

Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) Service Records

The Royal Air Force Museum holds the official service records of members of the ATA (1939 – 1945), many of whom were women and one of whose main duties was ferrying aircraft. These records are only available to the individuals concerned and their relatives.

Medals and Awards

Enquiries regarding unclaimed medals should be made to RAF Disclosures at Cranwell.

To find the citations for medals and other awards, you need to know the approximate date of the award. Citations were sometimes given in the London Gazette (held by TNA, the Guildhall Library and the British Library), and a greater number appeared in the magazine *Flight* (about one month after the London Gazette date). During the Second World War, notices were not published for personnel from occupied countries. The full version of a citation may be in the AIR 2 class at the TNA, although it could be difficult to trace.

Also see:

- B Austerberry, *Gazetted Awards to NCOs and other ranks of the aerial forces, 1914-1924* (Jade Publishing, 1999)
- N & C Carter, *The Distinguished Flying Cross and How it Was Won 1918-1995* (Savannah, 1998) 2 vols.
- I T Tavender, *The Distinguished Flying Medal: A Record of Courage 1918-1982* (Polstead, 1990) and I T Tavender, *The Distinguished Flying Medal Register for the Second World War* (Savannah, 2000) 2 vols.

Tracing Ex-Servicemen/Women

The Royal Air Force Museum holds the addresses of many veterans' associations, and may be able to advise on other ways of getting in touch with ex-servicemen/women.

Further Research

Please write to the Department of Research and Information Services if you require further advice, such as on the availability of published squadron histories. Information on many more sources, especially official records, is given in: S Fowler, P Elliott, R C Nesbit & C Goulter, *RAF Records in the PRO* (PRO Publications, 1994). TNA's website also gives advice on using the records held there.

Addresses

The National Archives

Ruskin Avenue
Kew
Richmond
Surrey TW9 4DU
Tel: 020 8876 3444
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

2 Marlow Road
Maidenhead
Berkshire SL6 7DX
tel: 01628 634221
www.cwgc.org

Air Historical Branch (RAF)

Building 824
RAF Northolt
West End Road
Ruislip
Middlesex HA4 6NG

British Library Official Publications & Social Sciences Reading Room

96 Euston Road
London
NW1 2DB
tel: 020 1412 7536
www.bl.uk

RAF Disclosures

Room 221b
Trenchard Hall
RAF Cranwell
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 8HB

The Family Records Centre

1 Myddelton Street
London
EC1R 1UW
tel: 020 8392 5300

The Guildhall Library

Aldermanbury
London
EC2P 2EJ
tel: 020 7606 3030

Department of Printed Books Imperial War Museum

Lambeth Road
London
SE1 6HZ
tel: 020 7416 5000
www.iwm.org.uk

Department of Research & Information Services Information Sheet No.2 Personnel Records

RAF, RAFVR, RAuxAF, WRAF, WAAF & ATA

This leaflet describes sources for tracing the careers of former members of the above services. Some information about an individual's service may be held by a number of organisations, including the Royal Air Force Museum, The National Archives (TNA) (formerly the Public Record Office), and the Ministry of Defence. If you know very little about an individual, the first stage of research will generally be to obtain a copy of their official service records, although in many cases these are only available to next of kin (see below: if you cannot get access to service records, there are still many other sources of information).

Researchers wishing to view material held in the Royal Air Force Museum's library and archives should make an appointment by telephone, fax or e-mail with the Department of Research and Information Services well in advance of their proposed visit. Enquiries should be made in writing (enclosing an SAE) and should contain as much detail as is already known, in particular the individual's name, service number, rank and approximate dates of service, also mentioning any sources which have already been consulted.

The titles of books are given in italics.

**Department of Research & Information Services
Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, Hendon,
London NW9 5LL Tel: 020 8205 2266 Fax: 020 8200 1751**

**website: www.rafmuseum.org
e-mail: research@rafmuseum.org**

For a more detailed guide to researching air services personnel see: W Spencer, *Air Force Records for Family Historians* (Public Record Office, 2000).

RAF & WRAF Personnel discharged between 1 April 1918 and 31 December 1920:

The TNA holds the service records of these RAF officers (in class AIR 76) and RAF airmen (in class AIR 79, indexes in AIR 78). Records of members of the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF), which existed 1918-1920, are at TNA in class AIR 80.

The Royal Air Force Museum and TNA hold copies of the Muster Roll compiled on the formation of the RAF (1 April 1918), which gives brief details of all NCOs and airmen then in the service, they are only listed in order of service number, and there is no alphabetical index.

Service after 1920:

The service records of personnel who served beyond 1920 are held at RAF Cranwell, and are normally only released to next of kin, on payment of a search fee. These include the records of members of Commonwealth air forces (RAAF, RCAF, SAAF and RNZAF) who served during the Second World War.

