GUIDE FOR VA PSYCHOLOGY HISTORIANS AND USERS OF THE
VA PSYCHOLOGY, AVAPL, AND NOVA-Psi ARCHIVES AT CCHP

BY

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Introduction

Psychology in the Veterans Administration (VA), now the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), has a distinguished history of accomplishments in patient care of veterans, behavioral health treatment research, the clinical training of psychologists, and the development of professional credential standards for psychologists. In order to preserve this history, two separate archives have been established and housed at the Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP) at the University of Akron and a third archives is under development at CCHP.

The two current archives include the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychology archives and the Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL) archives. The first contains material published by the VA since 1946 to prepare and guide clinical and counseling psychologists for their patient care and leadership roles in working with veterans. The archival material in the collection includes administrative policy, information bulletins, mental health treatment program guides and manuals, staffing and workload data. The collection additionally includes reports of research conducted by VA psychologists for presentations at

1 With thanks for assistance and review of this manuscript from Rhonda Rinehart, Manager, Special Collections, Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP), University of Akron.

2 Note that all underlined, colored internet links to material in the text of this manuscript can be accessed directly for viewing or downloading by clicking on the link if this manuscript is being viewed on a computer.

3 The Society of American Archives defines an archives as a collection of records or materials having some enduring value and considers the word “archives” to be a singular noun, i.e., an archives is a collection. It can be parenthetically noted that it is a convention to use the verb ‘housed’ vs ‘stored’ when referring to the location of an archives.
research conferences or research summarized in VA psychology and behavioral health newsletters.

The AVAPL archives include the by-laws, administrative records, newsletters, and other materials regarding the activities, policy, and advocacy of the non-profit, independent association of VA psychology leaders established in 1977. Correspondence records and white papers are additionally included in the collection regarding such topics as recruiting and retaining psychologists, training and licensing, and issues affecting veterans such as homelessness, substance abuse, and PTSD.

The third archives under development is that of the National Association of VA Psychologists (NOVA-Psi) archives. NOVA-Psi was established as an independent association of psychology staff from 1981-1999. The material in this archive collection currently includes by-laws of the organization and the newsletters for members which describe the administrative activities and advocacy of its leadership as well as contains topical interest articles for VA psychologists on treatment program and professional activities in the VA. A research summaries column in many of the newsletters also described ongoing or completed research summaries.

This guide for historians and users of the three archives has been prepared to help users identify and locate material in the three archive collections at CCHP. The guide first locates CCHP finding aids for the archive collections which identify and locate material in the archive collections. Finding aids are currently available for both the VA psychology archives and the AVAPL archives (and are under development for the NOVA-Psi archives). Secondly, this guide provides illustrations and examples of material in the VA psychology archives and AVAPL archives for the standards used in describing and organizing archival material in the U.S. [Describing Archives: A Content Standard, Second Edition (DACS)].

It can further be noted that the aforementioned standards include guidelines for the naming of an archive. If creating a title for an organizational collection, archival guidelines suggest using the latest or existing title of the organization in naming its archives if the organization had an existence with a former title. For example, the Veterans Administration (VA) was established in 1930 to consolidate several federal benefit programs for veterans. In 1989, the VA became a cabinet-level department and was re-named the Department of Veterans Affairs. Since VA psychology was established in 1946 and existed in the organization under both names, the official name of the VA psychology archives is the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychology archives or, more informally, the VA psychology archives (note that only proper nouns are capitalized in titles of archives). Similarly, the Association of Veterans Administration (VA) Chief Psychologists (AVACP) was renamed to reflect a change in membership and, with

4 http://files.archivists.org/pubs/DACS2E-2013_v0315.pdf
the name change of the VA, became the Association of Veterans Affairs (VA) Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL). The latter official title is used in naming its archives or, more informally, is referred to as the AVAPL archives. The AVAPL archives will also include collected documents with the previous AVACP name.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychology archives

The description page of the VA psychology archives at CCHP can be found at http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll10/id/1447 (see Figure 1). It can be noted from Figure 1 that a finding aid for the VA psychology archives is included in a pdf or text document in a scroll window at the top half of the page with several description items listed in a box below that window. The finding aid in the scroll window begins with a descriptive summary of the archives including title, repository, creator, dates of archive items, quantity, abstract, identification, location, and language. Scroll down to see all sections or instead of scrolling down the window to read the finding aid, you can click on the button for “Page Flip View” at the top right shown in Figure 1 which produces a side-by-side image of two pages as if you were reading a book.

Scrolling further down the finding aid will provide information on several sections of material (not seen in Figure 1 without scrolling down the window). The last section of the finding aid identifies where items in the collection are physically located at CCHP. In the finding aid for the VA psychology archives, for example, the first item in the Detailed Description notes that it contains information about the first Cooperative Psychological Research Conference, Tuberculosis, 1958 November 6-7 and indicates that information is located in Box 724 / Folder 1. If you are not at the CCHP at the University of Akron to examine those materials yourself, you can phone or email someone at CCHP to photocopy the material in Box 724 / Folder 1 and have them send the contents to you with a charge for the person’s time and photocopying costs. When available, the finding aid may inform you (in the Related/Separated Materials section of the finding aid) of any materials that have been scanned and are available for viewing and downloading of digital files on your office or home computer without charge.
Figure 1
CCHP description of VA psychology archives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychology archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository</td>
<td>Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>330-972-7285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>United States. Department of Veterans Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>1947-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>3.16 linear feet (10 document cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychology archives are comprised mainly of the materials issued by the organization to better prepare psychologists for their leadership and treatment roles with veterans, and to improve training and psychologists' capabilities in dealing with the unique situations of United States veterans. Many materials in this collection are photocopies of the originals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>p15960coll10/Id/1302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Boxes 724-733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can note that one of the description items below the scroll window (Link to Finding Aid Repository) provides a direct link to the finding aid located at the OhioLINK database at
http://rave.ohiolink.edu/archives/ead/OhAkAHA0516 in what is called the persistent view. Figure 2 displays what you will find at that link. The persistent view link provides finding aid information in standard sections of the archives which are listed in the left column. As is the case with the CCHP database, the OhioLINK database displays the same general information about the archives and its collection of material and identifies the location of all archival material at CCHP.

Figure 2

Persistent link view of finding aid for VA psychology archives at the OhioLINK database

5 That same view can also be directly accessed at http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/view?docId=ead/OhAkAHA0516.xml&query=&brand=default.
A print view displaying the entire finding aid file can be accessed by clicking on the print view area next to the persistent link circled in red in Figure 2. It can also be directly accessed at http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/view?docId=ead/OhAkAHA0516.xml&doc.view=printead.

The last finding aid section listed in Figure 2 is the “Detailed Description of The Collection” which identifies the specific location of all items in the collection. Scanning the brief titles in that section provides an overview of what you will find in the archival collection. For example, photocopies of the Department of Medicine and Surgery Information Bulletins, 1947-1953 are located in Box 728 / Folder 5, Box 729 / Folder 1, and Box 729 / Folder 2. (These bulletins are also referred to as Neuropsychology Division of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Information Bulletins, 1947-1953.) The “Related/Separated Material” section of the finding aid indicates that these Information Bulletins were scanned and are available for viewing and downloading in a separate location and a link to the scans is found in the Related Material Section of the finding aid. By clicking on the link in that section to Neuropsychology Division of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Information Bulletins, 1947-1953, any of the information bulletins can be viewed by or downloaded to your office or home computer by selecting the thumbnail or title (see Appendix for more information on these Information Bulletins).

A document with an introduction and brief summary of each of the 31 Information Bulletins can also be found in Box 728 / Folder 5. A link to a digital version of that document entitled “Introduction, Content Summaries, and Archive Location of Information Bulletins of the Neuropsychiatry Division in the Department of Medicine and Surgery, Veterans Administration 1947-1953” can be found at the website of the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL) at http://www.avapl.org/ (select Archives tab). That summaries document will assist users in locating specific information about the contents of the bulletins. An introduction to the digital newsletter collection summaries provides additional information about the purpose and structure of the bulletins and how to digitally view or download each volume.

Individual photographs for each archives are placed in the Cummings Center Still Images Collection. The following finding aid entry in the Related/Separated Material Section indicates the location of photographs in the VA psychology archives.

“Photographs of psychologists involved with the Veterans Administration – Harold Hildreth, Cecil Peck and James Grier Miller – as well as images of the Veterans Administration building and other individuals, are located in the Cummings Center Still Images Collection, box V77.”

Donated books in the VA psychology archives are placed in a special CCHP on-site location with other Books of Psychology and Related Human Sciences and are given a call number (see Figure 3).
Figure 3

Titles and call numbers of books in the VA psychology archives at CCHP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Collection Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical care of veterans / Robinson E. Adams</td>
<td></td>
<td>UB359 .A477 1967</td>
<td>Cummings Center Books of Psychology and Related Human Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL) archives

The Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL) archives primarily include the administrative records, newsletters, correspondence, and materials concerning
advocacy and policy of the association. Correspondence includes topics such as recruiting new psychologists, training and licensing, and issues affecting veterans directly such as homelessness, drug use, and PTSD. The CCHP description of the archives can be found at http://cdm15960.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15960coll10/id/1456. As with the VA psychology archives already described, the CCHP description page contains the finding aid in a scroll window that can be read in a “Page Flip View.” The Link to the Finding Aid Repository descriptive item below the scrolling window can be used to take you to a persistent view of the archives finding aid located at http://rave.ohiolink.edu/archives/ead/OhAkAHA0433. Figure 4 displays what you will find at that link.6

Figure 4

Persistent link view of finding aid for AVAPL archives at the OhioLINK database

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6 That persistent link can also be found at http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/view?docId=ead/OhAkAHA0433.xml&query=&brand=default.
The print view displaying the entire finding aid file can either be accessed by clicking on the print view area next to the persistent link area circled in red in Figure 4, or it can also be directly accessed at http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/view?docId=ead/OhAkAHA0433.xml&doc.view=printead;chunk.id=0.

For the AVAPL archives there are three categories or series of materials in the section titled The Detailed Description of The Collection. The finding aid indicates that printed association newsletters from 1978-2003 are located in Series 3, Boxes 561 through 562 (see Appendix for a description of these newsletters).

Those printed newsletters were scanned and a link to the digital newsletters is provided in the Related/Separated Materials Section (see below). By clicking on the link to these digital files, each of the 92 newsletters can be viewed or downloaded to an office or home computer (see Appendix for more information on this material). The Related/Separated Section additionally indicates the AVAPL archives contains photos located in designated boxes in the CCHP Still Images collection.

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### Related/Separated Materials

**Association of Chief Psychologists Newsletters**

Organization photographs are located in the Still Images Collection, boxes V76 and V77.

The AVAPL archives also has another link to brief summaries of the association newsletters as noted in the Other Finding Aid Section (see Appendix for more information on this material.). This link takes the user to the newsletter summary manuscript on the AVAPL website.

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### Other Finding Aid

**Brief Summaries of the AVACP/AVAPL Newsletters by Rodney Baker.**

The Bibliography for the AVAPL finding aid lists the manuscript and digital link to a scrolling window to view or download
The 40-Year History of the Association of VA Chief Psychologists (AVACP) and the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL): 1977-2017 (see Appendix for more information on this material). That history manuscript may also be directly accessed for viewing in a scrolling window or with Page Flip View with downloading at http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15960coll1/id/3283.

The National Organization of VA Psychologists (NOVA-Psi) archives

In 1981, an independent organization was formed to represent the interests and advocacy goals of VA staff psychologists named the National Organization of VA Psychologists (NOVA-Psi). Although NOVA-Psi shared many goals with VA psychology chiefs and leadership in AVACP, advocacy differences existed for a number of years. After these differences became minimal, NOVA-Psi members voted to disband in 1999.

A history project was initiated in 2017 to compile historical documents from NOVA-Psi, including its newsletters, and use those materials to write its history. The plan further included the establishment of a NOVA-Psi archives to be housed at CCHP.

The compilation and use of NOVA-Psi materials to document organization’s history was completed in April 2018 and the compiled NOVA-Psi documents were sent to the CCHP and are pending cataloging in establishing the formal NOVA-Psi archives.

The 50 NOVA-Psi newsletters were scanned early in the history project to provide access for use by the co-authors of the history during the writing of the history, and the CCHP agreed to house those digital files and make them available to other users for viewing and downloading pending completion of cataloging. The link to the digital NOVA-Psi newsletters is http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/search/collection/p15960coll1/searchterm/newsbriefs%20and%20newsletters%20of%20the%20national%20organization%20of%20va%20psychologists/field/collcmode/exact/conn/and/order/title. Select thumbnail or title of any newsletter for viewing in a scrolling window or Page Flip View or downloading to an office or home computer.

The written history of NOVA-Psi can be obtained from the AVAPL website at http://www.avapl.org/pub/NOVA%20Psi%20History%20April%202018.pdf.

When the CCHP completes the cataloguing of the new NOVA-Psi archives, this document will be updated to locate its finding aid with similar information to that presented for the VA psychology and AVAPL archives.
APPENDIX—CONTENT SAMPLING OF MATERIALS IN THE
VA PSYCHOLOGY AND AVAPL ARCHIVES

I. VA Psychology Archives

► Department of Medicine and Surgery Information Bulletins, 1947-1953: These 31 bulletins were published by the VA Central Office Neuropsychiatry Division to inform mental health leadership and other health professionals in the field about the rapid development and staffing of mental health programs and services for returning WWII veterans. The bulletins featured reports from the field on new or improved programs of care for patients with mental health problems and included periodic updates on staffing, trainee positions, and publications as well as activities in Mental Hygiene Clinics and other programs.

Location: Box 728/Folder 5, Box 729/Folder 1, and Box 729/Folder 2.

