#### Department of Veterans Affairs M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii

**Veterans Benefits Administration January 21, 2016**

**Washington, DC 20420**

#### Key Changes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Changes Included in This Revision | The table below describes the changes included in this revision of Veterans Benefits Manual M21-1, Part III, “General Claims Process,” Subpart iii, “General Development and Dependency Issues.”***Notes***: * The term “regional office” (RO) also includes pension management center (PMC), where appropriate.
* Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* update incorrect or obsolete references, and
* bring the document into conformance with M21-1 standards.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| To update the locations, phone numbers, and fax numbers of National Archives and Records Administration regional archive offices. | [Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 2, Section F, Topic 8, Blocks b-i (III.iii.2.F.8.b-i)](#_b.__Logbooks) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rescissions | None |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Authority | By Direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature | Thomas J. Murphy, DirectorCompensation Service |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Distribution | LOCAL REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED |

### Section F. Merchant Marine Service Records

#### Overview

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In This Section | This section contains the following topics: |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | Topic Name |
| 1 | General Information on Veteran Status Based on Merchant Marine Service |
| 2 | Merchant Marine Service Verification Required for VA Claim |
| 3 | Merchant Marine Service Record Requests |
| 4 | Service Treatment Records (STRs) for Merchant Marine Service |
| 5 | Merchant Marine Logbook Records |
| 6 | Records Available for Combat-Related Injuries |
| 7 | Records Available From the Marine Index Bureau, Inc. (MIB) |
| 8 | Addresses for National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Regional Archives |
| 9 | Exhibit 1: Merchant Marine STR Development Letter for the Public Health Service (PHS) |
| 10 | Exhibit 2: MIB Sample Letter to a Claimant |

#### 1. General Information on Veteran Status Based on Merchant Marine Service

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains general information on Veteran status based on Merchant Marine service, including* eligibility for a U.S. Merchant Marine discharge certificate
* Merchant Mariners who are eligible for all VA benefits under *Public Law (PL) 95-202*
* Merchant Mariners who are eligible for burial benefits only under *PL 105-368*
* applying for a *DD Form 214*, *Certificate of Discharge or Release from Active Duty*, or a *DD Form 1300*, *Report of Casualty*, for Merchant Marine service, and
* determining where to send *DD Form 2168, Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group Certified To Have Performed Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States*.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | December 27, 2013 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Eligibility for a U.S. Merchant Marine Discharge Certificate | Members of the U.S. Merchant Marine who served under the Coast Guard, Naval Transportation Service, or Army Transport Service in active, oceangoing service during the period from* December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, are eligible to receive discharge certificates under *PL 95-202*, or
* August 16, 1945, to December 31, 1946, are eligible to receive discharge certificates under *PL 105-368*.

Each of these services will issue a *DD Form 214*, *Certificate of Discharge or Release from Active Duty*, or a *DD Form 1300*, *Report of Casualty*, as applicable.***Important***: The Veterans Service Representative (VSR) and Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR) must pay close attention to the law under which the *DD Form 214* or *DD Form 1300* is issued to avoid entitlement errors.***References***: For more information on* Merchant Mariners eligible under *PL 95-202*, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.1.b.
* Merchant Mariners eligible under *PL 105-368*, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.1.c.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Merchant Mariners Who Are Eligible for All VA Benefits Under PL 95-202 | On January 19, 1988, in response to Section 401 of *PL 95-202*, the Secretary of the Air Force approved service aboard certain merchant or public vessels in oceangoing or foreign waters as active duty in World War II (WWII).If the discharge document shows eligibility under *PL 95-202*, Veterans and survivors are eligible for benefits in the same manner as any other Veteran or survivor.***Reference***: For more information on Merchant Mariners eligible under *PL 95-202*, see [38 CFR 3.7(x)(15)](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=9e5509539edbba3668ccfe58def65f5e&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_17&rgn=div8). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. Merchant Mariners Who Are Eligible for Burial Benefits Only Under PL 105-368 | *PL 105-368*, Section 402, provides that the qualified service of certain Merchant Mariners between August 16, 1945, and December 31, 1946, is deemed active duty service for purposes of all VA burial benefits, including:* burial flags
* burial, plot, and transportation allowances
* headstones and markers
* interment in national cemeteries, and
* markers in memorial areas of national cemeteries

