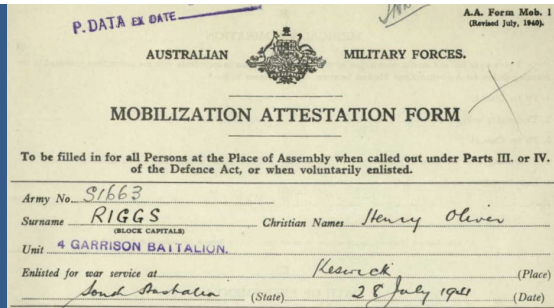


VIRTUAL WAR MEMORIAL AUSTRALIA

GUIDE TO READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

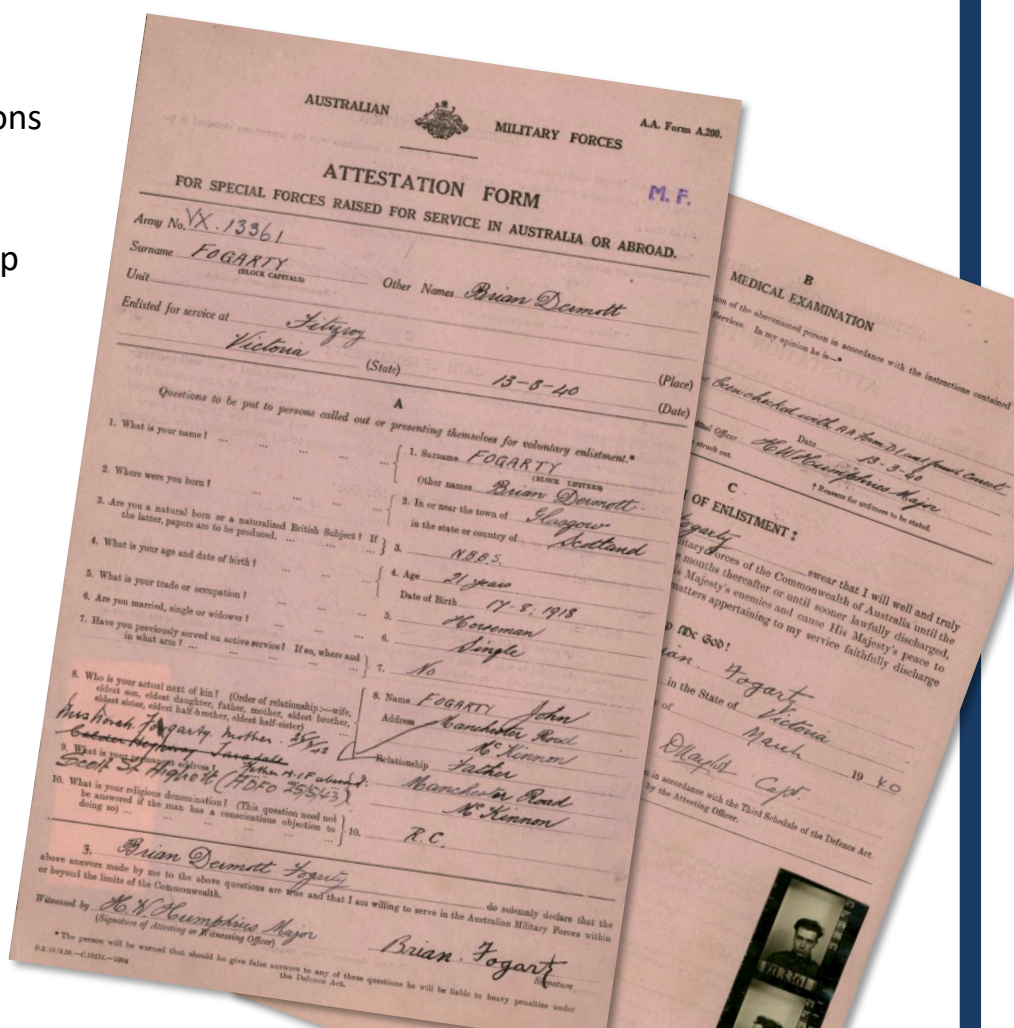


World War Two (1939-45)

Service Records often hold the key to understanding the experiences of men and women before, during and after conflict. But they are not always easy sources to read.

This guide will help you to understand Australian service records from World War Two. It contains:

- I. AIF/CMF Service Records (i.e. the land forces)
- II. RAAF Service Records (air force)
- III. RAN Service Records (navy)
- IV. Reading handwriting
- V. Keywords and abbreviations
- VI. Handwriting exercise
- VII. Where to go for more help



AIF/CMF SERVICE RECORDS

P. DATA EX DATE _____ A.A. Form Mob. 1 (Revised July, 1940)

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

MOBILIZATION ATTESTATION FORM

To be filled in for all Persons at the Place of Assembly when called out under Parts III. or IV. of the Defence Act, or when voluntarily enlisted.

Army No. 91663

Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver

Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION.

