



THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

RESEARCHING SOLDIERS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Guide last updated September 2021

Image: Vaire-sur-Somme, France. 5 May 1918. Australian soldiers resting at the ferry landing on the bank of the River Somme. Note "Circular Quay" painted on the wall, a reference to the famous large ferry terminal in Sydney. Australian War Memorial, E04795

Researching Soldiers in Your Local Community

A Royal Australian Historical Society Research Guide

Australia is a country of war memorials. There are around 1,500 dedicated to the First World War alone: roughly 1 memorial for every 40 men who died. ^[1] Some of them are great monuments: the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, the Martin Place Cenotaph in Sydney. But the majority are much smaller. They are in local parks, beside schools, on street corners. There is probably one in your town.

As sources of local history, war memorials are invaluable. They give insight into what your community was once like: who lived there, and what they fought for. Each name has a story attached, and the increasing availability of online resources means that researching them is more achievable than ever. But where to begin?

This guide has been prepared by the Royal Australian Historical Society as part of our NSW History project, *Researching Soldiers in Your Local Community*. It aims to assist students, local historians and history groups, as well as any other interested party, in researching local soldier stories from recruitment to commemoration. This guide is not a history of the World Wars, nor does it offer specific family history research advice. Rather, the focus is on the villages, suburbs, towns, and cities across NSW that were touched by war: our local communities, our soldiers' hometowns. It outlines the major online resources available for Anzac history research and suggests key questions to ask about your local serviceman or woman.

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Beginning Your Research

Choosing Your Soldier

The first step in researching your local serviceman or woman is to choose them. You can do so by visiting your local war memorial either in person or online, through the **War Memorials Register**: <https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/> or the **Anzac Memorial**'s interactive Hall of Service: <https://www.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/hall-of-service/>. Note these online resources may be incomplete or inaccurate, so it is better to visit the physical site if you can.

Tip!

It is always easier to choose a soldier with a less common name, as there will be fewer records to sort through and you can be more certain you have found the right records for the right person. For example, there are more than 300 'John Smiths' who served in the First AIF!

Your local memorial should list each soldier's name, what war they fought in, and sometimes their rank and fate—that is, whether they died in the war or lived to return home. Some memorials also include the names of nurses and other servicewomen. Choose a few people to begin with, as some will have less available information than others and could make it difficult for you to research them. This is especially the case for researching World War II servicemen and women, as their records are still in the process of being digitised.

What is a service number?

In WWI, the service number was a regimental number given by regiments, battalions, and other units to their personnel from 1 upwards, not including officers or nurses. They were therefore not unique, although are still useful in narrowing search results and cross-checking records. ^[2]

Service numbers in WWII were known as army numbers and, unlike those for the First AIF, were given to all personnel and were unique to each serviceman and woman. They were prefixed by district, gender, and other parameters. For example, a nurse from NSW may have had the army number NFX1000: N for NSW, F for female, X for enlistment in the Second AIF. ^[3]

Locating Service Numbers

The next step is to find out your soldier's service number if it is not recorded on the memorial.

First, try searching your soldier's name on the **National Archives of Australia** catalogue. If it is relatively uncommon, you should have very few results to sift through. The service number will be listed beside their name in the search results: SERN ###.

If your soldier has a *common* name, however, and you wish to avoid sorting through a large number of records, you

may need to search via name *and* address: try the suburb your local memorial is in. Unfortunately, some soldier records do not include address in their searchable terms. Others might be misspelled and therefore will not show up in your search results.

If this is the case for a World War I soldier, try searching your suburb in the Anzac Memorial's interactive Hall of Service. Check the list of enlistees from that suburb. If you find your soldier, click the link to be taken to their **AIF Project** page, a UNSW Canberra initiative to collect the service information of the First AIF into a single, searchable database. Your soldier's service/regimental number should be listed at the top of their record.

For World War II service numbers, search the **Department of Veterans' Affairs** nominal roll: <https://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/ww2>. Use the main 'Search' or 'Place Search' functions to locate your soldier, filtering your search as necessary.

Where to Next?

Armed with your soldier's name and service number, you can now readily search all available online resources for information regarding their war service. The rest of this guide outlines these resources, with links to guided YouTube videos throughout.

Tip!

Visit the glossary on page 25 of this guide for help deciphering abbreviations on your soldier's service records.