***Important***: Merchant Marine service after August 15, 1945, does *not* establish eligibility for compensation and/or pension.***Reference***: For more information on Merchant Mariner benefits under Section 402 of *PL 105-368*, see [46 U.S.C. 11201-11204](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/46/subtitle-II/part-G/chapter-112). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Applying for a DD Form 214 or DD Form 1300 for Merchant Marine Service | To apply for a *DD Form 214* or *DD Form 1300*,a claimant must * complete and sign *DD Form 2168*, *Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group Certified To Have Performed Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States*, and
* submit the *DD Form 2168* to the appropriate service department.

***Notes***:* The applicant should also submit copies of any documentation of sea service that he or she may have.
* An applicant must resubmit the *DD Form 2168* and supporting documentation to establish periods of duty other than those that are shown in Item 18, REMARKS, on the *DD Form 214*.
* If the Merchant Mariner is deceased, the applicant must submit evidence of death with the *DD Form 2168*. A photocopy of a death certificate, a funeral obituary, or other evidence showing the date of death is acceptable for this purpose.
* For certification under *PL 105-368*, the applicant must enclose a $30.00 check or money order, payable to the U.S. Treasury.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. Determining Where to Send DD Form 2168 | Use the information below to determine where the claimant should send the *DD Form 2168* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If the alleged service was employment … | Then the claimant sends the DD Form 2168 to the … |
| as a civil servant for the U.S. Army Transport Service (ATS) (or the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, Water Division) | Commander U.S. Army Human Resources CommandDepartment 420Ft. Knox, KY 40122-5402ATTN: AHRC-PDR |
| as a civil servant for the Naval Transportation Service | CommanderU.S. Navy Personnel Command (PERS-312)5720 Integrity DriveMillington, TN 38054-5045 |
| with the* War Shipping Administration, or
* Office of Defense Transportation or their agents, and
* acknowledged by the U.S. Coast Guard or Department of Commerce, in a document such as a Merchant Mariner's Document/Certificate of Service
 | Commanding OfficerU.S. Coast Guard – National Maritime CenterATTN: Records Management Branch (NMC-41)100 Forbes DriveMartinsburg, WV 25404Phone: (888) 427-5662***Reference***: For more information about verification of maritime service through the Coast Guard, see the National Maritime Center website at [www.uscg.mil/nmc/](http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/). |

#### 2. Merchant Marine Service Verification Required for VA Claim

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains instructions regarding information required for a claim, including* forms required for a Merchant Marine claim
* correct voyage entries and release dates on *DD Form 214*
* information required on the *DD Form 1300*
* Merchant Marine claims establishment (CEST) processing
* Veterans Assistance Discharge System (VADS) entries prior to January 1, 2015
* VADS entries beginning January 1, 2015, and
* prior Coast Guard certification of certain Merchant Marine service.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | May 20, 2015 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Forms Required for a Merchant Marine Claim | Notify the claimant that benefits may not be paid without a discharge document.* If there is a Veterans Assistance Discharge System (VADS) record or other evidence of merchant service, inform the claimant that VA cannot pay benefits until the claimant provides a *DD Form 214* or *DD Form 1300.* Assist the claimant by developing the claim pending receipt of a discharge document.
* If there is no evidence of merchant service, inform the claimant that VA cannot initiate development until the claimant provides a *DD Form 214* or *DD Form 1300* or other evidence of merchant service.

***Note*s**:* If there is a VADS record or a discharge document, establish a claim. Otherwise, send an information letter under end product 400.
* Although it is ultimately the claimant’s responsibility to provide a discharge document, VA is not precluded from accepting the discharge document from any legitimate source such as the service department or Power of Attorney when warranted.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Correct Voyage Entries and Release Dates on DD Form 214 | The *DD Form 214* issued should show the * entered on date (EOD) as December 7, 1941, or the date of the earliest voyage, and
* released from active duty (RAD) as the date of completion of the last voyage or
* August 15, 1945 (for *PL 95-202*), or
* December 31, 1946 (for *PL 105-368*).

