Australian prisoners of war: Second World War, prisoners of the Japanese

Overview
Overview of Australian prisoners of war of the Japanese during the Second World War [www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/pow/ww2_japanese/]

Sources of information

- Personal service record – The service record will typically include details of when an individual became a prisoner of war and may include details of the camps where they were held [www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx].

- Department of Veteran's Affairs World War 2 Nominal Roll [www.ww2roll.gov.au] – Provides a summary of military service details including whether or not the person was a prisoner of war.

- Australian Military Forces Prisoners of War and Missing in the Far East and South West Pacific Islands Official record series AWM232. This series contains lists of those imprisoned arranged by service, unit or country. It has been digitised and is searchable online [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people].

- Roll of Honour [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people] records the names of service men and women who died during or as a result of service with Australian military forces.

- Casualties – 8th Division Details of AIF casualties provided by 2nd Echelon AIF Malaya, for Australian Red Cross Society, Changi, 8 December 1944. Official record AWM54 171/11/2. Arranged alphabetically and by service number (includes force and fate).

- Casualty information compiled by Lieutenant-Colonel J M Williams, Australian Army Medical Corps, of Australia prisoners of war, Burma – Thailand and Japan, including section on 2/2 Pioneer Battalion. Official record AWM127 77

The prisoner-of-war experience

The following resources are available on the Memorial’s website. Search using the name of the unit, camp, force (such as A Force, Ramsay Force) or country (remember that some countries now have a different name – Taiwan was still called Formosa during the war).

- Library database [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search?query=library=true]: Look especially for published unit histories. Some of these contain sections on the experiences of those members of the unit who were taken prisoner-of-war, often with lists of names.

- Collections Search [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search]: To find photographs and private records, search by names of individuals, camps, name of unit or service (e.g., RAAF, RAN, nurses).

- RecordSearch [www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/]: Search for official records in the joint database of the Memorial and the National Archives of Australia using the name of country, camp, unit or service, or prison* and relevant date range. Some examples of types of official records:
  - Series AWM127 contains some nominal rolls, such as those for individual units, groups of nurses, or specific camps

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You are free to download, display, print, distribute and reproduce text content, provided that you attribute the Australian War Memorial and do not use the work for commercial purposes.
- War crimes and trials. Affidavits and sworn statements, various items in AWM54 1010/". To locate items in this series, search RecordSearch using individual names (surname and prison* or prisoner of war) as keywords with AWM54 1010/" in the Series number field
- War crimes and trials. Control copy of evidence. Synopsis of evidence. Index of names. AWM54 1010/1/8. Alphabetical list of names of those giving evidence (not listed individually on RecordSearch). Includes name, rank, number, unit, list of prisoner-of-war camps in which they were held, dates and synopsis of evidence

**Ephemera and souvenirs** include some material relevant to Second World War prisoners of war, such as concerts and theatre programs. Some guides to the ephemera collection are available online [www.awm.gov.au/findingaids/], while others are only available in paper format in the Reading Room. Please contact the Research Centre if you would like assistance [www.awm.gov.au/contact/].

**Official history of the Second World War:**

**Location of camps**
- Frances Worthington Lipe. *Japanese prisoner-of-war camps during World War II, 1941-1945: known locations of camps where American, British, Dutch, Australian, Canadian, Indian and other allied military and civilian personnel were imprisoned by the Japanese* (Brownsville, Tex.: Medical Research Committee of American Ex-prisoners of War, 1983?) *AWM Map Collection G7720.S7*
- General diagram of railway between Thailand and Burma and brief list showing prisoner-of-war camps (about Oct 1943). *Official record AWM54 469/4/1*
- Sketch map of part of Burma, Thailand showing location of F and H Force Camps and Halts - Apr-Dec 1943. *Official record AWM54 469/5/13*

**Further information**

- Borneo (Sandakan) [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/pow-ww2-borneo]
- Senior Officers' Party, Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/pow-ww2-senior]
- Singapore (Changi and Singapore Island) [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/pow-ww2-singapore]

**External sources**


- The Thailand-Burma Railway Centre [www.tbrconline.com/] is an interactive museum, information and research facility dedicated to presenting the history of the Thailand-Burma Railway. The TBRC has researched the experiences of approximately 105,000 prisoners of the Japanese in South East Asia during the Second World War. They can be contacted regarding this research at admin@tbrconline.com.