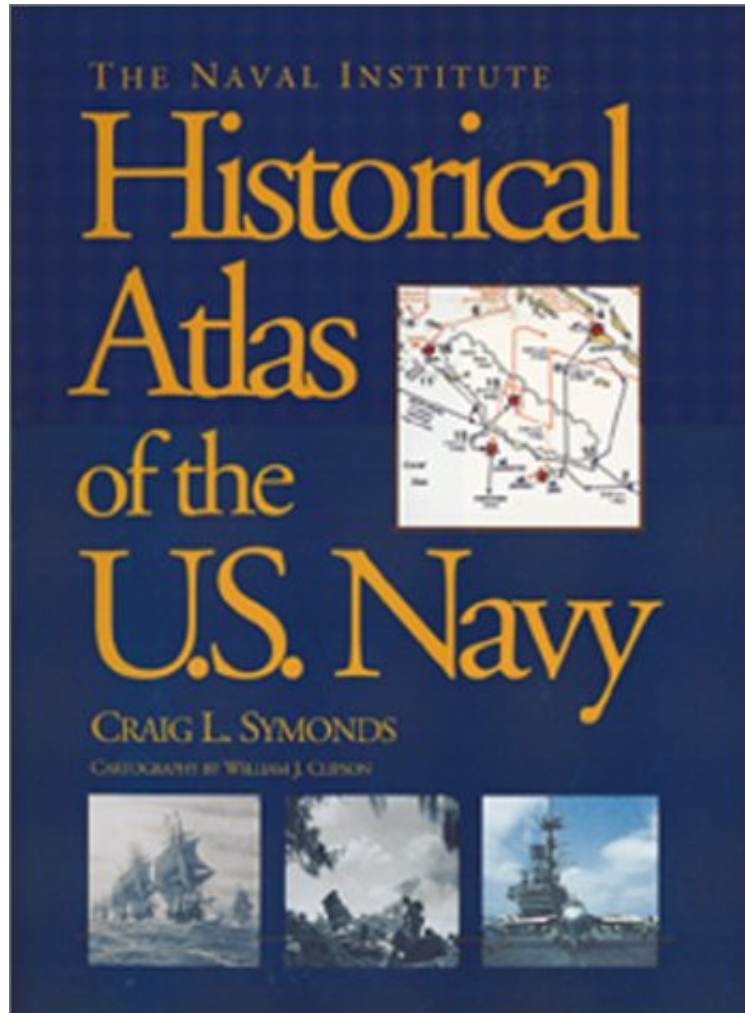


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## The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy

*Craig L. Symonds, William J. Clipson*

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#908462 in Books Naval Institute Press 2013-01-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 .66 x 9.22 x 11.801, 1.85 #File Name: 15575098401100 pages | File size: 52.Mb

**Craig L. Symonds, William J. Clipson** : **The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy:

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war books in my possession.

From the Battle of Flamborough Head during the American Revolution to the naval air wars over Vietnam and Kuwait, this historical atlas charts the course of the U.S. Navy across its entire history. Laid out here are the frigate duels of the War of 1812, the confrontation of ironclads during the Civil War, the World War II carrier battles in the Pacific, and the amphibious landings in Korea. Depicted also are campaigns, operations, and interwar interventions--like the cruise of the *Susquehanna*, Perry's mission to Japan, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Desert Storm--all helping to make this cartographic portrait of U.S. naval actions understandable at a glance. The maps in this large-format, high quality book are presented in full color and show the deployment of ships, their tracks, and even some shore activity. Each map has facing text that describes the action and its political, economic, and strategic significance. The atlas is organized chronologically into ten eras with each section preceded by a thoughtful essay about that historical period and accompanied by relevant illustrations of ships, battles, and portraits of significant individuals. Winner of the 1996 John Lyman Book Award, this handy and attractive reference will be treasured by everyone who enjoys reading American maritime history. Students, scholars, and old salts alike will appreciate the bird's eye view of how the Navy's fortunes have changed over the years, successfully guarding the nation and securing its interests.

From BooklistSymonds, professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy, and cartographer William Clipson have produced a most satisfying historical atlas. The work is divided into 10 sections, covering from the American Revolution to the Gulf War, which is included in the final section of the work, "The Pax Americana, 1980<sup>^</sup>-1994." Good, brief coverage of important naval battles accounts for most of the discussion, but the author also suggests political concerns serving to impede or expedite development of the U.S. naval force from its beginnings in October 1775. A work about the navy published by the Naval Institute Press might suggest less than candid coverage. The author's discussions are made more interesting by his pointing out mistakes in judgment before, during, and after important naval engagements. He notes that the navy is often called upon to come to the aid of ground forces. However, the discussion of naval operations during the Civil War, World War II, and Desert Storm illustrates the importance of cooperative planning. Entries are based on sound scholarship, reflecting the author's disinterestedness, and he is able to make complex operations understandable and interesting to laypersons. Good examples of this are the discussions of submarines developed during the Cold War and the excellent naval history of the Vietnam War. Large-format maps are in full color, each facing a page of text. Major entries, such as "Midway," have two pages of text and two of maps. Maps illustrate movements of opposing forces, showing such details as placement and names of individual vessels. Symonds calls attention to illustrated details in the body of his text. Presently, this is the only historical atlas of U.S. naval warfare. David Howarth's *Famous Sea Battles* (Little Brown, 1981) covers some of the more important U.S. engagements, but maps are not as helpful. The same can be said for Michael Sanderson's *Sea Battles: A Reference Guide* (Wesleyan Univ., 1975). Howarth and Sanderson attempt to cover world naval history and thus devote little space to the U.S. This new historical atlas has black-and-white photographs of ships, old and new, and old salts, military and civilian. The index is complete, and a well-constructed table of contents enables users to understand organization and to quickly locate needed entries. It is highly recommended for purchase by public, academic, and special military libraries. About the Author Craig L. Symonds has taught naval history at the U.S. Naval Academy since 1976. He is also the author of *Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin*. William J. Clipson, former head of graphic arts at the U.S. Naval Academy, has illustrated hundreds of books.