographies/index.htm>, which will guide researchers to relevant publications.

Medals and awards

Campaign and service medals

The Research Centre holds a fragile microfilm copy of *Medal Rolls and Correspondence, Sudan and South Africa* (ORMF 0055) documenting the issue of Queen's and King's Medals to soldiers in Australian contingents with an index to the unit. Individuals are not listed alphabetically.

Michael R. Downey, "Medal roll for Doyle's Australian Scouts, South Africa, 1902" *Despatch* 16, 7 (1981): pp. 161–75.

Honours and awards

South African war honours and awards: officers and men of the army and navy mentioned in despatches (London: Greenhill, 1987) is a published source which lists those who received awards for gallantry (not only Australians) and includes citations.

Neil and Sylvie Smith, *Brought to notice: British held records of Australian rewards for the Boer War, 1899–1902* (Gardenvale, Vic: Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications, 2000)

Honours and awards that have been gazetted are available on Honours and Awards (Gazetted), <http://www.awm.gov.au/honours/honours/>.

Where to look for photographs

- Collections Search, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp>, provides access to digitised images of photographs held by the Memorial.
- Picture Australia, <http://www.pictureaustralia.org/>, has images held by a range of major Australian libraries, archives and other cultural institutions
- State libraries and archival repositories. For contact details, see our information sheet Addresses, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/addresses_aust.asp
- *Queenslanders on the Veldt*, <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/oh/treasures/boerwar/database>, Photographs appearing in The Queenslander newspaper of those who joined up for the war between 1899 and 1902 have been indexed. Photographs may be ordered from the Library.

Other sources

Search the Collections Search, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp>, for private papers, (diaries, and letters) and photographs using

- surname of a specific individual or
- for a comprehensive search, Advanced Search option, select South Africa War 1899–1902 from the Conflict pull-down menu.

National Archives of Australia holds many files relating to this conflict. Details of these can be found at

- Fact Sheet 67 Boer War records, <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs67.aspx>
- Craig Wilcox *Boer War: Australians and the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Research guide), http://www.naa.gov.au/naaresources/Publications/research_guides/guides/boerwar/introduction.htm

Some state archives institutions and state libraries hold material relating to the Boer War.