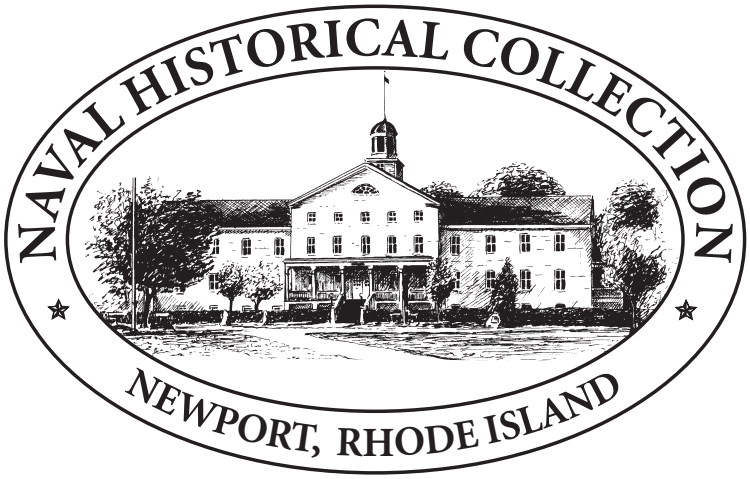
Register of the W. Starling Burgess Papers



Naval War College
Newport, RI

REGISTER OF THE PAPERS OF W. STARLING BURGESS

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Manuscript Register Series
No. 33

Naval Historical Collection
Naval War College, Newport, RI
2004

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Biographical Sketch

W. Starling Burgess, naval and aeronautical architect and engineer, was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on December 25, 1878, to Edward and Caroline L. Sullivant Burgess. Burgess attended Harvard University as a member of the class of 1901; however, he left Harvard during the Spanish American War to join the Navy. He served as a gunner's mate in USS *Prairie* and again studied at Harvard in 1903 and 1904.

Burgess was a gifted inventor who designed a recoil operated machine gun that he patented while a student at Milton Academy. His father had designed winning America's Cup yachts, and in 1904 Burgess followed in his father's footsteps by opening a shipyard in Marblehead, Massachusetts, where he designed and built motorboats and small boats. In 1909, Burgess developed an interest in the new and burgeoning field of aviation and built an airplane that he flew from Newburyport to Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1910. This was the first flight made in New England. Together with Norman Prince, he began the manufacture of airplanes, with guidance from the Wright Brothers whose use of patents rights extended to the two men. Both the Navy and the Army purchased the Burgess designed airplane. In 1911, with Frank Russell and Greely S. Curtis, he organized the Burgess Company, which manufactured airplanes, seaplanes, hydroplanes, and flying boats. Burgess had the distinction of being the first person to begin and end a flight on water, having fitted out a biplane with pontoons.

In 1913, Burgess's company gained exclusive rights to the British Dunne biplane. Sportsmen liked the plane and several were sold to individuals; however, in 1914, the Canadian Government purchased the plane for use in World War I. With the war in full swing, there was an increased demand for the Burgess planes and new plants were built and employees hired. However, in 1917, Burgess sold his company and joined the Navy as a lieutenant commander in the airplane design division. This was the beginning of an affiliation with the Navy that continued during the Second World War. When the war was over in 1918, Burgess returned to the boat construction business in Boston. His firm designed prize winning J-class yachts, including *Enterprise*, *Rainbow*, and *Ranger*, which won the America's Cup Race in 1930, 1934, and 1937 respectively. Expanding his talents even further, in 1933 Burgess designed the Dymaxion automobile, which had three wheels and got thirty miles to the gallon.

In 1936, Burgess worked for the Aluminum Company of America designing and testing the use of aluminum in ship construction at the Bath (Maine) Iron Works. The "Aluminette," an aluminum section of a ship, that he designed was tested by the U.S. Navy in Norfolk, Virginia, and found to be resistant to corrosion. His design for a high speed aluminum destroyer was accepted by the Navy General Board and was to go into production in 1941; however, when war broke out the order was cancelled.

