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**Subject File of the  
Confederate States Navy  
1861-1865**



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*Naval Records Collection of the  
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*Record Group 45*

SUBJECT FILE OF THE  
CONFEDERATE STATES NAVY  
1861-1865

On the 61 rolls of this microfilm publication is reproduced the collection of documents comprising the Subject File of the Confederate States Navy, 1861-65. The documents in this series were earlier interspersed in a larger collection of naval documents known as the Subject File of the U.S. Navy, 1775-1910, which was brought together by the Office of Naval Records and Library. To facilitate research on the Confederate States Navy, the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) in 1963, removed the documents reproduced in this publication from the original Subject File and consolidated them in a new series. In addition to records of the Confederate States Navy, some official records of the Union Navy, particularly those concerning Confederate prisoners of war and Confederate vessels, were removed from the original Subject File and placed with the Confederate records. The majority of documents reproduced in this publication are dated between 1861 and 1865. A few documents, mostly correspondence of the Office of Naval Records and Library (in answer to requests for information about the Confederate Navy), are dated as late as 1942. The Subject File of the Confederate States Navy is a part of a body of records in the custody of NARS that are designated as Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Record Group (RG) 45.

History and Organization

The Naval Records Collection was begun in 1881 when the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, John Grimes, started to collect records of Union and Confederate naval operations during the Civil War with a view to their eventual publication. In 1882 the Secretary of the Navy established the Navy Department Library in the newly created Office of Naval Intelligence. The first Librarian, James Russell Soley, then set about to acquire naval records from the various Navy departmental bureaus. In 1884 Soley assumed the work of collecting Civil War records that Grimes had begun. Also in 1884, the Congress appropriated funds for a special naval war records staff that was to be responsible for assembling and publishing documents that contained official information about the Union and Confederate navies. This naval war records staff and the Library operated under the Office of Naval Intelligence with a single head and as a single organization; it became known as the Office of Library and Naval War Records.

In 1894 the Office of Library and Naval War Records began publishing the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (30 vols. Washington, 1894-1927).

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\*For a brief history on Confederate States Navy and its records, see Henry P. Beers, *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America* (1968).

The first five volumes of this publication included the texts of only a few documents of Confederate origin. Most of the official records of the Confederate States Navy Department were destroyed by fire or pillage in 1865 in the Confederate War Department building in Richmond, Va. Some naval records were destroyed to prevent them from falling into Union hands; others were carried off by Confederate naval officers. Still others were among captured Confederate War Department records taken north to Washington. Because the Office of Library and Naval War Records had few Confederate documents in its holdings, it decided to assign a special agent to seek out and acquire records from private sources. In 1889 a former Confederate naval officer, Hardin B. Littlepage, was hired to contact other former Confederate naval officers, the Confederate Museum in Richmond, and other depositories and historical societies with holdings relating to the former Confederacy. Littlepage was successful in obtaining the donation and loan of documents relating to the Confederate States Navy. The documents thus acquired, in addition to being copied in the *Official Records*, were made a permanent part of the Naval Records Collection; many of them were later placed in the original Subject File of the U.S. Navy.

In 1889 the Office of Library and Naval War Records was placed directly under the Secretary of the Navy. At that time, the Office began to serve as a repository for naval records predating 1886 and soon became the major archival unit of the Navy Department. It acquired most of the bound records of the Secretary's Office and gradually added noncurrent records of other Navy bureaus to its collection. Legislation passed by the Congress in 1904 and 1906 aided this endeavor by requiring that all executive agencies transfer to the Navy Department naval records in their custody from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War. A 1915 act of the Congress consolidated the hitherto separate appropriations of the naval war records staff and the Library and changed the name of the organization to Office of Naval Records and Library. This title remained unchanged until August 1946 when the Office of Naval Records and Library was incorporated into the Office of Naval History, established in 1944. The latter was redesignated as the Naval History Division in 1952.

