

Researching Australian military service: First World War, 1914-1918

Overview

Australian military history overview: First World War, 1914-1918 [www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war]

Nominal rolls

- **First World War nominal roll:** details of approximately 324,000 AIF personnel, recorded to assist with their repatriation to Australia from overseas service following the First World War. [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=First%20World%20War%20Nominal%20Roll]
- **First World War Unit Embarkation Roll:** details of approximately 330,000 AIF personnel, recorded as they embarked from Australia for overseas service [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=First%20World%20War%20Embarkation%20Roll]
- **Nominal roll of Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force to New Guinea, 1914–1918 war** [Military component], AWM190[4]: nominal roll of the military component of the AN&MEF to New Guinea, 1914–1918 [www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1425491]
- **The AIF Project, Australian Anzacs in the Great War 1914–1918:** Searchable database of men and women who served overseas in the Australian Imperial Force, 1914–1918. Information has been gathered from a variety of sources. [www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html]

Personal service records

Service records contain information about an individual on enlistment and throughout their military service.

First World War service records are held by the National Archives of Australia and have been digitised so may be viewed online. For information regarding viewing or obtaining copies of these records see the Archives information page Australian Service Records from World War I [<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/army-wwi.aspx>].

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

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] 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 [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, including plans and photographs of the cemetery or memorial.

Details of circumstances of deaths or wounding

It can be difficult to locate detailed information about how someone was wounded or killed during their service. Sources that may help include:

- **Australian Red Cross Society, Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau files:** digitised files for approximately 32,000 servicemen reported missing or wounded after July 1916, including additional information such as where and

how the person died, physical description, and initial burial details; not all casualties have a file.

[www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Australian%20Red%20Cross%20Wounded%20and%20Missing%20Files]

- **Official casualty lists** issued by the Australian Military Forces: available in the Reading Room; arranged by military districts within each list, then by categories (e.g. killed in action, wounded, prisoners of war); gives name, rank, unit, and date of death.
- **Enquiry lists** issued by the British Red Cross and Order of St John: available in the Reading Room; arranged by unit and given name, service number, and dated report of wounded, missing, or killed.
- Published unit histories and unit war diaries may provide information on location and general circumstances of the unit on the date of death

Where they served

You can use sources of information about an individual's unit to trace where they were and what they were doing during their military service.

- **Unit war diaries:** maintained by units on operations, these diaries contain detailed information on the activities in which a unit was engaged on a given date [www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1338583]
- See also the information sheet *Researching the history of a unit* [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/unit-history]

Medals and awards

- Honours and Awards database: please note that not all those recommended for an award received one. [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?people_roll_type=both&roll=Honours+and+Awards]
- Research guide Campaign and service medals [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/campaign-medals]
- Research guide Australian military honours and awards [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/honours]

Where to look for photographs

- Collections Search [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search] allows you to search and view 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.
- State libraries and archives often hold photograph collections that can include military personnel
- A number of memorial volumes containing brief biographies and photographs were issued during and after the First World War. Most of these were state based. Only some of those who enlisted are included and details were usually provided by relatives. Some titles are:
 - *The All-Australia memorial: a historical record of national effort during the Great War: Australia's roll of honour: history, heroes and helpers* (Melbourne: British-Australasian Publishing Service, 1917-1919).
 - Owen Wildman, *Queenslanders who fought in the Great War* (Brisbane: Besley & Pike, 1919).
 - *Australia's fighting sons of the Empire: portraits and biographies of Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: B. Jackson & Co, 1919). (NSW & Qld)
 - *Australia's fighting sons of the Empire: portraits and biographies of Australians in the Great War* (Perth: Palmer & Ashworth, 1919.) (WA)

Other resources

- Unit histories: Some published unit histories provide lists of names of their members, usually with service number. Search for published unit histories in the Memorial's Library [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search?query=&library=true] using the name of the unit with the date range 1914-1918, for example "21st Battalion 1914-1918".
- Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force to New Guinea (AN&MEF) [Official History, 1914-18 War: Records of Charles E W Bean, Official Historian:] List, n.d.; covers the officers who served in the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, AWM38 3DRL 6673/144. Available for viewing in the Research Centre.
- **Discovering Anzacs:** search for selected government records about soldiers, sailors and airmen, munitions workers, nurses, depot personnel, internees, and official artists, photographers, war correspondents and historians.
- **First World War official history biographical files:** contain biographical information on individuals, sometimes including post-war information, collected by the official historian. The following official record series are arranged alphabetically by surname:
- **AWM140 Biographical cards** microfiche in the Research Centre
- **AWM43 Biographical and other research files** individual names indexed on RecordSearch [www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/]. Search using the person's name e.g. Deering H H (phrase)