During World War II, Burgess worked for the Navy as an engineer in the Special Services Division, Bureau of Aeronautics, with the anti-submarine development detachment at the Naval

Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island, and later at the Coast Guard Patrol Base, Port Everglades, Florida. There he designed devices for use in anti-submarine warfare.

After the war, Burgess worked in damage control research for the Navy's Office of Research and Inventions at Stevens Institute in Hoboken, New Jersey. While engaged in this work, he died unexpectedly on March 19, 1947.

Burgess was a member of the New York Yacht Club, the British Institute of Naval Architects, the Early Birds, and the American Legion. In 1915, he was awarded the Robert J. Collier Trophy for his contributions to aeronautics. Burgess was married five times: to Helene Adams, Rosamond Tudor, Elsie Janet Foss, Nannie Biddle, and Marjorie Gladding Young, a naval architect and his assistant, who survived him. He had five children, three sons and two daughters.

Description of Papers

The papers of W. Starling Burgess were presented as a gift to the Naval War College Foundation for deposit in the Naval Historical Collection by his principal assistant and wife, now Mrs. Paul Wolff, in August 1980. A second deposit was made by Mrs. Wolff in January 2004.

The collection consists of forty-seven boxes of blueprints of anti-submarine and damage control devices, as well as those for yachts and the Aluminette. Included are mathematical calculations, technical booklets and reports, and correspondence relating to his work for the U.S. Navy in World War II and the immediate postwar era. From 1943 to 1947, Burgess worked for the Navy under personal service contracts: first for the Surface Division of ASDEVLANT at Quonset Point Naval Air Station, Rhode Island, and the U.S. Coast Guard Base at Port Everglades, Florida, and second, with the Damage Control Project administered by the Navy's Office of Research and Inventions at Stevens Institute of Technology, 1945–1947. During his first assignment, he worked on acoustic torpedo countermeasures. At Stevens, he worked on hull stability measures and devised a method to calculate a ship's stability when it had been damaged in action. By using these calculations, a ship would be saved from sinking.

He also worked on the development and testing of hull designs for a class of fast destroyers. Burgess considered his work for the Navy one of the most fruitful periods in his long and varied scientific career. The Navy, in turn, felt that his contributions to the development of devices were invaluable.

The Burgess collection constitutes a body of important scientific and technical materials relating to developments in naval warfare during World War II. The war marked an acceleration of government funding for projects leading to improvements in warfare. Burgess's papers document his response as an engineer and architect to the needs and demands of the wartime era.