Not sure what to research? Why not start with our suggested themes:

- *Recruitment*
- *The Road to War*
- *Life on the Front*
- *Indigenous Service*
- *Prisoners of War*
- *On the Home Front*
- *Soldiers Return*
- *Memories and Memorials*

Watch our introductory video for a brief outline of the online resources available:

<https://youtu.be/-SjaHitNs4g>



National Archives of Australia

<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/defence-and-war-service-records>

The National Archives of Australia is the primary record-keeping body of the Australian Government. It collects, preserves, manages, and makes public federal government records to ensure transparency and connect today's Australians to our democratic past.

The National Archives' defence and war service record collection holds records of international conflicts from the Boer War (1899–1902) to Vietnam (1962–75), including World Wars I (1914–18) and II (1939–45), the Korean War (1950–53), the Malayan Emergency (1948–60), and the Indonesian Confrontation (1962–66). Records for conflicts since the Vietnam War—those created less than 30 years ago—are not held by the National Archives and are unavailable to the public.

World War I

Series B2455: First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914–1920

The primary records relating to World War I held by the National Archives. They typically include an attestation form completed on enlistment, a service and casualty form detailing unit movements and any illness/injury, and in some cases military correspondence. These records are completely digitised and freely available online, via **RecordSearch**, the National Archives' collection database. Soldiers are best searched via their surname and service number using the **NameSearch** function: <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/>.

The National Archives and Archives New Zealand have also partnered to create the **Discovering Anzacs** website, dedicated to Australian and New Zealander Boer War and World War I service records. You may be able to find your local soldier's record on this database as well: <https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/>.

Other World War I records held by the National Archives include:

- **Series A14290: Photographs of Australian WWI Servicemen:** A completely digitised series of approximately 500 Australian soldier portraits, available via RecordSearch and Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/national-archives-of-australia/collections/72157628184430675/>.
- **Series A471: Courts-Martial files:** 90,000 Department of Defence courts-martial records, not fully digitised.
- **Series MT1486/1: Applications to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force:** 95,000 records of individuals who were rejected on enlistment, discharged after enlistment, or who served in Australia during World War I, not fully digitised.

World War II

Series B883: Second Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1939–1947

The primary World War II records held by the National Archives, available via RecordSearch and best searched using name and service number via NameSearch. Like World War I records, Second AIF personnel records include an attestation form and a service and casualty form, sometimes accompanied by discharge documentation, letters of reference, and other correspondence. Approximately 40 percent of World War II service records include an identity photograph.

These records are in the process of being digitised, meaning that some will be available online but not others. Look for the digitised item icon (pictured right) beside the record listing to check.



Other World War II records held by the National Archives include:

- **Series B884: Citizen Military Forces Personnel Dossiers, 1939–1947:** More than 300,000 records for the Citizen Military Forces/Militia, a separate home defence force distinguished from the Second AIF, not fully digitised.

The National Archives also holds service records for the Royal Australian Navy (est. 1911) and the Royal Australian Air Force (est. 1921). Members of the Australian Flying Corps who served in World War I are included in the records of the First AIF. Some of the available series on RecordSearch are:

- **Series A6769: Service Cards for Navy Officers, 1911–1970:** 12,000 cards recording navy officers' details and service history, completely digitised.

- **Series A6770: Service Cards for Petty Officers and Men, 1911–1970:** 100,000 cards recording personal details and service history of navy petty officers and other enlistees, completely digitised.
- **Series A9300: RAAF Officers Personnel files, 1921–1948:** 30,000 officer personnel files including personal details, postings, and awards, not fully digitised.
- **Series A9301: RAAF Personnel files of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and other ranks, 1921–1948:** 200,000 personnel files for NCOs and ranks other than officers including enlistment papers, service records, and discharge papers, not fully digitised.

As well as war service records, the National Archives holds defence resources about the Australian home front during World Wars I and II, including the Women's Land Army, the Japanese air raids on Darwin in 1942–43, and wartime internment camps, some of which are available online through RecordSearch.

