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VA completes digitization of archived Vietnam-era deck logs

This enables expedited disability claims for Blue Water Navy Veterans

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today completion of an interagency effort with the [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#) to digitize declassified deck logs to process claims faster for eligible Vietnam-era Veterans.

The [U.S. Navy](#) and [Coast Guard](#) deck logs within NARA contain helpful information being used to validate claims for [Blue Water Navy \(BWN\) Veterans](#) who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam, to establish presumption to herbicide exposure for service-connected disability benefits.

“The team at NARA recognizes the importance of this effort making it easier for BWN Veterans to receive the benefits they’ve earned without burdening them with paperwork,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Since January 1, VA has processed thousands of claims and encourages every Veteran, dependent and surviving spouse who is eligible to file a claim as soon as possible.”

Data contained in deck logs is used when deciding VA benefit claims. Also known as ship logs or captain's logs, information was manually inputted to chronologically document the daily activities of a navy ship or unit.

VA provided the digital images of deck logs to NARA, available in the [National Archives Catalog](#).

“Through this scanning project, VA contractors digitized declassified Navy and Coast Guard deck logs from 1956-1978 in NARA's holdings, including the log of the hospital ship USS Sanctuary which I served aboard during the Vietnam conflict,” said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero. “As a Veteran from this era, I recognize the unprecedented value this provides to Veterans making these logs easily accessible online.”

Digitization of all available Navy deck logs for ships that served in Vietnam were completed in December 2019, while Coast Guard deck logs were completed in September.

Veterans, dependents and surviving spouses may contact approved [Veterans Service Organizations](#) for assistance in filling a claim. Learn more about [Agent Orange](#) or call 800-827-1000 for more information.

[The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019](#), signed into law by President Trump June 25, 2019 and effective January 1, [extends the presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with herbicide exposure](#). To date, VA has collectively awarded \$641 million to more than 22,524 Blue Water Navy Veterans or survivors.

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