***Notes***:* The actual voyages and inclusive dates of each voyage will be shown in Item 18 (REMARKS) on the *DD Form 214*. If all of the voyages cannot be entered in Item 18 (REMARKS), an attachment sheetwill be provided.
* For computation of service, only the actual dates of each voyage are considered as qualifying active duty for VA purposes.
* Do *not* use the information provided in Item 12 (RECORD OF SERVICE) to determine an applicant's entitlement to VA benefits.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. Information Required on the DD Form 1300 | If the death of a Merchant Mariner occurred during service, *DD Form 1300*, *Report of Casualty*, is issued in lieu of *DD Form 214*.The *DD Form 1300* should show the equivalent military pay grade. If the pay grade information is necessary but not provided, request pay grade verification by following the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.J.10.***Note***: A *DD Form 1300* is valid even without pay grade information or a Social Security Number (SSN). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Merchant Marine CEST Processing | During claims establishment (CEST) processing, update the corporate record by entering the beginning and ending dates of the three earliest voyages, unless the claim was established based on a VADS entry and voyage information is not yet available.If the three earliest voyages do not satisfy the minimum 90-day active duty requirement for pension, enter the three longest voyages.***Reference***: For more information on establishing a claim based on a VADS entry, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.2.a. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. VADS Entries Prior to January 1, 2015 | Prior to January 1, 2015, the Department of Defense (DoD) sent paper copies of *DD Forms 214* to the VADS unit at the Austin Data Processing Center. When processing paper copies of the *DD Forms 214* for certain categories of Veterans, the VADS unit entered "*DEV*" as the separation reason into the corporate record. This *“DEV”* entry ensured that Merchant Mariners who served during the WWII era did not receive the benefits information package, which is intended to be sent only to recently discharged Veterans. ***Important***: For paper copies of *DD Forms 214* sent to the VADS unit prior to 2015, it is not necessary to clarify the separation reason code if it is “DEV.” Consider these as “SAT” unless other evidence of record reveals otherwise.If "*SAT*" is shown in Item 26 (SEPARATION CODE) on a paper copy of the *DD Form 214*, update the corporate record to reflect the correct entry.***Reference***: For more information on the VADS data format field in the corporate record, see the [*Share User Guide*](http://css.vba.va.gov/SHARE/). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f. VADS Entries Beginning January 1, 2015 | Beginning on January 1, 2015, the DoD terminated the practice of sending paper copies of the *DD Form 214* and began electronically transmitting pertinent discharge data to the VADS unit at the Austin Data Processing Center. If it is apparent that discharge data for Merchant Marine service was transmitted to VADS on or after January 1, 2015, then proper development for the separation reason code is required if it is ***not*** satisfactory service, or “*SAT*.”***Note***: If using a paper copy of the *DD Form 214* to verify service and “*SAT*” is shown in Item 26 (SEPARATION CODE), update the corporate record to reflect the correct entry.***Reference***: For more information on the VADS data format field in the corporate record, see the [*Share User Guide*](http://css.vba.va.gov/SHARE/). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| g. Prior Coast Guard Certification of Certain Merchant Marine Service | Previously, the Coast Guard would certify 90 days of service in certain cases, without providing specific periods of service, if there was proof that a mariner sailed on oceangoing vessels, but the records of vessels or dates of voyages were incomplete.Even if Item 18 (REMARKS) shows no voyage information, consider a previously issued DD Form 214 to be valid if the DD 214 contains the following statements* *“The above individual falls into a special class of World War II Merchant Mariners. The complete sea service records for these individuals, which indicate specific sailing dates and vessel names, cannot be located due to their no longer being in the Federal records system; were lost with the ship; or the individual served aboard the ship in a capacity for which official records were not kept.”*
* *“Based on the information available, the Coast Guard certifies that the above individual has at least 90 days of service aboard oceangoing vessels during the period between 7 December 1941 and 15 August 1945.”*

***Reference***: For more information about what a currently issued *DD Form 214* must contain, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.2.b |

#### 3. Merchant Marine Service Record Requests

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains information on Merchant Marine service record requests, including * problems associated with Merchant Marine STRs
* determining continuity of treatment
* information required when requesting Merchant Marine service records
* requesting records for U.S. Maritime Service, and
* requesting former prisoner of war (FPOW) records for Merchant Mariners.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | December 27, 2013 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Problems Associated With Merchant Marine STRs | Merchant Marine service treatment records (STRs) * are difficult to obtain, and
* may not be as detailed or as complete as those VA has historically received from the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy.