Ready to start researching? Watch a guided tour of the National Archives of Australia's resources on our YouTube channel below:

<https://youtu.be/VKMqL8-rIY>



Australian War Memorial

<https://www.awm.gov.au/>

The Australian War Memorial collects material related to Australia's military units during times of peace and war. While personnel service records are held by the National Archives of Australia, the War Memorial holds several nominal rolls useful for researching individual servicemen and women, as well as various other items of war memorabilia including diaries and letters, photographs and film footage, official unit histories, and personal mementos.

Nominal Rolls

The 'People' search function on the War Memorial website allows a cross-search of the various nominal rolls available: <https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people>. It is best searched using a soldier's surname and service number.

The nominal rolls searchable on the War Memorial website include:

- **Roll of Honour**, for members of the armed forces who died during or as a result of war service. Details include name, unit, and date of death, often alongside cause of death and place of memorial. Some records include a circular form filled out by next of kin in World War I and the Directorate of War Graves Services in World War II that offers extra information about the deceased.
- **First World War Embarkation Rolls**, a series comprising the printed lists of First AIF embarkations from Australia during World War I. Information includes name, number, rank and age at enlistment, trade, marital status, address, next of kin, religion, date of enlistment, and date, place, and ship of embarkation.
- **First World War Nominal Roll**, created in London in 1919 recording the members of the First AIF who served overseas. Information includes name, number, rank and unit at end of war, date of enlistment, and fate: RTA (return to Australia), KIA (killed in action), DOW (died of wounds), DOD (died of

disease). Unfortunately, this nominal roll contains numerous omissions and inaccuracies, including misspelled names.

- **Honours and Awards**, a list compiled from the London and Commonwealth Gazettes providing details for Australians granted honours and awards from the Boer War to Vietnam. Includes a list of recommendations.
- **Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files**, containing files created by the Australian Red Cross during World War I for Australians reported as wounded or missing. Includes official correspondence and witness reports.
- **Second World War POWs and Missing Persons**, a series documenting Australian Military Forces prisoners of war and missing personnel in the Far East and South West Pacific Islands during World War II. Not a complete record for all Australian POWs and missing persons in the Pacific theatre of the war.
- **Indigenous Service**, a compiled list of information about people of Indigenous descent who served in wars from South Africa to Vietnam. Terminology included is reflective of the time period in which the records were created and may cause distress.

Once you have your soldier's records, you may want to find out more about their war experience. Many units from World Wars I and II have dedicated pages on the War Memorial website, allowing you to trace their movements on the front lines and place your soldier within the wider context of their war. Search for them via the 'units' filter on the Memorial collection catalogue: <https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search?units=true>. The Memorial also holds an extensive collection of wartime photographs and film footage which can help you understand what the war was really like for your local soldier.

Tip!

Your research doesn't have to stop at official records. Why not take a closer look through the War Memorial's catalogue? Was your local soldier a trumpeter in his battalion? You can see the exact instrument he would have carried to war on the War Memorial website. What about searching your soldier's name or unit in the Memorial's photograph collection? You never know what you might find!

Ready to start researching? Watch a guided tour of the Australian War Memorial's resources on our YouTube channel below:

<https://youtu.be/o-XXIJklQA>



Trove

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Trove is a collaborative resource database between the National Library of Australia and hundreds of partners around the country including museums, libraries, universities, media and government organisations, and more. It holds more than 6 billion records on all facets of Australian history, sorted into nine categories:

- *Newspapers and Gazettes*
- *Magazines and Newsletters*
- *Images, Maps and Artefacts*
- *Research and Reports*
- *Books and Libraries*
- *Diaries, Letters and Archives*
- *Music, Audio and Video*
- *People and Organisations*
- *Websites*

You can search across all nine categories or narrow it down to your specifications. The possibilities are almost endless for researching your local soldier on Trove.

Newspapers and Gazettes

Trove's collection of digitised newspapers and gazettes is its most widely used and significant resource. More than 1,000 Australian newspapers and gazettes published before 1955 have been completely digitised on Trove and are easily searchable using date, location, and key terms. The more filters you can set on your search, the better—although sometimes searching too narrowly can miss key records.

There are many ways to use newspapers when researching your local soldier. Was he killed or wounded in action? You might be able to find him in casualty lists or family notices. Did he come from a small town? You are more likely to find personalised accounts of soldier departures, deaths, and returns from the war if they were from a small community with a local newspaper. Did your soldier's family publish his correspondence in their local paper? You may be able to read his very words more than one hundred years after he wrote them. Was he recommended for honours on the battlefield? Details of his exploits may have received local coverage.