Enlisted for war service at Keweenaw (Place)
South Australia (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

Parts of AIF/CMF Service Records

During World War Two, Australia maintained two armies: the **Second AIF** (for overseas service) and the **CMF** (also known as the **Militia**, for service in Australia and New Guinea). **AIF members' service numbers contain an X.**

Service Records normally contain three groups of documents:

1. Attestation Paper. In the CMF this was the *Mobilization Attestation Form* and in the Second AIF it was the *Attestation Form for special forces raised for service in Australia or abroad*. It was completed on enlistment and normally gives address, next of kin, age as well as date and place of birth.

2. Service and Casualty Form.

For officers, this was the *Officer's Record of Service*, which had a slightly different format. This form shows movements, transfers between units, absences through wounds or illness, promotions and decorations.

3. Other documents. These include discharge forms, correspondence with the serviceman or their family, and receipts for medals.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES A.A. Form A200

ATTESTATION FORM M.F.

FOR SPECIAL FORCES RAISED FOR SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA OR ABROAD.

Army No. VX.13361

Surname FOGARTY (BLOCK CAPITALS) Other Names Brian Desmond

Unit _____ Enlisted for service at Felton (Place)
Victoria (State) 13-8-40 (Date)

Questions to be put to persons called out or presenting themselves for voluntary enlistment.*

1. What is your name? ... 1. Surname FOGARTY (BLOCK LETTERS)
Other names Brian Desmond

2. Where were you born? ... 2. In or near the town of Glasgow
in the state or country of Scotland

3. Are you a natural born or a naturalized British Subject? If the latter, papers are to be produced. ... 3. N.B.S.

4. What is your age and date of birth? ... 4. Age 21 years
Date of Birth 17.5.1918

5. What is your trade or occupation? ... 5. Houseman

6. Are you married, single or widower? ... 6. Single

7. Have you previously served on active service? If so, where and in what arm? ... 7. No

8. Who is your actual next of kin? (Order of relationship—wife, eldest son, eldest daughter, father, mother, eldest brother, eldest niece, eldest half-brother, eldest half-sister) ... 8. Name FOGARTY John
Address Canishobie Road
McKinnon
Relationship Father

9. What is your religious denomination? (This question need not be answered if the man has a conscientious objection to doing so) ... 9. R.C.

10. What is your religious denomination? (This question need not be answered if the man has a conscientious objection to doing so) ... 10. R.C.

Witnessed by Brian Desmond Fogarty do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to serve in the Australian Military Forces within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

Witnessed by H. N. Humphries Major (Signature of Attesting or Attesting Officer)


* The person will be warned that should he give false answers to any of these questions he will be liable to heavy penalties under the Defence Act.

13-10-40-13107-1940

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

AIF/CMF SERVICE RECORDS

P. DATA EX DATE _____ A.A. Form Mob. 1 (Revised July, 1949)

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

MOBILIZATION ATTESTATION FORM

To be filled in for all Persons at the Place of Assembly when called out under Parts III. or IV. of the Defence Act, or when voluntarily enlisted.

Army No. 91663


Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver

Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION

Enlisted for war service at Kearock (Place)
Sand Bay (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

The **Attestation Paper** is a two sided form, sometimes compressed into one page. The front page gives personal information, such date of birth, address, occupation, and next of kin. The person enlisting signed the form at the bottom; if the signature is readable, you can use it to check the spelling of his or her name. The second page records the medical examination and (sometimes) the oath. Soldiers had to be passed medically fit (Class I) or an explanation given for how they could serve. The actual enlistment date is the day the oath was taken.

A.A. Form A.200.

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES

ATTESTATION FORM

FOR SPECIAL FORCES RAISED FOR SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA OR ABROAD.

Army No. T4194

Surname SHEEHAN (BLOCK CAPITALS) Other Names Reginald

Unit _____

Enlisted for service at Launceston (Place)
Tasmania (State) 13/10/39 (Date)

A

Questions to be put to persons called out or presenting themselves for voluntary enlistment.*

1. What is your name? ... 1. Surname SHEEHAN (BLOCK CAPITALS)
Other names Reginald

2. Where were you born? ... 2. In or near the town of Launceston
in the state or country of Tasmania

3. Are you a natural born or a naturalized British Subject? If the latter, papers are to be produced. ... 3. _____

4. What is your age and date of birth? ... 4. Date of Birth 27^{3/4}
4/7/1912

5. What is your trade or occupation? ... 5. motor mechanic

6. Are you married, single or widower? ... 6. single

7. Have you previously served on active service? If so, where and in what arm? ... 7. _____

8. Who is your actual next of kin? (Order of relationship:—wife, eldest son, eldest daughter, father, mother, eldest brother, eldest sister, eldest half-brother, eldest half-sister) ... 8. Name Mildred Mary Sheehan
Address South St
Launceston
Relationship Mother

9. What is your permanent address? ... 9. South St
Launceston

10. What is your religious denomination? (This question need not be answered if the man has a conscientious objection to doing so) ... 10. R.C.

DISCHARGED

3. Reginald Sheehan do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

Witnessed by R. Sheehan (Signature of Attesting or Witnessing Officer) 13/10/39 (Date)

*The person will be warned that should he give false answers to any of these questions he will be liable to heavy penalties under the Defence Act.

Date of enlistment

Date of birth & Occupation


Next of kin, address and relationship

This is the date Reg Sheehan took the oath: 13/10/39. This made him legally a soldier.

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

AIF/CMF SERVICE RECORDS

P. DATA EX DATE _____ A.A. Form Mob. 1 (Revised July, 1940.)

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

MOBILIZATION ATTESTATION FORM

To be filled in for all Persons at the Place of Assembly when called out under Parts III. or IV. of the Defence Act, or when voluntarily enlisted.

Army No. 91663
 Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver
 Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION.
 Enlisted for war service at Kearock (Place)
Sand Bastian (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

The **Service and Casualty Form** (or **Officer's Record of Service**) is where you will find most of the information about what happened during the period of service.

- Transfer from one place, hospital or unit to another
- Changing status (e.g. promotion, disciplinary action, decorations)
- Wounded, missing, dead

It often also contains other medical information. Please treat this information with respect when writing your biography, particularly if it is not related to service. So instead of stating specific illnesses, you could write that the serviceman was hospitalised for an infection.

A Casualty Form was written on by many different military clerks, often with quite different handwriting, and contains many abbreviations and acronyms. It is often hard to read.

Army Form B. 103 - 1 (Adapted) (Revised, July, 1940.)

Service and Casualty Form

Rank Cpl Christian Names Ronald James Surname BARASSI (Block Capitals)
 Army No. VX. 45220.
 Unit 7 Div Supply Coy
 Date of Enlistment 15th July, 1940. Marital Condition Married.
 Place Caulfield, Victoria. Next of Kin Elza Bryant Barassi
 Date of Birth 24/10/1913. Address of Next of Kin 10 Howard Street,
 Place of Birth Guildford, Victoria. Brunswick, Victoria.
 Trade or Occupation Motor Driver. Relationship Wife.
 Religion Church of England. Identification—Colour of Hair Fair Eyes Blue.
 Medical Classification—Class I. (On Enlistment) Class II. Distinctive Marks Appendix Scar.

REPORT		Record of all casualties regarding promotions (acting, temporary, local or substantive), appointments, transfers, postings, attachments, &c. forfeiture of pay, wounds, accidents, admission to and discharge from Hospital, Casualty Clearing Stations, &c. Date of disembarkation and embarkation from a theatre of war (including furlough, &c.).	Date of Casualty	Place of Casualty	Authority W.3011, B.2069, or other Document	Signature of Officer Certifying Correctness of Entries
15/7/1940.	O.C.R.D.	Taken on strength R.R.D.	15/7/1940.	Caulfield.	R.O. 148/38/40.	
22/7/40.	O.C. 15 J.T. Bn	Tfd to 15 Inf Training Bn from R.R.D	22/7/40	Shepparton	5701 3 700/40	H.M.A.
27. 7. 40	oc Supply Col	Posted from 15 Inf to 15 Supply	25. 7. 40	Pueha	27011 59/40	
26-7-40	Mc 15 17 B	Tfd from 15 17 Bn Supply to A.S.C. Supply Col 7 Aust Div	25-7-40	Shepton	27011 59/40	
18.10.40	oc Supply Col	Embarked with 15th Div	18.10.40	Bedouin	4206	
12.12.40	2nd Ech	Disembarked	16.11.40	at East	1370 1/161	H.M.A.
24. 3. 41	"	Appointed 15 Supply	14.12.40	"	4205 23/905	
24. 3. 41	"	Appointed 15 Supply (Papilloma (foot) Trans to X best)	20. 3. 41	"	4354 20/970	
14. 4. 41	"	Promoted Cpl	20. 3. 41	"	4770 29/161	H.M.A.
23/4/41	"	Discharged 1941 (Mental Illness) R.D.	1-4-41	"	5118 23/180/44	
5. 5. 41	2nd Ech	Re-embarked from 1 O.S.P. and 1st Ech of 15 Supply	1-4-41	"	5482 34/127	
18. 8. 41	"	Appointed 4th Ech, 15 Supply (Mental Illness) R.D.	18. 7. 41	"	10369 150/2515	
4. 8. 41	1st Ech	Killed in action (Cable)	30. 7. 41	"	5482 34/127	
6. 8. 41	O.R.O. Case	Killed in action	30. 7. 41	"	5482 34/127	

13 JUN 1946. GRANTY CHECKER

When the event was reported, not when it happened. **Note the unit**; otherwise ignore.

This is the most important field: **what actually happened.**


When and where the event actually happened: **this is important.** Often quite generic: O'seas, ME (Middle East).

References to the military filing system; this can be safely ignored.

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

AIF/CMF SERVICE RECORDS

A.A. Form Mob. 1
(Revised July, 1949)

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

MOBILIZATION ATTESTATION FORM

To be filled in for all Persons at the Place of Assembly when called out under Parts III. or IV. of the Defence Act, or when voluntarily enlisted.