After World War I, the Office of Naval Records and Library continued to act as a custodian of old books, manuscripts, and other historical materials, but in addition it also became a collector of current records that could be used for contemporary and official research and for future historical research. This was partly due to the efforts of Force Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, Adm. William S. Sims, who recommended that the Navy Department establish a "Historical Section," modeled after the Historical Section of the British War Cabinet, to handle World War I naval records. In 1918 the

Navy Department approved his suggestion and established a history section under the Chief of Naval Operations. The History Section was responsible for collecting and publishing World War I naval records, particularly those accumulated at Admiral Sims' London headquarters. Recognizing the common interests of the History Section and the Office of Naval Records and Library, the Secretary of the Navy combined the two offices in July 1919. As a part of this reorganization, the Office of Naval Records and Library was returned to the Office of Naval Intelligence under the Chief of Naval Operations. Despite the merger of the two offices, each continued to do its own work: the Office of Naval Records and Library handling the "old records" and the History Section handling the "current records."

In 1924 Commodore Dudley W. Knox, head of the Office of Naval Records and Library, ordered the establishment of a division of records (in the History Section), which was to be responsible for all the pre-World War I records. The Division of Records and the History Section lost their separate identities in 1927 when Knox reorganized the staff in order to begin a systematic arrangement of both the pre-World War I and the World War I records.

The Office of Naval Records and Library decided to arrange the pre-World War I records according to the same principles used to organize the World War I records of Admiral Sims' London headquarters. Examining and following the general principles of the British archive system for historical naval records, the History Section at London had selected individual documents for preservation rather than entire series and then gave the selected documents a new arrangement. As most of the documents concerned naval operations, an arrangement by geographical area according to the content or origin of a document was used to create an Area File for the World War I records collected at London. In the same manner, the Office of Naval Records and Library assembled the Area File of the U.S. Navy, 1775-1910, consisting of documents that related chiefly to events or conditions that occurred in specific places on definite dates. The Office arranged the records chronologically under eight geographical areas. In 1963 NARS removed documents pertaining to the Confederate States Navy from the original file to form a separate Area File of the Confederate States Navy. Both the main Area File and Confederate Area File have been microfilmed by the NARS staff as *Area File of the Naval Records Collection, 1775-1910*, M625.

### Records Arrangement

Some documents could not be fitted into a geographical area arrangement pattern and had to be placed in a separate collection arranged by subject. The History Section at London

assembled a subject file of World War I records, and, following that as an example, the Office of Naval Records and Library created the Subject File of the U.S. Navy, 1775-1910. In so doing, the Office of Naval Records and Library devised 17 major subject categories for classifying records and assigned a letter of the alphabet to designate each major subject category as follows:

- A. Naval Ships: Design, Construction, Etc.
- B. Ordnance
- D. Communications
- E. Engineering
- H. Battles and Casualties to Ships
- I. Instructions
- K. Nautical Technology and Science
- M. Medical
- N. Personnel
- O. Operations of Naval Ships and Fleet Units
- P. Bases, Naval (Including Navy Yards and Stations)
- R. Prisoners and Prisons
- S. Merchant Ships and Commerce
- V. Governmental Relationships
- X. Supplies
- Y. Pensions
- Z. History

Under each main category, documents were arranged chronologically under subtopics, which were also assigned a letter of the alphabet. Each document in the Subject File was assigned a two-letter designation, which indicated the main category and subtopic under which it was filed. For example, under major category "A. Naval Ships: Design, Construction, Etc.," the documents under subtopic "Construction" were assigned the two-letter designation AC. A list of file designations of the Subject File follows these introductory remarks. Within the 17 major subject categories with subtopics, a number of arrangement patterns are used: alphabetically by names of ships, naval stations, or individuals, or they are further divided into narrower alphabetical, chronological, or other subtopics.\*

When the NARS staff removed the documents relating to the Confederate States Navy from the original subject file, it maintained the original filing scheme of the documents. Each roll of microfilm contains a list that indicates the major and minor subdivisions and the filing scheme for the subject categories included on that particular roll. For convenience

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\*Within subject categories, documents not relating to a specific topic were designated "miscellaneous" as were documents which could not be placed within narrower subtopics. Miscellaneous documents generally are found at the end of each subject category or subtopic.

of reference, each list gives the complete range of subdivisions for each subject heading that appears on that roll. However, in some instances, not all of the subheading listed may actually be reproduced on that roll. The microfilm user should consult these lists to understand the arrangement pattern for the records being used. One part of the original subject file, the "Z" or History section, was retained by the Navy Department and is now in the custody of its Naval History Division. It contains alphabetically arranged files on Confederate ships, persons, places, and operations.

A sizable part of the documents in the Subject File of the Confederate States Navy are paymasters' vouchers, which list disbursements for supplies, equipment, transportation, and other services. Although these documents are financial records, they include incidental information about ship construction, ordnance, personnel, medical conditions, and many other subjects. Other official records include correspondence and reports sent or received by the Secretary of the Confederate States Navy, orders and reports of commanding officers of squadrons or vessels, and muster rolls and payrolls of vessels and shore establishments. Collections of private papers include drawings, reports, and other records of Confederate naval officers John M. Brooke, Robert D. Minor, and Catesby ap R. Jones pertaining to naval ordnance; correspondence of J. J. Guthrie, George W. Gift, and Samuel Barron relating to naval operations; and drawings and other correspondence of William F. Carter and other naval officers regarding ship design and construction.

A researcher may have to look under several subject categories to locate documents pertaining to a single topic because subjects often overlap. Vouchers for the purchase of marine clocks, for example, are filed both under "AF" (Fittings and equipment) and "KN" (Navigation and astronomy). Sometimes a collection of papers donated by an individual has been kept together under one file designation although some of the documents may more properly have been classified under a different subject category. In other cases, private collections have been separated and filed under various topics. The documents included in the Subject File of the Confederate States Navy bear a number of markings and stamps. Most of the documents are marked in the top left corner with the two-letter file designation. In addition, some are stamped "C.N.W.R." (Confederate Navy War Records), which indicates that they were selected for possible publication in the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. Documents that were transferred to the Office of Naval Records and Library from the War Department's collection of Confederate records are usually stamped "REBEL ARCHIVES." Typewritten copies of papers that were loaned to the Office often bear notations showing the source of the original document and giving information regarding its transcription. Often there is no means of determining the source

of a document. The records of unknown origin, private papers, and the official Confederate documents are presumed to have had no connection with any unit of the U.S. Navy other than the Office of Naval Records and Library.

The fact that private papers were donated or loaned to the Naval Records Collection is not believed to divest their original owners of any literary property rights in them. Anyone who publishes them in whole or in part without permission of their owners may be held liable for infringement of such literary property rights. Several registers that list names of donors and other information about donations were prepared by the Office of Naval Records and Library and are in NARS custody. They have not been microfilmed.

#### Related Records

The Naval Records Collection includes other records relating to the Confederate States Navy in addition to the Subject and Area Files. These consist primarily of vessel logs, journals, muster rolls, payrolls, and paymaster's records. The War Department Collection of Confederate Records, RG 109, includes several series of records pertaining to the Confederate States Navy, the following two of which have been reproduced as NARS Microfilm Publications: *Papers Pertaining to Vessels of or Involved With the Confederate States of America "Vessel Papers,"* M909, and *Records Relating to Confederate Naval and Marine Personnel,* M260. Some drawings and plans of Confederate Naval Ordnance are among Records of the Bureau of Ordnance, RG 74. The Treasury Department Collection of Confederate Records, RG 365, and the General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, also contain records relating to the Confederate States Navy.

These introductory remarks were prepared by Rebecca A. Livingston and edited by Thomas Whitfield.

FILE DESIGNATIONS OF THE SUBJECT FILE  
OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES NAVY

A. NAVAL SHIPS: DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, ETC.

- AC. Construction
- AD. Design and general characteristics
- AF. Fittings and equipment
- AH. Hulls
- AO. Small boats
- AR. Repairs
- AS. Spars and rigging
- AV. Miscellaneous
- AX. Salvage of wrecks
- AY. Purchases, sales and final disposition of ships

B. ORDNANCE

- BA. Ammunition
- BG. Guns and gunnery
- BH. Hand weapons (revolvers, pistols and cutlasses)
- BM. Mines and torpedoes
- BO. Ordnance equipment
- BR. Armor and armament
- BV. Miscellaneous

D. COMMUNICATIONS

- DC. Codes and cryptography
- DE. Emblems and flags
- DM. Mail
- DP. Special signals
- DS. General signals
- DT. Telegraph
- DV. Miscellaneous
- DX. Courier and secret service

