

# United States Military History



## Navy

# Navy

13 October 1775

The Continental Congress originally passed a resolution urging the individual colonies to build and equip fleets. On October 13, 1775, the Congress decided to start commissioning its own ships - starting with the ship **Alfred**.

13 October 1775, is the official date establishing the Navy.

# The Beginning

## The Resolution

*Resolved*, That a swift sailing vessel, to carry ten carriage guns, and a proportionable number of swivels, with eighty men, be fitted, with all possible despatch, for a cruise of three months, and that the commander be instructed to cruize eastward, for intercepting such transports as may be laden with warlike stores and other supplies for our enemies, and for such other purposes as the Congress shall direct. That a Committee of three be appointed to prepare an estimate of the expence, and lay the same before the Congress, and to contract with proper persons to fit out the vessel.

*Resolved*, that another vessel be fitted out for the same purposes, and that the said committee report their opinion of a proper vessel, and also an estimate of the expence.



## 2nd Continental Congress 1775

# John Paul Jones

John Paul Jones was the Continental Navy's first seaman to be appointed the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

Jones was given command of the ship called the **Bonhomme Richard**. His orders were to harass British commerce in British waters.



# John Paul Jones

During one bloody, destructive fight, the English captain called out to inquire if the Bonhomme Richard had struck her colors (surrendered).

Jones cried out, “I have not yet begun to fight”

Jones and her crew defeated the British ship.



# Bonhomme Richard



# Navy

With the close of the war, Congress was in need of funds to run the new nation. In response to the financial crisis, Congress ended the Continental Navy's existence on 1 August 1785.

All remaining Continental Navy vessels were auctioned off.



# Navy

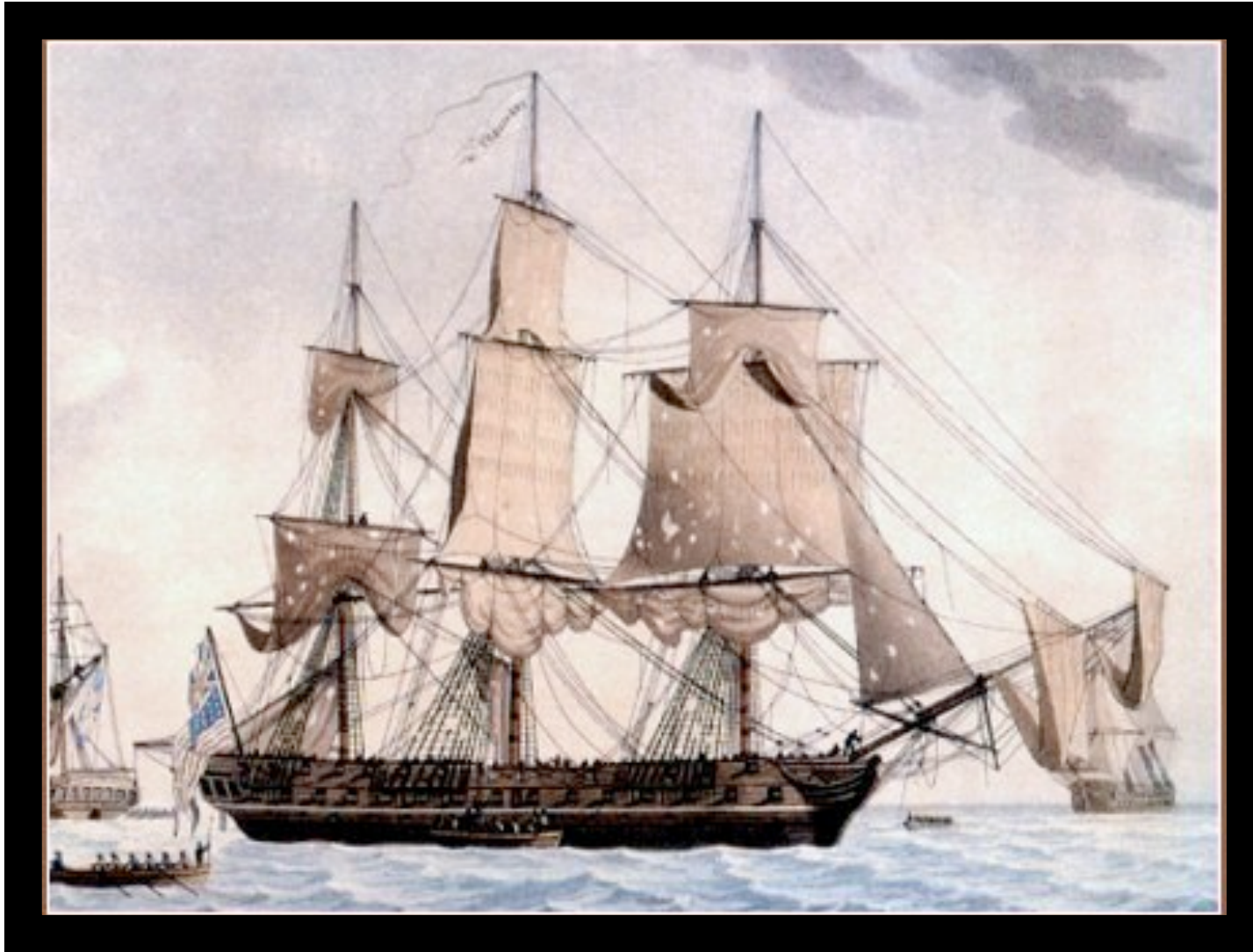
Congress pass the **Naval Act of 1794** ordering the construction of six frigates:

1. USS Untied States
2. USS President
3. USS Constellation
4. USS Chesapeake
5. USS Congress
6. USS Constitution

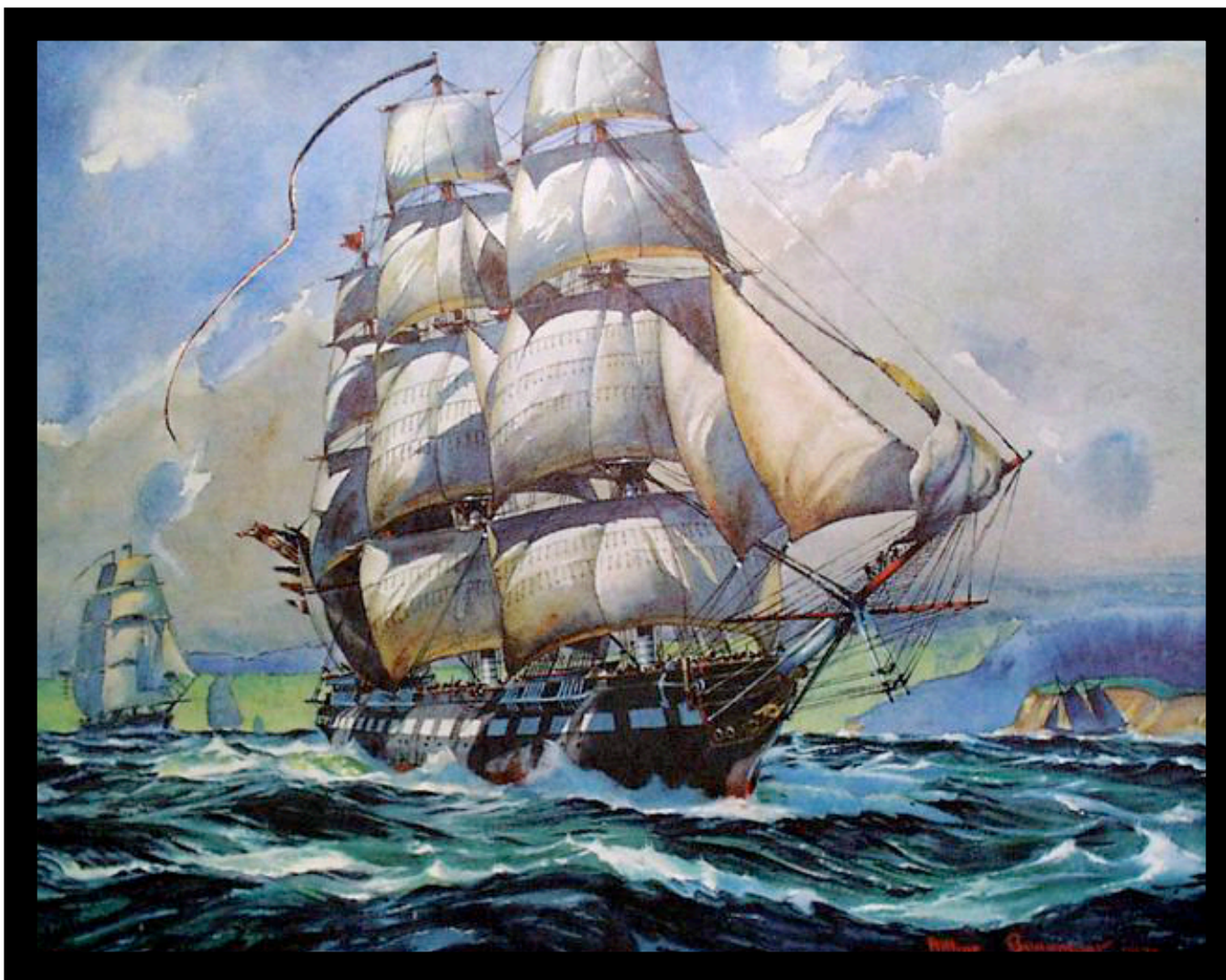
# USS United States



# USS President



# USS Constellation



# USS Chesapeake

Photo # NH 59556-KN USS Chesapeake. Painting by F. Muller



# USS Congress

Photo # NH 590 USS Congress (1842-1862). Photograph of a painting by Vandenberg.



# USS Constitution



# War of 1812

In June 1812 the United States declared war on Britain. Much of the war was fought at sea.

During a battle between the USS Constitution and the British ship HMS Guerriere, Guerriere's crew were shocked to see their cannonballs bouncing off the Constitution's oak hull - giving her the nickname of **"Old Ironsides"**.

The HMS Guerriere was defeated.



# War of 1812

The United States ships did very well in their battle with the British navy. Eventually British frigate captains were ordered not to engage their American counterparts unless in squadron force.

On June 1, 1813, the frigate USS Chesapeake, commanded by Captain James Lawrence, was captured. Lawrence was mortally wounded and famously cried out, **“Don’t give up the ship”**.

# 1813 – 1861

After the war, the U.S. Navy focused on protecting American shipping, sending squadrons to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, South America, Africa and the Pacific.

The United States went to war with Mexico in 1846, contributing by creating a blockade, assisting the American takeover of California, and participating in the U.S. Marine Corps first large-scale amphibious operation that captured Vera Cruz and Mexico City.

# Amphibious Landing at Vera Cruz



# American Civil War

The opening of the American Civil War hastened the final end of the “sailing” Navy. Steam powered ships began to be build.

On April 20, 1861, the Union burned its ships that were at the Norfolk Navy Yard to prevent their capture by the Confederates, but not all of the ships were completely destroyed.

