

SOURCES FOR RESEARCHING WORLD WAR TWO ANCESTORS

The Second World War covered more regions of the world, involved more forces and services and also included the Home Front on a much larger scale than the First World War. Added to this is the fact that some of the records are still closed. Thus researching a Second World War ancestor can be a little more complicated.

The list below covers all the Resource Guides available on the National Archives website which will help guide through what is available and where to find.

Further records and resources can be found at the Imperial War Museum, National Army Museum, RAF Museum, Bomber Command Museum, Duxford Air museum, National Museum of the Navy.

Local resources would include local Archives and Libraries, local museums (Harrington Air Museum, Sywell Airport, Silverstone Museum), town museums, parish and church records, parish council records, parish newsletters, website and local newspapers.

1939 Register All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/1939-register/>

British and Commonwealth prisoners of the Second World War and the Korean War

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-prisoners-second-world-war-korean-war/>

British Army casualty lists 1939-1945 All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-casualty-lists-1939-1945/>

British Army nurses

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-nurses/>

British Army officers in service after 1918

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-officers-in-service-after-1918/>

British Army operations in the Second World War

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-operations-second-world-war/>

British Army soldiers in service after 1918

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-soldiers-in-service-after-1918/>

Deaths in the First and Second World Wars

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/deaths-first-and-second-world-wars/>

Evacuees

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/evacuees/>

Home Guard personnel

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/home-guard-personnel/>

Internees

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/internees/>

Merchant seamen serving since 1918

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-seamen-serving-since-1918/>

Merchant seamen's campaign medal records 1939-1945 All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-seamens-campaign-medal-records-1939-1945/>

Merchant seamen's medals and honours

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-seamen-medals-honours/>

Merchant shipping movement cards 1939-1945

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-shipping-movement-cards-1939-1945/>

Military maps of the Second World War

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/military-maps-second-world-war/>

Military nursing

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/military-nursing/>

National Farm Survey of England and Wales 1941-1943

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/national-farm-survey-england-wales-1941-1943/>

Officers in the Merchant Navy

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/officers-merchant-navy/>

Prisoners of war: selected records 1715-1945

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/prisoners-of-war-selected-records-1715-1945/>

Royal Air Force airmen service records 1912-1939

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-air-force-airmen-service-records-1912-1939/>

Royal Air Force operations

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-air-force-operations/>

Royal Air Force combat reports 1939-1945

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/raf-combat-reports-1939-1945/>

Royal Air Force operations record books 1911-1963

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/raf-operations-record-books-1939-1945/>

Royal Air Force personnel

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-air-force-personnel/>

Royal Air Force squadrons

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-air-force-squadron/>

Royal Marines officers

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-marines-officers/>

Royal Marines other ranks

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-marines-other-ranks/>

Royal Naval Reserve personnel

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-naval-reserve-personnel/>

Royal Naval Reserve service records 1860-1955

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-naval-reserve-service-records-1860-1955/>

Royal Navy nurses

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-navy-nurses/>

Royal Navy operations in the Second World War

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-navy-operations-second-world-war/>

Royal Navy ratings enlisted after 1918

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-navy-ratings-after-1918/>

Royal Navy ratings' pensions 17th-20th centuries

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-navy-ratings-pensions/>

Volunteers and Territorials

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/volunteers-territorials/>

Women's Land Army

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/womens-land-army/>

Women's Royal Air Force personnel

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/womens-royal-air-force-personnel/>

Women's Royal Naval Service personnel

All records viewable online

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/womens-royal-naval-service-personnel/>