Army No. 91663
 Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver
 Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION
 Enlisted for war service at Keswick (Place)
Sand Bachelar (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

PART B—Personal details—compiled by Unit:

1. Home address 15A GARDENS AIA YEWVILLE N.S.W.
 Date commenced F.T.D. 30/12/41 Date of Birth 1/5/187
 State whether:—
 Married, single, divorced, widow No. of Dependants in respect of whom dependant's allowance is being paid—
 as-widower MARRIED Under 16 yrs. — 16 yrs. & over 1

2. Present Description of Soldier:—
 Age 24 yrs. 5 months Medical Cases Only AMR & O 253A(1)(d) Disability:—
 Height 5 ft. 8 ins. Eyes BROWN Complexion MEDIUM Hair BROWN Marks/Scars
 Trade Group in which employed _____ Degree of Disability _____ %
 3. Operational Service:—
 (a) Overseas area of service Embarked from Aust. 1-2-44 Disembarked in Aust. _____
NEW GUINEA 31/5/43 1-2-44
POKORU 31/5/43 1-2-44
 (b) N.T. (North of Par. 14th Sth.) or Torres St. Is. — From _____ To _____
 Part B compiled by:— [Signature]
 Date 22 OCT 1946 (Officer's signature and rank)

PART C—Compiled by Ech. and Rec.:

4. Non-effective Service: *
 TOTAL NON-EFFECTIVE SERVICE 339
 INSIDE AUST 339
 OUTSIDE AUST _____

PART D—Compiled by Ech. & Rec.:

5. Details for Certificate of Discharge No. 474849
 Unit (for discharge purposes) 4 Garrison Btl Co
 Served on continuous Full Time War Service in the CMF from 30/12/41 to 30/10/42
AIF from 31/10/42 to 29/10/46
 for a Total Effective Period* of 1421 days, which included
 Active Service in Australia† 308 days and
 Active Service O/S Australia‡ 408 days
 Decorations and Awards‡ during that Service: _____
 War Badge _____ Entered _____
 Class and No. N/A Badge Register _____
 Discharged from the _____ and discharge confirmed vide Schedule NUM 4414 to take effect on and from _____
 Place _____ Signature _____ Ech. and Rec. _____
 Date 1-1 Officer i/c _____
 6. Details compiled by [Signature] checked by [Signature]
 A.A.F. A.101 written by _____ entered _____
 Entered Discharge Certificate Register _____
 A.A.F. A.131 obtained by _____ Entered "Will" Register _____
PART E—To be signed by Soldier on discharge:
 7. I hereby acknowledge receipt of:
 (a) Certificate of Discharge No. 474849
 (b) Army Form A.131 purporting to contain my Will.
 (c) War Badge No. N/A
 Date 10/1/46 Signature of Soldier [Signature]
 Place N/A Signature of Witness [Signature]
 * "Effective Period" means the period of service, less any consecutive 21 days or more for which the soldier was not entitled to pay.
 † Australia means the mainland of Australia and Tasmania.
 ‡ Does not include War Medals.

Service Records sometimes contain discharge papers, which can provide a wealth of information. This man served in the CMF 1940-42 and in the Second AIF 1942-46, before being discharged for disciplinary reasons.

This document shows the **service** (or **campaign**) **medals**, issued to all soldiers who met the eligibility criteria. Charles Coombs served in the Pacific Theatre and so received the **Pacific Star**. He also received the **1939/45 Star**, the **Defence Medal**, the **War Medal** and the **Australia Service Medal**. See www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Imperial/WWII.

NAME COOMBS, C.M. No. 512557
 Address 66 E maberey Renmark

1	1939/45 STAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	AFRICA STAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	„ with 1st Clasp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	„ with 8th Clasp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	ATLANTIC STAR	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	A.C. EUROPE STAR	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	ITALY STAR	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	FRANCE & G. STAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	PACIFIC STAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10	BURMA STAR	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	DEFENCE MEDAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	WAR MEDAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13	A.S.M.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14		<input type="checkbox"/>

Recorder _____
 Checker _____
AWARDS WITHHELD
 Serials: _____
 REASON: _____
 AUTHORITY: _____
 Packer _____
 Despatcher _____

TO WHOM DESPATCHED PO Box 557 - Renmark
SA 5341
 Reg'd Parcel No. 9446 DATE 18/12/81
RECEIPT
 Serials _____ Sig _____
 AHQ Press—3443—9/46—710m DATE _____

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

RAAF SERVICE RECORDS

PERSONAL RECORD OF SERVICE — OFFICERS

George
11-12-67
McPherson
Lio Announced
MUDGE

Name: *George Pauline Hall*
Relationship: *Wife*
Address: *Post Office Helix*
Mudgee

Branch: *GD*
Gaz: *193/44*
P.O.R.: *25/44*
Posted To: *W.A.*

Personal Record of Service

This was a printed A3 sheet. The **Airmen** and **Officers'** forms record much the same information but with a different layout: basically, the Airmen form has numbered sections and the Officers' does not. If your person was promoted from Airman to Officer the file will contain both forms, and you will need to read both to find all the relevant information.

This form gives most key information about a person's service. Pay particular attention to these areas:

Personal information: marital status, DOB, next of kin, etc.