E. ENGINEERING

- EA. Auxiliary machinery
- EB. Steam boilers
- EE. Engines
- EM. Machinery plants
- EP. Propellers and paddles

H. BATTLES AND CASUALTIES TO SHIPS

- HA. Engagements with enemy war vessels
- HC. Engagements against enemy commerce raiders
- HF. Fires, explosions, etc.
- HJ. Joint military naval engagements
- HL. Engagements of naval forces with land forces
- HV. Miscellaneous

I. INSTRUCTIONS

- IC. Circulars
- IG. General orders
- IS. Special orders
- IV. Miscellaneous orders

K. NAUTICAL TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE

- KH. Hydrography and topography (maps and charts)
- KL. Lighthouses and other navigational aids
- KM. Meteorology
- KN. Navigation and astronomy

M. MEDICAL

- MA. Administration of hospitals and medical departments
- ME. Equipment and supplies
- MH. Health conditions in general: hygiene and sanitation
- MK. Casualties
- ML. Medical personnel
- MM. Admissions to hospitals
- MN. Discharges from medical custody and deaths
- MV. Miscellaneous
- MX. Medical surveys and examinations of individuals

N. PERSONNEL

- NA. Complements, rolls, lists of persons serving in or with vessels or stations
- NE. Training and education
- NF. Distribution and transfers
- NH. Heroic acts, commendations, honors and medals
- NI. Promotions and privileges; rank, retirement, reinstatement
- NJ. Discipline (minor)
- NK. Technical and professional examinations of individuals
- NL. Living conditions and customs
- NN. Acceptances, applications, appointments, discharges, dismissals, oaths of office, resignations, revoked commissions
- NO. Court-martial
- NP. Pilots
- NR. Recruiting and enlistments, shipping articles
- NU. Uniforms
- NV. Miscellaneous
- NZ. Desertions and straggling

O. OPERATIONS OF NAVAL SHIPS AND FLEET UNITS

- OD. Distribution
- OH. Shore operations
- OI. Inspections

O. OPERATIONS OF NAVAL SHIPS AND FLEET UNITS (con.)

- OJ. Joint military-naval operations
- OL. Mobilization and demobilization
- OM. Routine operations
- ON. Strategy and tactics
- OQ. Operations of large groups of vessels
- OP. Pilotage, port movements, port changes
- OR. Chartered vessels operations
- OV. Miscellaneous
- OX. Lines of supply and supply ships

P. BASES, NAVAL (INCLUDING NAVY YARDS AND STATIONS)

- PB. Administration of stations
- PD. Dry docks
- PI. Industrial activity
- PL. Labor and civil personnel
- PN. Plant
- PS. Sites and boundaries

R. PRISONERS AND PRISONS

- RB. Prisoners of war rolls and lists (persons captured by Union Forces)
- RE. Release and exchange
- RL. Paroles
- RV. Miscellaneous

S. MERCHANT SHIPS AND COMMERCE

- SG. Illegal service, including blockade-running and smuggling
- SN. Personnel
- SP. Privateers and privateering
- SR. Registry, clearance papers, port charges
- SZ. Prizes

V. GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

- VA. Administration and organization of Navy Department
- VC. National policy
- VD. Diplomatic negotiations
- VI. International relations and politics
- VN. Naval policy
- VU. Revenue collection
- VV. Miscellaneous

X. SUPPLIES

- XA. Accounting and finance
- XD. Claims
- XF. Fuel and water

X. SUPPLIES (con.)

XN. Naval stores afloat

XO. Clothing and food

XP. Pay and allowances

XS. Naval supplies ashore

XV. Miscellaneous

XZ. Prizes, prize money and prize sales (legal and financial aspects)

