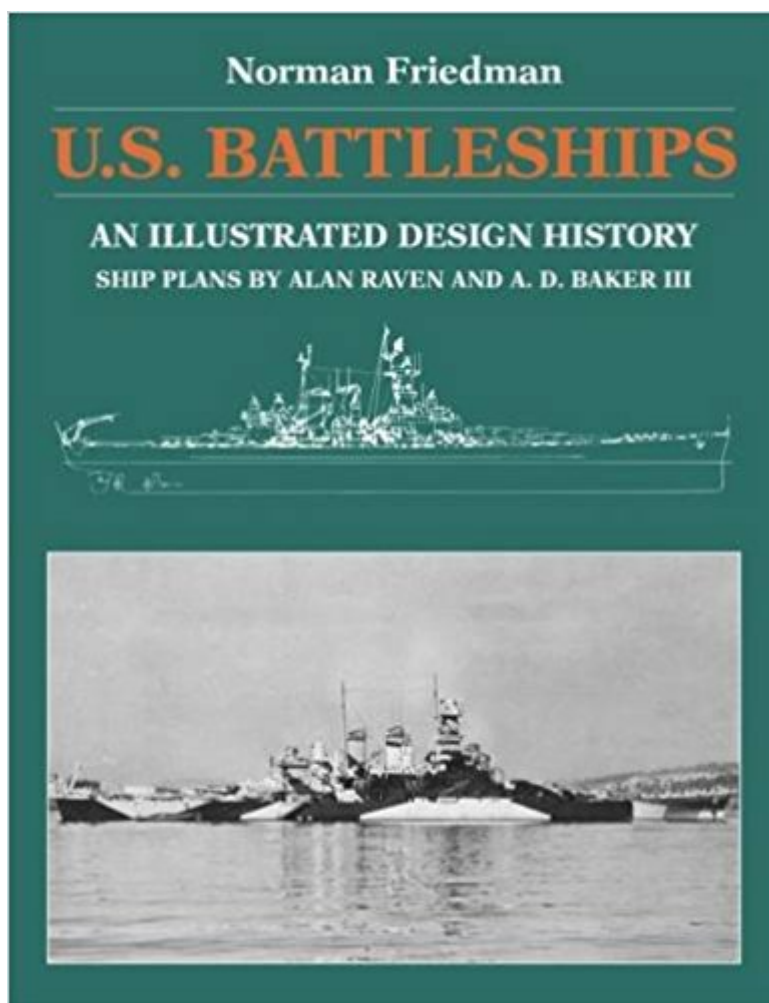The book was found

U.S. Battleships: An Illustrated Design History

Synopsis

Naval historians and enthusiasts alike will find U.S. Battleships to be the most comprehensive reference available on the entire development of U.S. battleships, from the Maine and Texas of 1886, through the Montana class of World War II, up to the recommissioned Iowas. Like the other books in Norman Friedmanï¿ s design-history series, U.S. Battleships is based largely on formerly classified internal U.S. Navy records. Friedman, a leading authority of U.S. warships, explains the political and technical rationales for building battleships and recounts the evolution of each design. Alan Raven and A.D. Baker III have created detailed scale outboard and plan views of each battleship class and of major modifications to many classes. Numerous photographs complement the text.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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.Alan Raven is a British-born naval historian, illustrator, and professional ship-model builder whose work frequently appears in modelling magazines.He was formerly editor of Combat Fleets.A.D. Baker III is a highly regarded naval authority known for his work as an illustrator and writer. His line drawings appear in several books, including others in this series. He is the editor of The Naval Institute Guide to Combat Fleets of the World and a contributing editor to the journals Warship International and Proceedings.

