

Researching Australian military service: Second World War, Royal Australian Navy (RAN)

Nominal Rolls

- **Department of Veterans' Affairs World War 2 Nominal Roll** [<http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/ww2>]
- **Ships' ledgers:** The National Archives of Australia holds ships' ledgers, which contain some details about ships' crew members. For more information see their Fact Sheet 31 – Navy crew and ships records [www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs31.aspx].

Personal service records

Navy service cards for the Second World War are held by the National Archives of Australia. These have been digitised and can be viewed online. Please refer to their Fact Sheet 30 - Navy service records [www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheet/fs30.aspx].

Those who died while serving

The **Roll of Honour** [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Roll%20of%20Honour] records the names of servicemen and servicewomen 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 [www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/honour-rolls/roll-of-honour].

The **Commemorative Roll** [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Commemorative%20Roll] lists 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 [www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/honour-rolls/commemorative-roll].

Commonwealth War Graves Commission [www.cwgc.org/] casualty database lists all British Commonwealth soldiers who died in the First and Second World Wars. The register provides details about where the individual is buried or commemorated, includes plans and photographs of the cemetery or memorial.

Other sources

The following books provide information about RAN ships and personnel who died on RAN operations during war:

- Vic Cassells, *The capital ships: their battles and their badges* (East Roseville: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- Vic Cassells, *The destroyers: their battles and their badges* (East Roseville: Kangaroo Press, 2000).
- Vic Cassells, *For those in peril: a comprehensive listing of the ships and men of the Royal Australian Navy who have paid the supreme sacrifice in the wars of the twentieth century* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1995).
- Eric Dermott-Powell, *Royal Australian Navy, 1939-1946: Plymouth Naval Memorial: dedicated to the sacred memory of Australian naval personnel lost at sea 1939-1946* (Mortdale: E. Dermott-Powell, 1991).
- Allen Lyne, *Lost: the stories of all ships lost by the Royal Australian Navy* (Moana Heights: Allen Lyne, 2013).

Check with your local library for availability of these books.

Where they served

Navy service cards show which ship(s) an individual served with and when, but not where the ship went. You can use official records and other sources to locate where the ship served while the individual was with that ship.

Official records

Reports of Proceedings (ROPs), known previously 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 use the RecordSearch database [www.naa.gov.au/collection/search], entering the name of the ship as your keyword and AWM78 in the series number field. These records are available for viewing in the Research Centre Reading Room. The Memorial is progressively digitising its collection of ROPs, many of which are now available for viewing online [www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/navy-reports].

AWM188 contains Naval Historical Section research files compiled for the Official Naval Historian, G. H. Gill. These contain information about a range of topics relating to Navy operations, and may be viewed in the Reading Room.

The National Archives of Australia also holds some ROPs, ships logs, ships books and other Navy operational records. For more information see the Archives' Fact Sheet 31 – Navy crew and ships records [www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs31.aspx].

Online

The Royal Australian Navy website has published histories for many HMA ships [www.navy.gov.au/fleet/ships-boats-craft/available-ship-histories].

Published sources

- John Bastock, *Australia's ships of war* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1975). Contains specifications, illustration and history of each ship.
- G. Hermon Gill, *The Royal Australian Navy, 1939-1942* Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series 2 (Navy), vol. I (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1957).
- G. Hermon Gill, *The Royal Australian Navy, 1942-1945* Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series 2 (Navy), vol. II (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1968).

You may also find information by searching library catalogues for books on individual ships or campaigns.

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* [www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1417143] have been digitised and are available for viewing on the Memorial's website.

See also our research guide Researching the history of a unit [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/unit-history]

Medals and awards

James J. Atkinson, *By skill and valour: honours and awards to the Royal Australian Navy for the First and Second World Wars* (Sydney: Spink and Son Australia, 1986).

Please refer to our research guides:

- Campaign and service medals research guide [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/campaign-medals]
- Australian military honours and awards research guide [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/honours]

Where to look for photographs

- Collections Search [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search] provides access to digitised images of photographs held by the Memorial.
- Trove [trove.nla.gov.au] includes photographs and other images held by a range of major Australian libraries, archives and other cultural institutions.