

With the variations that occur on official lists, TNA transcriptions and German cards, it is difficult to determine the correct format of prefixes. Therefore, to maintain consistency on the website now and in the future, we are going to ignore any spaces, dashes (hyphens), dots and forward slashes. Just the prefix (capital letters) followed by the number. There are a few exceptions and these are stated below. If we are searching on FWR, FMP or Ancestry it is advisable to undertake two searches, one with and one without the prefix. Usually there is no need to include the space, dash, dot, or forward slash but if results are not forthcoming, then try searching with these options.

**Exceptions:**

**Any prefix ending with the letter 'O'** O/

**Royal Navy**

Official Numbers for ratings consisted of a Prefix indicating their Port Division, **a forward slash**, a Main Letter denoting their trade, and a 4-6 figure number. An additional letter "X" after the main letter indicates that the rating was engaged after the new pay code of the early 1930s was introduced. Commissioned Officers were not given a number until early 1970s.

**Royal Marines**

Some Royal Marine numbers (Register Number) had prefix letters and sometimes there was a letter after the number indicating their trade.

Refer to previously issued information about the Royal Navy and **Royal Marines** numbers.

**General Information:****Merchant Navy**

Comes under the T124 Agreement – refer previously issued information. Except for Cable ships (CSP IX) and Admiralty Fleet Auxiliary (T299Z), all agreements are T124 with the suffix X or one of its variables. A standard note has been added to the body text of these POW records.

WO392 POW Lists state a 'Discharge A. Number'. These numbers were issued in the form of a Discharge Book when joining the Merchant Navy. This was essentially a 'service number' and would remain with the seaman throughout his time in the Merchant Navy. By the mid-1920s, numbers had reached 7 figures. About this time, it was decided to reset the numbers back to 1 and prefix 'R' was added. Therefore, two seamen could have the same number, but one will have a prefix. POW records with T124 may eventually be updated with the Discharge A. Number if this is available.

A standard note will be added to POW records in due course.

**Australian Army (2<sup>nd</sup> AIF)**

The first letter represented the state of enlistment: N: New South Wales; V: Victoria; Q: Queensland; S: South Australia; W: Western Australia; T: Tasmania; D: Northern Territory. The serial numbers of female soldiers followed this with an F. AIF serial number then had an X. A low number indicated an early enlistment.

Soldiers transferring from the Militia often kept their old number with 100,000 added, while PMF officers had 200,000 added. Example: NX7725 VX19829 WX2458 QX7297

## **British Army**

Most British Army service numbers have no prefix. A common exception is the Royal Army Service Corps:

T = Transport. S=Supplies. M=Mechanical Transport. R=Remounts.

Other prefixes were allocated to a limited number of Personnel. They are stated on the WO392 German POW Lists, otherwise it depends on where you look.

Example: P = Polish. RH = Rhodesian or Attached to South Rhodesian Forces. NAAFI = Navy Army and Air Force Institutes personnel (RASC). ME = British Volunteers enlisted in Egypt. NS = Compulsory Enrolments (males).

## **NAAFI Personnel**

NAAFI civilians can volunteer to join the Expeditionary Force Institutes (EFI), which provides NAAFI facilities in war zones. Male EFI personnel, until 1965, were members of the Royal Army Service Corps.

NAAFI civilians serving aboard ship are part of the Naval Canteen Service (NCS) and can similarly volunteer to join the Royal Navy when it is on active service. Refer Royal Navy and Royal Marines prefixes.

## **Canadian Army**

X12345: the X was an alphabetic character denoting the Military District the soldier was recruited in. 'A' represented MD1, 'B' MD2, etc. Up until 1945, officers never received numbers and were identified by name and rank only.

## **New Zealand Army (2NZEF)**

There are no prefixes with New Zealand Army service numbers.

## **South African Army**

P	South African Permanent Force
SAP	South African Police Brigade
SR	Southern Rhodesia
N	Native Military Corps
C	Cape Corps
M	Cape Corps

**More information here:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service\\_number](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_number)

Note:

Some service number prefixes refer to the nationality and some specifically relate to the Unit. You will find the prefix PAL not only with the Palestinian Pioneer Corps, but with service numbers for Palestinians who served in other British units such as the RASC, RAOC and the Royal Engineers.