Newspapers can also give you a better understanding about your soldier's context. Did local newspapers publish any form of propaganda to encourage enlistment, like posters or stories of enemy atrocities? Were front line reports reprinted for the community, detailing the exploits of their Anzac family, friends, and neighbours? What of stories written about the home front itself: women's groups, community fundraising, the air raids of World War II?

You might also be able to find out about your local war memorial. Newspapers may have published information regarding fundraising drives, design ideas, and unveiling ceremonies.

Ready to start researching? Watch a guided tour of Trove's resources on our YouTube channel below:

<https://youtu.be/Mbf5azQPeLs>

Tip!

You will want a soldier with a less common name when searching Trove. Often newspapers published stories using only surnames with first initials or referred to the soldier by his rank or nickname. Sometimes service numbers were included in local news coverage, sometimes not. Less common names not only allow more certainty that you are reading about the right soldier, but mean that you could have 30 records to look through instead of 300—or more!



AIF Project (UNSW Canberra)

<https://aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>

The AIF Project is an initiative by UNSW Canberra to collect the service information of members of the First AIF into a single, searchable database. Data from the Australian War Memorial nominal rolls, personnel dossiers held by the National Archives of Australia, and other sources are collated for each soldier, offering a comprehensive overview of their war service record.

The AIF Project allows World War I Australian soldiers to be searched via name, regimental number, address, place of birth, and fate in the war. Unit lists are also available for browsing, however, many of these may be incomplete. Some soldier records may also include mistakes or omissions.

A number of special lists are highlighted on the AIF Project home page, including:

- **Victoria Cross recipients:** <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/examples.html#vc>.
- **Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, France**, a growing list of Australian casualties so far identified from the 1916 Battle of Fromelles: <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/Fromelles.html>.
- **Enlistment details**, including statistics of enlistment by state, marital status, and even name: <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/stats.html>.

Although an excellent starting point to gain a general understanding of your local soldier's service in the First World War, original records should always be consulted to verify information where possible.



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Department of Veterans' Affairs

<https://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/home>

The federal government's Department of Veterans' Affairs holds the nominal rolls for troops serving in the Second World War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the First Gulf War. First World War nominal rolls are held by the Australian War Memorial, as outlined above. These nominal rolls variously include name, service type and number, rank and unit, date and place of birth, enlistment details, next of kin, fate, and any honours received during service.

Tip!

Check out the Department of Veterans' Affairs Anzac Portal for veterans' stories and other online Anzac resources:
<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/>

The 'refine search' function is particularly useful for World War II, as it allows you to specify not only name and service number, but whether your serviceman or woman was a prisoner of war. There were more than 30,000 Australian POWs in the Second World War, compared to 4,000 in World War I. The majority of World War II POWs were captured by the Japanese. ^[4]



Commonwealth War Graves Commission

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/>

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was founded as the Imperial War Graves Commission in 1917 between the six member states of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, to locate, record, and maintain the graves and memorials of Commonwealth forces who died overseas during World Wars I and II.

If your local soldier died during service overseas, you may be able to find where they are commemorated via the Commission's 'find war dead' function, best searched using your soldier's surname and service number. Each record should show at least name, service number, rank, unit, date of death, and site of commemoration, as well as grave registration documentation from the Commission's archives. Some records contain additional information about next of kin and grave inscriptions.

Selecting the site of commemoration will take you to a page with further information about your soldier's memorial, where you can view all identified casualties buried or listed there.



National Film and Sound Archive

<https://www.nfsa.gov.au/>

The National Film and Sound Archive is Australia's 'living' archive, preserving over 3 million visual and audio records for future generations of Australians. Their records on World Wars I and II are vast, ranging from actual battlefield footage to homecoming parades, propaganda film reels, and much more.

