

Information on series of documents

Series	BT 348, 349, 350 & BT 364
Title	Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen: Register of Seamen (Indexes), 1918-1941
Structure	<p>These four series are organised primarily by discharge book number (BT 364, BT 348) or alphabetically (BT 349, 350).</p> <p>The dates given do not refer to date of discharge but reflect the dates of signing on.</p> <p>For each of BT 348 & BT 349 there exists a small additional set of cards which is filed at the end of each series. It is thought that these are for seamen who were not issued with discharge 'A' numbers.</p>
Size/Scope	<p>Approx. 1,281,742 images (assuming 1 card, front and reverse per image)</p> <p>BT 348: 4266 fiches, 418, 068 images BT 349: 3179 fiches, 311,542 images BT 350: 3098 fiches, 303, 604 images BT 364: 2536 fiches, 248, 528 images</p> <p>Consists of microfiche copies of a card index, front and reverse for each card. This was a Central Index Register of Seamen, kept by the RGSS and made up of series of "CR cards". These are CR1 cards (BT 349), CR2 cards (BT 348), CR10 (BT 350) and later additions (BT 364) made up of extractions from the previous series. The CR1 and CR 2 cards record a seaman's voyages, while the CR10 cards were created to record the issue of a WW1 seaman's identity card.</p> <p>Each card typically gives the following information: discharge A number; certificate of competency (officers only) number; name of seaman (surname and forename); year and place of birth; rank or rating; name and official number of ship and date of engagement of service. Sometimes (BT 349) an RV2 or PR number (origin unknown) is included, as well as health insurance number, unemployment insurance number, height, colour of eyes and hair, complexion and distinguishing marks and name and address of next of kin. Frequently, on the reverse of the card, can be found a list of the vessels on which the crewman served (BT 348), or seaman's signature and the date of issue (BT 349).</p> <p>Some records (the majority within BT 350 a few within BT 349 and 364) include passport style photographs of the seaman clipped to the back of the card.</p>

Series BT 348 - 50 & BT 364

Series	BT 348, 349, 350 & BT 364
Physical Format and Condition	<p>Microfiche copies of cards taken from microfilm, in good condition. There are in some cases two sets of microfiche copies of cards.</p> <p>The microfiche and film of BT 364/3 (Discharge A Numbers R104584-1059119) has been miss-filmed and in at least 50% of cases the front and reverse of the cards may not have been filmed together. TNA holds the originals of these cards.</p> <p>Piece BT 349/1 fiche 2949 appears to be missing from film library (copy may be available).</p>
Popularity	These series ranked from 11 to 17 in the National Archives microfiche usage survey, February 2006. Since many of the cards are currently arranged by discharge book no., transcription of names would improve access.
Copyright clearance	Crown Copyright
Research Guide	Merchant Seamen: Sea Service Records 1913-1972
Possible areas for indexing	Name, Date of Birth, Discharge book no., Place of Birth
Any other relevant information	<p>The original cards are held by Southampton City Archive, except for cards from piece 364/3 which are held at TNA.</p> <p>Cards dating from 1913 to 1921 from BT 348 & 349 were destroyed in 1969 for unknown reasons. BT 350 cards can be used for the period 1918-1921. For 1913 to 1917 the Agreements and Crew Lists for the period can be used, however they have not been indexed see the Research Guide Agreements and Crew Lists after 1861.</p> <p>Further Reading: Christopher T and Michael J Watts, <i>My Ancestor Was a Merchant Seaman</i> (Society of Genealogists, 2nd edition with addendum, 2004)</p>