NAA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

Fact sheet

Army administrative records held in Melbourne

Army administrative records held in Melbourne cover the period from Federation in 1901 until 1962. The records are held in series described as 'correspondence files' or 'correspondence series' which in general cover the wide range of Army policy, operational and administrative issues dealt with by the Department or Service arm.

Army administrative records

Army correspondence files held in Melbourne are listed below.

General correspondence series

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Correspondence files, annual single number	1901–06	B168
Correspondence files, multiple number	1906–17	A289
Correspondence files, multiple number with ABDE prefix	1913–17	A2023
Correspondence files, multiple number with W (War) prefix	1914–17	B543
Correspondence files, multiple number with AIF prefix	1914–17	B539
Correspondence files, multiple number	1917–29	MP367/1
Correspondence files, multiple number	1917–29	MP421/2
Correspondence files, multiple number	1930–39	MP431/1
Correspondence files, multiple number	1939–42	MP508/1
Correspondence files, multiple number	1943–51	MP742/1
Group (Army formations) correspondence files, multiple number with GP prefix	1943–46	MP727/1
Correspondence files, multiple number with A prefix	1952–62	MP927/1
Correspondence files, multiple number with A prefix	1952–62	MT1131/1

Building and property records series

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Correspondence files relating to rifle ranges, drill halls and training depots, multiple number	1913–62	MP1142/1

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Correspondence files relating to rifle ranges, drill halls and training depots, multiple number	1913–62	MT1461/1

Classified general correspondence series

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Secret correspondence files, annual single number	1905–07	B173
Secret and confidential correspondence files, multiple number	1906–35	B197
Secret correspondence files, multiple number	1936–45	MP729/6
Classified correspondence files, multiple number	1940–42	MP729/7
Classified correspondence files, multiple number	1945–57	MP729/8

Identifying the records you want to use

There are different ways of identifying the records you want to use from these series:

1. After identifying a relevant series number, examine the paper item lists for the series to select specific record items. These item lists are held in the research centre of the Victorian Archives Centre.
2. After identifying a relevant series number, you could examine the control records to the correspondence series, such as series of index cards and registers. These records can be difficult to use for those unfamiliar with them, and working with them is usually time consuming.
3. Researchers using the Internet or any of our research centre computers can use the National Archives' RecordSearch database, which includes item-level information. RecordSearch allows you to search for relevant records by keyword in the item title, or by relevant file number or primary number stem of a file or group of files. An example of this method of searching is outlined below.

The multiple number system of control

Many of the series listed in the table above are controlled by a multiple number system, in this case a three number system, with each number separated by a slash eg 1/1/1. The first number relates to the primary subject of the file (in the example below the number 146 represents hospitals), the second number is a category of that primary subject (in this example 1 represents 'general', 2 represents 'returns', and 3 represents 'convalescent homes and depots') and the third number is the next consecutive file number raised on that precise subject. Subject index lists are maintained for most of the series listed. Note that primary numbers change from series to series.

The example below is from the series MP742/1 (1943–1951).

Primary subject	Number	Secondary subject
HOSPITALS	146/1/–	General
	146/2/–	Returns
	146/3/–	Convalescent homes and depots

If you want to look up a file about Army convalescent homes or depots between 1943 and 1951 you can go straight to the paper check list for MP742/1 and look for files with the primary and secondary number string of 146/3/–. Alternatively you could use RecordSearch to conduct a series/item number search using the series number 'MP742/1' and item number '146/3/*' (the asterisk (*) serves as a wildcard for this type of search). This search will find all items in the series with the number string 146/3/– listed on the database. Remember that all files related to the series you are interested in may not yet be listed on RecordSearch. A third option would be to examine the control records relating to MP742/1 using the number 146/3/. This will identify all papers to which this number was allocated, although not all of them may have survived and any that did survive may have been top-numbered to another file.

For more information

Fact Sheets:

- *Fact sheet 134 - Colonial defence personnel records held in Melbourne*
- *Fact sheet 136 - Army service records*