

NameSearch

NameSearch enables you to search more effectively for records in the National Archives relating to a person.

Using NameSearch you can search particular collections held by the National Archives – such as defence service, migration or naturalisation records – using a family name or combination of family name and other personal information.

Accessing NameSearch

NameSearch can be reached through the National Archives collection database, RecordSearch, available in all research centres and on this website.

To search the collection, either Begin your search, Register, or Sign in. Then select the NameSearch tab to go to the NameSearch search screen.

How to use NameSearch

To search for records using NameSearch:

1. Enter a family name into the **Family name** box.
2. Select a category of records from the **Category of records** dropdown menu.
3. Click on the **Search** button or press the **Enter** key to begin your search.

Family name searching

The **Family name** field is not case sensitive. You can use upper or lowercase text without affecting a search result. The following hints might be helpful:

- The **Family name** field searches for a family name exactly as you have typed it. A search for a double name like 'Kingsford Smith' will only retrieve entries for 'Kingsford Smith' – it will not find 'Smith Kingsford', 'Smith' or 'Kingsford'. Similarly, a search on a plural name (like 'Boyles') will not retrieve records for the singular version of that name ('Boyle').

- For names with apostrophes or hyphens, enter the name without spaces between the words (as 'O'Brien' not 'O ' Brien' or 'Brown-Smith' not 'Brown - Smith'). Note that no other types of punctuation can be used in a Family name search.
- Search using wildcards to find names beginning with a common stem. Key at least three characters followed by an asterisk (*). For example, 'Neil*' will return results for 'Neil', 'Neill', 'Nielsen' and 'Neilson'. Further hints for using wildcards can be found in the Help text available in NameSearch.
- Uncheck the **Use exact spelling box** to extend your search to include common variations of names, such as 'Abrams' and 'Abrahams' or 'Darcy' and 'D'Arcy'. Note that this feature may not include every spelling variation of a name.
- Try variations of the spelling of a name if your first search is unsuccessful. The spelling of a family name may have changed over time, or may have been recorded incorrectly in a government file.

Selecting a category of records

The first option in the **Category of records** dropdown menu is 'All records'. If you choose this option your search will be redirected and conducted on the entire contents of RecordSearch.

NameSearch itself uses four broad categories to locate records about people. Three of these categories include sub-categories that let you narrow your search.

A search for records in a broader category will look for records in all its sub-categories. For example, a search within '*Australian Defence Forces personnel records*' will look for records of all forces in all conflicts.

If you know what type of record is most likely to be relevant to your research, select that category only – it will return a smaller, more manageable result set.

The broad categories are:

- **Australian Defence Forces personnel records** – includes categories for all services in the Boer War, World War I and II, post World War II and peacetime service
- **Other defence records** – includes categories such as service pay records, Royal Australian Air Force accident reports, Australian prisoners of war records, courts martial, repatriation cases (Boer War and WWI only), war gratuity, civilian service, Army Inventions Directorate and Papua New Guinea evacuees
- **Immigration and naturalisation records**
- **Other records** – includes security and intelligence records, copyright, patent and trademark registrations, Australian Broadcasting Commission artists, Commonwealth Literary Fund applicants and High Court cases

Refining your search

Depending on the category you used to conduct your initial search, you will be given a choice of fields to refine your search result.

If your initial search was conducted within the *'Australian Defence Forces personnel records'* or one of its sub-categories, you can refine your search using a given name or a service number. If you have searched under any other category you can refine your search using a given name or a date.

- The **Given name** field can be searched in the same way as the **Family name** field, using the same types of punctuation, case and wildcards. The **Given name** field can also be searched using more than one name, as *'all words'*, *'any words'* or as a *'phrase'* selected from the dropdown menu. Note that given names do not always appear on record item titles or descriptions, and when they do appear an abbreviated form may be used.
- The **Service number** field lets you refine a search using the person's service number, if it is known. Enter service numbers without spaces (eg 'NX12345'). Wildcards can also be used in a service number search if only part of the number is known.
- The **Date** field allows you to refine a search by the date the records were created. It can be searched using a single year (eg '1961') or a range of years (eg '1960-1966').

For further information

To use NameSearch more effectively we suggest that you read the [Help](#) text.

As NameSearch will not identify all files listed on RecordSearch, you may wish to conduct further searches using the Advanced search screens. For more information see:

Please see:

- *Fact sheet 13 – RecordSearch an overview*
- *Fact sheet 14 – Keyword searching in RecordSearch Advanced search screens*