

## Researching Australian military service: British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), 1945–52

### Overview of the conflict

Australian military history overview: British Commonwealth Occupation Force 1945–52  
[[www.awm.gov.au/atwar/bcof/](http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/bcof/)]

### Nominal rolls

A nominal roll of Australians who served with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan can be found in Neil C. Smith, *Disarming the menace: Australian soldiers with the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces Japan 1946–1952* (Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications, Brighton, Victoria, c. 2012).

### Personal service records

Service records of those who served with Australian forces during this period may be held by either the Department of Defence or the National Archives of Australia. Information about access to these records is available on the Department of Defence website [[www.defence.gov.au/records/ExService.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/records/ExService.asp)].

### Those who died while serving

The **Roll of Honour** [[www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Roll%20of%20Honour](http://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](http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/honour-rolls/roll-of-honour)].

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

### Where they served

To locate where an individual served you need to examine records of the unit with which that individual was serving. The personal service records will indicate the units and dates relevant for the individual's service. For further assistance please refer to our guide, *Researching the history of a unit* [[www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/unit-history](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/unit-history)].

### Army

**War diaries** for the British Commonwealth Occupational Force have been amalgamated into Official records series AWM52, *2nd AIF (Australian Imperial Force) and CMF (Commonwealth Military Forces) unit war diaries, 1939–45 War*. The Memorial has digitised headquarters and infantry units' diaries from the Second World War, including those of 65th, 66th, and 67th Battalions, BCOF

[[www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1359733](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1359733)]. Those war diaries that have not been digitised are available in the Research Centre.

AWM85, *Australian Army unit war diaries, Korea*, includes diaries of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, from November 1948, when it was stationed in Japan as part of BCOF. The war diaries of army units in the Korean War have been digitised and are available for viewing on the Memorial's website [[www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/unit-diaries](http://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/unit-diaries)].

## Royal Australian Navy

**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/](http://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. 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](http://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/navy-reports)].

## Royal Australian Air Force

**Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) formation and unit records** (AWM64 [[www.aa.gov.au/cgi-bin/Search?Number=AWM64](http://www.aa.gov.au/cgi-bin/Search?Number=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 issued only when no microfilm copy is available. The National Archives of Australia has a duplicate series A9186, many records of which have been digitised and are available online through the RecordSearch database [[www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/](http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/)].

## Other sources

- **Collections Search** [[www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search](http://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search)] identifies items from the private records collection such as diaries, letters, manuscripts, and papers belonging to individuals who served during this period.
- Larry Lacey, *BCOF: an unofficial history*, L Lacey, Yamba, New South Wales, c. 1995.
- Arthur W. John, *Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown: a history of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, Japan* (2nd edition), Gen Publishers, Cheltenham, Victoria, 1987.

## Medals

Refer to our research guides:

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

## Where to look for photographs

- **Collections Search** [[www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search](http://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search)] gives access to images of photographs held by the Memorial.
- **PhotoSearch** [[photos.naa.gov.au/](http://photos.naa.gov.au/)] is the online photographic catalogue of the National Archives of Australia, and contains digital images of photographs from the collections in all state and territory offices of the archives.
- **Trove** [[trove.nla.gov.au/](http://trove.nla.gov.au/)] includes photographs and other images held by a range of major Australian libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions.