



# Archives Month as a Way to do Advocacy



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## Charting Course

Every October, Archivists across the nation celebrate and advocate for the archival field as part of American Archives Month. In 2018, the Naval History & Heritage Command (NHHC) archival staff participated in Archives Month specifically developing archives outreach that not only advocated for archival services but also as a way to foster connections, and encourage communication and collaboration within our organization

Working at a large institution with both archival and non-archival staff, and locations spread across the country is a challenge in and of itself, let alone for fostering community engagement. Under the umbrella of Archives Month, NHHC staff planned outreach activities that sought to create and cultivate a sense of community, not only within our large organization, but also within the Navy community at large.

Inspired by MARAC Spring 2018 Session 18, If You Plan It, They Will Come: Archives Month Event Incubator, a call for volunteers went out to establish an Archives Month Committee (AMC). The AMC brainstormed ideas, came up with 8 proposed ideas, and ultimately settled on 5 objectives.

Focusing on a series of internal and external outreach activities, NHHC staff created blogposts, participated in the DC Archives Fair and Ask an Archivist Day, hosted an information table on the Washington Navy Yard base, and generated brochures, handouts and giveaways, as well as organizing a staff webinar training day.

## Underway

- AMC consisted of 5 archivists across departments planning the logistics of the objectives but all archival departments would have an opportunity to participate.
- AMC started having regular meetings in May with subsequent meetings being held more frequently as October got closer.
- The Archives Month Activity Proposal was due in June to Senior Leadership and AMC met with Senior Leadership to discuss the proposal a week after submitting. The AMC went forward with 5 of the 8 proposed activities.
- Organizing a staff webinar training day involved free webinars such as *Identifying and Selecting Digital Content for Preservation*, Library of Congress and *Preservation for Free*, FDLP Academy .
- A call for Archival Staff to volunteer at scheduled outreach activities went out in September via mass email, and meetings, sign up sheets were posted on our shared drive.
- NHHC's Communication and Outreach Division (COD) provided some brochures and posters.
- AMC staff created Archives Branch business cards (250 Avery Printable Business Card \$8).
- AMC staff purchased two sets of badge reel (\$9 x 2) and badge holder (\$7 x 2) as a creative away to handout our Archives Branch business cards.
- Gaylord Archival – Guide to Collections Care brochure was free. Thank you to Gaylord Archival.
- Tiny Hollinger boxes were also free. Thank you to Hollinger Metal Edge.
- AMC staff added candy and our Archives Branch business card into the boxes as well as a label on the lid.

## Ask An Archivist Day



Archivists around the country, including NHHC, took to Twitter to respond to questions tweeted with the hashtag #AskAnArchivist, letting us engage directly with the public about what we do, why it's important, and of course, to share our "most interesting/bizarre/touching etc., records" stories.

With tweets gaining more than 118,200 impressions, Twitter was the most impactful platform for the Archives Month effort.

Two of the top ten tweet for the month were Archives Month Tweets.

<https://archivesare.archivists.org/2018/09/27/october-3rd-is-ask-an-archivist-day/>

## Blog Posts



Combined, the four blogs received 1,444 pageviews. The most popular was the What's An Archivist post (462 pageviews) closely followed by the Before you Donate... post (425). Finding Treasure received 360 pageviews and the What's in the Seabee Museum Archive received 197 pageviews.

While those numbers may not seem like a huge success, it's worth it to note that on average, people remained on the blogs 40 seconds longer than our typical posts for the month, and because of how the posts were written, we can continue to use each in social posts throughout the corresponding year. In fact, the "Before You Donate" blog post is already something we send to people when we receive a public query.

Archivists from the Seabee Museum and the Washington Navy Yard wrote archival themed journal articles on various subjects. Over 15 blog posts were written. AMC, Senior Leadership, and COD reviewed them to select the most appropriate ones for Archives Month. The rest of the blog posts will be used throughout the year.

**NHHC Published Blogs**  
• *Finding Treasure in the Archives*: Whether you're looking for a Navy record or just a fun story, you'll find it here. We've compiled a list of our most interesting records and they're being featured in our Archives Month blog. These records are not only interesting, but they're also being featured in our Archives Month blog. These records are not only interesting, but they're also being featured in our Archives Month blog.

**NHHC Published Blogs**  
• *What's in the Seabee Museum Archive?*: The U.S. Navy Seabee Museum's archival collection represents the history of the Seabee Civil Engineer Corps and their contributions to the Navy. We select, collect, preserve and display records related to Seabee history. The collection consists of: records, ephemera, photographs, maps, equipment, collection reports, inventory reports, and indexes showing the movement of personnel. Originally meant to be a temporary record, they have been preserved for our benefit because they reflect the history of the Seabees from 1942 to the present. They're important because of the Seabees' contributions and innovations that have shaped the Navy's accomplishments on all seven continents. For more information, visit <http://seabee.museum.navy.mil>

## Giveaways



Tiny Hollinger boxes used as giveaways

Staff created business cards placed in purchased badge holders and reels as a way to draw people to our table. Ready made badge holders with reels were much more expensive and cost prohibitive.



We experienced some printing format issues with the cards. It was good that we got a 250 pack because we had enough to spare.



NHHC's COD provided brochures and posters. We also have a sign up sheet to join our email mailing list.

## DC Archives Fair

In celebration of American Archives Month, archivists and experts from a wide array of institutions across the region were on hand to share their collections, answer questions and discuss the challenges and opportunities they face every day.



30 People  
vs  
73 People



In-house outreach event on base. Archivist across the department were on hand to share information about the archive, answer questions and discuss how we support the US Navy.

## Information Table at the Washington Navy Yard

## Moored Port Side

- It's important to formally elect a Captain (committee chair,) someone who can keep everyone on course.
- The sooner you start, the better.
- AMC should work with managers on finding staff to write blog on specific topics.
- Ask An Archivist – Have a War Room (central location) of where all the action is happening. Need a Captain (one point of contact) divvying up questions but may also need more people to assist with questions.

## Properly Relieved By

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## Questions? Feedback?

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