

**A MILITARY AND
NAVAL
DICTIONARY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649463770

A Military and Naval Dictionary by John P. Wisser & H. C. Gauss

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DICTIONARY

COMPILED BY

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AND

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CONTAINING

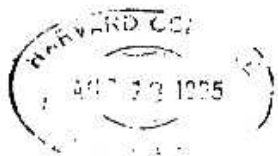
AUTHENTIC AND PLAINLY-WORDED DEFINITIONS OF ALL TERMS
USED IN THE MILITARY AND NAVAL SERVICES, AND
BRIEF BUT COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITIONS OF
THE POWERS APPERTAINING TO EACH
DEPARTMENT OF THE U. S. GOVERN-
MENT, AND THE DUTIES OF
ALL GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS.

L. R. HAMERSLY COMPANY

49 WALL STREET, NEW YORK CITY

1905

Wax 139.05



General fund

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New York

PREFACE.

A good *Military and Naval Dictionary* in the English language, up to date in all respects, is a great desideratum. To partially supply the want of such a work of reference the present work has been prepared.

There is at present no dictionary of *modern* military or naval terms in the English language. Wilhelm's is the latest, and that is practically obsolete in most respects.

Military literature has not only increased enormously in volume in the last quarter of a century, but has completely changed its vocabulary. The nomenclature of military material is entirely different, and even the forms of drill regulations, tactics and strategy have undergone transformations which require new expressions to define them.

In the present work *technical* forms of defining words have been avoided as much as possible, in order that the general student or reader may be able to comprehend them more easily.

To the military or naval officer the work will be found useful as a work of reference, in spite of the fact that much of the material is naturally familiar.

To the officers of the National Guard (or organized militia of the United States) and to the Naval Reserve, it will be found most useful, not only in supplying them with a new vocabulary of modern terms, but also in furnishing correct ideas of modern tactics.

To the general reader who desires to read understandingly any article relating to modern military matters, this little volume will be found quite essential. Any one who reads the reports of the war in the Far East will be greatly assisted by this handbook, and the accounts of the army maneuvers, of improvements in war material, of our own operations in the Philippines, or, indeed, of any military matters, will all assume a clearer aspect by its assistance.

Besides the ordinary service text-books, manuals and tactics,

both army and navy, the following works were consulted in its preparation:

- Wörterbuch der Marine.* Julius Heinz. Pola. 1900.
French-English Military Dictionary. Willcox. 1899.
Petit Dictionnaire Militaire. Stavenhagen. 1898.
Militær-Lexikon. Frobenius. 1901.

The military and naval articles in the *New International Encyclopaedia* were also referred to, as they were written by military and naval authorities of the first order.

The work is condensed into a small handbook, constituting a handy volume of ready reference, and the words selected are clearly defined in ordinary language. In arranging and selecting the list of words to be defined the most recent military and naval dictionaries in foreign languages were used as types. The work should therefore commend itself to the navy, the army, the National Guard, the Naval Reserve and the general reader, or the citizen who is interested in military matters. No other work covering the same ground is available, in our language, and its subject matter includes the latest words introduced into our military or naval vocabulary.

JOHN P. WISSER,
Major U. S. Army.

Military and Naval Dictionary.

ABACK. When the sails of a square rigged vessel are filled by a wind so that their pressure tends to drive the vessel stern first, they are said to be taken aback. Sometimes also the condition as to the head sails of a fore and aft rigged vessel; the condition is generally brought about by an unexpected puff of wind, hence the expression "taken aback" denoting surprise.

ABAFT. A nautical term indicating the direction of the stern of a vessel.

ABATIS. A military obstacle in field fortification, made of large limbs of trees (or entire small trees), placed side by side, the branches toward the enemy.

ABEAM. The direction in line with the widest portion of a vessel, strictly on a line forming a right angle with the keel. An object is said to be abeam when it is opposite the main body of the ship, as contrasted with on the quarter when an object is opposite the after part of the ship, and on the bow when an object is opposite the forward part of the ship.

ABLE SEAMAN. Referred to in nautical literature as "A. B." One who is competent to take up any of the duties of a sailor; that of navigation excepted, being the duty of an officer. A rating on merchant sailing ships commanding higher pay than that of ordinary seamen. The old class of able seamen sailing in square rigged vessels is almost extinct, owing to the lack of opportunity for training and the passing of the demand for their especial skill.

ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE. An offence against naval discipline punishable by summary court martial. The act of leaving or failing to return to a ship. When the factor of intent to remain away permanently is added it becomes desertion.

ABSOLUTE FORCE OF GUNPOWDER. The pressure which the products of its explosion exert when the powder entirely fills the space in which it is fired: it has been determined to be about 6,400 atmospheres.

