



About the National Archives



The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper. Of all the documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States Federal government, only 1%–3% are determined permanently valuable. Those valuable records are preserved and are available to you, whether you want to see if they contain clues about your family's history, need to prove a veteran's military service, or are researching an historical topic that interests you.

www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records



KNOW YOUR RECORDS
National Archives and Records Administration



THE KNOW YOUR RECORDS PROGRAM

consists of free events with up-to-date information about our holdings. Events offer opportunities for you to learn about the National Archives' records through ongoing lectures, monthly genealogy programs, and the annual genealogy fair. Additional resources include online reference reports for genealogical research, and the newsletter *Researcher News*.

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December 8, 2016



***Records for Veterans:
Gathering Evidence for Claims and Benefits***

Michelle Brown, Susan Gillett, and Deborah Powe

At the National Archives, citizens can access records for diverse reasons. Many of our patrons are veterans seeking documentation in support of a benefit or claim. This presentation is designed for veterans and their families.

www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records



Susan Gillett joined the National Archives in 2015 after completing graduate archival studies at the University of MD. She works in Research Services in College Park assisting on-site researchers with Navy and Marine Corps records, and responding to written requests for information from veterans and the Veterans Administration. Susan served in the Navy's Judge Advocate General Corps where she assisted Vietnam veterans under President Carter's discharge review program.

Michelle Brown is currently an Archivist in the Textual Processing Division of Research Services at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. Before coming to her current position, she served for ten years as a Technician and an Expert Technician at the National Archives Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri. While working in this role, she provided reference services pertaining to military personnel records.

Deborah Powe has served the National Archives for 26 years and currently is a Program Analyst with Researcher Registration at the National Archives in College Park, MD. She performs extensive customer service for researchers in person and by phone (sometimes over 20 calls in a day), and helps locate records. Deborah assists veterans to obtain their personnel files, medical records, photos, and awards. She trains new staff in office functions and creates training manuals. Deborah served eight years in the U.S. Army.

www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records

Records for Veterans:

Gathering Evidence for Claims and Benefits



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Every day at the National Archives we work with citizens who need access to records for a variety of reasons. Some patrons research records of government agencies for the purpose of writing scholarly papers and books, others use documents in the archive to investigate genealogical histories, but many of our patrons are veterans or the families of veteran who are seeking documentation in support of a benefit or service-connected claim. This presentation is designed for veterans and their families.

So many people have served in the United States Military...



Grace Hopper



Jimi Hendrix



Steve McQueen



You

As of 2014, the VA estimates there were 22 million military veterans in the U.S. population. If you add their figures on veterans to the active personnel numbers calculated by the Defense Manpower Data Center, 7.3 percent of all living Americans have served in the military at some point in their lives.

Grace Hopper joined the Navy Reserve during WWII. She invented the first compiler for a computer programming language that led to the development of COBOL, one of the first high-level programming languages.

Jimi Hendrix was an American rock guitarist, singer, and songwriter popular in the late 20th century, and still celebrated today for his influential style. In 1961, he enlisted in the US Army and trained as a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division; he was granted an honorable discharge the following year.

Steve McQueen was an iconic actor who received an Academy Award nomination for his role in *The Sand Pebbles*. In 1947, McQueen joined the United States Marine Corps and was promoted to private first class and assigned to an armored unit. McQueen served until 1950, when he was honorably discharged.

When were you in the military? If you served in the military sometime during the 20th Century, your Official Military Personnel File is probably on file at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. Your personnel record may contain much of the documentation you need to claim benefits, but there are other types records available you may not have considered. This presentation is designed to provide veterans and their families with awareness concerning the diversity of records available that may aid in supporting the claims process.



What kind of documents or records will help with benefits and claims?

Official Military Personnel Record

- Unit of Assignment
- Locations of Service

Unit Records

- Engagement in Combat
- Casualty Report
- Geographic location of unit

Dept. of Veterans Affairs

- Certificate of Eligibility
- Medical records

In the course of this presentation, we will discuss various types of records that may help veterans provide evidence needed to the claims and/or benefits process, including the Official Military Personnel File, various types of unit records, as well as records created by, or in the custody of, the Veterans' Administration.

With regard to unit records, the geographic location of a unit may help identify an area where Agent Orange was sprayed. We will discuss this later in the presentation.

Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)



The Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) is primarily an administrative record, containing information about the subject's service history such as: date and type of enlistment/appointment; duty stations and assignments; training, qualifications, performance; awards and decorations received; disciplinary actions; insurance; emergency data; administrative remarks; as well as date and type of separation, including release from active duty, discharge, and retirements.

Basic Proof of Military Service

Active Duty

Report of Separation

- Issued to members with at least 90 days of continuous active duty.
- Shows discharge or release from active duty
- DD Form 214 is the current and most common type of Separation report

Reserve

Retirement Points

- Reserve Retirement Points document service less than 90 continuous days
- Participation includes annual active duty training

National Guard

NGB Form 22

- Issued to National Guard Members
- Shows inactive service, but may reveal prior active service
- Retirement points are shown on the NGB Form 23.

A Report of Separation is generally issued when a service member performs active duty or at least 90 consecutive days of active duty training. The Report of Separation contains information normally needed to verify military service for benefits, retirement, employment and membership in veterans' organizations. Information shown on the Report of Separation may include the service member's:

- Date and place of entry into active duty
- Home address at time of entry
- Date and place of release from active duty
- Home address after separation
- Last duty assignment and rank
- Military job specialty
- Military education
- Decorations, medals, badges, citations and campaign awards received
- Total creditable service
- Foreign service credited
- Separation information (date and type of separation, character of service, authority and reason for separation and separation and reenlistment eligibility codes)

The report of separation form issued in most recent years is the **DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty**. DD Forms 214 look different depending on the edition. The one pictured is generally a Vietnam-era edition of the form.

Reserve service less than 90 continuous days is documented in the retirement points record, including National Guard service. This includes active duty for training. National Guard Members are also issued an NGB Form 22, *Report of Separation and Record of Service*.

How can I get a copy of my OMPF?

Most personnel records from the 20th century are stored at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, a repository of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Army: Discharged through 9/2002

Air Force: Discharged through 9/2004

U.S. Marine: Discharged through 1998

U.S. Navy: Discharged through 1994

U.S. Coast Guard: Discharged through 9/2006

Most personnel records from the 20th century are stored at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, a repository of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Requesting your OMPF

Online

The screenshot shows the eVetRecs website interface. It includes a header with the NARA logo and the date August 2, 2015. The main content area is titled "Veterans or Next of Kin" and contains three numbered steps: 1. Are you this? (Veteran), 2. What is your relationship to the deceased veteran? (Next of Kin), and 3. Are you seeking information concerning? (Former Military Service). There are "Continue" and "Exit" buttons. A note states: "By providing the 'Continual' button you declare that you are the veteran or the veteran's next of kin." Below this, it says: "If you are other than the veteran or next of kin you must complete the SF 180. You can obtain the SF 180 online at the EACSR-Standard."

By Mail

The screenshot shows the SF 180 form titled "REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS". It includes sections for: 1. NAME (Last, First, Middle, Initial, Social Security #, Date of Birth, Place of Birth), 2. SERVICE (Branch, Dates, Discharge Status, Service Number), 3. STATUS (Active, Reserve, National Guard/Reserve), 4. DECEASED (Yes/No with date), 5. DID THIS PERSON RECEIVE MILITARY SERVICE? (Yes/No), and 6. CHECK THE ITEMS YOU ARE REQUESTING (DD Form 204 or equivalent, Deleted copies, Deleted copies of DD Form 1300, Deleted copies of DD Form 1300, Deleted copies of DD Form 1300, Deleted copies of DD Form 1300). There are checkboxes for "I want a DELETED copy" and "I want a DELETED copy".

For access to the SF 180 or eVetRecs, please visit <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

Online:

Veterans and their relatives who qualify as “next of kin,” may request their OMPF online via eVetRecs: <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html> .

However, when you use this method, there is a signature page generated at the end of the application that you must submit either by fax, email or mail.

By Mail: Anyone may submit the SF 180 or letter by mail or fax.

All requests should include...



Identity Information

- Full Name
- Service Number
- Branch of service
- Dates served

Veteran's Authorization

- Veteran's Signature

Mailing Address

- Where should records be sent?

What should your request include? The veteran's identity information, the veteran's authorization, and a mailing address where the documentation should be sent. The veteran's identity information is very critical to locating a records. Be sure to include the veteran's full name, service number, branch of service, and dates served.

In & Outpatient Military Records

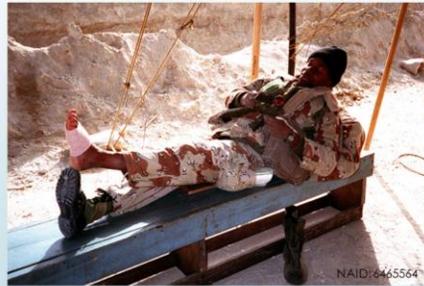
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has some medical records and so does the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis.