The NFSA has several curated collections on their website relevant to understanding not only your local soldier's war experience, but that of your community as well. These include:

- **Anzac Day**, a collection of footage dedicated to Anzac Day commemorations: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/anzac-day-history-marches-and-traditions>.
- **Gallipoli campaign**, a collection of film, photography, and audio from the Dardanelles: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/gallipoli-campaign>.
- **First World War cartoons**, created by Harry Julius and used as propaganda during World War I: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/harry-julius>.
- **Life on the home front**, a collection capturing what life was like in Australia during World War I: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/life-home-front>.
- **Newsreels – Australian Gazette**, film footage from the 1910s to the 1930s, including World War I material among other film clips showcasing Australian society, life, and culture: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/newsreels-australasian-gazette>.
- **Newsreels – Cinesound Movietone**, containing newsreels from 1929 to 1975, including footage of the Kokoda campaign and home front celebrations at the end of World War II: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/newsreels-cinesound-movetone>.

The NFSA YouTube channel also has a range of documentaries on Australians at war for a better understanding of your local soldier's potential war experiences. They include:



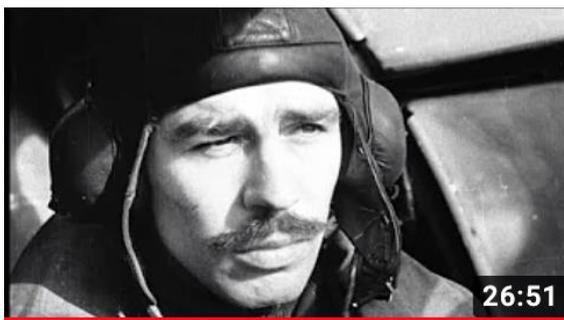
Australia at War 1914 – 1918

<https://youtu.be/FNrHK0Mhs-l>



Australian Army at War 1939 – 1945

https://youtu.be/_moP0lr2s1w



The Australian Airman 1939 – 1945

<https://youtu.be/xSIHLFAQIGg>



The Australian Seaman at War

<https://youtu.be/3A6szu1ca0Y>



State Library of NSW

<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/>

The State Library of NSW is the oldest library in Australia, established in 1826. It collects and preserves materials relating to Australia's place in the world.

The State Library's World War I collection contains a vast array of research materials about both the home and battle fronts of the war: <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/wwi>. Of particular interest in researching your local soldier is their collection of World War I diaries from over 400 members of the First AIF. These diaries are housed in the Mitchell Library collection and are fully digitised and transcribed online. Perhaps there is a diary written by a fellow member of your soldier's unit that could offer personal insight into the circumstances of their war. Perhaps your soldier even wrote one himself.

Tip!

Transcriptions are great when trying to read handwritten material, but keep in mind the possibility they may be incorrect. Why not have a go at transcribing the war diaries yourself? The RAHS YouTube channel has a video that may help you decipher certain words, abbreviations, and writing conventions: <https://youtu.be/NUHmqeTrlkk>.

Alongside their diary collection, the State Library holds other material on the World Wars such as:

- Recruitment posters
- Campaign maps
- Portraits of servicemen
- Frontline photographs
- Wartime cartoons
- Government publications

Many of these resources have been digitised and are available online via the State Library's catalogue.



NSW State Archives and Records

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/>

The NSW State Archives and Records is a government record-keeping body that collects official materials dating back to 1788, including records on births and deaths, marriage and divorce, convicts, probates and wills, census data, and much more.

Much of the State Archives' World War material is not digitised, but they hold various databases of interest that you may wish to pursue further. These include:

- **Soldier Settlement Indexes**, including loan, transfer, and purchase files: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/soldier-settlement/indexes> and **Soldier Settlement Guide** to aid in research in this area: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/soldiersettlement>.
- **Probate Packets (Wills)**, an index of probate packets from the years 1817–1976 and 1989 that may include the last will and testaments of deceased military personnel: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/probate-packets-wills-guide>.
- **Railway Employees Guide**, for research into NSW railway employees who served in World War I, including indexes on the Australian Railway Supply Detachment, the Railway and Tramways Roll of Honour, the Nominal Roll of the First Railway Section (AIF), and NSW Government employees granted military leave: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/railway-employees-guide>.
- **Colonial (Government) Architect Index**, featuring photographs of NSW war memorials 1920–1926: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/colonial-government-architect-index>.



National Library of Australia

<https://www.nla.gov.au/>

The National Library of Australia is Australia's largest reference library, preserving documentary materials towards the conservation and continuation of Australian heritage and culture.

As well as their Trove database, explored in depth earlier in this guide, the National Library holds a vast range of other World War I and II materials, including:

- Soldier newspapers
- Recruitment posters
- Official war photography
- Personal testimony

To begin your journey, visit the National Library's First World War Research Guide: <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/first-world-war> for exact information on how to search their catalogue using effective subject headings.

