

Researching Australian military service Second World War, 1939-1945

Nominal rolls

The Department of Veteran's Affairs created the World War 2 Nominal Roll, <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/>. The Nominal Roll provides basic service details

Some published unit histories provide lists of names of their members, usually with service number. You can identify if there is a published unit history for your individual's unit by searching the Books database, <http://www.awm.gov.au/firstopac/>. Search using the name of the unit as keywords with the date range 1939-1945, for example, 2/2 Battalion 1939-1945.

Personal service records

Service records of those who served with Australian forces are held by the National Archives of Australia. You can apply to the National Archives for copies of personal service records, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/army-wwii.aspx>.

If your individual served with the forces of another country during the Second World War please see the information sheet Personal service records - countries other than Australia, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/overseaspsr.asp>, for further information.

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>.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Debt of Honour register, http://www.cwgc.org/debt_of_honour.asp, lists all British Commonwealth soldiers who died in the First and Second World wars only. The register provides details about where the individual is buried or commemorated, and includes plans and photographs of the cemetery or memorial.

Where they served

To locate where an individual served during the war you need to examine records of the unit your individual was serving with. The service records will indicate which unit they were serving with when. For further guidance please refer to our Information Sheet Researching the history of a unit, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/unit_history.asp.

Army

War diaries were kept by the commanding officer of a unit to record their daily activities and location. The war diaries of Headquarters and some Infantry units in the Second World War have been digitised and are available at <http://www.awm.gov.au/diaries/ww2/>. The war diaries that have not been digitised are available for viewing in the Research Centre.

There are a limited number of unit profiles for the Second World War available at <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/ww2.asp>. The profiles include a short history of the unit, details of its casualties, decorations, battle honours and commanding officers.

Published unit histories can be a useful source for information about where a unit served and what they were doing. You can identify if there is a published unit history for your individual's unit by searching the Books database, <http://www.awm.gov.au/firstopac/>. Search using the name of the unit as keywords with the date range 1939-1945, for example, 2/2 Battalion 1939-1945.

Royal Australian Navy (RAN)

Reports of Proceedings (ROPs), known earlier as "Letters of Proceedings", are summaries of a ship's or shore base's activities. The reports were submitted by commanding officers to the Chief of Naval Staff. To identify relevant ROPs in the Memorial's collection search RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>, using the name of the ship as your keywords and AWM78 in the reference numbers field. These records are available for viewing in the Research Centre.

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)

RAAF Formation and Unit records (AWM64) were kept to record operations and activities of RAAF units. The records are available for viewing on microfilm in the Research Centre. The original records have been withdrawn from public access due to their fragile nature. Original records are only issued when no microfilm copy is available.

There are a limited number of unit profiles for RAAF squadrons available at <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/ww2.asp>. The profiles include a short history of the unit, details of its casualties, decorations, battle honours, commanding officers and aircraft.

General information

Official histories are a detailed chronological record of all services and all theatres of conflict. The official histories for the Second World War, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945*, have been digitised and are available for viewing at <http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/volume.asp?conflict=2>.

Medals and awards

- Information sheet: Campaign and service medals, <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/medals.asp>
- Information sheet: Australian military honours and awards, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/honours_awards.asp

Where to look for photographs

- Collections Search, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp>, gives access to 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 archives, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/addresses_aust.asp
- Second World War personal service records may contain a photograph, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/army-wwii.aspx>.