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W. Starling Burgess Papers
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	28	Body Plan of Lines 1508-2 + 3, S.I.T. Model 285-2 + 3, 1939
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	7	285' Light Destroyer Resistance, 1937
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	13	Arrangement of Experimental Aluminum and Steel Girders for Vibration Test, 1935
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	4	Blueprint, New Orleans, Louisiana, Proposed Shipyard in Inner Harbor, n.d.
	5	Rudder for Experimental Launch Tinavette, 1936
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	7	Blueprint, New Orleans, Louisiana, Proposed Shipyard in Inner Harbor, 1938
	8	Blueprint, New Orleans, Louisiana, Proposed Shipyard in Inner Harbor, 1938
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	17	285' Sub Destroyer, Burgess Design, 1937
	18	Sections 100' High Speed Launch, 1936
4	1	Blueprints, Body Plan, #156-C-1, 1943
	2	Submarine Indicator Float, General Assembly and Details, X-68, 1943
	3	Burgess Destroyer, Model #7, Model Data and Coefficients, n.d.
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	20	Hydrophone Mounting Rings and Covering Case, n.d.
	21	Stern Tube and Depth Control Gear, 1945
	22	*Blackfish* Alternations, Stern Tube Coupling Flg, n.d.
	23	Burgess Whale Depressor, 1945
	24	Triplane Towing Model, 1945
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	26	Bombing Target for Special Devices, Bombing Division, 1945
	27	Lead Ballast, 1945
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	6	Wood Paravane, Locking Tongs, Main Towing Tang, 1945
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	10	Shape and Force of Towing Cable II and Calculations, 1944
	11	*Blackfish*, MKI, Modo, Correspondence, 1945 and Calculations
	12	Rotating Barrier, Correspondence, 1943–1944, Calculations
	13	USS *Salt Lake City*, Inclining Experiment, 1929
	14	Ballast B Block for Rm 31a, 1947
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	6	*Skate* VII, Hydrofoil, Gudgeon, Crosshead Stud Rod, Nose Bolt, Rudder, Bulkhead, Nose, Body, Elevator, Quadrant, Rattle Bar Bracket, Fairwater, 1944
	7	*Skate* Trials, Report on, 1944
	8	*Skate* VIII Trials, Report on, 1944, Calculations and Blueprints
	9	*Skate* VIII-B, Report on, 1944, Calculations, Photographs, Crosshead and Connecting Rod, Curves of Tension and Outrigging
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	13	Mod *Skat*e Plastic, Correspondence, 1945
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	16	Specifications for Construction of Bombing Target, 1945, Correspondence, Calculations
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	2	Unnamed Chart, with Ratios, 1946
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	4	Body for Stop and Start MKI, Release Rod, Pawl, Nose, After Body, Tail Shaft, Bushing, Guide, End Block, Lead Ballast, Spring Retainer, Ratchet Tripping Guide, Draw Bar, Screen Assembly, Fairwater, Crosshead, Spacer, Spool 1-3, Tail Assembly Screen, Towing Tang, Pawl Spring Rod, Crosshead Screw, 1944

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	8	Underwater Sound Laboratory, Harvard University, Letter, 1944
	9	Wood Paravane Lines, Calculations and Drawing, 1944–1945
	10	Wood Paravane, Notes, Tests and Trials, 1945
	11	Surface Paravane, Log Record, Trials, Drawing and Photographs, 1945
	12	Diverter and Outrigging Formulas, Calculations, 1944
	13	Depressors, Calculations, 1943
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	3	Propellers, Theory, Curves, Characteristics, 1943
	4	Stability Wedge Method for Life Raft, Fast Freighters and Seamobile I, 1943
	5	SIT Model Data, Experimental Towing Tank, High Speed Gear Box, Correspondence, 1938
	6	USN Tank, Blueprints and Calculations, 1930–1936
	7	700' US Liner, Hull 369 Displacement & Curves, 1938
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	4	Freeboard Gauge Terminal Block, 1946
	5	Freeboard Gauge, Rod Tip, Cover Plate, Driven Gear, 1946
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	7	Steering Tests of Three Destroyer Models, Stevens Model 283-1, 285-2, and 3x and 289-4 + 0 Report No. 37, December 16, 1939
	8	Water Absorption Experiments with White Pine by Fred W. S. Locke, Jr., Technical Memorandum No. 57, April 16, 1941
	9	Model 285-2 + 3_1, Calculations, Graphs and Blueprints, 1939–1940
	10	Model 289-2, Calculations and Blueprints, 1939
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	11	50' Model Series, Design #2—Lines for Towing Model, 1937
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	18	Tank Equipment Engineering File, Drawings, and Calculations, 1947
	19	Freeboard Gauges, Calculations, n.d.
	20	Inclining Gear, Calculations, 1946
	21	BuShips Test CV-9 Model, Correspondence, 1947–1948
	22	Stability Tank, Inclining Device and Associated Equipment, Report No. 25, 1948
	23	Conversion—CV-9-40 and Models, Carbon Backs and Prints, 1946