NPRC

- Most inactive inpatient
- Some outpatient

VA

- If the veteran filed a claim
- All medical records since the mid 1990s



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has some medical records and so does the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis.

Many OMPFs contain both personnel and former active duty health records, but the service branches discontinued retiring the health record portion to the NPRC in the 1990s. In 1992, the Army began retiring most of its former members' health records to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Over the next six years, the other services followed suit.

Veterans who plan to file a claim for medical benefits with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) do not need to request a copy of their military health record from the NPRC or the VA records center holding the file. After a claim is filed, the VA will obtain the original health record from the NPRC, or the VA storage facility, as applicable.

Contacting NPRC

- Call/Fax**
 - Customer Service: (314) 801-0800
 - Fax: (314)-801-9195
- Write**
 - Military Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
- Web**
 - <https://www.archives.gov/forms/st-louis/mpr-followup.html>

NPRC works actively to respond to each request in a timely fashion. The Center receives approximately 4,000 - 5,000 requests per day. Response time can vary, depending on the complexity of each request, the availability of records, and the center's overall workload.

In general, NPRC responds to requests for separation documents within 10 days about 92% of the time. However, requests that involve reconstruction efforts due to the 1973 Fire, or older records which require extensive search efforts, may take 6 months or more to complete.

NPRC asks individuals not to send a follow-up request before 90 days have elapsed, as it may cause further delays.

INTRODUCE SUSAN GILLETT: Now I am going to turn the presentation over to my colleague Susan Gillett, who works with Navy/Marine Corps records in the National Archives Textual Research Room at College Park, MD.

Records of Unit Activities



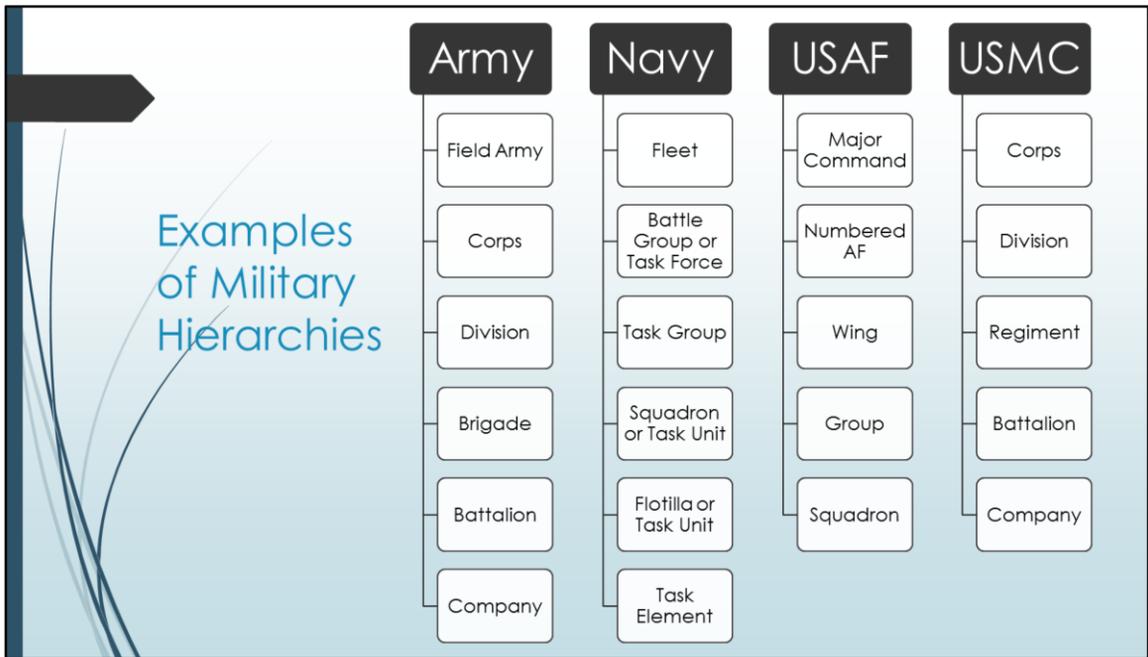
Unit records mainly document a unit's personnel and its major activities. They also have important secondary uses such as showing unit participation in combat, or service in a geographic location where other records show that Agent Orange was sprayed. They may also document an accident or major incident. So now we turn to the types of unit records often requested by veterans seeking information for claims documentation.



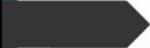
What Unit Records Will Support My Claim?

- 1) Some may be used to document your presence in a unit or on a ship.
- 2) Others show activities in which the unit engaged.

Think about your claim and decide if you need to demonstrate your presence on a ship or in a unit, or if you need to demonstrate the type of activities in which the unit engaged, or do you need to do both?



When searching for unit records, the most crucial information you need is the veteran's unit hierarchy. The terminology varies by service. These are just a few examples of command hierarchies. The veteran's OMPF may disclose the command hierarchy of his unit. It's important to remember that structures in the Army have changed over time.



Documenting Your Presence in a Unit or on a Ship

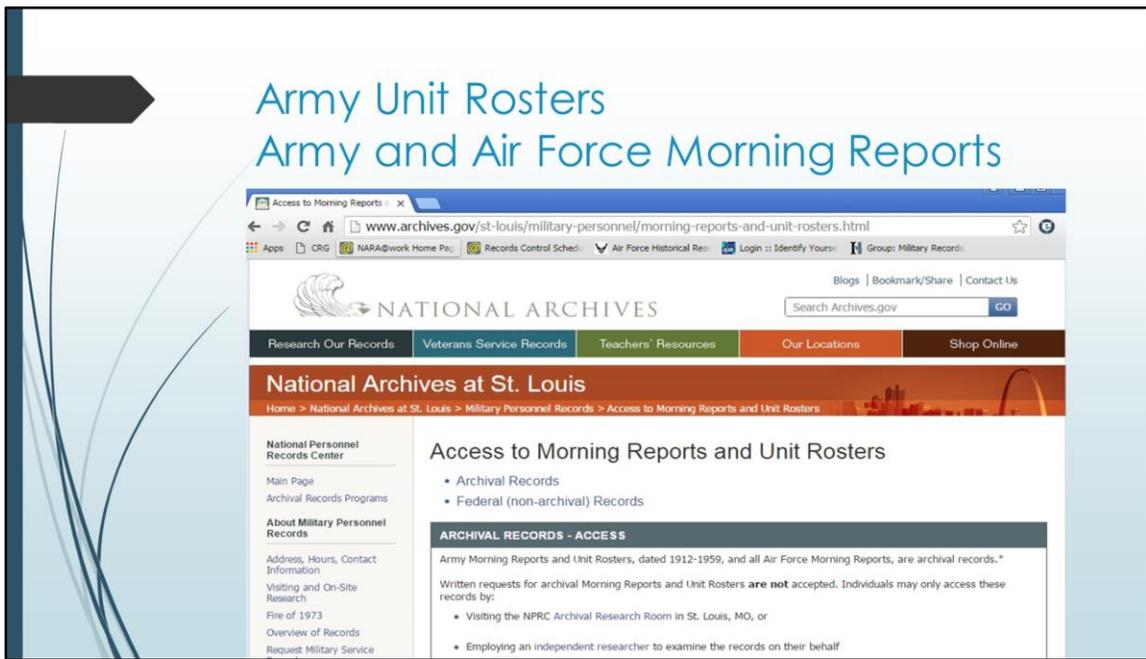
Army Unit Rosters

Army and Air Force Morning Reports

Navy, USMC, and Coast Guard Muster Rolls

Navy Personnel Diaries and USMC Unit Diaries

This slide shows you the different names given by each service to their records that document a person's presence in a unit or on a ship.



The National Archives at St. Louis webpage pictured here provides specific information about how to request Morning Reports and Unit Rosters.

An Army Unit Roster shows the name, service number and rank and/or occupational specialty of members attached to a unit.

Army and Air Force Morning reports can document who was present each day and who might be listed as sick or wounded.

Access procedures for these records depend on which years you need.

Army Morning Reports and Unit Rosters, dated 1912-1959, and all Air Force Morning Reports, are archival records or public records. The Army unit rosters & morning reports for 1944-1946 were disposed of by the Army. The National Archives at St. Louis **does not** accept written requests for archival Morning Reports and Unit Rosters. Individuals may only access these records by:

- 1) Visiting the NPRC in St. Louis, MO, or
- 2) Employing an independent researcher [randomly generated list on NARA website]

Army Morning Reports and Unit Rosters, **dated 1960-1974**, are **non-archival** and subject to limitations of the Privacy Act. Individuals may access these records by submitting a written request for copies of the records via postal mail or fax.

In your request include:

the exact unit of assignment ("Company A, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment"), a description of the action ("I was wounded and sent to a hospital") and an approximate date ("June 1944"). Without this type of information, the NPRC may be unable to perform a search.

