

Guide to Second World War online resources

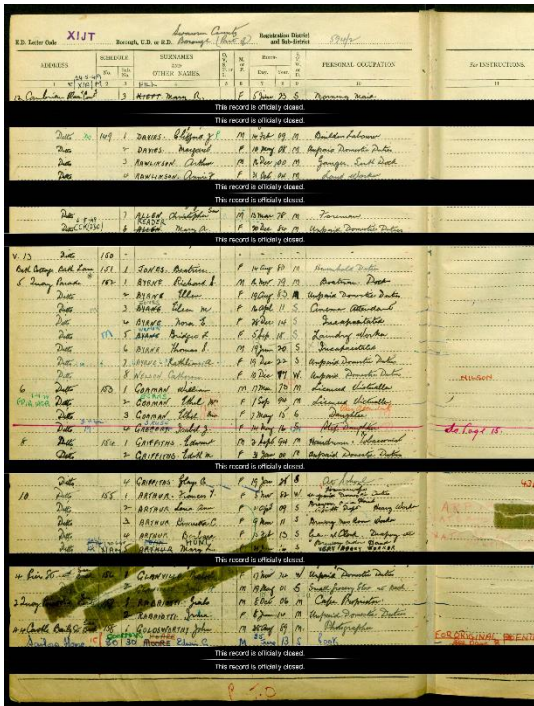


A guide to tracing your Second World War
ancestors online

Guide to Second World War online resources

Trying to find information on your ancestor can be challenging: many sources contain sensitive information on named individuals and, due to UK Data Protection Laws, some documents are subject to restrictions. However, we have produced a useful guide to resources for the Second World War.

1939 Register



In December 1938 it was announced that in the event of war, a National Register would be taken that listed the personal details of every civilian in England and Wales. National Registration Day was 29 September 1939. This Register was a critical tool in coordinating the war effort at home. It was used to issue identity cards, organise rationing and, after the war, was used in the founding of the NHS. The records remained with the NHS until 1991.

The register **does** include the civilian populations of England and Wales.

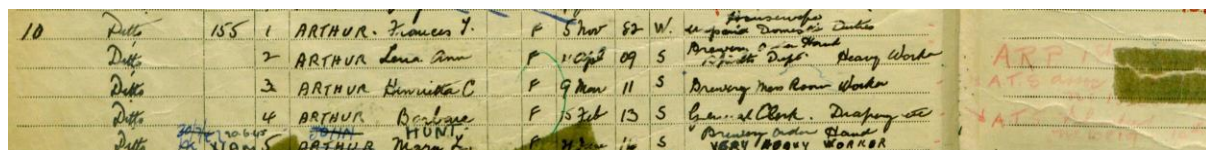
The register **does not** include the civilian populations of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The register **does not** include military populations.

Individuals' records remain closed or information in them redacted for 100 years from their date of birth (the 100 year rule) or until proof of death is verified. The record of anyone born less than 100 years ago is closed (not open to the public) because they are deemed to potentially still be alive (if you can prove that they are dead you may be able to get the record opened).

The register records the following information: address; schedule number; sub number; surname; first name(s); role (for institutions only, e.g. Officer, Visitor, Servant, Patient, Inmate); gender; date of birth; marital status; occupation.

The left hand column holding the street address will often have notes in pencil or other colours. This can signify a wedding date or change of name of the person it is next to. The column on the far right hand side sometimes includes information relating to jobs or roles the individuals may have held during the war, for example air raid warden or special constable.



Red Cross

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the British Red Cross united with the Order of St John to help aid the wounded and sick. Extensive services were carried out both at home, and abroad. The British Red Cross were caring for the sick and wounded, prisoners of war and civilians needing relief.



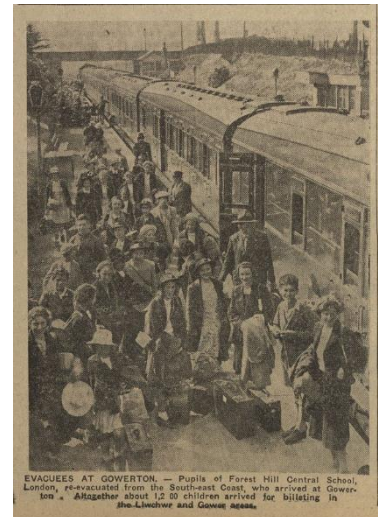
The British Red Cross website has a section dedicated to their Museum and Archive collections: <https://museumandarchives.redcross.org.uk/explore> Researchers can view 29,574 documents online, and they include items relating to First Aid, Prisoners of War and disaster relief.

For more information on the support that the Red Cross gave during the Second World War, please see their dedicated information page <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/our-history/the-red-cross-in-the-second-world-war>

Royal Voluntary Service

Originally founded in 1938 as the Women's Voluntary Services for Air Raid Precautions, Royal Voluntary Service is the largest volunteering organisation in British history. You can find out more about the organisation on their website: <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/about-us/our-history>

The Royal Voluntary Service has digital copies of hundreds of historical reports and details about the Evacuation process from the Second World War, including those for our area: <https://bit.ly/3c2IHrL> The website also has lots of useful facts sheets and school resources.



EVACUEES AT GOWERTON. — Pupils of Forest Hill Central School, London, re-evacuated from the South-east Coast, who arrived at Gowerton. Altogether about 1200 children arrived for billeting in the Lincolne and Gowerton areas.

Military

Nearly all regiments and corps maintain museums, and some have deposited their archives with local record offices. A full list is provided by the Army Museums Ogilby Trust at www.armymuseums.org.uk

Detailed information about the award of gallantry medals to individual service men and women (mainly soldiers) between 1935 and 1990 can be found on The National Archives website <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/medals.htm>



The London Gazette provides details of officers' promotions and information about the award of gallantry medals as well as despatches from commanders in the field. The Gazette is online at www.thegazette.co.uk

Newspapers may include stories about local militia units and local men. These can be accessed via British Newspapers Online: www.britishnewspaperarchives.co.uk

A number of unit histories for the Second World War, including war diaries and other documents are available on WW2 Talk: <http://ww2talk.com/forums/index.php>

If you want to help identifying badges the British Badge Forum has a lot of useful content www.britishbadgeforum.com

For some excellent information sheets on the history of the Navy visit the Royal Naval Museum website which includes people, ships and vessels, general Navy history www.royalnavalmuseum.org/research_info_sheets.htm

BBC Archive

The BBC compiled an archive of Second World War memories, which add depth and feeling to the facts that can be found elsewhere online. The full online collection can be consulted at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/categories/> You can find people like Doris Irene Davies nee Scourfield providing us with a civilian story. Mrs Davies was a Red Cross Nurse on the Children's Ward at Neath Port Talbot Hospital. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/68/a8076468.shtml>

Specialist subscription only websites

Forces Records www.forces-war-records.co.uk

Military Archive www.militaryarchive.co.uk

The Naval and Military Press www.military-genealogy.co.uk

A lot of the content on these sites can be located via Ancestry and Find My Past. Remember your local Archive will have free access to these sites!





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