***Reference***: For more information on obtaining Merchant Marine service records, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.J.10. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Determining Continuity of Treatment | If a disability compensation claim is filed* ask the claimant to provide evidence of continuity of treatment for the claimed conditions from date of separation to present, and
* advise the claimant
* that difficulty may be encountered in obtaining STRs
* to provide as detailed information as possible, and
* that the disabilities claimed *must* have occurred during actual voyages, not merely while attached to a vessel.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. Information Required when Requesting Merchant Marine Service Records | When requesting medical records, pay grade data, or other records* send a copy of the *DD Form 214* with the request, or
* include the following information from the *DD Form 214* REMARKS
* the identification number of the vessel
* the name of the vessel
* the Veteran’s SSN (not included in death cases)
* the Z number, if available, and
* the Veteran’s date of birth (DOB).

***Notes***:* The names of vessels may not be sufficient for identification of service records, since the names of the vessels could have been changed. However, the identification numbers were always retained.
* The Z number was a number assigned to Merchant Mariners that is comparable to a service number.

***Reference***: For more information on the address codes for Merchant Marine service records, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.J.10. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Requesting Records for U.S. Maritime Service | The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) (address code 13) has records of Merchant Mariners trained by the U.S. Maritime Service.Request these records through the Personnel Information Exchange System (PIES), using the Army branch tab. The following information must be provided in the request:* the name used by the Veteran during training
* DOB, and
* SSN.

***Note***: The Coast Guard does not use training time with the U.S. Maritime Service as evidence of active, ocean-going service during WWII for issuing U.S. Merchant Marine discharge documents. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. Requesting FPOW Records for Merchant Mariners | Time spent as a former prisoner of war (FPOW) does count as qualifying service for Merchant Mariners. The Coast Guard (address code 52) has most of the names of those who were held captive. The names were obtained from a list compiled by the Coast Guard and DoD in 1950.***Notes***:* If verified FPOW dates are available, they should be listed in the REMARKS block of the *DD Form 214*, above the actual voyages/dates of each voyage.
* For FPOW records, the RAD date on the *DD Form 214* can be later than August 15, 1945. If the Veteran was captured, the period of qualifying service is from the beginning date of the voyage during which the Veteran was captured to the date the Veteran was repatriated.

***Example***: John Smith served on the ship, Ft. Benjamin Harrison. The voyage began December 7, 1941, and the crew was captured and held until September 13, 1945. Mr. Smith was repatriated on September 13, 1945. His service from December 7, 1941, to September 13, 1945, is considered one period of qualifying service. |

#### 4. STRs for Merchant Marine Service

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains information on STRs for Merchant Marine service, including * availability of STRs for Merchant Mariners
* requesting Public Health Service (PHS) medical records from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HSRA)
* how to request PHS records from the HSRA
* action to take if unable to provide required information to HSRA locating records of military or overseas treatment for Merchant Mariners
* information concerning treatment of Merchant Mariners onboard ship, and
* PHS records for Merchant Marine treatment more than 50 years ago.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | December 27, 2013 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Availability of STRs for Merchant Mariners | It is not possible to request STRs for Merchant Mariners because these individuals do not have a medical file as such.However, Merchant Mariners were eligible to receive medical treatment at Public Health Service (PHS) hospitals. Microfilm copies of certain medical records are maintained by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HSRA) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), at the National Hansen’s Disease Center in Baton Rouge, LA. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Requesting PHS Medical Records From the HSRA | If the claimant alleges treatment at a U.S. PHS hospital *and* the claimant can furnish the minimum information as required below, send a request to the HSRA.For the HSRA to conduct a search, the request * *must* include
* the Veteran's fullname and any aliases
* the Veteran’s DOB
* the location (state, at a minimum) of the clinic(s)/hospital(s) where the Veteran was treated, and
* the month and year of treatment (provide at least the decade), and
* should include, if available
* the Veteran’s SSN and/or Z number, which is comparable to a service number, and
* any other identifying information.

***Important***: Do *not* send a request to the HSRA if the Veteran * is unable to furnish the minimum required information, or
* did not claim treatment at a PHS facility.

***Note***: Because HSRA searches reels of microfilm to find treatment records, the more specific information furnished, the greater the likelihood of locating the records. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. How to Request PHS Records from the HSRA | Prepare a request using the example letter in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.9 * providing the information listed in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.4.c, and
* attaching a *VA Form 21-4142*, *Authorization and Consent to Release Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs*, completed and signed by the claimant.

Send the request to: Public Health Service Health Data CenterNational Hansen’s Disease Program1770 Physicians Park DriveBaton Rouge, LA 70816***Note***: Telephone 1-800-642-2477 or (225) 756-3773 if priority/expedited assistance is required.***Important***: All correspondence must include the name and telephone number of the requester. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Action to Take if Unable to Provide Required Information to HSRA | If the information required to submit a request for PHS records to HSRA is not available, review M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.5 and 6 to determine if there is any possibility that records may be available from National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) or the Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support.Once all possible sources for records have been queried, route the claim to the rating activity for final rating action.***Notes***:* The rating decision must outline the efforts made to obtain the records.
* The letter to the claimant must explain that a search cannot be conducted for medical records without the minimum required information outlined in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.4.c.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. Locating Records of Military or Overseas Treatment for Merchant Mariners | The HSRA does not possess records for Veterans treated at military or overseas facilities.Use the table below to determine how to obtain medical records if the claimant alleges military or overseas treatment. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If a claimant alleges… | Then … |
| any overseas treatment (military or private) | * obtain as much identifying information about the treatment facility as possible from the claimant, such as the
* complete name, address, location, and nation administering the facility
* date(s) of treatment, and
* conditions treated.
* write to the facility, enclosing a *VA Form 21-4142* signed by the claimant, explaining what is needed and why.
 |
| treatment in a U.S. military facility | send a PIES request to NPRC asking for clinical records, using request code C01.***Reference***: For information on preparing PIES requests for service records, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.D. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f. Information Concerning Treatment of Merchant Mariners Onboard Ship | The HSRA does not possess records of medical treatment furnished onboard a ship.If the claimant alleges treatment for injury or illness onboard ship, logbook development may be appropriate. ***Reference***: For more information on logbook development, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.5.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| g. PHS Records for Merchant Marine Treatment More Than 50 Years Ago | The HSRA is authorized to destroy PHS treatment records after 50 years from the date of treatment for Merchant Mariners serving under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard. Most Merchant Mariners who served during WWII are affected by this policy. However, records administrators may choose not to destroy such records, so VA should not assume that such records do not exist.In addition, documentation of the date and treatment was recorded on index cards that are stored indefinitely. If a Merchant Mariner served under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard and that service was more than 50 years ago, the index cards may be the only available records. After initiating the routine development as described in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.4.c, if the claimed treatment was more than 50 years ago, send a copy of the request to the National Maritime Center. Ask for any treatment records or copies of treatment index cards if the treatment records were destroyed.***Reference***: For the address of the National Maritime Center, see the table in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.1.e. |

#### 5. Merchant Marine Logbook Records

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains information on Merchant Marine logbook records, including* purpose of logbook records
* effects of privacy restrictions
* obtaining information on shipboard injuries
* the information to include in requests to NARA
* NARA information furnished to claimants, and
* the records available
* for vessels with foreign registration, and
* from the U.S. Army Transportation Corps or Naval Transportation Service.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | August 13, 2009 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Purpose of Logbook Records | Captains of Merchant Marine vessels employed by the Coast Guard maintained daily logbooks. The logbooks are now in the possession of NARA regional archives. These logbooks are *not* the traditional ships’ logs often referred to as “deck logs,” in which masters recorded the daily entries that concerned the position and operation of the ship.The logbooks in the NARA regional archives were issued to masters of vessels in accordance with Federal laws and regulations passed to protect the health and welfare of Merchant Mariners. Entries were required to record offenses and desertions punishable by forfeiture of wages, and injuries or illnesses of crewmembers. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Effects of Privacy Restrictions | Since logbooks contain information relating to many individuals that may be of a personal nature, they are subject to privacy restrictions. Therefore, entries that relate to medical or disciplinary matters concerning individuals other than the subject of the inquiry may be deleted by NARA. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. Obtaining Information on Shipboard Injuries | Logbooks may contain entries pertaining to injuries suffered by Merchant Mariners. If a claimant alleges an injury or illness occurred onboard a ship, send a letter to the National Archives requesting a logbook search for evidence of the illness or injury. No release of information authorization is required. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Information to Include in Requests to NARA | Letters to NARA requesting logbook searches for evidence should be accompanied by a photocopy of the Veteran's *DD Form 214* and should include the following information* the full name
* under which the Veteran served, and
* of the vessel on which the incident occurred
* the name of the port where the voyage ended, and
* the approximate dates of the voyage (month and year).