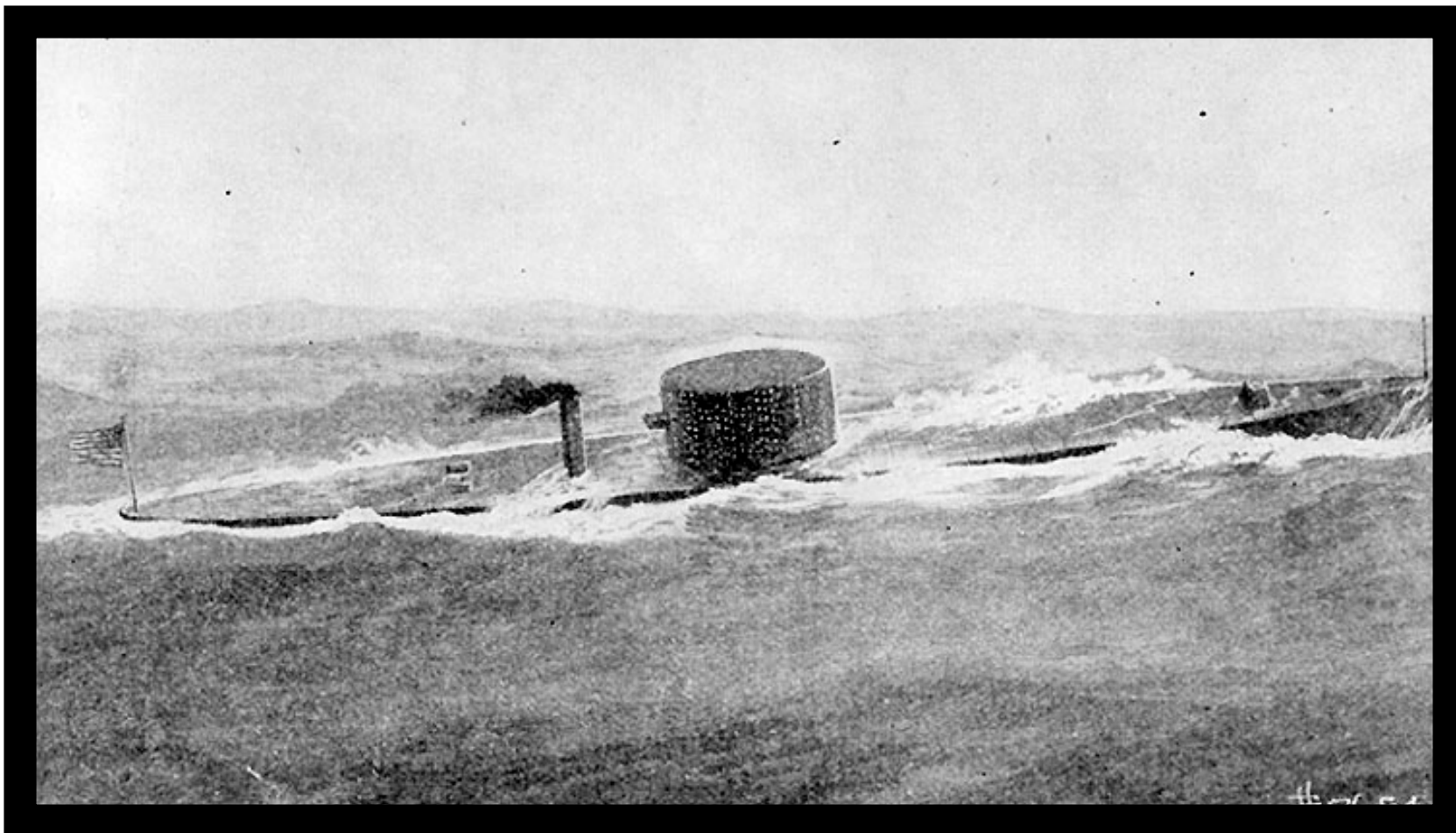
# American Civil War

The frigate **Merrimack** had been so hastily scuttled that her hull and steam engine were basically intact, which allowed the Confederates to raise her and armor the upper sides with iron plates.

At the same time, the Union provided funding to build an iron plate ship called the **Monitor**.

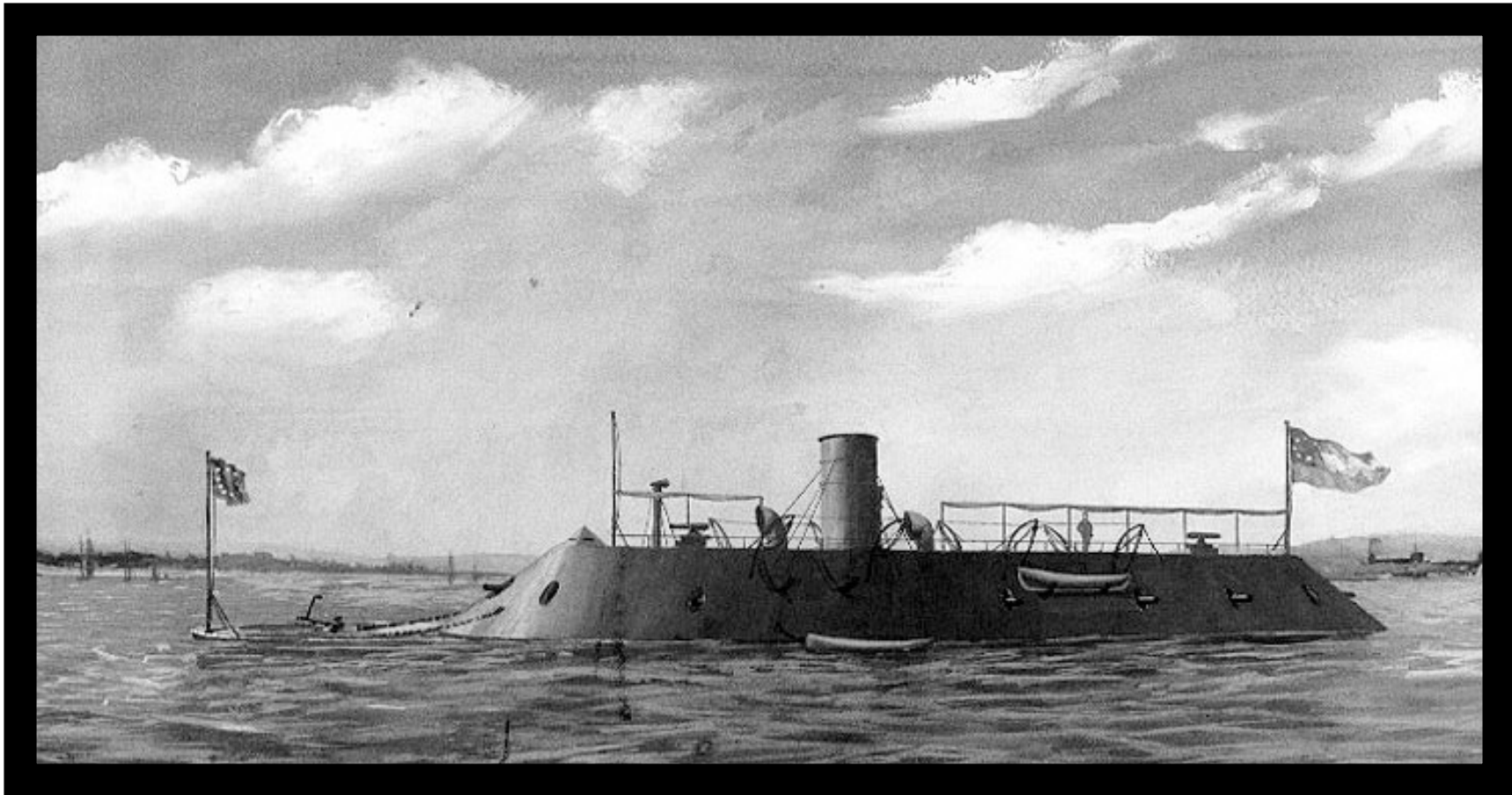
The two ships met in the "Battle of the Ironclads" in 1862, slugging away at each other for hours. Both left the battle unharmed and both agreed that the battle was a draw.