The Air Force List, published monthly 1918-1945, and less frequently thereafter, gives the branch, rank and date of seniority of RAF officers. Those issued between 1920 and 1938 also show the officer's unit and date of posting.

The RAF Retired List contains brief information on officers receiving service pensions, but does not include those who left the service at the end of the Second World War, or after completing a Short Service Commission.

Most large libraries hold copies of *Who Was Who* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which give details of the careers of senior officers.

Aces High contains nearly 1,200 brief biographies of British and Commonwealth aces of the Second World War: C F Shores & C Williams, *Aces High. The Fighter Aces of the British and Commonwealth Air Forces in World War Two* (Grub Street, 1994); also Vol. 2 (1998).

Nearly 3,000 aircrew of all nationalities who flew with Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain are listed in: K Wynn, *Men of the Battle of Britain* (Second edition: CCB Associates, 1999). Additional information may be found in: W G Ramsey (ed.), *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* (After the Battle, 1985).

For general information about the day-to-day operations of Bomber and Fighter Commands, see: M Middlebrook & C Everitt, *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (Viking, 1985); J Foreman, *Fighter Command War Diaries. Vol. 1: Sept 1939 – Sept 1940; Vol. 2: Sept 1940 – Dec 1941* (Air Research Publications, 1996 & 1998).

The unit diaries (Operations Record Books) at TNA may also provide further information.

Casualties and Prisoners of War (PoWs)

Information on the place of burial or commemoration of Commonwealth service personnel killed in the two World Wars can be obtained from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which can also supply some military and personal details. The Imperial War Museum also holds copies of the Commission's registers, although these are not indexed.

The Air Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence may hold information regarding RAF personnel killed, injured, reported missing or taken PoW during the years 1919-1985.

An index to some 65,000 RAF war dead (killed outside the UK 1939-1948) is held by the Family Records Centre, which also contains other records useful to those researching family history. The index is arranged alphabetically and gives full name, rank, service number, unit and year of death. Commonwealth citizens are not included, unless they served with the RAF. All other RAF deaths are registered in the general ledgers held at the Centre.

Bomber Command Losses and Fighter Command Losses contain chronological listings of the losses in action of individual aircraft and aircrew of these commands during the Second World War. Details of these and other useful books are as follows:

• W R Chorley, *RAF Bomber Command Losses, Vol. 1: 1939-40; Vol. 2: 1941; Vol. 3: 1942; Vol. 4: 1943; Vol. 5: 1944; Vol. 6: 1945; Vol. 7 (OTUs 1940-1947), Vol. 8 (HCUs & miscellaneous units) and Vol. 9 (Roll of honour 1939-1947)* (Midland Counties Publications, 1992-2007): also contains escapers and evaders, PoWs and internees.

• N L R Franks, *Fighter Command Losses. Vol. 1: 1939-1941; Vol. 2: 1942-1943; Vol. 3: 1944-1945 (including 2nd Tactical Air Force and Air Defence Great Britain)* (Midland Publishing, 1997, 1998 & 2000).

• E W Martyn, *For Your Tomorrow: Vol. 1: 1915-1942; Vol. 2: 1943-1998* (Volplane Press, 1998 & 1999): gives information on casualties to New Zealanders in the RNZAF and other air services, 1915-1998.

• L Allison & H Hayward, *They Shall Not Grow Old (Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum, 1991)*: lists over 18,000 RCAF Second World War casualties and PoWs, plus RAF, RAAF and RNZAF casualties in and near Canada.

• *Prisoners of War. Naval and Air Forces of Great Britain and the Empire, 1939-1945* (J B Hayward & Son, 1990): an incomplete list of Second World War PoWs in Europe.

• For losses of RAF aircraft and personnel in accidents since May 1945, see: C Cummings, *The Price of Peace (losses May-December 1945) Last Take-Off (1950-53) To Fly No More (1954-1958) and Lost To Service (1959-1996)* (Nimbus; 2005, 2001, 2000, 1999 & 1997).

The Royal Air Force Museum holds an incomplete series of RFC/RAF casualty cards for the years 1914-1925. These include many non-fatal casualties and training accidents.

The Museum also holds a set of Bomber Command Loss Cards covering 1939-1945, and an incomplete set of Accident Cards beginning in 1919, both of which provide some information on casualties. In both cases it is necessary to know the date of the loss or accident, and in the case of accident cards, also the aircraft type.

Rolls of honour for the Groups of Bomber Command are displayed in the following cathedrals, and the Royal Air Force Museum holds copies of all but the No. 2 Group book: Lincoln: Nos. 1 & 5 Groups; York Minster: Nos. 4 & 6 Groups, and those members of No. 7 Group who died while serving in the York area; Ely: Nos. 2, 3, 8 & 100 Groups.