Navy Muster Rolls are quarterly reports (i.e. March 31st, June 30th, September 30th, and December 31st). They list the naval personnel attached to a ship, station or other activity.

At the top of a muster roll you will see:

- Name of ship, station, or activity
- Ship name & hull number and the ship or station activity code
- Date of muster roll

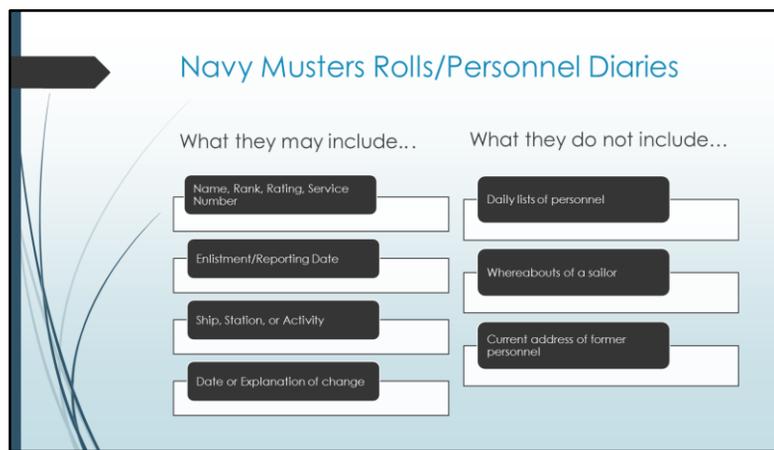
The body of the muster roll will show:

- Name of service member
- Rank or Rating (occupation/specialty)
- Service number
- Date reported for particular duty or on board
- Date of enlistment

Personnel diaries are different from **muster rolls** in that they are compiled each month, and consist of daily entries. They are the Navy's equivalent of Army morning reports. They record **significant status changes**, including reporting to or transferring from the activity; being promoted or demoted; members departing for or returning from periods of leave, or temporary additional duty. They should note if someone is medically evacuated from the ship.

Each entry in a **personnel diary** includes:

- Name of the service member
- The Date of the any change in status or duty and
- An Explanation of the change



It is possible to find a “late entry” in a diary. This happens when the entry post dates the date of the change of status or duty. So although your research might be focused on a certain month, it is wise to look beyond that month to see if there are any “late entries” for the service member you are looking for.

A personnel diary can sometimes document the identity of another service unit serving with the ship or being transported by it. This can happen, for example, if it was a USMC unit, and you need that unit’s name to find their command chronology because it may document an incident involving the Marine unit on that ship.

It is important to note what muster rolls and personnel diaries do NOT include:

Muster rolls are not daily lists of naval personnel attached to a ship, station, or other activity. Nor will they tell you the daily activities of a sailor during their service.

Muster rolls/personnel diaries do not contain current addresses of former naval personnel or their survivors.

Navy Muster Rolls/Personnel Diaries

Pre-1938 Archives I Reference

- Contact archives1reference@nara.gov

1938-1949 Digitized and available from Ancestry

- <http://www.ancestry.com/>

1950-1970 Archives II Reference

- Contact archives2reference@nara.gov

1971-2003 Archives II Reference

- Records contain the Social Security numbers of Personnel
- Submit a Muster Roll FOIA Form to specialaccess_FOIA@nara.gov
- Archives II only has officer personnel information thru 1979

Post-2003 U.S. Navy

- Navy Personnel Command (PERS-00J6), 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055

How and Where you access the Navy Muster Rolls or Personnel Diaries depends on what time period you are looking for.

For pre-1939 Muster Rolls or Personnel Diaries:

You will contact the main National Archives building [known as Archives 1 or A1] in downtown Washington, D.C. Their email address is archives1reference@nara.gov

To Find Navy Muster Rolls or Personnel Diaries for 1939-1949:

These have been digitized in a partnership with Ancestry.com. You can find them at **Fold3.com**, the web site of one of Ancestry's subsidiaries. **These are the only reference copies that will be made available to researchers.** If you are at the National Archives in the DC area (either A1 or A2), or at one of our regional facilities or a Presidential library, you can link to **Fold3.com** at no charge from one of our public access computers. You may print or download copies to a USB for about 40 cents per page.

For Muster Rolls or Personnel Diaries after 1971:

The National Archives at College Park holds Navy Officer muster rolls through 1980, and Navy enlisted muster rolls through 2003. For enlisted personnel after 2003 and officers after 1980, you must contact the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, TN. Their address is shown here on the slide, and is also in the handouts.

In 1971 all the Armed Forces started to use Social Security numbers as service numbers. Because of privacy restrictions, a request must be submitted on a Muster Roll FOIA Request Form to the Special Access section of NARA's FOIA office. This office will remove SSNs before providing copies.

If a veteran is seeking their own name entry, his or her SSN will be removed along with third parties' SSNs unless the veteran submits a DOJ form called [Certification of Identity](#).

We have provided this form and the FOIA request form as handouts.

You may submit your request via email to specialaccess_FOIA@nara.gov.

Reproductions of muster rolls or personnel diaries from 1950 on that are accessible at Archives 2 can be reproduced on DVD or on paper, but paper copies may be difficult to read because the records are stored on microfilm, and the quality of the film varies. It is possible to purchase a duplicate reel of microfilm for about \$125. If you visit in person you can scan pages from the microfilm to a USB on our new microfilm scanners.

USMC Muster Rolls/Personnel Diaries

1798-1958 Ancestry.com

- Online title "U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958"

1959-1980 Archives II Reference

- Available on Microfilm
- Archives2reference@nara.gov

After 1980 USMC at Quantico

- Commandant of the Marine Corps, HQMC MMSB-10, "Unit Diaries", 2008 Elliott Rd., Suite 202, Quantico, VA 22134-5030
- Phone: 800-268-3710
- Fax: 703-784-5792

The **USMC Muster Rolls** from 1798-1958 have been digitized and made available online by our partner, Ancestry.com, for a fee. They are accessed at Ancestry's website through a link to their subsidiary **Fold3.com**. As mentioned earlier, the digitized records on Ancestry.com are accessible without a fee in all NARA Research Rooms, including those in our regional archives and Presidential Libraries. You simply pay for any copies you print or scan.

Note that access to Marine Corps muster rolls dating from the year 1971 and later is restricted owing to the use of Social Security Numbers as personal identifiers. Make your request to the Archives 2 FOIA office as described earlier for US Navy muster rolls.

Source:

<https://research.archives.gov/id/602065>

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1089>

U.S. Coast Guard Personnel Diaries

Through 1948

Archives I

- The Coast Guard muster rolls may be requested by email: archives1reference@nara.gov

Diaries < 51 Years
Old

U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters

- From 1949 on, the Coast Guard changes the name to "Personnel Diaries," designates them as "non-permanent!" records and retains them only for 50 years.
- Personnel Service Center
ATTN: BOPS-C-MR, US COAST GUARD Stop 7200
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20593-7200
fax: (202) 372-8440

During WWII

Archives II Reference

- During World War II there were Coast Guard members who served on U.S. Navy ships (ships whose name starts with USS). These men would be listed on Navy muster rolls for those ships.
- Direct your request to: archives2reference@nara.gov

Before 1949, the Coast Guard also called their lists of personnel, muster rolls. After 1949 they are called "personnel diaries." The National Archives in downtown Washington, D.C. holds the Coast Guard muster rolls through 1948.

From 1949 on, the Personnel Diaries are now classified as "non-permanent records" by the Coast Guard. The records are retained for only 50 years.

In time of war, the Coast Guard comes under the control of the U.S. Navy. Coast Guard members may serve on Navy ships, and Coast Guard ships may be assigned to naval commands. The Coast Guard members forming part of the crew of a Navy vessel will show up in the Navy ship's muster rolls and personnel diaries. [WWII, Korea, Vietnam]

As mentioned earlier, from 1971 on, if Social Security numbers are present in the records, they must be requested by means of a FOIA request to the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center in Washington, D.C.



Records Related to Unit Activities

The names given to types of unit records vary by service, and even by war. Knowing these differences can help the veteran find what he or she is looking for.

Our Army Unit Records

WWII

- Unit Daily Staff Journals
- Action Reports
- After Action Reports
- Unit Histories
- Operation Reports

Korea

- Unit Daily Staff Journals
- Command Reports

Vietnam

- Unit Daily Staff Journals
- Situation Reports
- Operational Report-Lessons Learned (ORLL)
- After Action Reports
- Unit Histories

Army records about unit activities for 1917-1975 are held at the National Archives, College Park. Contact: Archives2reference@nara.gov

You can see by looking at this slide how the titles given to unit records vary by war. It helps in your search if you specify the type of report you are looking for. To get to the right report, one also needs as much of the command hierarchy as possible. An example of Army hierarchy is: Corps, Division, Brigade, Regiment, Battalion, Company, Platoon, and Detachment. Having this information down to the Company level helps you find the records that may mention that company. As mentioned before, unit structures can change over time.

Archives 2 in College Park has Army **unit operational records** covering years 1917-1954. After 1954 through the end of the Vietnam War, Archives 2 also has records for Army units that served in Southeast Asia. If you are looking for Vietnam records, remember that the overall joint command was called Military Assistance Command Vietnam or MACV.

For units that did not serve in SE Asia, some of their operational records for years 1955 and later are found in RG 338 and RG 319. These can include awards, unit deployments, change of command and readiness information that go up to about 1991. We have received in the last two years about 105 series of records for Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield through years 1994. However, many

series remain restricted because the information is still classified or contains personal identification information.

Records not yet at NARA may be in the custody of the U.S. Army Records Management and Declassification Agency, 7701 Telegraph Rd, Alexandria, VA 22315

Other Army Unit Records



Contemporary and historical Army materials may also be found at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC) located in Carlisle , PA. This is a picture of the home page of their website.

USAHEC Operations



U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center
950 Soldiers Drive
Carlisle, PA 17013-5021
Ask A Question: <http://usawc.libanswers.com/>
USAHEC Information Desk: 717-245-3972
Research Assistance: 717-245-3949 / 3660

This slide shows the components within the Army Heritage and Education Center. The Center has some unofficial materials, including unit histories, personal papers, diaries, and photographs. Selected official papers are also available.

The Center has a helpful chart on their website that shows the different types of official Army records and which institutions have custody of them. The link is: <http://www.history.army.mil/reference/records.htm>



Our WWII Air Force Unit Records

Combat Mission Reports

- To locate, provide group or squadron and date of interest.

Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs)

- To locate, provide MACRs number. If you do not know the number, we may be able to locate it.

For WWI Air Force Records, contact the National Archives at College Park, MD: Archives2reference@nara.gov

Now we turn to types of Air Force unit records that we hold at Archives II in College Park.

We have **Army Air Force WWII** unit records. Two major series are **Combat Mission Reports** and **Missing Air Crew Reports** (known by the acronym MACRS). NARA holds few Army/Air Force records after 1946. The Air Force became a separate branch in 1947.

Combat mission reports for WW II pertain to specific targets. The reports are arranged by units. The **name of the group or squadron**, and a **date of interest** are necessary before a search can be conducted.

The **Missing Air Crew Reports** can provide some or all of the following kinds of information for a crew member:

- Name, rank and service number
- Crew position
- name and address of next of kin

The report also usually indicates the following:

- The Army Air Forces organization to which the aircraft was assigned
- Place of departure and destination of the flight
- Weather conditions and visibility at the time of loss
- The Cause of the crash
- The Type, model, and serial number of the aircraft and its engines
- The kinds of weapons installed and their serial numbers

Some case files include the names of persons with some knowledge of the aircraft's last flight. In some cases these are rescued or returned crew members. Most reports do not contain all of the above information, especially those prepared in 1943 and in 1947.

If you know the MACR number, you may order from the Microfilm Catalog. If you do not know the MACR number, we may be able to find the number for you.

The most important information to give us is:

- Date of loss of the aircraft
- Tail number of lost aircraft
- Personal name of the crew member

Send your request with the above information to archives2reference@nara.gov.

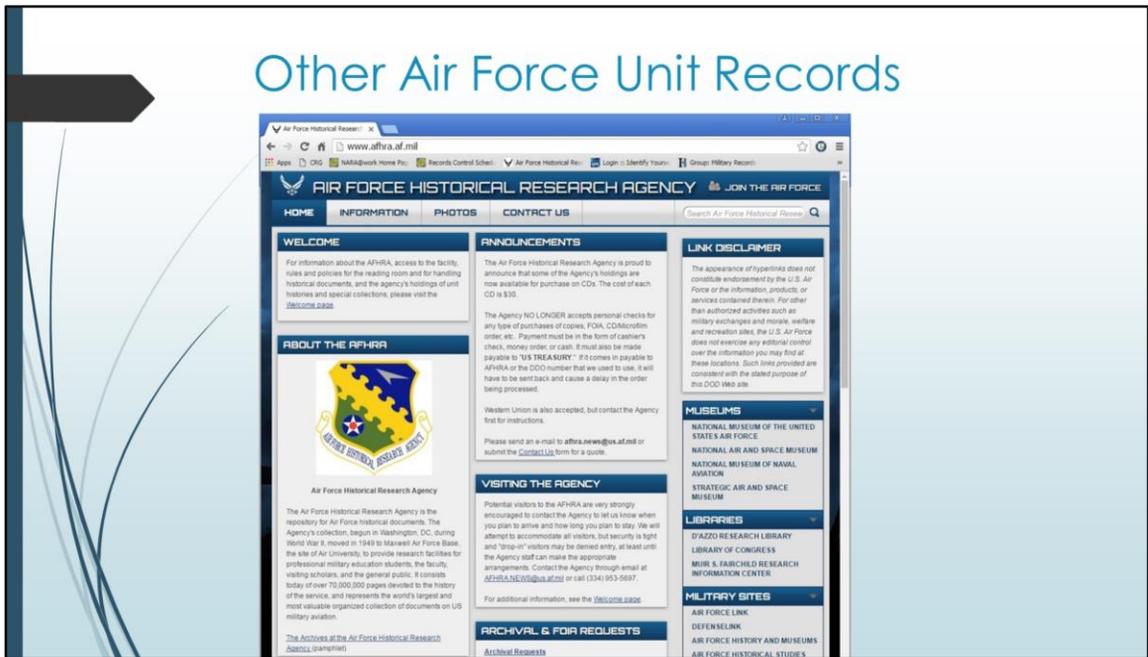
Ancestry.com has digitized the MACRS. This means you can search in their database by crewmembers name. If you do not have a subscription to Ancestry.com, you can

access their database free of charge at any of our public access computers at Archives 1 or 2 or at any of our regional research rooms.

Source:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/missing-air-crew-reports.html>

Other Air Force Unit Records



For Air Force records not held by NARA, we refer you to the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. They hold unit histories and supporting documents of the Army Air Force and Air Force units for WW II and post WW II. You may call them at (334) 953-2395. We have put their mailing address and web site address in the handouts.

The Air Force History Program began in 1942, and this research agency has Reporting “remarkably complete” coverage of Air Force activities.

Index of AFHRA Content

Air Force History Index

- Online index supplies IRIS number.
- <http://airforcehistoryindex.org/>

Air Force Historical Studies Division

- Microfilm index available in the Washington D.C. area
- <http://www.afhso.af.mil/>



The Air Force Historical Research Agency assigns each document in its Archive an 8-digit IRIS number. There is an Air Force History index you can use to look up an IRIS number. This has been compiled and made available online by a private entity called Air Force History Index. Once you have the IRIS number for a document, the Research Agency can determine if the document is classified.

This same index is available on microfilm at The Air Force Historical Studies Office at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC.

To request a classified document, you must file a Freedom of Information Act Request with the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center (AFIMSC) at Randolph AFB, TX. Email: AFIMSC.FOIA.WorkFlow@us.af.mil

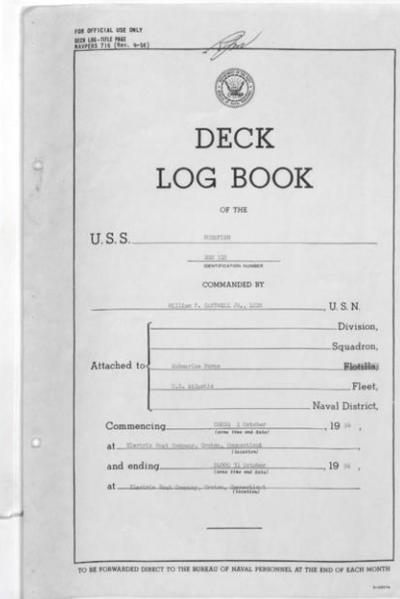
Our Navy Records

Deck Logs

- 1941-1983

Action Reports & War Diaries

- WWII



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FORM 100-1016 (REV. 4-58)

DECK
LOG BOOK

OF THE

U.S.S. _____

NO. _____
REGISTRATION NUMBER

COMMANDED BY _____

U.S.N. _____

Division, _____
Squadron, _____
Attached to: Submarine Force, _____ (Station)
Fleet, _____
Naval District, _____

Commencing _____ 19 ____
at _____ (Name, Rank, Grade, Station, Organization)
and ending _____ 19 ____
at _____ (Name, Rank, Grade, Station, Organization)

TO BE FORWARDED DIRECT TO THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL AT THE END OF EACH MONTH

Now we will look at Navy unit records held at the National Archives. At Archives 2 in College Park, MD, two of the most heavily used groups of Navy records are the **ship deck logs**, and the **WWII Action reports and war diaries**.

This slide shows the cover page of a deck log. They are kept by month and each month can average about 65 pages. Their format and design has also changed over the decades.



About Navy Deck Logs

Records include...

- Brief record of the daily administrative activities of a ship
- Journal-style entries of the ship's administrative activities
- Location and course of travel
- Disciplinary procedures
- Sometime include information related to operational activities

Records do not include...

- Detailed journals describing a ship's mission and all events transpiring in and around the ship
- Personnel information besides the monthly officer rosters for the years 1941 through 1956

A **deck log** is a brief record of the daily administrative activities of a ship. It includes journal-style entries of the ship's administrative activities; location and course of travel; disciplinary procedures; and any unusual events. The logs sometime include information related to operational activities, although the level of content and detail may vary widely.

It is important to note what a deck log does NOT include. They do not describe a ship's mission in detail, nor do they mention all events occurring on or around the ship.

For the period 1941 through 1956, deck logs usually include monthly rosters of officers. Beginning in March 1957, officer rosters are no longer included in the deck logs. From 1957 onwards, officer rosters are included in the ship's Muster Rolls/Personnel Diaries with the Rosters of enlisted crew as mentioned in the previous section.

Only the deck logs of major combatant and support ships are considered permanent records, per the Department of the Navy records management regulations.

Source:

<https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2013/11/01/know-your-records-u-s-navy-deck-logs/>

Access to Navy Deck Logs

FOIA

Only needed in limited cases

- if deck log withheld or under review
- submit Deck Log Screening form to FOIA office at Archives 2
- specialaccess_FOIA@nara.gov

NARA Catalog

Many deck logs are digitally available via the National Archives Catalog (NAC)

- Follow the link <http://research.archives.gov/description/594258> for the Deck Log Series Description
- Click the "Search within the Series" button

NARA Reference

For non-digital records from 1941-1983

- In your request, please include: Full name of the ship, and hull number, if possible, the dates of interest, the nature of your inquiry
- Contact archives2reference@nara.gov

"If you find deck logs at the National Archives that have pages marked "Special Operations," and there are no entries, no further information is available. If you are using deck logs, and you find a notice in the box that indicates some deck logs have been withheld or are under review, you may submit a Deck Log Review form to the FOIA office at Archives 2 to request access. We have included this form with the handout.

Many deck logs have been digitized and are available via the National Archives Catalog (NAC). Following the link <http://research.archives.gov/description/594258> and it will take you to the series titled "Logbooks of the U.S. Navy Ships and Stations, 1941-1978." To search within the series, in the Details area, click on the "Search within this Series" button. Each month of a deck log is one digital file. You can identify them by the digital thumbnail picture of a deck log cover.

If you are interested in requesting non-digitized deck logs for the period between 1941-1983, please contact archives2reference@nara.gov.

In your request, please include:

Full name of the ship, and hull number, if possible

the dates of interest

the nature of your inquiry (For example, are you looking for a particular type of incident, or a specific ship location?)

Our WWII Navy Records

Action Reports, 1941-1946

- Action Reports are narrative or form reports of incidents of direct combat action with enemy forces during WWII
- Other reports pertain to more routine operations, training, accidents, or other unusual events

War Diaries, 1941-1946

- Most war diaries provided a day-to-day record of operational activities and sometimes administrative activities as well

Naval records about unit activities for 1941-1946 are held at the National Archives, College Park. Contact: Archives2reference@nara.gov

Action Reports:

Action Reports are narrative or form reports of incidents of direct combat action with enemy forces during WWII. Other reports pertain to more routine operations, training, accidents, or other unusual events.

Most of the reports are authored by the Navy, although a few reports were submitted by Coast Guard ships that were under Navy control during the war. The same is true for U.S. Army and foreign vessels. Documents created by non-Navy commands were also integrated into the series, including Army, Marine Corps, and various multinational (joint) commands.

Sometimes reports cover entire campaigns or portions of campaigns. Reports of lower level units were sometimes attached to reports of parent organizations or filed in multiple locations. For example, reports submitted by a carrier-borne fighter squadron could appear under that unit's designation, or with the aircraft carrier's report, or in both locations.

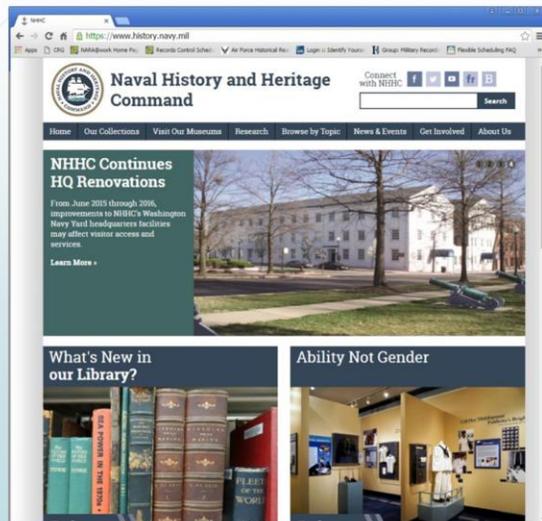
War Diaries:

Most war diaries provided a day-to-day record of operational activities and

sometimes administrative activities as well. War diaries were submitted by most units in the Navy, and most of the Marine Corps war diaries were submitted by aviation units such as fighter squadrons.

The quality of the diaries varied widely, with some providing detailed accounts. Sometimes Action Reports are incorporated in War Diaries. An example of this is submarine patrol reports providing details of missions.

Other Navy Unit Records



For Navy records that NARA does not have, you may need to contact the Naval History and Heritage Command at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. The center's mission is to collect, preserve, protect, present, and make relevant the artifacts, art, and documents that best capture the Navy's history and heritage.

NHHC Archival Holdings



CORs - Command
Operations Reports
[Explore »](#)



Deck Logs
[Explore »](#)



Digitized Collections
[Explore »](#)



Research Guides and
Finding Aids
[Explore »](#)



Resources for Veterans
[Explore »](#)

Naval History and Heritage
Command
805 Kidder Breese Street SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-
5060

Archives Branch:
Bldg. 108, 3rd Floor
Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm
Visiting hours by appointment only
202.433.3224
archives@navy.mil

Command Operation Reports (CORs):

Aviation Squadron and Ship Command Operations Reports cover the operational and administrative actions of the command for each calendar year. These are filed in time of peace. During war time, they are called war diaries.

In addition to Navy Command Operation Reports, the NHHC also holds deck logs less than 30 years old, certain digital collections, guides and finding aids, and various resources for veterans.

Action reports for Coast Guard units serving with Naval units in Vietnam are held at the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Our U.S. Marine Corps Records

WWII

- Geographic files
- USMC Commandant correspondence
- Amphibious corps and division records
- Some aviation records

Korea

- Two Unit Histories
- USMC Commandant correspondence

Vietnam

- Command chronologies
- USMC Commandant correspondence
- Squadron mission reports

For USMC records held at the National Archives, College Park, contact Archives2reference@nara.gov

Next, we turn to Marine Corps Records.

Archives II holds Marine Corps **operational unit records** from 1941 to 1976. We also hold unit and operational records for some Marine commands from 1953-1993. There are also some records on specific topics up to 1983. This slide shows how the type of record can vary by war.

When looking for Marine Corps unit or operational records, it helps to have the veteran's command hierarchy. For example, it is not enough to just give the lowest unit, such as a USMC company. Nor is it sufficient to just say 4th Regiment. Command histories known as command chronologies are retained at the Divisional and Regimental level. There are also command chronologies for Marine detachments attached to Navy ships.

The lower level unit records are not usually retained as permanent records. However, it helps to know the company because the Regimental chronology will mention what companies are attached to it during the reporting period. It may show if the veteran was attached to another regiment or division, for example.

As a rule of thumb, the higher you are in a hierarchy, the more general the

chronology. A Regimental command chronology will be more detailed than a Division's command chronology.

Other USMC Unit Records



For Marine Corps records that NARA does not hold, you need to contact the USMC History Division located at the Marine Corps base in Quantico, VA. Its' primary task is to research and write the Marine Corps' official history. It also provides reference and research assistance; preserves personal experiences and observations through oral history interviews; and deploys field historians to record history in the making.

Other USMC Unit Records

MC History Division Archives

- Personal papers collections of Marines of all ranks
- USMC command chronologies
- Marine Corps University materials
- Selected USMC records, documents and publications
- Maps and drawings
- Director, Gray Research Center (C40RCA) Attn: Archives-Reference 2040 Broadway Street Quantico, VA 22134 (703) 784-4685 archivesreference@gc.usmcu.edu

Texas Tech University

- Texas Tech University's Virtual Vietnam Archive, which hosts the "US Marine Corps in Vietnam" online database
- Database includes records that were digitized by the Gray Research Center at the Marine Corps University at Quantico Virginia
- Includes Operation Reports, Commanders Combat Readiness Reports, Command Chronologies, After Action Reports, etc.
- To access, visit: http://www.recordsofwar.com/vietnam/usmc/USMC_Rvn.htm

The MC History Division has an Archives Branch that collects, preserves, and provides access to primary source documentation pertaining to the history of the United States Marine Corps. It supports Marine Corps University, the United States Marine Corps, and civilian researchers.

Materials range in dates from 1773 to the present, and include a wide variety of formats. Holdings are comprised of:

- Personal papers collections of Marines of all ranks
- USMC command chronologies
- Marine Corps University materials
- Selected USMC records, documents and publications
- Maps and drawings

Currently the archive's holdings are not accessible on-line. Requests for information about the branch and its holdings can be submitted by email, phone, letter, or in person. However, email is preferred. We have put their contact information here on the slide and also in the handouts.

Texas Tech University created

the Texas Tech University's **Virtual Vietnam Archive** that hosts the "**US Marine Corps in Vietnam**" online database. Database includes records that were digitized by the Gray Research Center at the Marine Corps University at Quantico Virginia. The archive includes Operation Reports, Commanders Combat Readiness Reports, Command Chronologies, After Action Reports, etc. These records only go through 1975. For command chronologies after this date, it is necessary to contact the Marine Corps History Division. Look here before you contact Archives 2 for Vietnam command chronologies. What you need is probably in this database.

We have put the website address on the slide and in the handouts.

Our Coast Guard Records

Deck Logs, 1797-1972

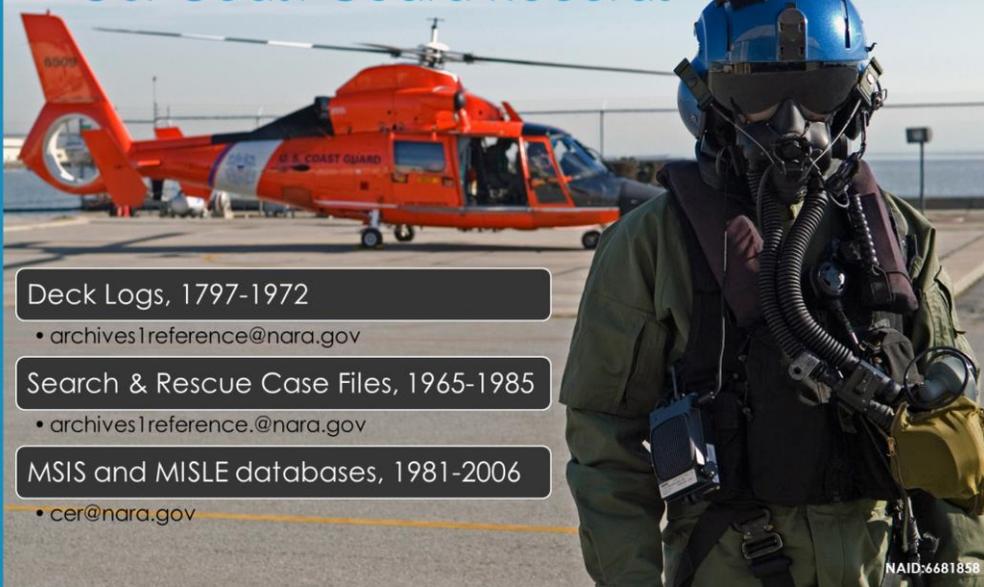
• archives1reference@nara.gov

Search & Rescue Case Files, 1965-1985

• archives1reference@nara.gov

MSIS and MISLE databases, 1981-2006

• cer@nara.gov



And last, but not least, is the U.S. Coast Guard. For U.S. Coast Guard ship deck logs dated 1797 through 1972, contact NARA's Archives I Reference Section.

There are some early deck logs for 1791-1797 that are held in NARA regional archives, but the staff at Archives 1 can refer you to the appropriate facility.

After 1972, these logs are now held by the Coast Guard district that covers the ship's homeport. They are retired after 20 years to the NARA **regional field archives** nearest to the ship's homeport. A list of NARA's field archives is on our website: www.archives.gov. If you need to verify the ship's homeport, contact Coast Guard Headquarters at (202) 475-5001.

Archives 1 in downtown Washington, D.C. also holds **Search and Rescue Case Files** for years 1965-1985. For case files after 1985 you must contact Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Their address is in the handouts.

Starting in 2012, the U.S. Coast Guard only retains as permanent what they consider **historically significant** search and rescue case files. All others are disposed of after 15 years.

In 2003 they started entering these files into a digital database known as MISLE.

The Coast Guard also has law enforcement and safety functions. Operational records for these functions were kept from 1981-2001 in an electronic database known as **Marine Safety Information System (MSIS)**. In 2002 the MSIS system was integrated into a new database called the **Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement or MISLE**. Both series can include information about marine accidents, pollution incidents, and injuries and deaths.

The **Electronic Records Unit at Archives 2** manages requests for both series. Because the records contain a great deal of Personal Identification Information any request has to be made under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

For records on these subjects dated after 2006, contact Coast Guard Headquarters.

Action reports for Coast Guard units serving with Naval units in Vietnam are held at the Naval History and Heritage Command referred to earlier.

Sources:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6266951>

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/3478075>

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/559642>

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/572672>

Other Coast Guard Unit Records

CG Search and Rescue Case Files after 1985

- Search and Rescue Online Index:
<https://www.uscg.mil/history/sarindex.asp>

CG Unit Diaries, WWII and later

- COMMANDANT (CG-09231)
ATTN: COAST GUARD HISTORIAN'S OFFICE
US COAST GUARD STOP 7031
2703 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR AVE SE
WASHINGTON DC 20593-7031
(202) 372-4653
Fax: (202) 372-4984



For Coast Guard records not at NARA and not held by Coast Guard headquarters or districts, you may need to turn to the **Coast Guard Historian's Office**. Its collections include documents, official publications and manuals, photographs, oral histories, memoirs, and artifacts, among others.

This material complements, and in some cases, duplicates, the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration.

We have put the contact information for this office on this slide and also in the handouts.

Records Pertaining to Special Circumstances



Now that we have covered information concerning the contents of and access to your military personnel file and several types of unit records, we would like to take a moment to address records that are commonly requested for specific circumstances. Veterans occasionally request documents concerning military accidents and/or incidents that may be relevant to claims concerning Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Agent Orange.

Army and Air Force Accident Reports

AF Aircraft Accident and/or Incident Reports

- Headquarters AF, Air Force Safety Agency, AFSA/IMRP
9750 Avenue G, Suite 236, Kirtland AFB, NM 87117-5671

Army Preliminary Reports of Aviation Mishaps

- U.S. Army Safety Center, Fort Rucker, AL 36362

Army Individual Accident Case Report Files

- Retained for 6 years, then destroyed
- National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138

The Air Force maintains **Aircraft Accident** and/or **Incident Reports** of significant research value that help with eliminating the causes of accidents or incidents. Reports created on or after January, 1956 may be requested from Air Force Safety Agency at Kirtland AFB, NM. The address is on the slide and in a handout.

The Army maintains pertinent and relevant information concerning mishaps/accidents. Records consist of **Preliminary Reports of Aviation Mishaps** (but excludes final aircraft accident reports). You may request them from the U.S. Army Safety Center, Fort Rucker, AL. The address is on the slide and in a handout.

The Army also maintains **Individual Accident Case Report Files** and related papers concerning accidents incident to Army operations involving motor vehicles, aircraft, other Army equipment or structural damage. These include reports of injuries to any person involved. These records are retained at the **National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis** for six years, then destroyed.

Navy and USMC Accident Reports

Casualty Ship Folders

- National Archives & Records Administration
Archives 1 Reference Services Branch (RDT1)
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001

Aviation Mishap Reports

- Director of Aviation Safety Programs, Naval Safety Center, Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA 23511-5796

Motor Vehicle Accident and Injury Reports

- Director of Occupational Safety, Health, and Support Programs, Naval Safety Center, Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA 23511

Record Group 24: BUNAV Casualty Assistance Branch Files

- archives2reference@nara.gov

NARA at Archives 1 holds **Casualty Ship Folders** for damaged or lost ships that may contain names and service numbers of survivors and/or casualties.

Navy Aircraft Accident Reports can be found at both Archives 1 and Archives 2 in the General and Confidential Correspondence of the Bureau of Aeronautics (RG 72). You must look under the Navy Filing Manual designation by type of aircraft. Here is an example, a Hellcat F6F are labeled as VF6F and the filing designation for material loss which is L11-1. So for a Hellcat accident before 1950 one would look for correspondence labeled VF6F/L11-1. **After 1950 and until 1970**, aviation accident reports are found at the Naval History and Heritage Command. **After 1970, Aviation Mishap Reports** resulting in a cost of \$50,000 or more may be obtained from the Naval Safety Center in Norfolk, VA. We have put the address on this slide and in the handouts.

For Navy Motor Vehicle Accident and Injury Reports about Navy personnel who are injured, or who operate one of the vehicles involved in such an accident, information may be obtained from the Director of Occupational Safety, Health, and Support Programs at the Naval Safety Center in Norfolk, VA.



Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) & Agent Orange

- Claimants need proof of service with units that took part in combat, were involved in accidents, or served in other stressful activities
- In some situations, individuals need to verify that they were serving on Temporary Duty (TDY) or Temporary Active Duty (TAD)
- Personnel records that may show unit assignments include assignment orders, other orders, and any Officer Efficiency Report (OER)/Enlisted Efficiency Report (EER) which may show such TDY/TAD
- Your OMPF contains documents that show units, TDY, TAD, and Efficiency Reports.

For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange Claims, individuals need proof of service with units that took part in combat, were involved in accidents, served in other stressful activities, or served with unit in areas where Agent Orange was sprayed. In some situations, individuals need to verify that they were serving on Temporary or Temporary Active Duty. This is important in cases of individuals who claim duty in Vietnam.

Personnel records that may show unit assignments include assignment orders, other orders, and any Officer and/or Enlisted Efficiency Report which may show such temporary or active duty. As discussed earlier, copies of your personnel record may be obtained from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

[Source: <http://10.148.251.13/crg/Ptsd.html>]



The Role of the Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC)

- JSRRC provides direct support to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- JSRRC research Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard (not USMC) unit records for information which will assist the VA in making determinations on Veterans' Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Agent Orange exposure, and other health related claims
- JSRRC is not a records archive and does not maintain personnel files, military unit records or historical documents for general distribution to requestors

JSRRC provides direct research support for the Veterans Administration

Its staff research Army, Air Force and Navy and Coast Guard unit records for information that will assist the VA in deciding cases of PTSD, Agent Orange health claims, or other health claims for disability benefits.

JSRRC has direct communication with all the VA Regional Offices, and a full-time VA Liaison Officer who works with the Regional Offices.

The veteran needs to provide to the VA Regional Office handling any claim his unit name, dates of service in the unit, type of incident, and the geographic area where he served with that unit at the time of the incident. The Regional Office then passes this information to JSRRC, and asks them to search applicable unit records. They normally only search a 60 day period, however, the VA can request an additional 60 day search period.

The VA has defined exposure sites for Agent Orange based on DOD research and other types of documentation. The VA asks JSRRC to research the unit records to determine if it operated in an area known to be an Agent Orange exposure site.

The JSRRC will not respond to individual veteran's requests made directly to them. The veteran needs to give the necessary information to their VA Regional Office closest to their place of residence as part of the claim process.

[Source: <https://www.rmda.army.mil/jsrrc/RMDA-JSRRC-Mission.html>]



Special Circumstance Research for USMC Members

Unit Diaries, Vietnam Era-Present

- Records Service Section
Headquarters, US Marine Corps (MMSB-10) "Unit Diaries"
2008 Elliot Road, Suite 202
Quantico, VA 22134
Phone: (800) 268-3710
Fax: (703) 784-5792

Command Chronologies & After Action Reports after 1975

- United States Marine Corps History Division
111 South Street, Bldg. 2044
Quantico, Virginia 22134

Research assistance for Marine Corps members is handled by two units at Marine Corps Headquarters in Quantico, VA.

The VA Regional Office handling the veteran's claim can contact both these units. Copies are normally provided to the VA free of charge.

Other Agent Orange Resources

Defense Technical Information Center

- Operation Ranch Hand covers aerial spraying from airplanes, multiple reports available
- Herb tape Report Number ADA160563 covers helicopter and ground spraying. Specific report available:
<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a160563.pdf>

The Defense Technical Information Center or DTIC provides the general public and industry with access to unclassified information, including many full-text downloadable documents, through its website.

One report in their database that helps with Agent Orange claims is known as the **Herb Tape Report**, ADA 160563. This documents helicopter and ground spraying missions and incidents.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) also conducted an investigation for the Defense Department to study the effects of herbicides used in Vietnam. During the conduct of the NAS study an automated database of **U.S. Air Force Ranch Hand spray missions** was developed. This report that covers aerial spraying from Air Force airplanes is also available at the DTIC web site.

<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a160563.pdf>



Richard Donham Coffelt

Casualty Reports

National Archives at St. Louis

- Air Force Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs), 1940-1973
- Navy and USMC IDPFs, 1907-1970, 1964-1969, and 1972-1975
- National Archives at St. Louis
P.O. Box 37587
St. Louis, MO 63138

Coffelt Database

- Contains information on all personnel who died in the Vietnam War
- <http://www.coffeltdatabase.org/>

Electronic Casualty Records at the National Archives

- Access to Archival Databases (AAD)
- Browse by category "Casualties" – 9 series available in digital form
- <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/>

The National Archives facility at St. Louis holds Casualty Files or Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs) for Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps veterans. Army Individual Deceased Personnel Files have not yet been accessioned. These files were created by the military services to document the death of a military member, and the related actions associated with the disposition of the remains.

The Coffelt Database of Vietnam War casualties has its roots in an effort begun by Richard Coffelt. A Korean War era soldier and later an attorney in Hays, Kansas. He became aware that the government had not made public a central source of information regarding the servicemen and women who died as a result of service in Vietnam. In 1980 Richard set out to determine the unit of assignment for each Army soldier who died in Vietnam.

A user can search the database by name, unit, location or home of record. The database may be used to locate the unit of a veteran who survived, but can only remember who he served with, and not his unit name. The database can also be used to document combat activities that survivors participated in.

The National Archives' in its' **Access to Archival Databases (AAD)** contains 9 digitized

series concerning war casualties, mostly from the Korea and Vietnam Wars eras. These are digital records received from the agencies that created them.

Thank you for your attention. Now I would like to turn the podium over to my colleague, Deborah Powe, who will talk about questions that veterans and their families frequently ask NARA that concern benefits, awards and photographs.

Source:

<https://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair/2014/handouts/session-14-presentation-handout-mcgraw.pdf>



Frequently Asked Questions:

Benefits, Medals, and Service Photos

A variety of important benefits and services are available to veterans and to their families, survivors and next-of-kin from the Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, many states, counties and local municipalities offer additional veterans benefits and programs.

While the National Archives does not provide these benefits, we can help you obtain copies of military personnel records or other proof of service which you'll need to prove eligibility.

In addition to veterans seeking eligibility evidence for benefits, veterans also often request records or other service items as a memento of their military experience. We often field questions related to replacement medals, photographs, and other service memorabilia.



Department of Veterans Affairs VA.gov

Benefits

- Compensation
- Education and training

Health Care

- Hospitals
- Clinics and other care facilities

Burials and Memorials

- Burial Benefits
- Headstones, Markers, and Medallions

VA administers a variety of benefits and services that provide financial and other forms of assistance to veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors.

The agency operates the nation's largest integrated health care system, with more than 1,700 hospitals, clinics, community living centers, readjustment counseling centers, and other facilities.

The VA also operates 131 national cemeteries in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Burial and memorial benefits are available for eligible service members, Veterans, and family members.

VA Home Loans

- ▶ VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies
- ▶ VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide veterans with more favorable terms
- ▶ Certificate of Eligibility (COE) verifies to the lender that veterans are eligible for VA-backed loans
- ▶ Specific military service documentation is needed to obtain the COE
- ▶ To obtain a COE, you must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and meet the service requirements
- ▶ Requirements include various amounts of active duty depending on the service period, and/or a certain number of years of reserve participation. For more information, please visit:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/purchaseco_eligibility.asp

VA Home loans are accepted by private lenders, such as banks, credit unions and mortgage companies.

- A veteran is eligible for a home loan if they meet the following requirements:
- The veteran served 181 days (5 months 4 weeks active duty)
- Served 6 years in the Reserves of National Guard
- Served 90 days during wartime (Active Duty)
- If you are the spouse of a service member who was killed in the line of duty.
- Briefly mention the “Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan”.

You need suitable income, a FICO score of at least 620, the VA guarantees of a portion of the loan which allows the mortgage broker to allow veterans better terms for purchasing houses.

To obtain a COE, you must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and meet the following service requirements:

WWII: 90 total days

Post-WWII: 181 continuous days

Korea: 90 total days

Post-Korea: 181 continuous days

Vietnam: 90 total days

Post-Vietnam: 181 continuous days

1980-1990: 24 continuous months

Gulf War: 24 continuous months

Current active duty: 90 continuous days

National Guard and Reserve 1990 to Present: 90 days of active duty

Documentation Needed for COE

Veteran and current or former Reserve or National Guard member activated for Federal active service

- DD Form 214 - required to have a copy showing the character of service (item 24) and the narrative reason for separation (item 28).

Active duty service member

- A current statement of service

Current National Guard or Reserve member with no Federal active service

- Statement of service

Discharged member of National Guard with no Federal active service

- NGB Form 22, Report of Separation and Record of Service, for each period of National Guard service -**OR**- NGB Form 23, Retirement Points Accounting, and proof of the character of service

NGB-22's, (Point Statements) are used to calculate the total number of years served in the military. The Department of Veterans Affairs(VA) is the only entity authorized to state whether or not someone is eligible for benefits. In order to purchase a home or refinance a home loan, a person will need their DD-214, (Report of Separation), their actual certificate of discharge, which is a DD-256, & their point statement.

These items must be requested via a written request. Either by writing a letter, filling out a SF-180, or using NARA's eVetRecs database. Once your request is filled out, print it out, sign it, state that it is needed for a home loan or refi, the date needed by and fax to: 314-801-9195. Or you can mail your request to: Military Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis MO 63138.

Source:

http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/purchaseco_certificate.asp

VA Claims for Burial Benefits

- According to the Department of Veteran's Affairs website, gravesites in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance.
- Advise your family of your wishes and where your discharge papers are kept so they may establish burial eligibility
- If you do not have your discharge papers, you may request copies from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis
- The veteran's next-of-kin or funeral home can request a copy of the service member's discharge papers or DD Form 214
- If your request is urgent (for example, upcoming surgery, a funeral, etc.), indicate the nature of the emergency and your deadline in the "Comments" section of "Purpose" section of your request and fax it the Customer Service Team at NPRC: (314) 801-0764.

Burial benefits include a gravesite in any of 135 national cemeteries with available space, opening & closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government mark or headstone, burial flag, & a Presidential Memorial Certificate signed by the current President at no cost to the family. Cremated remains in urns can be buried in national cemeteries in the same manner & with the same honors as casketed remains. They can also be placed in a wall known as columbarium.

Gravesites in national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance. Veteran should advise their families of their wishes and where their discharged papers are kept so they may establish burial eligibility

At the time of the veteran's demise, the family would need to make arrangements with the funeral home. There are no VA benefits available to spouses buried in a private cemetery.

Burial & Plot allowances are flat rate monetary benefits generally paid at the maximum amount authorized by law for an eligible veteran's burial & funeral costs.

Burial flags can be requested by filling out a VA Form 27-2008. Burial flags usually

cannot be replaced, but there are some organizations who may be able to help you obtain another flag.

Emergency request source:

<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

Replacement of Military Awards and Decorations



- The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) does not issue service medals; that is a function of each military service department
- However; with the exception of the Coast Guard, the NPRC will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request along with the records verification to the appropriate service department for issuance of the medal
- For replacement Coast Guard Medals, write to following address:
Coast Guard Personnel Service Center
4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 900 (PSC-PSD-MA)
Stop 7200
Arlington, VA 20598-7200

With the exception of Coast Guard, requests for replacement medals should be directed to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). NPRC uses the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) to verify awards to which a veteran may be entitled. NPRC confirms entitlement to the medals, while the service departments provide shipping. In general, the military services will work replacement medal requests for the veteran at no cost.

For the Next-of-Kin of deceased veterans, the process (and cost) for replacement medals differs among the service branches and is dependent upon who is requesting the medal, particularly if the request involves an archival record.

OMPFs are accessioned into the National Archives, and become archival, 62 years after the service member's separation from the military. This is a rolling date; hence, the current year, 2016, minus 62 years is 1954.

The general public may purchase a copy of the veteran's archival Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) to determine the awards due and obtain the medals from a commercial source. If the service member separated after 1954, the public may request such information from the OMPF via the Freedom of Information Act.

There are many sources for commercial replacement of military medals. One source includes:

<https://www.usarmymedals.com/collections/purple-heart-collection>

Photographs of Organizational Groups

Air Force/Army/Navy/Marine Corps, 2008-Present

- Department of Defense
Defense Media Activity
Defense Imagery Management Operations Center
<http://www.dimoc.mil>

Air Force/Army/Navy/Marine Corps, Prior to 2008

- Special Media Records Division
National Archives at College Park
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
stillpix@nara.gov

Coast Guard, Prior to 1962

- Special Media Records Division
National Archives at College Park
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Coast Guard, 1960 to Present

- Personnel Service Center
ATTN: BOPS-C-MR, US COAST GUARD Stop 7200
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20593-7200

Photographs of military service members may be available from the Official Military Personnel File. You may write to NPRC in St. Louis to request a copy. They may also be interfiled in textual references series.

Common External Sources

Military Yearbook Project

- <https://militaryyearbookproject.com/platoon-photos>
- Provides Platoon Photos
- 4,910 images listed on the web

Dog Tag Replacement

- Dog tags are issued for identification and casualty reporting purposes in the event of the death of an active service member
- There are no provisions for reissuance of dog tags by the military after separation
- Found Dog Tags must be returned to the Secretary of Defense
- A variety of vendors are available to create new dog tags, such as <http://www.militarydogtags.com/uses/military/>



Pre 1960's there is a chance that the photo is still in their records. However, 1978 and present, those photos are not part of their military personnel file. If the basic training school(fort) is known, there may be a copy of the basic training graduation yearbook. This book is usually located in the fort's museum. If the yearbook could be found at the museum, a copy of the veteran's photo could be copied for the veteran or a family member. This website provides some basic training photos:

<https://militaryyearbookproject.com/platoon-photos/us-army-basic-combat-training-bct-photos/fort-jackson-sc/1978-fort-jackson-a-10-2-3rd-platoon-4898>

Dog Tags: When a soldier first enlists, they are issued "Dog Tags" for identification purposes. No branch of the Armed Forces will re-issue new ones.

Please go to this website for information on how to obtain dog tags for yourself or a family member. It will give you instructions and will even provide you with examples of each branch of the Armed Forces and war era of how the dog tag should be created. Most military dog tags contain the same basic information. Tags list the full name of service members, their Social Security numbers, their blood types and their religious preferences. The Marine Corps, however, has an extra listing on its dog tags that specifies the size of the service member's gas mask. Function: The information listed on these tags can be crucial in the event of a service member's injury or death. For example, the name and Social Security number can be used to identify for a soldier while the blood type can help

in the event he needs a blood transfusion. The religious preference can also be useful in determining what type of chaplain a soldier needs in the event of injury or death. According to The American War Library, found dog tags aren't the property of the finder or the person identified on the tags. The tags still belong to the U.S. government. By law, all found military items must be immediately mailed to the Secretary of Defense.

Write on a piece of paper where you found the tags, the date you found the tags, your full name and contact information. Place the letter and dog tags into an envelope. Seal the envelope and address it to the Secretary of Defense. The address is: 1400 Defense Pentagon Washington, DC 20301-1400 .Include your return address on the envelope. Take the envelope to the Post Office to be weighed so you can pay the postage and mail it.

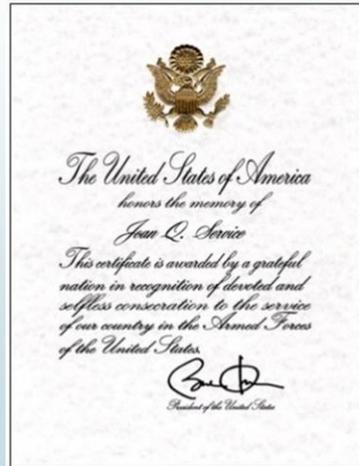
Common External Resources

Online Military Indexes and Records: A Genealogy Guide

- <http://www.militaryindexes.com/index.html>
- Information pertaining to wars and conflicts from the Revolutionary war to Vietnam

Presidential Memorial Certificate

- A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans
- Eligible recipients may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or fax
- Enclose a copy of the Veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility
- Request form available at:
<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf>



Online military Indexes websites:

<http://www.militaryindexes.com/vietnamwar/index.html> Vietnam War index

<http://www.militaryindexes.com/worldwartwo/index.html> WWII index

<http://www.militaryindexes.com/worldwarone/index.html> WW I index

<http://www.militaryindexes.com/koreanwar/index.html> Korean War index

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans. Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased Veterans. More than one certificate may be provided. Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. Please be sure to enclose a copy of the Veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility.

A Variety of Records May Support the Claims Process



In conclusion, to make a successful disability or benefits claim, a wide variety of records may be needed. Be sure to check requirements with the Department of Veterans Affairs or any other benefits provider. As mentioned earlier, these providers may be able to seek evidence on your behalf. However; if you are seeking documentation on your own behalf, note that much of what you need may be found in your Official Military Personnel File. These files may be requested from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

If you find you need records made for organizational purposes, such as unit records, many of those documents made be requested from the National Archives or the various service departments.

The Department of Veterans Affairs also stores many active duty medical records and other documents needed for the purpose of making claims.

Be sure to set aside plenty of time to aggregate resources in order to make the best possible claim; thereby, ensuring the best possible outcome.

Thank you for serving the country



Thank you for serving the country and remember; we at NARA, are available year round to serve you.

Are there any questions from the listening audience?



Thank you for attending!

If we did not get to your question,
you may submit it to inquire@nara.gov

Today's video recording and materials
will remain available at
www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records



www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records