

Researching Australian military service: Second World War, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)

Nominal rolls

The **World War 2 Nominal Roll** [nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/ww2] was created by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and provides the following details:

- Service number
- Full name
- Place and date of enlistment
- Place and date of birth
- Date of death or discharge
- Unit/ship/squadron at discharge
- Substantive rank on discharge
- Prisoner of war status (yes or no)
- Next of kin name
- Honours and gallantry awards

The Research Centre also holds a number of nominal rolls in the Official Records collection. You are welcome to visit the Research Centre to view these records.

	Title of list	Official record number
Fighter Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominal Roll of Australian pilots • Nominal Roll Australians in fighter command 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM54 81/4/64 • AWM173 7/4
Those serving with the RAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists of RAAF members who served with RAF squadrons, arranged by squadron. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM173 7/5
India & Burma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RAAF with RAF squadrons in India & Burma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM173 4/14
Prisoners of war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of RAAF prisoners of war who returned safely, 21 Mar–23 May 1945 (European theatre) • RAAF personnel list of prisoners of war • RAAF personnel list of prisoners of war with graves (including memorials) in Europe, Far East, and New Guinea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM54 81/4/134 • AWM135/8 • AWM135/9
RAAF Nursing Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominal Roll of RAAF Nursing Service 1940–52 (gives number, full name, dates of enlistment and discharge, position or rank, and demobilization action) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM137/1

Personal service records

- **Australian forces:** Service records of members of Australian forces are held by the National Archives of Australia (NAA). You can apply to the National Archives for copies of personal service records [www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/raaf.aspx].

- **Other countries:** If your individual served with the air force of another country, see the information sheet Personal service records: countries other than Australia [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/service-records-overseas].

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] 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].

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, includes plans and photographs of the cemetery or memorial.

Other sources

- **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) casualty files** (NAA series A705 [www.aa.gov.au/cgi-bin/Search?Number=A705]) were created for every member of the RAAF who was killed or severely wounded. As well as details of the incident, the files may contain reports from war graves investigators, eye-witnesses, survivors, the Red Cross and Squadron personnel. For further information see the National Archives Fact Sheet 32 'RAAF service records' [www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs32.aspx].
- **RAAF aircraft crash reports** (NAA series 9845 [www.aa.gov.au/cgi-bin/Search?Number=A9845]). Reports were produced whenever an aircraft was involved in an accident. Details were given on the type of aircraft including registration number, crew numbers, their names and rank, injuries and fatalities. In some serious accident cases courts of inquiry were convened, files were raised for these cases. The majority of the records (which may not be a complete set) are World War II era.
- Alan Storr, *RAAF World War 2 fatalities* (Canberra: Kwik Kopy Canberra, 2009-2010). Series of 38 volumes containing summaries of RAAF fatalities in date of death order. Included are the mission details, the names, ranks and musterings of crew members, and the known circumstances of the failure of aircraft to return.
- W.R. Chorley, *Royal Air Force Bomber Command losses of the Second World War* (Earl Shilton, Leicester: the author & Midland County Publishers, 1992–2002). Chronological list with brief details of the circumstances of the loss.

Where they served

Official records

- **RAAF Formation and Unit records** (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 only issued 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/]. Search using the name of the unit as your keywords (e.g. 453 Squadron) and A9186 as the reference number.
- Many of those who enlisted in the RAAF served in Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons. The Memorial does not hold official records of RAF squadrons, only some published information. The National Archives in the United Kingdom hold operational records for the RAF [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/raf-op.htm].

Other sources

- **Official histories** are a detailed chronological record of all services and all theatres of conflict. The official histories for the Second World War, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945* [www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1417143], have been digitised and are available for viewing on the Memorial's website.
- For further guidance please refer to the research guide, Researching the history of a unit [www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/unit-history].

Medals and awards

Please refer to our research guides:

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

Where to look for photographs

- Collections Search [www.awm.gov.au/search/collections/] provides access to digitised images of photographs, films, art, and private records held by the Memorial.
- PhotoSearch [recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/PhotoSearchSearch.asp] 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. The collection includes a series of photographs of RAAF funerals held in Europe during the Second World War. Enter the serviceman's surname and the word 'funeral' as a keyword search, for example: Cheatile funeral.
- Trove [trove.nla.gov.au] includes photographs and other images held by a range of major Australian libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions.