

From R.R, "Bob" Campbell  
NAFTS Chaplain 2008

I have had reasonably good success with getting information about the U.S.S. ARIKARA (ATF 98) during the years I served aboard her, 1963-1967. To date I have acquired 63 pages of documents about my ship. Specifically I have copies of Muster Rolls, Deck Logs and entries of transfers and promotions that often marry the two other documents.

Many shipmates have asked me how to get the information about their ships. Here below I have tried to set up a procedure that I know has worked for me.

### Procedure

Most of the information in which we are interested is available *free* in the National Archives Repository in College Park, Maryland. So, if you live in or around the Washington, D.C. area you have a distinct advantage. Living inside the beltway is not a requirement though.

First make list of the specific information you think you want. Then contact the National Archives directly on-line at [www.archives.gov/](http://www.archives.gov/) and follow the heading prompts mark contact us. Submit and email telling them what documents you want. Your email receipt will be acknowledged by email.

If you are not on-line follow the same plan and mail your information request to:

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001

You may also contact them by phone at:

Telephone: 1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272

IN EITHER FORM THEY WILL RESPOND BY REGULAR U.S.MAIL (Snail mail)

The folks at the NA are very helpful and will go the extra mile to get you the location of the information you trying to get. If you are not in the D.C. area the NA will provide you a list of researchers who will look up the information you need for an hourly fee. In the three trip I have currently made to the NA I have invested less than a total of eight hours

to get the 63 pages of material I have and I went in with absolutely no prior research training at the NA.

Many members of the NA staff and/or the researchers are retired military or are students at the Univ. of Maryland.

If you are blessed to be able to visit the NA personally, I would recommend the trip. There is a airport type security check upon entering the building and a one time, about 30 minute, orientation film on handling documents. There are no fees other than copying costs at about 25 cents a page.

You will find a macro approach doesn't work well. The cost of ordering a whole microfilm reel or a Deck Log copy is prohibitive. Most of the Muster Rolls are on microfilm and the deck logs are in the original book form. That's correct, you will get to leaf through the original Deck Log books just as they were hand recorded when you were aboard. The microfilm reels are by year or years and contain the records of all that type of ship during the time period recorded. So all of the ATF's are together, all the ARS' together, etc.

I hope this information is helpful. In any case I will be more than willing to help anyone who might wish my further advice.