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## “Statistical Division” a section from *A History of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors*

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The Statistical Division.

In addition to the Port Series mission, the Statistical Division, later the Statistical and Services Division, and then the Port Facilities and Administration Division had two other missions--the compilation of waterborne commerce statistics and the collection of data on foreign ports.

In 1942, the Board was requested to prepare military reports for use in staff planning of port and terminal facilities at foreign ports. Previously, the Office of the Chief of Engineers had been requested by the Navy to furnish such reports and, inasmuch as the Statistical Division of the Board had for many years prepared and published similar reports on the ports of the United States, it was appropriate for the Board to undertake that assignment. Accordingly, the Foreign Ports Branch of the Statistical Division was established in August 1942.

The first study assigned the Board covered the ports of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, to be submitted in about 30 days, with a preliminary report on Casablanca, Morocco, to be delivered in 3 days. During the 3-year period, August 1942 to September 1945, a total of 41 military reports on foreign ports and terminal facilities were submitted. Each report contained detailed descriptions of all the ports in a given country or area, accompanied by maps and photographs. A total of 1,484 ports or localities were described in these reports, which were accompanied by 1,559 photographs and 986 maps. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ARCE 1951, Part 1, Vol. 3, p. 287.

The Foreign Ports Branch functioned during World War II and until 1962, when the unit was transferred to another agency. During World War II, the unit had as many as 19 employees engaged in strategic engineering studies for ports and terminals.

Collection of waterborne commerce statistics at BERH began in the Statistical Division in 1919. The Waterborne Commerce Statistics Branch operated from about 1954 to 1967, when the collection mission was transferred to the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. The current Evaluation Division continues to provide Washington-level coordination for the statistics program.