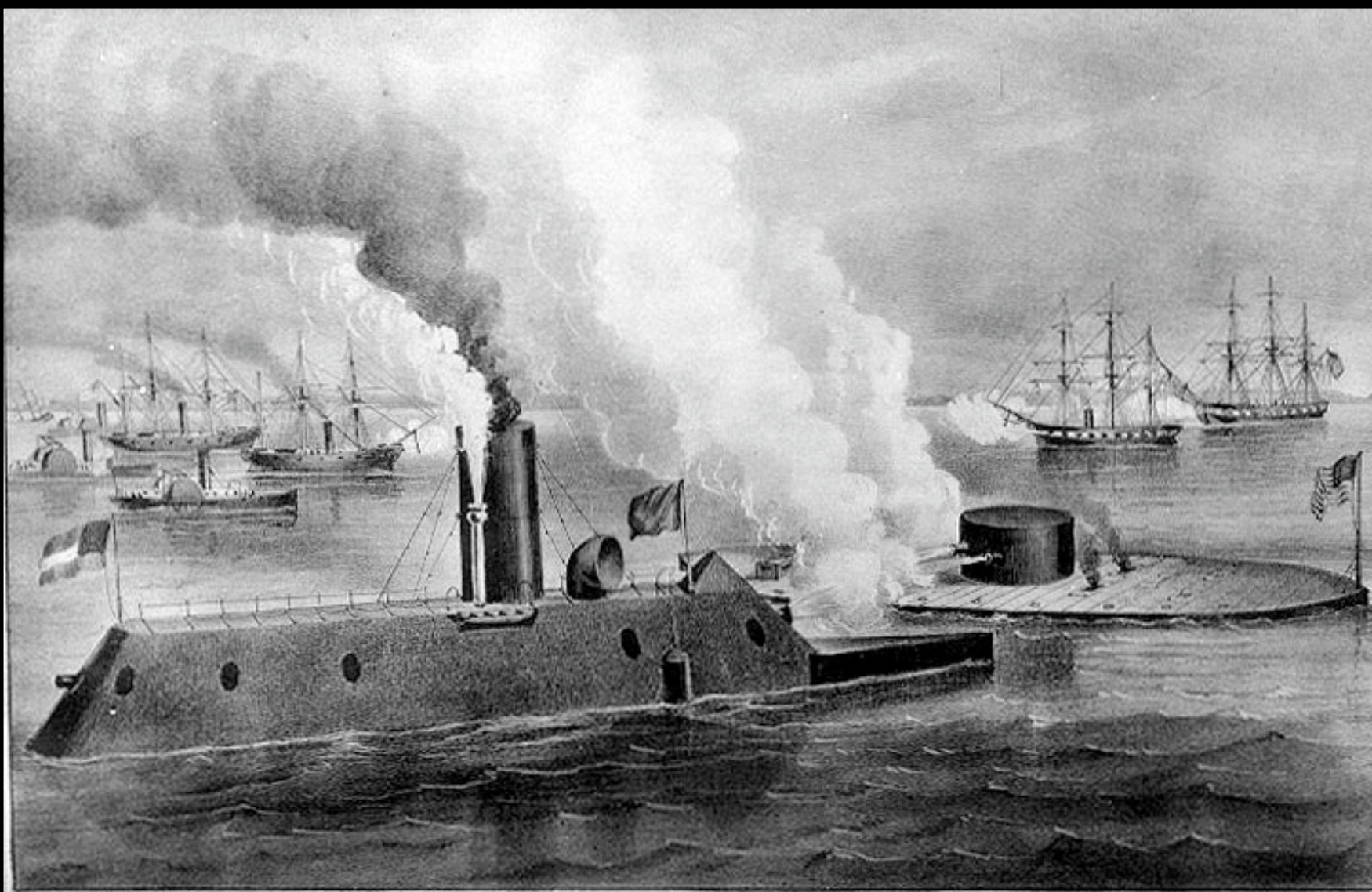
# USS Monitor



# CSS Virginia

“USS Merrimack”





THE GREAT FIGHT BETWEEN THE "MERRIMAC" & "MONITOR," MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup> 1862.  
THE FIRST BATTLE BETWEEN IRON CLAD SHIPS OF WAR.



