

Personal service records: Australian service

Service records, also known as dossiers, are the authoritative source of information about an individual's military service. Service records contain information about them on enlistment and throughout their military service.

A service record usually consists of:

- an attestation paper showing:
 - name
 - next-of-kin
 - employment / trade details
 - marital status
 - age
 - place of birth
 - physical description
 - prior military service
- a service and casualty form "Form B103" listing:
 - movements and transfers between units
 - promotions
 - when and how a soldier was injured
 - details of medical treatment
- military correspondence

South African War (Boer War), 1899-1902

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 or by the National Archives of Australia (NAA).

The National Archives' research guide, *The Boer War: Australians and the War in South Africa, 1899–1902* [guides.naa.gov.au/boer-war/] by Craig Wilcox provides advice on where to find Boer War records. As a general guide, the colonial period records are held in state government archives, and post-Federation records are held by NAA, although there may be exceptions to this.

Australian Naval Force records, 1903-1911

The Memorial holds Australian Naval Force engagement and service records for the period 1903-1911 (AWM266) [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Australian%20Naval%20Force]. Information includes:

- full name
- date and place of birth
- occupation prior to engagement, some physical characteristics
- names of ships served in, dates of service on these ships and rating
- some notes on discipline and reasons for discharge.

First World War, 1914–18

First World War service records are held by NAA.

The service records relate primarily to members of the First Australian Imperial Force. They include records of members of the:

- Australian Flying Corps
- Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force
- Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train
- Australian Army Nursing Service

The National Archives has digitised Navy service cards for 1911-1970 and Army service records for the First World War. These can be viewed online on RecordSearch [www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/].

For information regarding viewing or obtaining copies of these records please visit the National Archives Service Records page [www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx].

If a soldier saw service in both the First and the Second World Wars, the record has usually been amalgamated in the Second World War service record.

Second World War, 1939–45

Second World War service records are held by NAA. For information regarding viewing or obtaining copies of these records please visit the National Archives Service Records page [www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx].

Post–Second World War conflicts

You can apply for post–Second World War service records through the National Archives [www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx].

Merchant Navy

Merchant Navy Record of Service cards for people who served on Australian merchant vessels are held on microfilm in the NAA Canberra office. The cards are arranged by family name and give some personal information, the name of ships, and dates of service.

Please contact:

National Archives of Australia [www.naa.gov.au/]
PO Box 4924
Kington ACT 2604

Phone: (02) 6212 3600

Website: Ask a question about records in the NAA collection
[www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx]

If you are having difficulty understanding abbreviations used in the service record, consult our Glossary [www.awm.gov.au/learn/glossary] for assistance.