

Navy crew and ships records

Crew records

The National Archives' holdings include records containing information about members of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) who served as crew aboard RAN ships. To use these records effectively you will need to know the name of the vessel and the approximate period of service of the individual.

Navy ships: ledgers and tenders

The best available source for crew details is the ships' ledgers, which are held in Canberra in the record series A4624. The series ranges from 1912 to 1956. The Navy ceased to record crew information in this way after 1956.

The ledgers were completed quarterly for each ship (or shore establishment) and contain the following information for each crew member:

- name, number, seniority and rank
- victualling details
- pay entitlement and period of full pay
- credit or debit adjustments to pay
- remarks about punishments or qualifications

The ledgers for each ship have been bound as volumes for each quarter (ie three month period) the ship was on active service, and this is reflected in the title for each volume (eg *HMAS Rushcutter, quarter ended 30/6/1941*). On some occasions groups of vessels, referred to as tenders, have been recorded together as one ledger. Tenders are auxiliary vessels used to assist or serve another vessel. These generally involve requisitioned vessels, and the ledger is recorded under the name of the parent vessel or establishment. These ledgers often include individual crew lists for each vessel.

References to many of the ledgers appear at item level on [RecordSearch](#), available online in all National Archives' research centres. Searches using the name of the vessel as a keyword, and the series number as A4624, should select relevant items. Reference staff can assist you in using the database. Not all ledgers for the period 1950–56 are individually listed on RecordSearch. Reference staff can assist you in locating these ledgers.

Other records of ships' crew

An additional source of information on crew members to the rank of Petty Officer and below is provided in the table below.

Collection references

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Punishment returns, HMA ships</u>	1912–59	A7111

Ships records

There are a number of sources of information on RAN ships held by offices of the National Archives and the Australian War Memorial. These sources, which are listed in the table below, include the logs and reports of proceedings, which record the voyages undertaken by vessels and any incidents occurring on board during tours of duty. They also include records documenting the design, construction and maintenance of vessels.

Records relating to RAN ships

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Ships' drawings and specifications</u>	1870–1957	MP551/1
<u>HMA ships' books and supplements</u>	1911–	A4141
<u>Log books of HM Colonial (HMC), HM, and HMA ships</u>	1855–1956	SP551/1
<u>Reports of proceedings, HMA ships</u>	1923–50	B4883
<u>HMA ships logs (mainly 1914–18 period)</u>	1911–54	AWM35
<u>Reports of proceedings, HMA ships</u>	1939–	AWM78

Access to the records

While most records relating to crew and ships that are in the open access period are available for public access, some of the crew records referred to above may have restrictions to protect sensitive personal information contained in them. In these cases the restricted information is made exempt from public release and the remainder of the record will be made available. Please see Fact sheet 10 – Access to records under the Archives Act.

For more information

Further information about holdings of RAN personnel records is included in the following fact sheets:

- *Fact sheet 30 - Navy service records*
- *Fact sheet 138 - Navy service records held in Melbourne*