

A3442

**VESSEL AND ORGANIZATION INDEXES TO
U.S. NAVY MUSTER ROLLS,
1892–1938**

Compiled by Rebecca Livingston and Claire Prechtel-Klusens

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INTRODUCTION

On the two rolls of this microfilm publication, A3442, are reproduced vessel and organization indexes to U.S. Navy muster rolls, 1892–1938. These records are part of Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Record Group (RG) 24.

BACKGROUND

The War Department, established by an act of August 7, 1789 (1 Stat. 49), handled personnel functions for the U.S. Navy until a separate Department of the Navy was established by an act of April 30, 1798 (1 Stat. 553). Matters pertaining to personnel were centralized in the immediate office of the Secretary of the Navy, 1798–1862, assisted by the Board of Navy Commissioners, 1815–42; then jointly by the Office of Detail, 1861–89, and the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting, 1862–89; and then consolidated in the Bureau of Navigation, 1889–1942. The Bureau of Navigation was redesignated the Bureau of Naval Personnel by an act of May 13, 1942 (56 Stat. 276).

RECORDS DESCRIPTION

These records consist of four series of index cards arranged alphabetically by name of vessel or subject.

SERIES 1: VESSEL INDEX TO MUSTER ROLLS, 1892–1897.

The index cards are arranged alphabetically from *Adams* thru *Yorktown*. The cards indicate the dates for which muster rolls are extant for each U.S. Navy vessel, and, if stationed at a foreign port, it may indicate the date and place.

For example, the index card for the *Bennington* simply indicates there are muster rolls for March 31, 1892–December 31, 1897.

In contrast, the index card for the U.S.S. *Atlanta* provides more detail. It indicates there are muster rolls for the period January 1, 1892–September 28, 1895, and notes it was stationed at Port au Prince, Haiti, January 1–2, 1893, and at Graytown, Nicaragua, from May 24–June 13, 1893, and June 19–26, 1893. It further states the vessel was “Stationed at above ports to protect American interests. Landing parties may have been sent ashore during the period.”

SERIES 2: VESSEL INDEX TO MUSTER ROLLS, 1898–1938

The index cards are arranged alphabetically from *A-1* thru *Zumbrota*. The cards indicate the dates for which muster rolls are extant for each U.S. Navy

vessel and the volume number(s) in which the muster roll(s) may be found. It may also indicate the date(s) and place(s) of commissioning and decommissioning of the vessel.

SERIES 3: MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

Squadrons, 1852–1909. These 19 index cards are arranged alphabetically from Asiatic Squadron thru White Squadron. Each squadron card identifies the names of vessels in the squadron and may provide other information such as the year(s) the squadron sailed, the purpose of the mission, and the number of guns on each ship.

Veterans Bureau Circulars, 13–13J. These 17 index cards indicate the dates of wars and expeditions engaged in by the United States from 1897 to 1950; the names of naval vessels involved in the Boxer Rebellion and the Philippine Insurrection; and other miscellaneous information. Most of the cards say “See Veterans Bureau Circular No. ___.”

Honda Point Disaster, 1923. On September 8, 1923, seven U.S. Navy destroyers and 23 lives were lost at a rocky shoreline called Honda Point (also known as Point Pedernales) on the coast of California, a few miles from the northern entrance of the heavily traveled Santa Barbara Channel, while conducting nighttime training maneuvers. Dense fog and distrust of the new radio direction finding (RDF) system contributed to the ships’ grounding and sinking. The four index cards give information about this disaster, including the names of vessels involved, the date of an article in the *New York Times* that listed all the casualties, the date and page of articles in the *Army–Navy Journal* that discussed the disaster, and the names of the commander and lieutenant commander who saved their entire crew. The divider card, as well as the first of the four cards, misidentifies this event as the “Hondra” Disaster.

SERIES 4: ORGANIZATION INDEX TO MUSTER ROLLS, 1892–1938

The index cards are arranged alphabetically in two subseries. The divider card that precedes the first subseries says “Shore and Aviation Establishments.”

The 1892–97 subseries consists of seven cards, ranging from Academy Ships thru Torpedo Station. These cards indicate the dates in which the establishment was used.

The 1898–1938 subseries is much larger. It is arranged alphabetically from Academy thru ZR-3. Most of these cards indicate the dates in which the organization, unit, class (such as artificer or musician), shore establishment, or facility was in service and the related volume number in which a pertinent muster roll may be found. Some vessels are also included. As an example,

the “Matthews Co.” card (filed as if it were written, “Company, Matthews”) indicates that the station or location was Port Clinton, Ohio, June 30, 1918, Volume 2276.

Some cards are cross-reference cards that direct the researcher to a different subject. For example the “Lexington Detail” card (filed as if it were written “Detail, Lexington”) directs the researcher to “See Saratoga & Lexington Detail” card (filed as if it were written “Detail, Saratoga & Lexington”) on which pertinent information is listed.

Most of the original subject divider cards in this series were dark colored paperboard upon which the subject (such as “Detail”) was typewritten in black ink. As a result, they are impossible to read, but their presence (as a dark rectangle) will alert researchers to the fact there is a change in subject.

GENERAL REMARKS

According to the original microfilm box labels, these index cards were microfilmed by the “Defense Printing Service, Microfilm Section, Room BD-831, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D.C.” The cards were filmed on 16mm microfilm most likely between July 1959 (a date noted on one of the “Hondo” cards) and July 1963 (the date the five-digit zip code came into use). The microfilm was transferred to the National Archives as positive vesicular film many years ago, and it may not reproduce well. The original card index was also transferred to the National Archives by the Navy, but it is less complete than the microfilm version.

ROLL LIST

ROLL	CONTENTS
1	SERIES 1: VESSEL INDEX TO MUSTER ROLLS, 1892–1897 <i>Adams – Yorktown</i>
	SERIES 2: VESSEL INDEX TO MUSTER ROLLS, 1898–1938 <i>A-1 – Wiegand</i>
2	<i>Wieldrecht – Zumbrota</i>
	SERIES 3: MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS Squadrons, 1852–1909: Asiatic – White Veterans Bureau Circulars, 13–13J Honda Point Disaster, 1923
	SERIES 4: ORGANIZATION INDEX TO MUSTER ROLLS, 1892–1938 1892–1897: Academy Ships – Torpedo Station (7 cards) 1898–1938: Academy – ZR-3