Y. PENSIONS

YL. Pension laws

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<u>Roll</u>	<u>File and Subfile Designation</u>
1	AC Atlanta-Charlotte
2	AC Columbus-Jackson
3	AC Kinston-Nashville
4	AC New Orleans
5	AC Norfolk-Richmond
6	AC Saffold-Wilmington
7	AC Wilson-Miscellaneous AD C.S.S. <i>Alabama</i> -Miscellaneous AF Anchors and chains-Miscellaneous
8	AH C.S.S. <i>Raleigh</i> -C.S.S. <i>Virginia</i> AO C.S.S. <i>A. B. Seger</i> -Miscellaneous AR Brest-Savannah
9	AR Selma-Yazoo City AS C.S.S. <i>Bienville</i> -Miscellaneous AV C.S.S. <i>Alabama</i> AX C.S.S. <i>Bienville</i> -Miscellaneous AY C.S.S. <i>Atlanta</i> -Miscellaneous BA Atlanta-Miscellaneous
10	BG Atlanta-Miscellaneous
11	BG Miscellaneous BH Atlanta-Miscellaneous BM Charleston-Miscellaneous
12	BO Atlanta-Miscellaneous BR Miscellaneous BV Atlanta-Richmond DC Miscellaneous DE Miscellaneous DM Atlanta-Miscellaneous DP Miscellaneous DS Miscellaneous DT Atlanta-Miscellaneous DV Miscellaneous DX Miscellaneous EA Charleston-Wilmington EB Charleston-Miscellaneous

<u>Roll</u>	<u>File and Subfile Designation</u>
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14	KH Miscellaneous KL Miscellaneous KM Miscellaneous KN Charleston-Miscellaneous MA Brest-Miscellaneous ME Atlanta-Norfolk
15	ME Richmond-Miscellaneous MH Miscellaneous MK C.S.S. <i>Beaufort</i> -Miscellaneous ML Charleston-Miscellaneous MM Augusta-Miscellaneous
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17	NA C.S.S. <i>Alabama</i> -C.S.S. <i>Neuse</i>
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20	NN Appointments of officers (L-Z)-Revoked commissions
21	NO Court of Inquiry-Military Commissions NP A-Miscellaneous NR Miscellaneous

<u>Roll</u>	<u>File and Subfile Designation</u>
22	NU Miscellaneous NV Marine Corps-Miscellaneous NZ A-Miscellaneous OD Miscellaneous
23	OH Miscellaneous OI Miscellaneous OJ Fort Pickens-Miscellaneous OL Purchase of arms for Indians-New Orleans
24	OL Norfolk-Miscellaneous OM C.S.S. <i>Atlanta</i> -Miscellaneous
25	ON Miscellaneous OO Charleston-Miscellaneous OP Miscellaneous OR Miscellaneous OV Charleston-Richmond (accounts)
26	OV Richmond (clothing-ordnance)
27	OV Richmond (provisions)-Revenue Marine
28	OX Canals-Railroads
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37	PI Selma
38	PI Shreveport-Yazoo City PL Albany-Richmond

<u>Roll</u>	<u>File and Subfile Designation</u>
39	PL Savannah-Transfers place to place PN Albany-Augusta
40	PN Botetourt County, Va.-Columbia
41	PN Columbus-Prattsville
42	PN Richmond-Selma
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44	RB Mississippi Squadron-Miscellaneous RE A-W RL A-W RV Miscellaneous
45	SG Miscellaneous SN Miscellaneous SP Miscellaneous SR Miscellaneous SZ Miscellaneous VA Miscellaneous VC Miscellaneous VD Miscellaneous VI Miscellaneous VN Miscellaneous VU Miscellaneous VV Miscellaneous
46	XA Miscellaneous
47	XD Miscellaneous XF Water for ships-Coal and wood for ships (1861-62)
48	XF Coal and wood for ships (1863-65)
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50	XN Stores for ships (Apr. 1862-Dec. 1863)
51	XN Stores for ships (1864) XO Clothing and provisions (1861)
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<u>Roll</u>	<u>File and Subfile Designation</u>
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54	XO Clothing and provisions (Mar.-Aug. 1863)
55	XO Clothing and provisions (Sept.-Dec. 1863)
56	XO Clothing and provisions (Jan.-June 1864)
57	XO Clothing and provisions (July 1864-Miscellaneous)
58	XP Paymasters' accounts-Miscellaneous XS Atlanta-Charleston (June 1863)
59	XS Charleston (July 1863)-Mobile
60	XS New Orleans-Savannah
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