Other Resources

War Memorial Registers

War memorial registers are excellent resources for either locating local soldiers without needing to visit the physical memorial site, or finding out more about your local war memorial itself. Many of these registers are still in development and are constantly being updated with new memorial sites by community contributors.

NSW War Memorials Register

<https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/>

The NSW Government war memorials database, currently holds more than 3,000 war memorial records and over 200,000 veteran records. Some war memorial records are more detailed than others, providing descriptions of the physical memorial, additional information about its veterans, and even links to newspaper articles about the memorial on Trove. Information is shared between Places of Pride, the Australian War Memorial's National Register of War Memorials.

Places of Pride: National Register of War Memorials

<https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/>

A national war memorial register initiative by the Australian War Memorial to record and photograph every publicly accessible war memorial in the country. Includes community contributions such as photographs and local soldier histories, and a regularly updated news page collating stories from media outlets nationwide about Australia and war. Information about NSW memorials is shared between the NSW War Memorials Register.

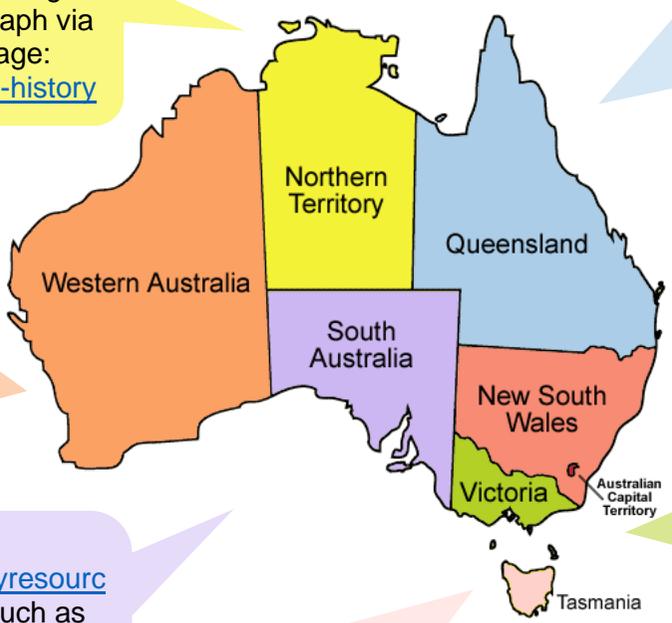
Anzac Memorial Hyde Park: Hall of Service

<https://www.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/hall-of-service/>

A unique, interactive register for NSW war memorials and veterans developed as part of the Anzac Memorial's Centenary Extension. The Hall of Service is a memorial artwork created by artist Fiona Hall using 1,701 soil samples from NSW communities and 100 from significant military sites around the world. Searchable via location or enlistee, the interactive database links to soldier records on the UNSW Canberra AIF Project and includes information about each community's soil collection.

State and Territory Libraries ^[5]

As well as the State Library of NSW, other state and territory libraries hold materials that could be useful if your local soldier is from another part of Australia, or had family who lived elsewhere and who may have donated war records to their local state library.



The map shows the following callouts:

- Yellow callout (Northern Territory):** Local stories such as the Bombing of Darwin and the Darwin Cenotaph via their Explore NT History page: <https://ntl.nt.gov.au/explore-nt-history>
- Blue callout (Queensland):** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service guide: <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/research-collections/queensland/century-service/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-service>, and Q ANZAC 100, dedicated to the WWI centenary: <http://qanzac100.slq.qld.gov.au/home>
- Orange callout (Western Australia):** WWI Centenary Project, an initiative to digitise the library's World War I resources, including photos, written materials, and interviews, via the catalogue: https://encore.slwa.wa.gov.au/iii/encore/search/C_SWWI%20Centenary%20Project
- Green callout (Victoria):** World War 1 research guide: https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/wwone_soldiers, and resources such as digitised unit histories, military postcards, and the Living the War online photo gallery: <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/search-discover/galleries/living-war>
- Purple callout (South Australia):** Military Resources guide: <https://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Militaryresources>, highlighting online resources such as interviews, diaries and letters, and records from the SA Red Cross Information Bureau: <https://sarcib.ww1.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/>
- Pink callout (Tasmania):** Digitised resources such as war diaries, photo albums, and oral histories: <https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Military.aspx>

Local Histories

While libraries and national record-keeping bodies hold a vast array of World War material, your local historical society or museum might also have resources that can help you understand your local soldier and your shared community. These could include online databases, archival material, and community histories of war.

Below is a brief selection of some of the material available, but who knows what each society or museum has in store?

Australian Military Memorials and Records (AMMAR)

A World War I database compiled by military history researcher Sandra Young with a focus on the community stories of the Queanbeyan region in the war. Includes gallery, archival digitised books and articles, and a searchable soldier index. <https://australianmilitarymemorialsandrecords.com/>



Berrima District Historical and Family History Society

'Poppy Seed from France', an ongoing project identifying the families with fallen soldiers in World War I who were sent poppy seeds from the schoolchildren of Villers-Bretonneux. <https://www.berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au/poppy-seed-from-france/>

Beyond 1914: University of Sydney and the Great War

An extensive, searchable database of biographies and archival information about members of the University community involved in the First World War. <https://heuristplus.sydney.edu.au/heurist/?db=ExpertNation&ll=Beyond1914>



Gilgandra & District World War I Diggers

A website dedicated to the stories of the men and women from the Gilgandra district of NSW who served in the First World War. Includes information about local recruitment marches: the 1915 Coo-ees and 1916 Tooraweenah Kookaburras. <https://www.gilgandradiggers.org.au/>.

World War I and the Hastings

A research project conducted by the Port Macquarie-Hastings Library into the lives of the men and women whose names are on the Port Macquarie War Memorial for World War I.

<https://mnclibrary.org.au/research/local-studies-and-family-history/convicts-pioneers-and-settlers/ww1-and-the-hastings/>



Stanthorpe Remembers

A project dedicated to the 39 soldiers remembered on the Stanthorpe World War I memorials, uncovering their stories and retracing their steps from the Granite Belt in Queensland to the trenches of the Western Front.

<https://stanthorperemembers.com/>

Some historical societies publish dedicated histories of their communities in the World Wars. Browse a [selected list](#) of these publications on our 'Local Stories' webpage.

Suggested Reading

Curious to know more about the wars your local soldier fought in? We have compiled a short list of suggested reading in areas that may be of interest. Keep in mind that Australian military history is a vast and growing field—books not listed below might be just as relevant, maybe even more so, to understanding your local soldier.

The official histories of World Wars I and II have been completely digitised by the Australian War Memorial and are available via the links below. Commemorative publications are also freely available via the Department of Veterans' Affairs Anzac Portal: <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/resources?keyword=&type=163&conflict=All>.

General/Anzac

Tom Frame, ed., *Anzac Day Then & Now* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2016).

Carolyn Holbrook, *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2014).

Ken Inglis assisted by Jan Brazier, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2005).

Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004).

Craig Stockings and John Connor, eds., *Before the Anzac Dawn: A Military History of Australia before 1915* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2013).

World War I

Kate Ariotti and James E. Bennett, eds., *Australians and the First World War: Local-Global Connections and Contexts* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Charles Bean, ed. [The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918](#), volumes 1-12 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1921-1943).

Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013).

Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974).

Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1980).

Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer, *The Last Battle: Soldier Settlement in Australia 1916-1939* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

World War II

Joan Beaumont, ed., *Australia's War: 1939-45* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996).

Mark Johnston, *At the Front Line: Experiences of Australian Soldiers in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Gavin Long, ed., [*The Official History of Australia in the War of 1939-1945*](#), volumes 1-22 (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1952-1977).

Michael McKernan, *All In! Australia During the Second World War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1983).

Peter Monteath, *Captured Lives: Australia's Wartime Internment Camps* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2018).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service

Allison Cadzow and Mary Anne Jebb, eds., *Our Mob Served: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories of Defending Australia* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2019).

Joan Beaumont and Allison Cadzow, *Serving Our Country: Indigenous Australians, War, Defence and Citizenship* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2018).

Robert A. Hall, *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997).

Philippa Scarlett, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the AIF: The Indigenous Response to World War One* (Sydney: Indigenous Histories, 2012).