Enlistment date

PERSONAL RECORD OF SERVICE—AIRMEN

1. No. *424179* 4. SURNAME *HAUG* 5. CHRISTIAN NAMES *Douglas Milton* 6. No. *424179*

7. DATE OF BIRTH *2.7.1922* 8. SINGLE 9. NEXT OF KIN *Donald Douglas Haug* 10. PERSON TO BE INFORMED *Next of kin*

11. RELIGION *Church of England* 12. NATIONALITY *BRITISH*

13. PREV. TRADE & TRADE QUALIFICATIONS *Mechanical fitter*

14. ENLISTMENTS & RE-ENGAGEMENTS

ENLISTED *NO. 2 REC. CENTRE* the duration of the War and a period of twelve months thereafter on *10 AUG 1942* Years *20* Authority *FOR 266/42*

RE-ENGAGED for years on: / /

15. PREV. NAVAL, MILITARY or AIR SERVICE

16. Decorations, Medals, Mentions & Badges

Pacific Star 1939/42 star Authority *9 A.C.S. 28/45*
WAR MEDAL 1939-45 Authority *ABC 01/1/40*

17. MUSTERINGS

On Enlistment *AIR CREW V* *4/10/42* Authority *FOR 266/42*

Remustered to *in technical fitter general fitter works* *31/1/43* Authority *2173 86/42*

6/11/44 Authority *219.W.Sqn. 5/44*

18. PROMOTIONS, RECLASSIFICATIONS, REDUCTIONS AND REVERSIONS

Description Date Authority

A.C. 2 ON ENLISTMENT *1 AUG 1942* *FOR 266/42*

A.C.1 *4.10.42* *2173 86/42*

LNC. *1.5.43* *WT.U. 4/4/43*

19. SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS

20. POSTINGS

Posted to Date Authority

21.T.S. *3 S.T.T.* *AUG 1942* *2 REC FOR 266/42*

12th Aerial Obs *4.10.42* *357.T. 203/42*

Works 3 Unit *29 11 42* *183 Sqn*

401 R.A.F. *4-3-43* *WT.U. 23/43*

2 mobile work found *14.8.43* *3RPP 4/4/43*

6 Mobile Work Sqdn *15.9.43* *2173 86/42*

10 Work Supply *30.6.44* *10WSU 10/44*

New Bedford Construction Squadron *18.7.44* *4RC 29/44*

102 R.D. *1.10.44* *102 R.D. 10/44*

9 R.C.S. *22.1.45* *9 R.C.S. 3/45*

3RPP. *3.1.45* *3RPP 3/45*

3 R.D. *7.1.45* *3 R.D. 7/45*

21. ATTACHMENTS

Attached From To Authority

1 RD *11.2.43* *15.12.45* *15.12.45 15/45*

1155 Aerial Obs

22. MOVEMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Proceeded on duty to Sydney by train on 2/4/40. W.S.

Returned to Sydney 9.1.43. W.S. 4/40

Embarked on 14.1.44 ARAUS (C) on Lambe 220 1057/44

Promotions: enter these into your person's Service History with date.

Postings: The first and last postings will probably be to training and holding depots respectively (which are of little interest), but look for Squadrons or similar. Enter these into your person's Service History as Transfers with date.

Decorations: mostly these will be service medals, but look for bravery decorations too.

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

RAAF SERVICE RECORDS

PERSONAL RECORD OF SERVICE — OFFICERS

George
11-12-67
McPherson

Name *George Pauline Hall*
Relationship *mother*
Address *Post Office Helix Mudgee N.S.W.*

Next of Kin (Enter in Pencil)
Address *Mudgee*

Enlistment *MUDGEE*

Branch	AUTHORITY		Posted To
	Gaz.	P.O.R.	
GD.	193/44	29/4	<i>Mudgee</i>
..	225/44	29/4	<i>Mudgee</i>

Before compiling this form read the notes to R.A.A.F. Supplement to Appendix III (Part II) War Manual Part II.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

NAVYMAN'S RECORD SHEET — (Active Service — Overseas). IAC.

Official NO. *412963* Name *HOLMES William George* *HAC*
(In full in block capitals, surname (Or acting first) appointment)

Enlisting *11/10/41* Special Qualifications (e.g. Instructor, Fire Fighter, Boxing Instructor)

Date of Birth *12.8.20* Religion *Method* Occupation *Radio Announcer*
Civil Life *Duration not known*

Last Enlisted *15.8.41* Current Engagement *11 months through*

If Reservist which class (see 1-5)..... Whether Married *Single*

Name and Address of person (or persons) to be informed of Casualties:
George Thomas Holmes (Father)
P.O. 1666 Mudgee N.S.W.

Relationship *Father* (in pencil)

Any alteration to above (e.g. Promotions) to be made by crossing out and writing above.