***Note***: If the voyage started at one port and ended at different port, write to the NARA regional archives for the port where the voyage *ended*.***Reference***: For information about the addresses of the NARA regional archives, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.8. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. NARA Information Furnished to Claimants | NARA will furnish individual Merchant Mariners or their surviving dependents with one set of copies, free of charge, of the logbook entries needed to verify the mariner's service in the Merchant Marine between December 7, 1941, and August 15, 1945. Claimants should state in their requests that the information sought is needed to obtain financial benefits from VA.***Note***: NARA requires reimbursement for * extra copies of logbook pages, as well as copies of logbook materials not needed to verify service in the Merchant Marine during WWII, and
* copies of entire logbooks.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f. Records Available for Vessels With Foreign Registration  | Logbook records are not available for vessels registered in foreign countries, such as Panama.***Notes***: * These vessels were not required to maintain and turn in logbooks, even if the vessel was owned by a United States company and operated under War Shipping Administration control.
* Neither the Coast Guard nor the National Archives are able to provide crew lists for such vessels.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| g. Records Available From U.S. Army Transportation Corps or Naval Transportation Service | Logbooks are not available for Merchant Mariners who were employed by the U.S. Army Transportation Corps or the Naval Transportation Service. |

#### 6. Records Available for Combat-Related Injuries

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains information on records available to confirm the incurrence of combat-related injuries, including* obtaining information on combat-related injuries
* records maintained at the Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support
* information about the Mariners Medal
* where to send requests for combat-related maritime injuries, and
* information to include in requests to the Office of Sealift Support.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | December 27, 2013 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Obtaining Information on Combat-Related Injuries | Logbooks in the NARA regional archives *do not* usually contain descriptions of wartime actions in which the vessel was involved.***Note***: If a claimant alleges a combat-related injury, write to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support before initiating logbook development with NARA.***Reference***: For more information on obtaining information from the Office of Sealift Support, see * M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.6.d, and
* M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.6.e.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Records Maintained at the Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support | The U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support, maintains records of citations and medals issued to WWII Merchant Mariners. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. Information About the Mariners Medal | The Mariners Medal was authorized for combat-related injuries and is similar to the Purple Heart. Because the medal was only authorized for combat-related injuries, evidence of award of the medal may be used as supporting evidence of a claimed service-connected injury.If the Veteran did receive a medal, a copy of the citation should be of record and will contain details of the incident. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Where to Send Requests for Combat-Related Maritime Injuries | If a claimant alleges a combat-related injury that cannot otherwise be documented, send a letter to the Maritime Administration Office of Sealift Support at the address shown below, requesting a review of folders for evidence that the Veteran received a medal. ***Address***:Office of Sealift SupportMaritime AdministrationRoom W25-3221200 New Jersey Avenue SEWashington, DC 20590ATTN: Awards***Notes***: * No release of information authorization is required.
* More information, including medal and contact information, is available on the [U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration](http://www.marad.dot.gov/) website.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. Information to Include in Requests to the Office of Sealift Support | A photocopy of the Veteran’s *DD Form 214* should accompany requests to the Office of Sealift Support. The following information should be provided if not shown on the *DD Form 214** the name under which the Veteran served
* the Veteran's Z number, and
* the Veteran's home address while serving during WWII (city and state).
 |

#### 7. Records Available From the MIB

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains information on the records available from the MIB, including * types of records available at the MIB
* who may request MIB records
* MIB fees
* information required for an MIB request
* address for the MIB, and
* notifying the claimant of MIB records.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | August 13, 2009 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Types of Records Available at the MIB | Some Merchant Marine records may be obtained from the Marine Index Bureau, Inc. (MIB), a private agency. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Who May Request MIB Records | The *claimant* must request the records directly from MIB. Regional offices (ROs) should not send requests directly to MIB. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. MIB Fees  | The MIB charges a fee of $25.00 for making the records search and the fee *must* be paid by the claimant. ***Important***: MIB cannot guarantee that records on file at the bureau will be acceptable to VA as proof of eligibility for VA benefits, nor can MIB guarantee that any records pertaining to the Veteran's wartime service are actually on file. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Information Required for an MIB Request | The claimant should contact the MIB directly and request the forms for documentation of sea service that may be on file at the MIB. The claimant will need to provide * the Veteran’s complete name
* DOB
* place of birth
* SSN
* Z or Book (Bk) number
* current mailing address, and
* any known mailing addresses during the period 1941 to 1946.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. Address for the MIB  | Claimants must send requests for information from MIB to the following addressMarine Index Bureau, Inc.67 Scotch Rd.Ewing, NJ 08628. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f. Notifying the Claimant of MIB Records | If all other development has failed to produce records in support of the claim, send a denial letter that* incorporates the language of M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.F.10, and
* advises the claimant that the claim may be reopened if the MIB search proves successful.
 |

#### 8. Addresses for National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Regional Archives

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains information on the addresses of the NARA regional archives, including* logbooks contained at NARA regional archives
* logbooks available and addresses for NARA
* New England Region
* Northeast Region
* Mid-Atlantic Region
* Southeast Region
* Southwest Region
* Pacific Southwest Region
* Pacific Sierra Region, and
* Pacific Northwest Region
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | January 21, 2016 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Logbooks Contained at NARA Regional Archives | [NARA regional archives](http://www.archives.gov/locations/) have logbooks only for individuals whose service was documented by the U.S. Coast Guard or the Department of Commerce.***Important***: The NARA regional archives do not have logbooks for individuals who served with the U.S. Army Transportation Corps or the Naval Transportation Service. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, New England Region | NARA, New England Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| * Boston, MA, from 1942 through 1953
* Portsmouth, NH, from 1942 through 1955
* Portland, ME, from 1941 through 1955, and
* Providence, RI, from 1941 through 1953
 | National ArchivesNew England Region380 Trapelo Rd.Waltham, MA 02154Phone: (781) 663-0144Fax: (781) 663-0154 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| c. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Northeast Region | NARA, Northeast Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| New York, N.Y., from 1942 through 1960***Important***: Before submitting a request for information from NARA, Northeast Region, obtain the year and logbook number from the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Inspection Office. This office maintains a card index arranged alphabetically by name of vessel.***Address***:U.S. Coast GuardMarine Inspection OfficeInvestigation SectionRoom 312Battery Park BuildingNew York, N.Y. 10004-1466 | National ArchivesNortheast RegionOne Bowling GreenNew York, NY 10004Phone: (212) 401-1620Fax: (212) 401-1638 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| d. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Mid-Atlantic Region | NARA, Mid-Atlantic Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| * Philadelphia, PA, from 1942 through 1956
* Baltimore, MD, from 1942 through 1957, and
* Norfolk, VA, from 1940 through 1955
 | National ArchivesMid-Atlantic Region14700 Townsend Road Philadelphia, PA 19154Phone: (215) 305-2044Fax: (215) 305-2038 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| e. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Southeast Region | NARA, Southeast Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| * Savannah, GA, from 1941 through 1953
* Tampa, FL, from 1942 through 1951
* Miami, FL, from 1943 through 1956
* Charleston, SC, from 1919 through 1958, and
* Jacksonville, FL, from 1943 through 1951
 | National ArchivesSoutheast Region5780 Jonesboro RoadMorrow, GA 30260Phone: (770) 968-2100Fax: (770) 968-2547 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| f. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Southwest Region | NARA, Southwest Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| * Houston, TX, from 1942 through 1973
* New Orleans, LA, from 1942 through 1976
* Corpus Christi, TX, from 1943 through 1972
* Galveston, TX, from 1941 through 1974
* Mobile, AL, from 1942 through 1956, and
* Port Arthur, TX, from 1939 through 1970
 | National ArchivesSouthwest Region1400 John Burgess DriveFort Worth, TX 76140Phone: (817) 551-2051 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| g. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Pacific Southwest Region | NARA, Pacific Southwest Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| * Los Angeles, CA, from 1941 through 1956, and
* Wilmington, Long Beach, San Pedro, Port San Luis, and Port Hueneme, CA, from 1942 through 1954
 | National ArchivesPacific Southwest Region23123 Cajalco RoadPerris, CAPhone: (951) 956-2000Fax: (951) 956-2079 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| h. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Pacific Sierra Region | NARA, Pacific Sierra Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| San Francisco, CA, from 1927 through 1957 | National ArchivesPacific Sierra Region1000 Commodore DriveSan Bruno, CA 94066Phone: (650) 238-3501 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| i. Logbooks Available and Addresses for NARA, Pacific Northwest Region | NARA, Pacific Northwest Region, maintains custody of logbooks of vessels with voyages ending in the ports of |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Port of Arrival | Address |
| * Seattle, WA, from 1940 through 1958, and
* Portland, OR, from 1942 through 1958.
 | National ArchivesPacific Northwest Region6125 Sand Point Way NESeattle, WA 98115Phone: (206) 336-5115 |

