

# PROFESSIONAL READING LIST

The Defense Acquisition Professional Reading List is intended to enrich the knowledge and understanding of the civilian, military, contractor, and industrial workforce who participate in the entire defense acquisition enterprise. These book recommendations are designed to complement the education and training vital to developing essential competencies and skills of the acquisition workforce. Each issue of the *Defense Acquisition Research Journal* will include one or more reviews of suggested books, with more available on our website at <http://dau.edu/library>.

We encourage our readers to submit book reviews they believe should be required reading for the defense acquisition professional. The books themselves should be in print or generally available to a wide audience; address subjects and themes that have broad applicability to defense acquisition professionals; and provide context for the reader, not prescriptive practices. Book reviews should be 450 words or fewer, describe the book and its major ideas, and explain its relevancy to defense acquisition. Please send your reviews to the managing editor, *Defense Acquisition Research Journal* at [DefenseARJ@dau.edu](mailto:DefenseARJ@dau.edu).

## Featured Books

### *To Provide and Maintain a Navy: 1775–1945*

**Author:** CAPT Richard L. Wright, USN (Ret.)

**Publisher:** Strategic Insight, Ltd.

**Copyright Date:** 2019

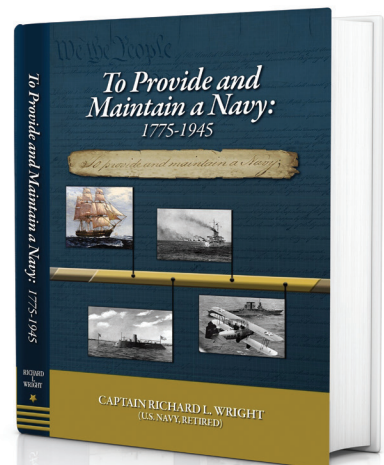
**Hard/Softcover:** 276 pages

**ISBN-13:** 9780578420967

**Available from:**

<https://www.stratsight.com/online-store>

**Reviewed by:** Brad Martin, Senior Policy Researcher, RAND Corporation



This book is worth reading by defense acquisition professionals. The events discussed go past simple historical interest, both in describing parallel situations to the present day and in identifying characteristics that have informed current structures.

The book credits several contributors in addition to the named author. While it does not read like a committee report, it is difficult to identify a single intellectual theme extending throughout. This may relate to a critical problem with the book's attempt to cover a large subject in some—but not too much—detail while at the same time making general points. This is difficult to achieve, resulting in some places where detail appears to be lacking and in other places a search for generality where it is not clear that generality exists. For example, the history of the Union Navy in the Civil War is fascinating, but with some attempts to describe tactics, some attempts to describe specific battles, then some general conclusions about industrial base. There's a reasonable argument that the Civil War offered a relatively unique set of circumstances, interesting in its own right, but not necessarily relevant to subsequent events. The chapter does not support a general point, nor does it cover the history in detail.

The focus of the work is on surface ships, which is certainly defensible for most of the U.S. Navy's history. However, the discussion of naval aviation is largely a discussion of aircraft carrier design rather than a description of aviation's role or aircraft capabilities. Submarine programs do receive attention, but here again the discussion is largely limited to submarines that were being designed and procured. The interplay between plans, concepts, and capabilities does not receive much discussion. Since the actual readiness to fight in war depends to a large degree on how well capabilities meet operational concepts, I believe the reader would not receive a complete picture of naval capability development—particularly in the critical interwar period—just from reading this book.

However, these shortcomings are largely the result of an ambitious attempt to cover a large subject in limited space. If those limitations are borne in mind, the book does provide a good sense of factors within the U.S. political system, economy, and culture that have influenced the Navy throughout its history. It is also well-referenced, well-edited, and generous with striking illustrations. For the acquisition professional looking for an overview of the U.S. Navy's history from the perspective of industrial base and capability development, this book is an excellent resource.