SECTION 1. Movements and Casualties.			SECTION 2. Promotions, Acting Appointments (Paid or Unpaid) reductions, Re-enlistings.		
Unit from which.	Unit to which.	Date of effect.	Authority.	Description.	Date of effect.
10 EFTS	1 SFTS	7.4.42	10 EFTS DOA 60/41 PER 60/41	Reclass HAC Acting WP	8/11/41
			1 SFTS	Promoted T/196	15/10/42
			P.O. M. 10/42	Reclassified 11/10/42	
1 SFTS	2 EA	7/6/42	AWO 19/43	Promo SFT/Spt	15/4/43
2 EA	H.A.A.M.	14/11/42	11 P.D.R.C.	Reclassified to P.D.R.C.	
1 E.D.M.	RAE	2/1/43	PER 210/43	THE CLASSIFICATION OF L.P.C.	24.12.43
	S.A.A.M.	15.1.43			
	11 P.D.R.C.	18.3.43			
11 P.D.R.C.	20(1) AEU	15.5.43			
20(1) AEU	12 C.T.V.	24.7.43		Appointed to a commission & discharged from the R.A.A.F. under A.A. 126(1) (A.A. No. 15/7/44) (A.A. No. 27/1944)	
12 C.T.V.	Assumption	28.10.43			
A.C.O.V.	11 A.B.R.C.	9.11.43			
11 P.D.R.C.	O.S.H.A.	10.1.44			

When on active service overseas, the authority to be quoted will be the serial number of the S.P.S.O.'s Casualty Form.

The RAAF personnel file may contain other documents: enlistment or attestation papers, conduct sheets, and RAF documents if the person was seconded to the RAF.

The file often contains a head-and-shoulder photograph of the person taken at enlistment. Zoom in as far as you can and take a screenshot of this photo, so you can use it as your person's Key Image. Make sure you note information for the Caption (in the format "Enlistment Photo of Person X, Service Number") and the Attribution ("From NAA Personnel File" with link).



READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

RAN SERVICE RECORDS

RECORD OF SERVICE. (PETTY OFFICERS AND MEN.)
 Name *Grayson Sydney* OFFICIAL NUMBER *26543*
 Place of Birth *Dunham Eng* Religion *Church of England*
 Date of Birth *21st 8-1898* St. *Bartholomew*
 INC. *St. Andrew's*

Date of Entry to R.A.N.	MEDALS, CLASPS, ETC.		From.	To.
	Date Received.	Nature of Decoration.		
<i>15-11-38</i>	<i>15-11-38</i>	<i>15-11-38</i>		

1911 TO 1920 INC. RECORD OF SERVICE. (PETTY OFFICERS AND MEN.) PHOTOGRAPHED ✓
 NAME *GYSS Louis Anton* OFFICIAL NUMBER *22598*
 Date of Birth *7 July 1920* Place of Birth *Alberton Sk Aust* Religion *Methodist* Port Division *Melbourne*
 Next of Kin (relationship and address) *Father Louis Gysa Palm Avenue Royal Park S.A. 3141*
Wife Denis M Gysa, 10 Derby St, Collingwood, Vic. 3102 Trade *Driver*

ENGAGEMENTS.		Date of 1st Entry in R.A.N.	MEDALS, CLASPS, ETC.		SECOND CLASS FOR CONDUCT (Inclusive Dates).			
Date of Commencement.	Period.		Date Received.	Nature of Decoration.	From.	To.	From.	To.
<i>15 Nov 1938</i>	<i>12 years.</i>	<i>15-11-38</i>	<i>82 Belair St Adelaide NSW Aust 14/8/41</i> <i>278 Young St Fitzroy VIC Aust 8/10/41</i> <i>✓ Palm Avenue Royal Park Adelaide SA. called 10/1/41</i>					

TIME FORFEITED.					
Date.	No. of Days.	P. C. C.F., W.F., or D.	Date.	No. of Days.	P. C. C.F., W.F., or D.
<i>15-11-38</i>	<i>15</i>				

DESCRIPTION OF PERSON.						
Occasion.	Height.		Hair.	Eyes.	Complexion.	Marks, Wounds, and Scars.
	Ft.	In.				
<i>On Entry age 18</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7 1/2</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Tattoo L forearm Bullseye design and Mother's. Ring forearm heart with clasped hands</i>

EXAMINATIONS AND NOTATIONS.		GOOD CONDUCT BADGES.	
Date.	Particulars.	Date.	Particulars.
<i>22 Dec '38</i>	<i>P.P.T. (Good) Corb. 1650 HT.</i>		
<i>20 Jan 39</i>	<i>Qual. A.G. 2. Days Sub. 1598 HX.</i>		
<i>16-3-39</i>	<i>Passed E.I. 145/25/683, Hobart. 3315</i>		
<i>29 Aug 39</i>	<i>Grants Sep 16. Sub. Hobart 15374</i>		
<i>16-1-40</i>	<i>Lifeline Hobart</i>		
<i>24 July 41</i>	<i>Camp L 1510 comm. Qual. Sep 190 174 7087 BU</i>		

WAR GRATUITY
 CLASPS No 23220
 AMOUNT £138-15-8
 INITIAL *LD*

Wounds received in Action, and Hurt Certificates; also, any Meritorious Service, Special Recommendations, Prizes, or other Grants.

Date: *15/11/38* Paid *£231 18/3* in Lieu of *33* Days Accrued
 S. Leave—Account No. Dated
 H. S. Leave Due.


RAN service cards are short and simple but provide good high-level information about service. The first page will give all the relevant personal information: date and place of birth, height and appearance, next of kin, enlistment date and occupation. Beyond that it will normally only give changes in rank, the ships or depots he or she served on and the dates for each. This information can be entered into your person's **Service History**.