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	9	Rm 31 Dimensions and Conversions, Calculations, 1946
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	18	Rm 31, Tank Tabulations, n.d.
	19	Rm 31, Tank Tabulations, n.d.
	20	CV-9 Class Model, Letters and Test Results, 1947
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	10	Damage Control Research Requisitions and Receipts, 1946
	11	Damage Control Research Memoranda, 1946–1947
	12	Damage Control Research Memoranda, 1947
	13	Damage Control Research Memoranda, 1947
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	16	Destroyer Tests, Notes on Experiments to test Accelerometer
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	18	Cover Plate, Accelerometer, 1946
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	5	Accelerometer, Pendulum Weights and Washers, 1946
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	8	Speed, Length, and Height of Sea Waves, 1945
	9	Circuit diagram of F-Knob and Accelerometers, n.d.
	10	Accelerometer, Wiring Diagram, Catalog, Electrical Measuring Instruments, Speedmax-Type G, Model 28 and 29 Strip Recorder, Instructions for Use of Graphic Instruments, 1946

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	17	Correspondence and Preliminary Schematic Wiring Diagram, 1946
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	19	Memoranda, and Reports of Paul Wolff, 1948
	20	Preliminary Assembly of Data of Acceleration and Displacement Recorder, 1947, and Sea Trials of Model I Accelerometer, 1947
17	1	Blueprints and Calculations: Draft Gauge Device, Tank Test Report, Sea Trials of Model I Accelerometer Report (2 copies), 1947
	2	Dynamic Draft Recorder, Head II Blueprint, 1946
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	10	Diagrams and Calculations, Burgess Draft Gauge, 1946
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	14	Draft Gauge, Calculations, 1946

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	2	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 474, "Windmills in the Light of Modern Research," by A. Betz, 1927
	3	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 846, "On the Theory of Hydrofoils and Planing Surfaces," by F. Weinig, 1937
	4	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 739, "Experiments with Planing Surfaces," by W. Sottorf, 1934
	5	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 810, "Impact of a Vee-Type Seaplane on Water with Reference to Elasticity," by F. Weinig, 1936
	6	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 624, "Landing Impact of Sea Planes," by William Pabst, 1931
	7	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 643, "Load Assumptions for the Landing Impact of Sea Planes," by Josef Taub, 1931
	8	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 811, "The Impact of Hulls during Landing as Affected by Bottom Width," by E. Mewes, 1936
	9	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 535, "A General Tank Test of NACA Model 11-C Flying Boat Hull, including the Effect of Changing the Plan Form of the Step," by John Dawson, 1935
	10	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 509, "Tank Tests of Flat and V-Bottom Planing Surfaces," by James Shoemaker, 1934
	11	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 504, "Complete Tank Test of Two Flying-Boat Hulls with Pointed Steps—NACA Models 22-A and 35," by James Shoemaker and Joe W. Bell, 1934
	12	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 458, "A Complete Tank Test of Two Fying-Boat Hulls with Pointed Steps—NACA Model No. 22," by James Shoemaker, 1934
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18	14	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 350, "Working Charts for the Selection of Aluminum Alloy Propellers of a Standard Form to Operate with Various Aircraft Engines and Bodies," n.d.
	15	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 286, "Aerodynamic Characteristics of Airfoils-V," National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, 1928
	16	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 346, "Water Pressure Distribution on a Flying Boat Hull," by F. I. Thompson, n.d.
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	19	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 137, "Point Drag and Total Drag on Navy Struts," No. 1, modified, National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, 1922
	20	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, No. 470, "The NACA Tank: A High Speed Towing Basin for Testing Models of Seaplane Floats," by Stan Truscott, 1933
	21	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Technical Memorandum, "Concerning the Coordination of Kinematic Data on the Turning Characteristics of Ships," by Kenneth M. Davidson and John B. Drisko, 1944
	22	U.S. Experimental Model Basin, "Investigations of Pressure and Flow on a Ship Model," by Wilmar Laute, 1939
	23	"The Making, Shaping, and Treating of Steel," by J. M. Camp and C. B. Francis, Carnegie Steel Company, Pittsburgh, PA, 1920
19	1	Blueprints, Detail of Fair Waters, CV-9
	2	U.S. Aircraft Carriers, CV-9 to CV-19, Displacement and other Curves and Cross Curves of Stability, 1940
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	6	Molded Beam, Half Widths of Water Lines, n.d.
	7	Faired Lines and Molded Offsets, 1941
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	2	Compartment, Access and Stanchions, Bridges, Island Platforms, and Flight Deck, 1941
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22	1	Blueprints, Curve of Righting Arms for 45 lb Rectangular Pontoon, 1946
	2	45 lb Pontoon Construction and Stability of Rectangular Aluminum Pontoon, 1946
	3	20' Standard Ship Model: Draft Marks, Table of Line and Offsets, Bilge Keel and Inclining Device Coupling, 1946
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	10	Floating Ship Model and Stability Demonstrator Device, Ballast Tank, Free Surface and Free Access, 1947
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23	1	Blueprints, Ship Model Stability Demonstrator Device, 27B-1, Hull Figure, 1947
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	5	Stability Curves, Essex Class Carrier, 1947
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	18	Destroyers 348–358, Outboard Profile, 1937
	19	Fast Freighter Body Plan, 1940
	20	Blueprint, Speed, Power Curves, n.d.
	21	Correspondence, Gibbs and Cox, 1940
	22	Correspondence, Norman Bel Geddes Co., 1941
	23	Correspondence, Goodyear Co., 1941
24	1	Correspondence and Reports, Correspondence, Assistant SecNav Charles Edison, 1938–1939
	2	Correspondence, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, 1941
	3	Correspondence, Depositors Trust Company, Wiscasset, ME, 1941
	4	Correspondence, Kenneth S. M. Davidson, 1939–1943
	5	Correspondence, Danforth Anchors, Berkeley, CA, 1941–1943
	6	Correspondence, W. A. Robinson, Inc., Ipswich, MA, 1941
	7	Correspondence, Harry E. Cooke, 1941
	8	Correspondence, JBW, Consolidated Shipbuilding Corp., Morris Heights, NY, 1941
	9	Correspondence, Chrysler Corporation, Detroit, MI, 1941–1942
	10	Correspondence, B. F. Sturtevant Co., Washington, DC, 1941
	11	Correspondence, Catalog Data for Burgess-Bath Yacht Fittings, 1937–1938
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	14	Transactions of the Institute of Naval Architecture, n.d.