ACADEMIC BOARD. The heads of the departments of instruction at the United States Naval Academy, acting as a collective body on matters relating to the admission of candidates, etc.

ACADEMY, NAVAL. The training school for officers of the United States Navy. Situated at Annapolis, Md. Founded in 1845 by George Bancroft, the historian, then Secretary of the Navy. Appointments are made on nomination of members of Congress. The students are called midshipmen and agree to serve the United States for eight years. Four years are spent at school, two more as midshipmen at sea. The midshipmen are then commissioned as ensigns and must serve two years before having the option of resigning. The buildings of the Academy are (1904) in the process of remodelling and extension at the cost of fifteen millions of dollars.

ACHROMATIC. A name applied to an optical instrument which corrects in part the aberration or apparent movement of objects caused by the interruption of the direction of light rays, together with the abnormal color appearances caused thereby.

ACTING. A prefix to a title which indicates that the person so styled is filling a position temporarily or during the absence or incapacity of the actual official. Also used as a prefix for a temporary appointment which is to be made permanent after a term of probation. Acting appointments are given in the Navy in time of war to officers whose commissions are expected to be terminated with the close of hostilities and also to medical officers employed for a term of years but who are not of the permanent medical establishment.

ACTION. A military engagement or battle. Clear ship for action is to remove all appliances not needed in battle and which would be likely to fly as splinters from the impact of shot. Much of the portable property of a ship is thrown overboard on the eve of action on the chance of a later recovery.

ACTIVE. An officer who is regarded as a part of the personnel available for duty. Officers may be on the active list though temporarily disabled or granted leave of absence. They are removed to the retired list when it is certified that they are permanently disqualified for duty.

ADJUTANT. A military officer, whose duty it is to assist the commanding officer of a regiment, artillery district, battalion, squadron, garrisoned post or detachment of troops.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL. The assistant of a general officer, especially in publishing orders, keeping records and attending to military correspondence.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT. The corps of officers comprising the Adjutants-General: now designated the *Military Secretary's Department*.

ADMINISTRATION. The methods employed to insure the existence and well-being of the army, including all that relates to organization, instruction, supply, pay and discipline.

ADMINISTRATION, COUNCIL OF. A board of officers assembled to audit the funds of companies, posts or post exchanges.

ADMIRAL. The highest naval title. The former Lord High Admirals of England were great nobles who were not necessarily sea-commanders. Their prerogatives have for centuries, however, been placed under the control of boards of commissioners known as the Admiralty. The subordinate titles of seagoing admirals are admiral, vice-admiral and rear-admiral. The title of admiral in the United States Navy is only attained when especially conferred by Congress. The highest title attained by promotion in the American navy is rear-admiral of which there are two grades, senior and junior. A rear-admiral commands a fleet, squadron or important naval station.

ADMIRALTY COURTS. The district and circuit courts of the United States have jurisdiction over causes originating on the high seas, or on rivers and harbors communicating with the sea including the various civil causes which may arise out of mercantile transactions on shipboard, relations between masters of ships and their men, criminal acts on board ship, etc. Attorneys practicing in admiralty courts are called proctors in admiralty. United States subordinate courts hold independent sittings as admiralty courts when upon maritime business, and follow the procedure of English admiralty precedents.

ADRIFT. A vessel or boat broken from her moorings or fastenings, also any object aboard ship which has become loose so that it moves from its place with the swaying of the vessel.

ADVANCE. Money paid in anticipation of pay to be later earned to enable an officer to reach a foreign station or to a merchant sailor to enable him to pay debts, purchase an outfit, or as an inducement to ship.

ADVANCE GUARD. A portion of a body of troops, marching in front of the main column, to insure its safety against surprise: its main purpose is to give the column time to deploy.

AERONAUTICS, MILITARY. Military ballooning. All modern armies have special balloon corps and schools of instruction in aeronautics.

AETNA POWDER. An American dynamite, containing from 15 to 65 per cent. of nitroglycerine, together with wood pulp and nitrate of sodium.

AFT. An abbreviation of abaft and most commonly used to indicate the direction of the stern. Going aft, to go in the direction of the sternmost part of the ship.

AFTERGUARD. A term belonging to the sailing navy. The afterguard was generally composed of landsmen, who were not competent to engage in the work on the loftier sails. They handled the fore and aft sail and looked after the gear on the quarter deck and poop. Being in the part of the ship where visitors were most frequent they were expected to be trim and neat in their personal appearance.

AGUILLETES. Gold cords terminating in points which are in some systems of uniforms the distinguishing marks of the