Having recently read some of Norman Friedman's recent books on British warships, and in particular the one on British battleships of the Dreadnought era, I found re-reading this one to be a fascinating experience. The overall look of Dr. Friedman's books have changed quite a bit in the last 30 years; at the same time, his writing style and occasionally peculiar fixations haven't changed much. This book, like most of his others, is an extremely dense, detailed work, which will prove a tough pill to swallow if the reader is only marginally interested in the subject. On the other hand, if you DO find the subject of warship design fascinating, you'll have a hard time pulling yourself away from it.As with the other "illustrated design histories," this book is heavily derived from formerly classified internal US Navy documents, and covers the entire history of American battleship development, from the "Maine" and "Texas" of 1886, to the aborted "Montana" class and the reactivation of the Iowas in the 1980s. At its core is a blow-by-blow boardroom level study of the subject, focusing on the evolution of guns, armor, hull design and machinery, with American politics, strategy, and the ever-changing international situation always in the background. One gets an impression of how incredibly frustrating the process of designing an effective battleship on fixed cost and displacement limits could be, and the frequently painful trade-offs required in the final design. Friedman doesn't pull many punches in his evaluations of the finished ships, and is sure to irritate some Iowa-class fanboys in the process. He also devotes plenty of space to refits and reconstruction, and the lessons learned from both World Wars.Although this book never strays from the titular subject matter, the level of detail is still pretty immense. There's a large number of photographs throughout, many with lengthy captions pointing out the latest guns and fire-control equipment installed aboard the ship. There are dozens of plans and profiles by Alan Raven and A.D. Baker III, along with the author's own sketches of unbuilt designs, and numerous cross-sections showing steel and armor thicknesses. A large number of tables are included, providing data on sketch designs and "spring styles." There's also detailed data tables in back, giving weight breakdowns, stability and trials data, tactical diameter, etc., along with appendixes on the damage suffered at Pearl Harbor, and monitors built after the Civil War.Unfortunately, the paperback reprint is the exact same book as the 1986 original - even the typos are in the same places! The chapter on pre-Dreadnoughts is rather sketchy, and the book still ends rather abruptly in the mid-80s. The photo quality in the original wasn't great, but it's substantially worse in the paperback. Many of the pictures look washed out or have excessive contrast, or have annoying "banding" problems. Unless you're a big fan of redundancy, there's no reason to buy the paperback if you already own the original.

This book is exactly what the title says it is ... A history of the designs used - or not- for US Navy battleships. It is long on diagrams and tables and data, less so on photos, and the operational history of these ships only comes up in terms of how it influenced subsequent designs. The narrative of the internal discussions and disagreements behind the design proposals is, for me, the most interesting aspect of this work. The most disappointing, to me, was the relatively brief treatment given to the ships from the pre- battleship Maine to the USS South Carolina BB-25. 10 produced classes of ship are dealt with in 33 pages, and for me, this is the most interesting period, as all kinds of different solutions were built and used. After BB-25, the basic pattern of superimposed turrets fore and aft was set, and all that followed were expansions on this basic theme. By contrast, 37 pages are spent on the two North Carolina ships, BB-55 and 56. So I am happy to have this book, and the evolution of these ships is very interesting indeed, but I would be happier with more time spent on the innovative and imaginative designs of the first 24 ships.

This is the best single volume history (463 pages) of the development of US Battleships.Information is detailed and the text easy to follow. Foot or endnotes are not included, nor bibliography, just a four page `Notes on sources', but an index is provided, as well as a list of US battleships and a battleship data list.Photos are not abundant, but suffice to illustrate the text. However photos and some diagrams poor quality is this book worst flaw and what make for the 4 star rating. This is perhaps due to the poor quality paper this book was printed on. A work of such importance clearly deserves a much better edition.

Always wanted a copy. The content is at the level of a "die hard" Iowa Class battleship fan. I'm a Civil Engineer by profession and could relate to some of the considerations as the Iowa Class evolved to its final (perhaps final) evolution. I have walked on two of the four members of the Class and always impressed with the level of massiveness. Not really for the casual reader.

A lot of information still reading great book

This book is a "keeper"! Great text explaining in detail all aspects of these ships with some great photos as well.

I found this an interesting history of the evolution of American battleship design. The book looks at some dead ends as well as leads that proved more successful.

If you love ships, you'll love this book. Everything from Monitors to the Montana and beyond. Plus loads of photographs, detailed drawings, and plans from the Navy Archives.

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