

Army Inventions Directorate, 1942–46

Inventions to support the war effort

In 1942 the Army Inventions Directorate (CA 537) was formed to encourage, coordinate, test and develop inventions of merit – particularly those with military applications – to assist Australia and the Allies in the war effort. The Directorate replaced the Central Inventions Board (CA 153), but had greater functions and resources at its disposal.

With headquarters in Melbourne and offices in each State capital and in Newcastle, the Directorate used the mass media and various technical journals to call for inventions. It also circulated lists of problems to selected inventors and scientific and technical organisations. By the time it was disbanded in 1946, the Directorate had received over 20,000 submissions and had accepted 127 for development. DP Mellor devoted a chapter in *The Role of Science and Industry* (volume V of the 'Civil' series of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1939–45*) to the Directorate's role and detailed some of the most notable submissions.

Record holdings

The Melbourne office of the National Archives holds a relatively comprehensive collection of Army Inventions Directorate records, including correspondence records about inventions; drawings, plans and photographs of inventions; and a range of indexes and registers. Details of these records are listed below.

Army Inventions Directorate records held in Melbourne

Correspondence records

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Inventions correspondence files, single number series</u>	1939–46	MP76/1
<u>Inventions correspondence files, single number series with 'M' (Miscellaneous) prefix</u>	1939–46	MP76/2
<u>Inventions correspondence files, single number series, 'G' (General) prefix</u>	1939–46	MP76/3
<u>Inventions correspondence files, annual single number series, 'LP' (Letters Patent) prefix</u>	1939–46	MP76/4

Drawings, plans and photographs

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Drawings of inventions</u>	1939–45	MP100/1
<u>Blueprints of inventions</u>	1939–45	MP100/2
<u>Volumes of photographs of inventions (the second volume of this series is an incomplete duplicate of the first)</u>	1939–45	MP100/3

Indexes and registers

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Names and addresses of inventors</u>	1938–40	MP1164/14
<u>Index to Army Inventions Directorate drawings, blueprints, etc</u>	1939–46	MP1164/4
<u>Inventions Board nominal index, alphabetical series</u>	1939–42	MP1164/5
<u>Card index of inventions, alphabetical series</u>	1939–42	MP1164/6
<u>Numerical subject index cards to inventions</u>	1939–46	MP1164/7
<u>File location book to 20,001 onwards and Letters Patent numbers</u>	1939–46	MP1164/9
<u>Inventory of drawing numbers and titles</u>	1939–45	MP1164/15
<u>'G' (General) series file register</u>	1939–46	MP1164/17
<u>Nominal index to inventors, alphabetical series</u>	1940–46	MP1164/1
<u>Secondary index to inventors</u>	1940–45	MP1164/20
<u>Nominal and subject index cards to 'G' (General) series inventions files</u>	1942	MP1164/2
<u>Reference cards to Army and Not Army requirements</u>	1942	MP1164/3
<u>File location book</u>	1942–46	MP1164/8
<u>Register of inventions files</u>	1942–46	MP1164/12
<u>Index to inventions of possible interest and branch development reports</u>	1942–45	MP1164/18
<u>Index cards of rejected inventions</u>	1942–45	MP1164/19
<u>Registers for Letters Patent applications</u>	1943–46	MP1164/10
<u>'M' (Miscellaneous) series submissions and inquiries register</u>	1945	MP1164/11
<u>Classification of submissions – supplementary index</u>	1946	MP1164/13
<u>New South Wales schedule of cases and files</u>	1946	MP1164/16