

United States forces in Queensland, 1941–45

The United States of America entered World War II following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 7 December 1941. On 14 December, US Defense Chief, General Eisenhower, decided that the US forces should direct their campaign from Australia. Queensland served as an important base for American forces during operations for the War in the Pacific. Nearly 80,000 Americans were located in Brisbane at the peak of the war.

The first contingent of the US forces to arrive in Australia arrived at Hamilton Wharf in Brisbane on 22 December 1941. The convoy named Task Force South Pacific included the escort ship USS *Pensacola* and USS *Chaumont*, USS *Republic* and USS *Meigs*; they had been diverted from the Philippines. The convoy disembarked a total of 4600 personnel. The first camp (Camp Ascot) was established at Brisbane's Eagle Farm racecourse. American service personnel were also located in and around the northern cities of Rockhampton and Townsville.

Types of records

Records held by the National Archives in Brisbane about the presence of US forces in Queensland during the World War II period relate to arrangements made for accommodation and training facilities (including Allied Works Council records), wartime security matters and the community issues that arise from hosting a large contingent of foreign servicemen.

Facilities and administration

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Department of Works – architectural plans</u>	1863– 1948	J2774
<u>Property correspondence files (WW II period files refer to construction of facilities for US forces)</u>	1902–98	J56
<u>Plans of Army property</u>	1908–61	BP378/1
<u>Allied Works Council exhibition of paintings and photographs of civil construction in Australia 1939–44</u>	1921–50	BP262/2, 8362
<u>Chinese employed by US Army at Townsville</u>	1941–44	J25, 1947/4384
<u>Division of Aircraft Production policy files (includes photographs of workers hostels, hangers, workshops and other facilities at Moorooka and Rocklea)</u>	1941–46	BP34/1

<u>Original tracings – architectural drawings – wartime building in North Queensland</u>	1942–58	J153
<u>Allied Works Council, Queensland – minutes of meetings – 1942</u>	1942	BP1/4
<u>Allied Works Council, Queensland – minutes of meetings – 1942–45</u>	1942–45	BP1/1
<u>Allied Works Council – inter office memoranda</u>	1942–45	BP1/2
<u>Plans of Rockhampton district camp areas</u>	1944	BP198/1
<u>Telephone directory – US Army at Victoria Park</u>	1945	J3088, QPT43
<u>Indices of Chinese employed by the USA Army at Bulimba and repatriated to China (4 volumes) 1945 BP210/7, 1</u>	1945	BP210/7, 1
<u>Indices of Chinese employed by the USA Army at Bulimba and repatriated to China (4 volumes) 1945 BP210/7, 2</u>	1945	BP210/7, 2
<u>Indices of Chinese employed by the USA Army at Bulimba and repatriated to China (4 volumes) 1945 BP210/7, 3</u>	1945	BP210/7, 3
<u>Indices of Chinese employed by the USA Army at Bulimba and repatriated to China (4 volumes) 1945 BP210/7, 4</u>	1945	BP210/7, 4

National security issues

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>State Publicity Censor – correspondence files</u>	1939–45	BP361/1
<u>Sabotage devices – matches</u>	1941–45	BP242/1, Q40200
<u>Correspondence files – wartime criminal prosecutions and investigations</u>	1942–46	J1889
<u>State Publicity Censor – reports</u>	1942–45	BP242/1, Q40135
<u>Australian-USA Co-operation – Lend Lease – Financial account procedure</u>	1942–48	B243/1, X45/1
<u>Australian-American relations</u>	1943–45	BP242/1, Q41191
<u>Collector of Customs – correspondence files – 1942–50</u>	1942–50	BP18/1
<u>Collector of Customs – correspondence files – from 1951</u>	1951–ongoing	J452

Entertainment

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Scripts of talks broadcast by the ABC Brisbane to and from the USA for troops</u>	1939–45	BP257/1
<u>Press Cuttings – Entertainment during wartime</u>	1939–46	BP770/1

War brides

Several thousand Australian women married US servicemen and left Brisbane for the United States following the war. Most travelled by sea in groups unaccompanied by their husbands. Women leaving from Brisbane are named in passenger lists held by the National Archives in series J716, but you will need to know the name of the vessel and the date of departure in order to locate relevant lists.

Collection references

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Ship passenger lists – Brisbane outwards</u>	1859–64	J716
<u>Nominal roll – Marine Phoenix arrived Sydney 20 February 1948 – Australian war brides with children returning with American ex-servicemen husbands</u>	1948	J25, 1948/1009

Other sources of information

Use the [RecordSearch](#) database to locate records about the presence of US forces in Australia during the war relating to areas such as those listed below. Keyword searches using terms relating to the subject of interest should identify relevant records.

- The presence of US servicemen in regions of Australia other than Queensland
- Australia–US cooperation in the war against Japan
- The relationship between Australian Prime Minister John Curtin and US General Douglas MacArthur.

MacArthur Museum, Brisbane

The [MacArthur Museum, Brisbane](#) also holds resources relevant for research into the presence of US forces in Queensland during World War II. Contact the museum as follows:

MacArthur Museum, Brisbane
MacArthur Chambers, 201 Edward Street
Brisbane, Queensland

GPO Box 1247
Brisbane QLD 4001