

Researching Australian military service: South African War (Boer War), 1899-1902

Overview

Australian military history overview: Australia and the Boer War, 1899-1902
[\[www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/boer\]](http://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/boer)

Nominal Rolls

The Memorial's *Pre First World War Conflicts Nominal Rolls* database [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Pre%20First%20World%20War%20Conflicts%20Nominal%20Rolls] has been compiled using P.L. Murray's *Official records of the Australian contingents to the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1911) [www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1416414] as a major source.

Other lists of those who served in the Boer War

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oz–Boer database [members.pcug.org.au/~croe/ozb/ozb_1st.htm] • Australians serving in the Boer War [www.perthdps.com/military/index.html] • Boer War Memorial website [www.bwm.org.au/] • The <i>General Orders</i> for the colonial (and, after 1901, Commonwealth) Military Forces include troopship information, both for ships going to and returning from South Africa. They usually list units and their officers and, occasionally, have a full embarkation roll of soldiers. The <i>General Orders</i> are in date order, so to find a particular voyage it is necessary to have a rough idea of its dates. P.L. Murray, <i>Official records of the Australian military contingents to the war in South Africa</i> (1911) and Craig Wilcox <i>Australia's Boer War: the war in South Africa, 1899-1902</i> (2002) may provide some assistance. <i>General Orders</i> are in official records series AWM1 3/19, AWM1 3/20 and AWM1 3/41.
Officers and those who remained in the army after the war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Record of war service" in <i>The military forces list of the Commonwealth of Australia</i>. Later titled <i>Officer's list of the Australian Military Forces</i>. The Research Centre holds lists from 1912.
Nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rupert Goodman, <i>Our war nurses</i>, (Bowen Hills, Qld: Boolarong Publications, 1988). • Sheila Gray, <i>The South African war 1899–1902: service records of British and colonial women</i>, (Auckland, NZ: S. Gray, 1993).
Known unit or contingent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some unit Nominal Rolls in official records series AWM1 or AWM3. Search RecordSearch [www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/], by name of unit or contingent and relevant dates to find nominal rolls held by the National Archives of Australia. • Some nominal rolls exist in private papers and these can be found by using the Collections Search [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/]. • Search library catalogues for books on specific units, such as George Newbury, <i>The Australian Commonwealth Horse</i>. (Adelaide, SA: George Newbury, 1990).

Personal service records

As the Boer War spanned the pre- and post-Federation period, personal service records may be held by State government archives or by the National Archives of Australia

[www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx]. As a general guide, the colonial period records are held in State government archives, and post-Federation records are held by the National Archives, although there may be exceptions to this.

Many men enlisted in Britain or South Africa. If your individual was serving in the Boer War with the forces of another country please see our information sheet Personal service records: countries other than Australia [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/service-records-overseas].

Those who died while serving

- Roll of Honour [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Roll%20of%20Honour] records the names of service men and women who died during or as a result of service with Australian military forces.
- 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
- *Graves and memorials of Australians in the Boer War* website has a searchable database of information from Australian Boer War memorials [http://familyhistoryact.org.au/boer_war/index.php].
- Alexander M. Palmer's *The Boer War casualty roll 1899–1902* (Perth, WA: A. M. Palmer, 1999) includes an alphabetical listing of those who were wounded or taken prisoner as well as those who died.

Where they served

- P L Murray, *Official Records of the Australian contingents to the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne, Vic: Government Printer, 1911) includes an overview of the service of each Australian contingent.
- Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: the war in South Africa 1899–1902* (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- For advice on official files relating to this conflict, see the National Archives of Australian Fact Sheet 67 Boer War records [www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs67.aspx].

Medals and awards

- Honours and awards that have been gazetted are available on the Honours and Awards database [[www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Honours and Awards](http://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Honours%20and%20Awards)].
- *Medal Rolls and Correspondence, Sudan and South Africa* (ORMF 0055) documenting the issue of Queen's and King's Medals to soldiers in Australian contingents with an index to the unit.
- Michael R. Downey, "Medal roll for Doyle's Australian Scouts, South Africa, 1902" *Despatch* 16, 7 (1981): pp. 161–75.
- *South African war honours and awards: officers and men of the army and navy mentioned in despatches* (London: Greenhill, 1987) Lists those who received awards for gallantry (not only Australians) and includes citations.
- Neil and Sylvie Smith, *Brought to notice: British held records of Australian rewards for the Boer War, 1899–1902* (Gardenvale, Vic: Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications, 2000)

Other sources

- Use Collections Search [www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search] to identify private papers, diaries, letters, and photographs held in the Memorial's collections
- The Australian Light Horse Association website [www.lighthorse.org.au] includes information on regiments, battles, and personal stories from the Boer War
- Australian Light Horse Studies Centre website [<http://alh-research.tripod.com/boer-war.htm>] contains a range of resources on Australian participation in the Boer War