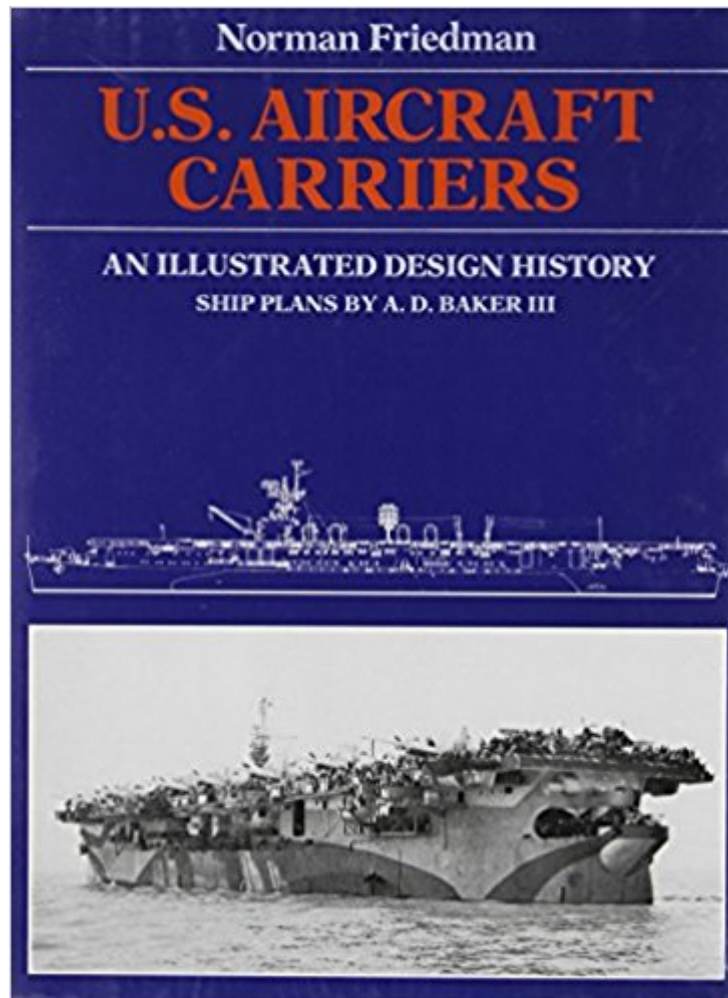




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U.S. Aircraft Carriers: An Illustrated Design History



Synopsis

This fully illustrated series offers detailed descriptions of the evolution of all classes of the principle U.S. combatant types, as well as plans, profiles, and numerous detailed photographs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This account of U.S. carrier development, based on the internal files of the U.S. Navy, presents a complete evolutionary design history at a level of detail and accuracy never before approached. The author, a recognized authority on U.S. warships, uncovers the issues behind the emergence of today's carrier, explaining the reasons for the periodic but always aborted attempts to trim back its dimensions.

Norman Friedman is a prominent naval analyst and the author of more than thirty books covering a range of naval subjects, from warship histories to contemporary defense issues. He is a longtime columnist for *Proceedings* magazine and lives in New York City.

U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIERS: AN ILLUSTRATED DESIGN HISTORY is a very good book that could have been excellent if better, more detailed drawings of the aircraft carriers would have been included. There was plenty of technical information and lists of specifications to satisfy the naval aficionado, but I am sure that more detailed deck layout drawings and, particularly, drawings of the machinery and armament, could have been included, since the USA must still have the complete

blueprints if these carriers available. That deficiency made the difference between this book and the books of the Naval Press Institute's series 'Anatomy of the Ship', which are unequalled in my mind when it comes to describing specific ships in detail. It was worth its price but lacked that extra 'oomph' to completely satisfy me.

This book is not a take-to-the-beach-for-light-summer-reading fare. It is a technically dense, exhaustive study of United States aircraft carrier design, from the first awkward experiments, (the Langley), through a brief description of the then-new (1983) Nimitz class. Reading it is like trying to run through knee-deep mud, but oh, what mud. Everything a serious historian--(or naval architect, for that matter)--could possibly want to know about pre-1983 American carriers is here. Want to know where the avgas tanks were in the first Yorktown class ships? You got it. How about a complete description of the electronic suites--radars, HF/DF, communications, meteorological--on the post-war carriers? Every minute iteration in the continually evolving systems is there, and which ships had which systems and when they were installed, upgraded, replaced or removed. Why did some of the Essexes have fold-up gun sponsons? (To fit through the locks of the Panama Canal.) There is even the only good description I've ever seen--with photographs--of the two WWII carqueel carriers converted from paddle-wheel (!!) steamers that operated in Lake Michigan. CVEs, the post-war conversion projects, LPHs, dedicated ASW carriers, the second Enterprise, catapults, arresting gear, and on and on. If you are a serious naval historian, this book belongs on your shelf.

I gave this a 4 instead of a 5. I have the "Cruiser" volume of this series. It is a beautiful book printed on excellent slick paper. The "Aircraft Carrier" volume I received was a good edition obtaining similar formatted information and photos. The difference is that it was printed in an inferior grade of paper, more like a rough bond type, not slick at all. In my opinion, the photos suffered in quality as a result. I would like to buy other volumes in this series but I won't purchase them without first either seeing the or having the assurance that they are printed on superior quality slick paper.

I've gotten past the middle so far, and have read about the damage taken by the USS Franklin (which survived) being similar to that taken by Japanese carriers at Midway (that did not). I've read Friedman's U.S. Battleships book a dozen times, and am enjoying this a little more; I've seen more of the carriers in here and supported two myself. All of the battleships I've seen have been stuffed and mounted as museums.

The first of Friedman's outstanding US Navy design series, it does not go into the depth of the later volumes, but succeeds in bringing out the thought process behind the designs, including the myriad ancillary considerations overlooked everywhere else. The discussions throughout on the impact of the developing carrier doctrine on operational requirements is enlightening. Appendixes on catapult development, arresting gear and magazine design loads provide critical information not even thought about elsewhere. And there is the usual specifications appendix found in all of the series.

I bought the book for my father-in-law's 80th birthday. He was in the Navy and served on a air craft carrier and he talks about his years of service so fondly. I wanted to give him a good book on air craft carriers so I read as many reviews on the books available and decided to order it. After he opened his present, he started looking through the book and he was instantly interested. He couldn't put it down and he said that he had never seen such a thorough book on aircrafts. I was thrilled with his response. He isn't easy to please and I know I bought him the perfect gift.

This volume, one of many in Norman Friedman's naval design histories, is amazingly thorough in its coverage of U.S. aircraft carrier design from the 1930s-era Saratoga and Lexington through the nuclear-powered Nimitz-class, as well as the offshoot amphibious assault carriers. The book is filled with design schematics, ships' specifications and more esoteric naval information than you could possibly absorb in a lifetime. The rich wealth of information is the consistent strength of this series that makes it a bit overwhelming for the casual reader looking for a narrative history of U.S. carrier. The emphasis here is on ship design, its impact on operations and little else. If there is any shortcoming to be found within the book, it is that it is rather old, having been last updated in 1983, when the Nimitz class was just hitting its stride and long before the design innovations fueled by the Navy's growth in the waning years of the Cold War.

This is a most excellent book that I refer back to all the time. There is no other comparable single stop reference source. Even though I own a copy, it is so good I look forward to when it is updated for subsequent ships being built. A companion volume covering the various aviation support ship types and seaplane tenders would also be most welcome.

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