

The Armed Forces in India, 1600 – 1947: Guide to Collections held by institutions other than the British Library

The British Library holds records relating to the armed forces in India during the period of colonial rule (1600-1947), from the formation of units under the East India Company, through the Raj to World War Two and Partition.

However, there are also collections of records on this subject in other libraries and archives around the UK. The following is a list of the more significant institutions holding relevant collections, as well as examples of some of the smaller collections to be found in local archives, libraries, and record offices.

The main online catalogues and guides for searching UK institutions for relevant collections are:

- Archives HUB <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>
- AIM25 <https://aim25.com/>
- The National Archives (TNA) Discovery <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) <https://www.scan.org.uk/index.html>
- Library Hub Discover <https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/>
- Social Networks and Archival Context <https://snaccooperative.org/?redirected=1>
- Making Britain <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/>
- South Asia Archive & Library Group (SAALG) Blog <https://saalg.blogspot.com/>
- Individual institutions often have their own online catalogues and collection guides. A list of UK archives can be found with the National Archives' Find an Archive service. <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/find-an-archive>

List of Institutions and relevant collections:

Bodleian Library, Archives and Manuscripts

The Bodleian Library holds a number of collections relating to military forces in India during World War Two, including:

- King's African Rifles Papers - During World War Two the regiment achieved battle honours in Abyssinia, British and Italian Somaliland, Madagascar, the Middle East and Burma. At this time the regiment totalled eight battalions, which served in Kenya, Somalia, Abyssinia, Madagascar, Burma, India and Palestine, as well as undertaking civil defence duties in Northern Rhodesia.
- Papers of Sir Reginald Coupland - The majority of these papers relate to the history of the British Empire and Commonwealth, with particular reference to Africa, Canada and India. During World War Two Coupland devoted much time to the study of India, visiting the country twice. In 1942 he was appointed a member of Sir Stafford Cripps' Mission to India, and his Report on the Constitutional Problem in India was published during 1942-1943.

- Photograph Albums and Travel Diaries of Sir Reginald Coupland - Travel diaries, photograph albums covering Britain, Greece, the West Indies, India, and South, East and West Africa.

Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York

This repository holds the Papers of Sir Charles Wood, 1st Viscount Halifax, as President of the Board of Control 1853-56, and Secretary of State for India 1859-66.

Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge University

The Churchill Archives Centre holds the archive of Sir Percy James Grigg, PC, KCB, KCSI. This includes papers concerned with India (sections 2-8), created during Sir James's appointment as Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council (1934-1939) and Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War (1939-1942).

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The CWGC holds the records of the 1.7 million people who died in World Wars One and Two.

Derbyshire Record Office

The Derbyshire Record Office includes the Personal and Royal Air Force Service Papers of Eric Walton of Clay Cross (reference D6022). Walton was clerk to General Sir Frederick Browning, Chief of Staff to Lord Louis Mountbatten during the Lord's time in Burma, India, and Singapore; and confidential clerk to Lord Killearn.

Edinburgh University Library Special Collections

The Edinburgh University Library holds the Percy Johnson-Marshall Collection (reference GB237 PJM), relating to Percy Johnson-Marshall's World War Two service in India and Burma (1940-1956). It also includes correspondence and papers of the Gauhati Group: Service Arts and Technical Organisation (SATO).

Families in British India Society

This website provides a wealth of information and sources to support research on ancestors from India. These sources include births, marriages and deaths mentioned in newspapers and periodicals, British and Indian censuses, and military and maritime records.

https://wiki.fibis.org/w/Main_Page

Gloucestershire Archives

These Archives hold the records of Dr. Alfred Melville Cook, organist, choirmaster and musicologist (reference D6885). They include his correspondence while serving with the Royal Artillery in the Orkneys, East Africa, India and the Far East.

Hull University Archives, Hull History Centre

The University includes two collections relating to war in India:

- The Papers of Reginald Francis Orlando Bridgeman (U DBN) including a section entitled Colonies (1927-1945) consisting of correspondence and printed material about anti-imperialism and colonies, particularly India.
- The Papers of Professor John Saville (U DJS) which include his academic writing inspired by his time in India, his correspondence with his wife, pamphlets on Indian Independence and communism, and an audio recording of Professor Saville talking about his military service in Britain and India during the World War Two.

Imperial War Museum – Department of Documents

The IWM holds private papers, such as letters and memoirs, of British military servicemen, including many who were stationed in India and the surrounding regions. The Museum also holds items in other formats, such as photographs, books, badges and weapons relating to forces serving in India.

The India-related records include those of Captain P Griffin (PG); Major General D W Reid (DWR); and Captain Lawrence Geoffrey Stephens (Documents.22513).

Jesuits in Britain Archives

This collection holds the archives of Archbishop Thomas d'Esteerre Roberts (1893-1976) (reference ABSI/SJ). These are official papers relating to Roberts' role as Archbishop of Bombay and his personal correspondence. During World War Two he was appointed Bishop Delegate for the Armed Forces in India and South-East Asia.

Lambeth Palace Library

The Library holds the papers of William Temple (1881-1944) which relate to the Indian Church Aid Association and the political situation in India, particularly the Quit India Movement during World War Two and its aftermath.

Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London

The Centre was founded in 1964 for research into British modern defence policy. It contains the papers of various military officials with service from the Boer War to the present day, and the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1942-1945).

The Centre holds records on the following individuals involved in the defence of India:

- BROAD, Lt gen Sir Charles (Noel Frank) (1882-1976)
- CAUNTER, Brig John Alan Lyde (1889-1981)
- FEARON, Lt Col Sheppard Percy (1911-1984)
- GUETERBOCK, Brig Ernest Adolphus Leopold (1897-1984)
- GIBSON, Brig Arthur Blair (1894-1986)
- GRACEY, Gen Sir Douglas David (1894-1964)
- GREEVES, Maj Gen Stuart (1897-1989)
- HUNT, Brig (Henry Cecil) John, Baron Hunt of Llanfair Waterdine (1910-1998)
- HUTTON, Lt Gen Sir Thomas Jacomb (1890-1981)
- LINDSELL, Lt Gen Sir Wilfred Gordon (1884-1973)
- MACLEOD, Col Roderick ('Rory') (1891-1984)
- THOMSON, Capt Stanley Johnstone, RN (1901-1981)
- WADE, Maj Gen (Douglas) Ashton (Lofft) (1898-1996)
- WINTERTON, Maj Gen Sir (Thomas) John (Willoughby) (1898-1987)
- WOODS, Maj Gen Thomas Frederic Mackie (1904-1982)

Museum of Military Medicine

The Museum holds the archives of the four Army Service Corps from the 19th and 20th centuries. These include service records, personal diaries, and photographs from units serving in India and Burma during World War Two.

National Army Museum

The Museum collection documents the history of the British Army, including the armies of the Indian Empire and other imperial forces.

Its archive includes books, photographs, personal papers, plans and other items.

National Maritime Museum

The Museum collection documents the history of seafaring, navigation and astronomy. Its archive includes books, photographs, personal papers, plans and other items.

This includes the records of the Royal Indian Navy (1612-1947) Association. These mostly consist of the papers of naval personnel on the ships used by the East India Company and its successors.

Parliamentary Archives

This repository collects the records of the UK Parliament. It therefore holds a number of records relating to military and naval policy throughout the Commonwealth.

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Archives, University of London

SOAS aims to record the British interaction with Africa and Asia over the last 250 years and has a variety of archives relating to India. There are records for charities, missionary societies, companies and campaign groups, as well as personal papers.

The collections relating to India include:

- the memoirs of Michael Audland - Following the outbreak of World War Two, Audland was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in June 1943. After five months training in India he travelled to Burma to take part with the 2nd Gold Coast Light Battery of the 82nd West African Division in the 1944-1945 Burma campaign
- the personal papers of Francis [Frank] Robert Moraes - Reflecting his work as a journalist and author in Asia from 1930 to 1974

Second World War Experience Centre

Held in Otley, West Yorkshire, the archive of the Centre compiles the wartime memories of veterans and witnesses, many of whom fought in India and the surrounding regions.

Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds branch

This local authority repository holds extensive records on the Suffolk Regiment (reference GB554). These include documents on the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment which took part in the Burma Campaign and the fighting in Arakan and at Imphal in March 1944. At the end of World War Two the battalion was stationed at Lahore in India.

Surrey History Centre

The Centre holds papers relating to the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) (reference QRWS). These include writings and research on the battalion, covering its service in the Boer War, World War One, and World War Two where it took part at Dunkirk and in the Burma Campaign.

The National Archives

TNA holds the official archives of the UK Government, with many records relating to the British in India, for instance, within the records of the War Office, the Cabinet Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office, and Foreign Office.

Unit Histories Website

This website compiles information about units and officers that fought in World War Two:

<https://www.unithistories.com/>

University of Leeds Special Collections

The University of Leeds holds a variety of records relating to war in India, including a large number of first-hand accounts of the two World Wars collected by Dr Peter Liddle, known as the Liddle Collection (reference LIDDLE).

University of Manchester Library

The special collections of the library contain various archives on this topic, especially in relation to World War Two.

These include:

- the papers of Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, covering 1940-1947: Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, June 1941 to August 1942; Commander-in-Chief, India, and latterly Supreme Commander, June 1943 to November 1947
- the William Brockbank Collection, relating to Dr Brockbank's research into medical aspects of the Chindit campaigns in Burma during the World War Two
- the George Dunlop papers, relating exclusively to his participation in the Chindit campaigns in northern Burma in 1942/3 (Operation Longcloth)
- the John Charles Mason collection of East India Company papers (1787-1885) relating to the marine branch of the East India Company and the Bombay Marine (later the Indian Navy). Mason was the Marine Secretary of the colonial Indian government between 1837 and 1867.

- the Peter Mead Papers, covering Mead's service between 1931 and 1964, including in the headquarters staff of Special Force (3rd Indian Infantry Division or, more popularly, the Chindits)
- the Derek Tulloch Papers, relating to his research into the life of Orde Wingate and the Chindit campaigns in Burma (1943-44)

West Sussex Record Office

This local authority archive holds a collection of records relating to the Royal Sussex Regiment, which first went to India in 1854 and continued an association with the subcontinent throughout the rest of its history, returning in the First and Second World Wars.