**9. Exhibit 1: Merchant Marine STR Development Letter for PHS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains an example Merchant Marine STR development letter for the PHS. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | December 13, 2005 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Merchant Marine STR Development Letter for PHS | A Merchant Marine STR development letter for the PHS is below. |

|  |
| --- |
| Public Health Service Health Data CenterNational Hansen’s Disease Program1770 Physician’s Park DriveBaton Rouge, LA 70816SUBJ: Merchant Marine medical treatment recordsWe are attempting to locate all medical records for the following Veteran:NAME *(required)*SSN *(if known)*DATE OF BIRTH *(required)*WHERE THE VETERAN WAS TREATED BY THE USPHS *(at least the state)*MONTH AND YEAR OF TREATMENT *(at least the decade)*VETERAN’S Z NUMBER *(if available)*OTHER IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:The Veteran has filed a claim for VA compensation benefits based on World War II Merchant Marine service. To process this claim, we need all available medical treatment records for that service.We have enclosed VA Form 21-4142, “Authorization and Consent to Release Information to theDepartment of Veterans Affairs,” and an additional copy of this letter for you to attach to your response so that we can quickly associate the reply with our records for this Veteran. If you have any questions about this claim, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at telephone number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.Your assistance in resolving this claim is very much appreciated.Sincerely yours,Veterans Service Center ManagerEnclosures |

**10. Exhibit 2: MIB Sample Letter to a Claimant**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | This topic contains an example of an MIB letter to a claimant.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Change Date | December 13, 2005 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Sample of a Marine Index Bureau Letter to a Claimant | An example of an MIB letter to a claimant is shown below. |

|  |
| --- |
| **[date]****[claimant’s name] [claimant’s address]****[salutation]**:A private agency, MIB (Marine Index Bureau, Inc.), may have records on file pertaining to the Veteran’s sea service as a U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. You should be aware that there is no guarantee records in the MIB folders will be acceptable to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as proof of eligibility for VA benefits. There is also no guarantee that MIB has any records pertaining to your (the Veteran's) wartime service.If you wish to request a search of the MIB file system, you should make such a request directly to this agency. There is a fee of $25 for this search, which must be paid by you. Submit a check or money order drawn to Marine Index Bureau, Inc., with your request. Send your request to: Marine Index Bureau, Inc., 67 Scotch Rd., Ewing, NJ 08628.When submitting your request, you *must* provide: the Veteran's complete name, date of birth, place of birth, Social Security number, Z or Bk number, current mailing address, and any known mailing addresses during the period 1941 to 1946. You must also certify that you are requesting only the Veteran's records, and that they will be used to apply for Veterans benefits and for no other purpose.Upon receipt of your request, along with any information needed to enable MIB to conduct its search, the MIB will perform a search of its record system for any reports concerning service during the World War II period. A document containing the results of the search will then be sent to you.Sincerely yours,Veterans Service Center Manager |