Note: These bulletins were scanned and are available for viewing and downloading on a home or office computer at http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/search/collection/p15960coll1/searchterm/Neuropsychiatry%20Division%20of%20Veterans%20Affairs,%20Information%20Bulletins/field/collection/mode/exact/conn/and/order/title. Select thumbnail or title for desired bulletin to view in a scrolling window or page flip view.

A document with a brief summary of each of the above 31 Information Bulletins can also be found in Box 728 / Folder 5. A link to a digital version of that document entitled “Introduction, Content Summaries, and Archive Location of Information Bulletins of the Neuropsychiatry Division in the Department of Medicine and Surgery, Veterans Administration 1947-1953” can be found at the website of the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL) at http://www.avapl.org/ (select Archives tab). That summaries document will assist users in locating specific information about the contents of the bulletins.

► Overview of VA psychology research as noted in Psychology Research Newsletters and archived in the Washington, DC VA Central Office Library, 2004: Photocopies are included of 18 years of the Newsletter of Cooperative Research in Psychology, 1959-1974, and two years of the Newsletter for Research in Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences, 1974-1976.

Location: Box 731/Folder 1.

Note: None of these materials have been scanned.

► Administrative Training for Chiefs of Psychology (1983 through 2003 with program title changes): Twenty-one years of programs and training materials are collected for the administrative training program of chiefs and assistant chiefs of psychology which later added psychology program managers and finally included behavioral health leaders in psychology, psychiatry, social work and nursing. The program topics and training information provide a tracking of critical mental health administrative issues and changes ranging from workload and program funding to privileging to performance appraisal with a
leadership skill training component. Included are training materials on CD-ROM for later programs and photographs taken at training programs.

Location: Box 726/Folders 1-8.
Note: None of these materials have been scanned.

II. AVAPL Archives

► *The finding aid bibliography for AVAPL archives*: The bibliography identifies a digital link to a pdf manuscript of “The 40-Year History of the Association of VA Chief Psychologists (AVACP) and the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL): 1977–2017” by Baker, Rodney R., June 2017. The narrative of this 63-page document of the history of the association includes an overview of each of the four decades of association history and describes significant organization events and activities in each decade in a mostly sequential manner. Data sources for this history were selected primarily from highlights of the almost 2500 pages of 101 association newsletters since 1978. The history includes a table listing the names of the 40 individuals serving as its president through 2017. A reference section includes the URLs for retrieving all printed AVACP and AVAPL newsletters that were scanned and cited in the history from 1978-2003 (see digital newsletter collection below).

Note: The manuscript is only available in a digital form in a scrolling window for viewing and downloading on a home or office computer (or select Page Flip View instead of scrolling in the window.)

Additional Note: Although the manuscript itself is available without cost, a memorial printed paperback of this history adding photos of all association presidents is available for sale on Amazon.com with ownership and royalties planned for CCHP.


Location: Box 561/Folders 1-5 through Box 562/Folders 1-5.
Note: These bulletins were also scanned and are available for viewing and downloading on a home or office computer at [http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/search/collection/p15960coll1/searchterm/Newsletters%20of%20the%20Association%20of%20VA%20Chief%20Psychologists%20and%20VA%20Psychologist%20Leaders%20since%201978/field/all/mode/exact/conn/and/order/date](http://collections.uakron.edu/cdm/search/collection/p15960coll1/searchterm/Newsletters%20of%20the%20Association%20of%20VA%20Chief%20Psychologists%20and%20VA%20Psychologist%20Leaders%20since%201978/field/all/mode/exact/conn/and/order/date). Select the desired thumbnail or title for viewing in a scrolling window or Page Flip View.

Note: Also available in digital form from the AVAPL website are summaries of the printed newsletters at [http://www.avapl.org/pub/Brief_Summaries_of_the_AVACP_AVAPL_Published_Newsletters.pdf](http://www.avapl.org/pub/Brief_Summaries_of_the_AVACP_AVAPL_Published_Newsletters.pdf).
► Presidential Materials, 1977-2000: This series of archival collection material contains correspondence and other activities that dealt directly with the presidents of the organization, such as relations with other organizations, elections, and minutes of meetings presided by presidents from its first president, Oakley Ray (1977-1979) through Jeff Burk (1999 to 2000).

  Location: Box 545/Folder 1-6 through Box 551/Folder 1-9.
  Note: None of these materials have been scanned.

► Handbook for New VA Chief Psychologists, 1983 and Manual for VA Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs of Psychology, 1993: With the start of association-sponsored training of new chiefs of psychology in 1983, a high priority for the establishment of the AVACP, the association also published the 1983 training materials for distribution to all chiefs and did the same thing for the 300 pages of training material used in 1993.

  Location: Box 555/Folder 1-3.
  Note: None of these materials have been scanned.