

Researching Australian military service

Royal Australian Air Force in the Second World War

Nominal rolls

The World War 2 Nominal Roll was created by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au>. The Nominal Roll provides the following details

- Service number
- Full name
- Place of enlistment
- Date of enlistment/attestation
- Place of birth
- Date of birth
- Unit/ship/squadron at discharge
- Date of death or discharge
- Substantive rank on discharge
- Prisoner of war status (yes or no)
- Next of kin name
- Honours and gallantry awards

The Research Centre also holds a number of nominal rolls in the Official records collection. You are welcome to visit the Research Centre to view these records.

	Title of list	Official record number
Fighter Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominal Roll of Australian pilots • Nominal Roll Australians in fighter command 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM54 81/4/64 • AWM173 7/4
Those serving with the RAAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists of RAAF members who served with RAF squadrons, arranged by squadron. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM173
India & Burma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RAAF with RAF squadrons in India & Burma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM173 4/14
Prisoners of war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of RAAF prisoners of war who returned safely, 21 Mar–23 May 1945 (European theatre) • RAAF personnel list of prisoners of war • RAAF personnel list of prisoners of war with graves (including memorials) in Europe, Far East, and New Guinea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM54 81/4/134 • AWM135/8 • AWM135/9
RAAF Nursing Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominal Roll of RAAF Nursing Service 1940–52 (gives number, full name, dates of enlistment and discharge, position or rank, and demobilization action) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM137/1

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 air force 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>.

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.

Other sources

The National Archives of Australia hold RAAF casualty files (NAA series A705). Casualty files were created for every member of the RAAF who was killed or severely wounded. As well as details of the incident, the files may contain reports from war graves investigators, eye-witnesses, survivors, the Red Cross and Squadron personnel. For further information see the National Archives Fact Sheet 32 RAAF service records, <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs32.aspx>.

W.R. Chorley, *Royal Air Force Bomber Command losses of the Second World War* (Earl Shilton, Leicester: the author & Midland County Publishers, 1992–2002). Chronological listing with brief details of the circumstances of the loss.

Where they served

Official records

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.

The National Archives of Australia also hold copies of many RAAF operational records. Some have been digitised and can be viewed on RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>. Search RecordSearch using the name of the unit as your keywords (e.g. 453 Squadron) and A9186 as the reference number.

Many of those who enlisted in the RAAF served in Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons. The Memorial does not hold official records of RAF squadrons, only some published information. The National Archives in the United Kingdom hold operational records for the RAF, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/RdLeaflet.asp?sLeafletID=155&j=1>.

Other sources

Official histories are a detailed chronological record of all services and all theatres of conflict. The Second World War official histories, *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>.

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.

For further guidance please refer to the information sheet Researching the history of a unit, http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/unit_history.asp.

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> provides access to digitised images of photographs held by the Memorial.
- The National Archives hold a collection of photographs of RAAF funerals held in Europe during the Second World War. Search RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>, using the serviceman's surname and the word 'funeral' as a keyword search, for example: Cheatle funeral.
- Picture Australia, <http://www.pictureaustralia.org>, has images held by a range of major Australian libraries, archives and other cultural institutions.