Name of Ship.	Rating.	From.	To.	Character.	Efficiency.	Date Assessed.	Remarks.
<i>Cerberus</i>	<i>STOKER II</i>	<i>15-11-38</i>	<i>11-4-39</i>	<i>VG</i>	<i>✓</i>	<i>31-12-38</i>	<i>Rated Stoker 14-9-39 Hobart 15161 No 553X.</i>
<i>Hobart</i>	<i>Stoker.</i>	<i>12-4-39</i>	<i>13-9-39</i>	<i>VG</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>31-12-39</i>	<i>Rated 7 July 40 (39) 17 Dec 40. Hobart 15161 No 553X.</i>
<i>Wollongong</i>	<i>9/10p Stoker (Ly)</i>	<i>17-12-40</i>	<i>22-1-41</i>	<i>V.G.</i>	<i>Simple</i>	<i>21-12-40</i>	<i>war pension granted to widow £4.4.11 from 14 Aug 42 by Capt. Corbin 558/204/334 4/42</i>
<i>Wollongong</i>	<i>Stoker</i>	<i>23-1-41</i>	<i>21-7-41</i>	<i>VG</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>9-4-42</i>	<i>S/C received at HQ: 11551 Hobart. Navy pension to widow granted 19/10/42 date 1 Jan 42 232427 1/42</i>
<i>Wollongong</i>	<i>Stoker</i>	<i>1-8-41</i>	<i>29-9-41</i>	<i>VG</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>9-4-42</i>	<i>Discharged Dead 10312 N 1155 Sectors 7/42</i>
<i>Wollongong</i>	<i>Stoker</i>	<i>20-9-41</i>	<i>16-12-41</i>	<i>VG</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>9-4-42</i>	<i>Repatriation advised 13-4-42</i>
<i>VAMPIRE</i>	<i>Lg. Stoker (Ly)</i>	<i>17-12-41</i>	<i>23-2-41</i>	<i>VG</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>9-4-42</i>	<i>Letter to mother re pension 22-15-26. 6 APR 1941</i>

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

READING HANDWRITING

P. DATA EX DATE _____ A.A. Form Mob. 1 (Revised July, 1949)

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

MOBILIZATION ATTESTATION FORM

To be filled in for all Persons at the Place of Assembly when called out under Parts III. or IV. of the Defence Act, or when voluntarily enlisted.

Army No. 37663

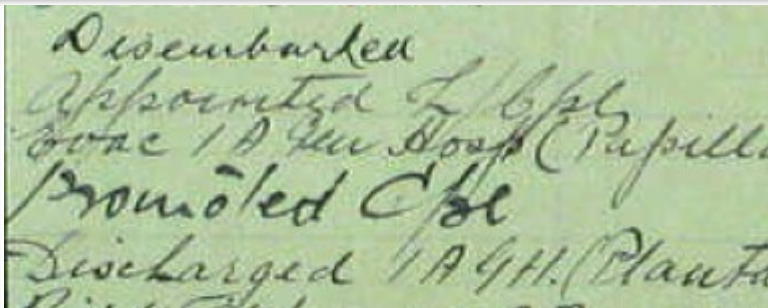
Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver


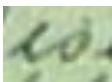




Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION

Enlisted for war service at Keswick (Place) Southern (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

This can be the trickiest part of reading World War Two service records, but don't let it stop you from understanding the document. Think of it as a puzzle or a coded message: start by finding words that you can read easily. Write it all out; this ensures you read every word and helps you spot gaps.

Follow the steps below, stick with it and you will get there.



	= r		= is
	= pp		= L
	= v		= k

Disembarked
Appointed L/Cpl
Evac 1 A Gen Hosp (Papill...
Promoted Cpl
Discharged 1 AGH.


A few techniques for reading those difficult words:

- **Use the context.** Can you guess the uncertain word from those around it? Can you at least work out what sort of word it is (e.g. a name, a rank).
- Bear in mind this was written by a clerk who was probably in a hurry. He may not have crossed his t's or dotted his i's. He may have had difficulty fitting his letters into the space.
- **Compare** the difficult letters with other letters in words you can read. Perhaps the clerk has an unusual way of writing an *S* or a *D*, and you've seen it written in another word. **Writing out these letters to form a "letter key"** (as above) is a really helpful technique. But not foolproof: note the similarity between *k* and *L* in the example above.
- Beware of letter combinations. The letters *in* often look like *m*; *h* can look like *k* or *d*; *n* can look like *u*.
- **Write down the possibilities** in a difficult word: (1) the letters you're certain of, (2) the letters where it might be a *d* or a *h* or a *k*, and (3) the letters you have no idea of. Work through the various combinations until you have one which fits.
- Isolate the difficult words and **get someone else to look at them** – without telling them what you think the word is.

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

KEYWORDS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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Army No. 37663

Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver

Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION.

Enlisted for war service at Kearock (Place)
Sand Bachelin (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

Although it is great to be able to read every word in a Service Record, sometimes even professional historians find this difficult. You can get around this by looking for important keywords that will help you to discover and tell the story of your soldier. Here are some of the main keywords and their common abbreviations, so you know what to look for. Remember: different clerks might use different abbreviations.