Prisoners of War

Kate Ariotti, *Captive Anzacs: Australian POWs of the Ottomans during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Joan Beaumont, Lachlan Grant and Aaron Pegram, eds., *Beyond Surrender: Australian Prisoners of War in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2015).

Gavan McCormack and Hank Nelson, eds., *The Burma-Thailand Railway* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

Aaron Pegram, *Surviving the Great War: Australian Prisoners of War on the Western Front, 1914–18* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Women and War

Patsy Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1984).

Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches: Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake, eds., *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Peter Rees, *The Other Anzacs: The Extraordinary Story of Our World War I Nurses* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008).

Glossary

Soldier service records will often include abbreviations that you may be unfamiliar with. This is a brief glossary including some of the most common terms you may come across, though it is not an exhaustive guide.

Some records will include the full term instead of the acronym, or use a partial abbreviation e.g. CC Station for Casualty Clearing Station. Sometimes partial acronyms will be used to refer to the same thing, e.g. ALH, LH, or LHR for the Australian Light Horse, Light Horse, and Light Horse Regiment respectively. If you are unsure of a term, or struggling with handwriting, try to read it in context. If it is a casualty form discussing a soldier's hospitalisation, for example, it probably has something to do with being wounded or ill.

For a more comprehensive glossary of military terminology and abbreviations, visit the Australian War Memorial: <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/glossary>.

Term	Definition
AAMC	Australian Army Medical Corps
AANS	Australian Army Nursing Service
ADBD	Australian Division Base Depot. <i>Processed men joining or returning to the front line. Often preceded by the number of the Division.</i>
ADS	Advanced Dressing Station. <i>A medical aid unit staffed by Field Ambulance to stabilise wounded soldiers for transport to hospital.</i>
AGBD	Australian General Base Depot. <i>Processed men joining or returning to the front line who were not infantry units.</i>
AH	Auxiliary Hospital. <i>For seriously wounded patients that specialised in rehabilitation.</i>
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ALHR	Australian Light Horse Regiment
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
AWL	Away without leave
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station. <i>A forward facility where wounded soldiers were treated as close to the front line as possible.</i>
CD	Command Depot. <i>Also known as convalescent depots, they housed men too recovered for hospital but not recovered enough for active duty.</i>
CO	Commanding Officer

DAC	Division Ammunition Column. <i>Transport units charged with supplying ammunition to the frontlines. Often preceded by the number of the Division.</i>
GH	General Hospital. <i>Large base hospitals with 250 – 1,000 beds. There were 17 Australian General Hospitals during the war but only five served overseas.</i>
GSW	Gunshot wound. <i>Also applied to shrapnel wounds as they looked the same.</i>
HMAHS	His Majesty's Australian Hospital Ship
HMAT	His Majesty's Australian Transport
MD	Military District. <i>For example, NSW was 2 MD, Victoria 3 MD.</i>
MO	Medical officer. <i>A qualified doctor.</i>
NCO	Non-commissioned officer. <i>For example, corporal, sergeant, etc.</i>
NOK	Next of kin
NYD	Not yet diagnosed
POB	Place of birth
POE	Place of enlistment
POW	Prisoner of war
RAP	Regimental Aid Post. <i>Battalion-level basic first aid provided during battle.</i>
SERN	Service number
SH	Stationary Hospital. <i>Small hospitals of up to 200 beds situated close to the front line that advanced and retreated with the army.</i>
TOS	Taken on strength. <i>A soldier being added to a unit.</i>
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment. <i>Volunteer nursing assistants trained by the Red Cross.</i>
VD	Venereal disease

Glossary compiled with the assistance of Peter Foster, Glenbrook and District Historical Society.

References

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- [2] 'Regimental numbers', Australian War Memorial, last updated 7 December 2020, <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/numbers/regimental>.
- [3] 'Army numbers', Australian War Memorial, last updated 7 December 2020, <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/numbers/army>.
- [4] 'Australian Prisoners of War 1940-1945', Anzac Portal, Department of Veterans' Affairs, accessed 24 May 2021, <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/resources/australian-prisoners-war-1940-1945>.
- [5] Labelled map of Australia from Wikimedia Commons, accessed 4 June 2021, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Australia_locator-MJC_coloured_\(labelled\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Australia_locator-MJC_coloured_(labelled).png). The colour of Tasmania was altered for the purposes of this publication.