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	16	Steering Tests with Rotating Arm Apparatus, Report No. 121, July 16, 1940
	17	The Relative Rolling Characteristics of Two Destroyer Form Models, Report No. 127, September 6, 1940
	18	Model Tests for E. H. P. of 369-foot Destroyers, Report No. 129, September 29, 1940
	19	Development of Test Technique for Measuring Encountered Wave Resistance Technical Memorandum, August 3, 1939
	20	Comparison of Stevens and U.S.E.M.B. Test Results for Full-Size E.H.P. (Bare Hull) of 369-foot Destroyer No. 445, Technical Memorandum No. 52, July 31, 1940
	21	Balance Experiments on "Gleam" and "Seven Seas," Technical Memorandum, No. 45, January 9, 1940
	22	Drag of N. A. G. A. 0012 Airfoil at Zero Left, Technical Memorandum No. 42, July 15, 1939
	23	Model Tests of the Steering Characteristics of Two Designs for a 369-foot Destroyer, Report No. 132, October 18, 1940
	24	Investigation of the Reliability of the Schoenherf Function Curve at Low Reynolds Numbers, Technical Memorandum, July 17, 1939
	25	Model Tests of 405-ft Destroyers, Report No. 108, March 29, 1940
	26	Model Tests of a 50-foot Cruiser, Report No. 110, July 29, 1940
	27	The Effect of the Skeg and the Bilge Keels on the Steering and Rolling Characteristics of Destroyer Model No. 285-2 + 3°
	28	Correspondence, Gyro-Balance Corporation, Greenwich, CT, General Electric Company, Schenectady, NY, etc., 1941–1943
25	1	Correspondence, Payroll and Credit, 1941–1943
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	3	165' Submarine Chaser, Displacement Table, n.d.
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