See also: www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/abbreviations.aspx

Term	Common abbreviation	What it means	Example
Lines of Communication Area	<i>L of C Area</i>	An Australian state (e.g. Qld, SA), for army support purposes.	<i>Lost Area</i>
Marched In/Out	<i>M/I, M/O</i>	To join or leave a unit (often with <i>ex</i> = 'from, our of').	<i>MARCHED IN Ex</i>
Admitted	<i>Adm</i>	Admitted to hospital, sick or wounded.	<i>Adm (M. Unkps)</i>
Take on Strength	<i>T.O.S.</i>	Transferring to a unit, and so being counted as part of its 'strength'.	<i>Taken on strength T.O.S. Disembark</i>
Absent Without Leave	<i>A.W.L</i>	A crime: being away from one's unit without permission.	<i>(away from)</i>
Transferred	<i>Tfd or Transfd</i>	Moved to another unit or hospital.	<i>Transfd from R.A.E</i>
Embarked / Entrained / Emplaned	<i>Emb.</i>	Got on a ship (or train or aeroplane)	<i>Embarked in ME Disembarked in Bexlar</i>
Ditto	<i>do or "</i>	The same as above	<i>en do</i>

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

EXERCISE

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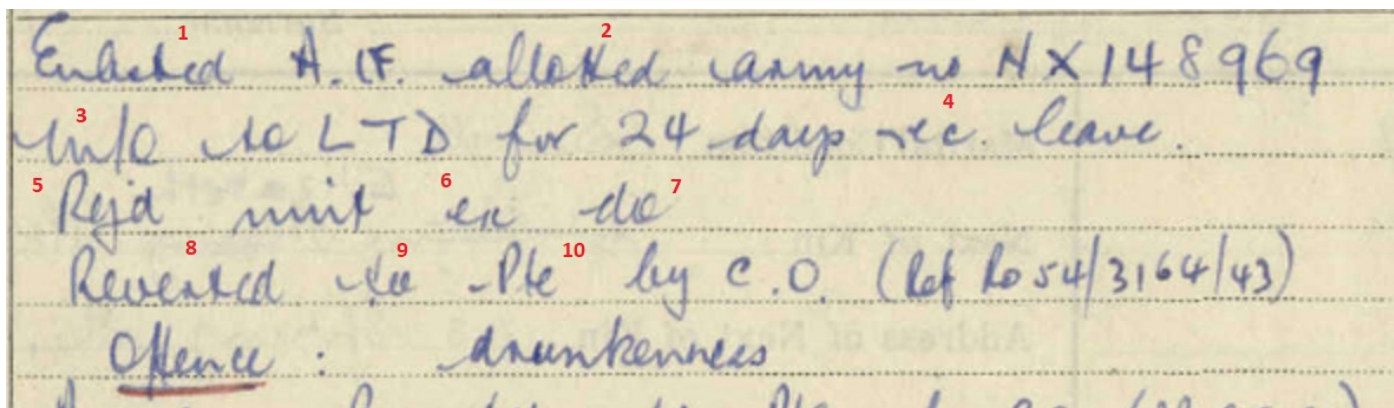
Army No. 37663

Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver

Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION

Enlisted for war service at Keswick (Place)
Sand Point (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

Those are the techniques.
Let's practice.



Here are five lines from a Casualty Form for a Second AIF soldier who fought in New Guinea. Bearing in mind there are abbreviations here, make a list:

- Which words can you read easily?
- Which can you probably read, or read with difficulty?
- And which can't you read?

Let's narrow down that middle list, the words you can read with difficulty:


- Which letters are you sure of? **Write them out.**
- Of the letters you're not sure about, **do any resemble letters in the words you know?**
- **Apply the techniques** we learned on previous pages. Look at the list of common abbreviations.
- What was his offence? And what was the punishment?

Now you probably have most of the words figured out, with a few you're still not sure of. What type of word needs to go in that spot? Is it a place name? Ask other students, or your teacher. If you still can't work it out, take a screenshot, attach a link and email the Schools Program Manager: schools.program@vwma.org.au.

READING WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORDS

FINDING MORE HELP

P. DATA EX DATE _____ A.A. Form Mob. 1 (Revised July, 1949)

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

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Army No. 37663

Surname RIGGS (BLOCK CAPITALS) Christian Names Henry Oliver

Unit 4 GARRISON BATTALION.

Enlisted for war service at Keswick (Place)
Southern Australia (State) 28 July 1941 (Date)

Sometimes no matter how hard you try, you just cannot find the information you need. That is ok; there is a lot of help out there.

For help with understanding abbreviations, look for our forthcoming Glossary, or:

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

<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/abbreviations.aspx>

Can't find the answer there, or have other questions about the service records? Visit the Virtual War Memorial Schools Program page on Facebook and post your question. We will answer your questions as quickly as we can.

Or email us at: schools.program@vwma.org.au

A group at Headquarters 11 Division listening to the radio for news of the projected Japanese surrender.

Australian War Memorial,
095256 .



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