



SHROPSHIRE
ARCHIVES

Gateway to
the history
of Shropshire
and Telford

Tracing your Second World War ancestors

At the end of the Second World War 3 million men and women were serving in the Army, one million in the RAF and 780,000 in the Royal Navy. Such was the scope of the conflict and the need for personnel that most families will have had members in the services or known people who served.

The following information will give some guidance to help you get started and indicates the main sources of information.

Information available at Shropshire Archives:

- **Kings Shropshire Light Infantry Records**

The KSLI records (ref: 6005) are held at Shropshire Archives, on behalf of the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum (see below). The records, which include books, photographs and war diaries, refer mostly to the regiment rather than to individuals. You can browse the catalogue [here](#) (or by searching our online catalogue for X6005) and onsite. You will need a Shropshire Archives Reader's Ticket to see the KSLI records.

- **Local newspapers**

An often neglected, but important source is local newspapers. These were heavily censored and much reduced in size as a result of paper restrictions during the war, but did carry articles and features about local men and women as well as local events.

The *Shrewsbury Chronicle* is on microfilm at Shropshire Archives. The *Wellington Journal* is on microfiche at Telford Library and the original copies can be seen at Shropshire Archives (with a Shropshire Archives Reader's Ticket).

Some newspapers are on <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> (free access at Shropshire Archives and libraries).

Other information:

- **Army Roll of Honour**

This also lists those who died between 1st September 1939 and 31st December 1946. The roll is held at the National Archives, but you can search it on the FindMyPast website (free access at Shropshire Archives).

There's a helpful guide on The National Archives' website with links to other online records for ancestors who died in the war:

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

- **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

The CWGC's Debt of Honour database at www.cwgc.org records all of those who died while on active service during the Second World War. The information given includes place of burial (or memorial if no known grave exists), name, rank and unit.

- **Service Records**

Personal service records and medal records are still held by the Ministry of Defence. Copies of service records will only be released to legal next of kin. A charge is made for this service (except for widows). Owing to demand there may be a delay in receiving a copy.

We recommend that you check the following website for up to date information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

Army

Ministry of Defence
Army Personnel Centre
Historical Disclosure
Mail Point 400, Kentigern House
65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX

Royal Air Force

PMA 1 b RAF, Room 5
Building 248A
Gloucestershire GL3 1EZ

Royal Navy

Prior to 1972 all Navy Personnel were issued with their service records upon discharge. Therefore records maintained by the Royal Navy are limited to little more than basic information such as name, rank and number.

DNCM

Data Protection Cell
Building 1/152
PP164 Victory View
HMNB Portsmouth
PO1 3LS

- **Medal Records**

Medal records are also still held by the Ministry of Defence.

As a rule military personnel were not issued with **Campaign Medals** upon demobilisation at the end of the Second World War. Most had to claim them. Medals are still issued free of charge to veterans or legal next of kin claiming them for the first time, for more information contact:

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>
veterans-uk@mod.uk

Gallantry Medals are those awarded for acts of bravery. The National Archives holds records, but they are not always very detailed. Notifications and citations, (if published, which was generally not the case with the Military Medal and Mentions in Despatches) appeared in the official journal the *London Gazette*. The *London Gazette Online Archive* <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/> contains First and Second World War entries.

- **Sources at The National Archives (TNA)**

War Diaries provide details of the activities of individual Army units, describe operations and list casualties among officers and more rarely NCOs and Other Ranks.

Operational Record Books give monthly summaries and daily flight records for each aircraft.

Ships' Logs focus primarily on navigational and meteorological data and do not generally provide useful information concerning individuals.

The web-site www.nationalarchives.gov.uk gives more details and you can see the records at:

The National Archives
Kew, Richmond
Surrey TW9 4DU
Tel: 020 8876 3444

Other Sources:

The **Soldiers of Shropshire** (Regimental) Museum is based in Shrewsbury Castle, Shrewsbury SY1 2AT. It is well worth a visit if your ancestors were local and staff there are extremely knowledgeable.

The Museum has copies of the army, navy and air force lists, 1778 to date. Their website <https://www.soldiersofshropshire.co.uk/> includes plenty of useful background about the regiments.

A vast collection of private papers, maps, photographs, film, art, oral testimony and published volumes, including unit histories can be seen at the **Imperial War Museum**, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ, www.iwm.org.uk

The **International Committee of the Red Cross** in Geneva keeps lists of all known Prisoners of War and internees of all nationalities for the Second World War. Enquiries can be made to: Archives Division and Research Service, International Committee of the Red Cross, 119 Avenue de la Paix, Geneva CH-1202 Switzerland.

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/researching-victims-conflict>

The National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HT holds a collection of books, manuscripts, drawings and photographs. www.nam.ac.uk

The Royal Naval Museum, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3NH, maintains an archive and library collection. www.royalnavalmuseum.org/

The RAF Museum, Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8UP and its sister site Grahame Park Way, London NW9 5LL have records of individual aircraft as well as personal papers. www.rafmuseum.org.uk

There are many other regimental and military museums throughout Britain holding a wealth of material potentially useful to you. *A Guide to Military Museums and Other Places of Military Interest* (10th Edition) by Terence and Shirley Wise is a good source for information and contact details. <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/militarymuseums/>

Official and personnel records are often relocated. The information is correct to the best of our knowledge at time of printing.

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