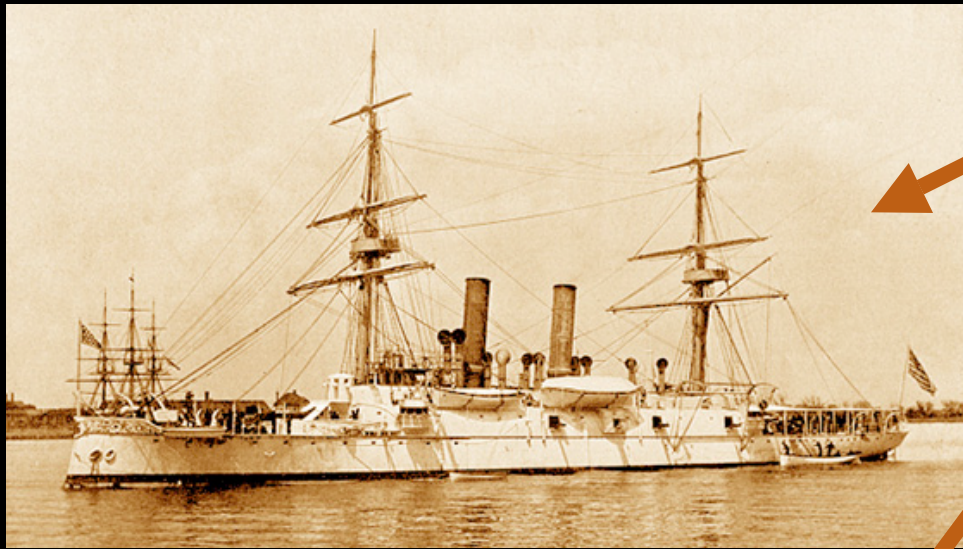


# 1865 – 1889

After the Civil War, the Navy went into a period of decline. The ships were broken up or sold.

At the beginning of the 1880, naval officers were recommending expansion of the Navy. In 1882, funding authorizing the construction of three small steel cruisers:

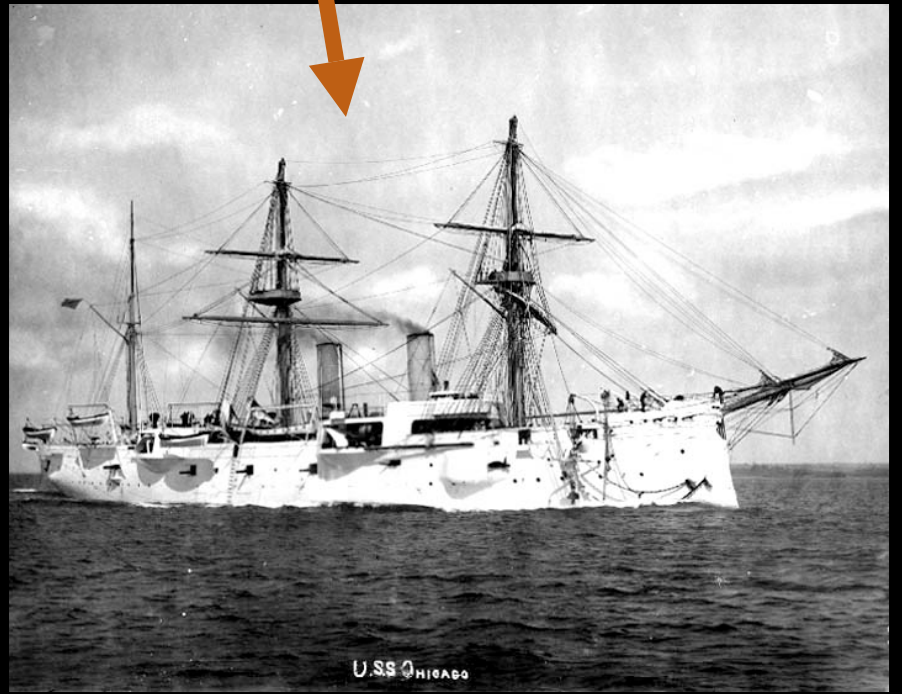
1. Chicago
2. Boston
3. Atlanta



USS Boston

USS Boston

USS Boston



# Spanish - American War

In 15 February 1898, the USS Maine was destroyed by an explosion in Havana harbor. Although the explosion was probably due to an internal fire, the Spanish were accused. The newspapers inflamed the American public against Spain.

The assistant Navy secretary, Theodore Roosevelt, sent the Asiatic Squadron for the Philippines, attacking and defeating the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay.

Hostilities ended on 12 August 1898 and the Spanish government sued for peace.

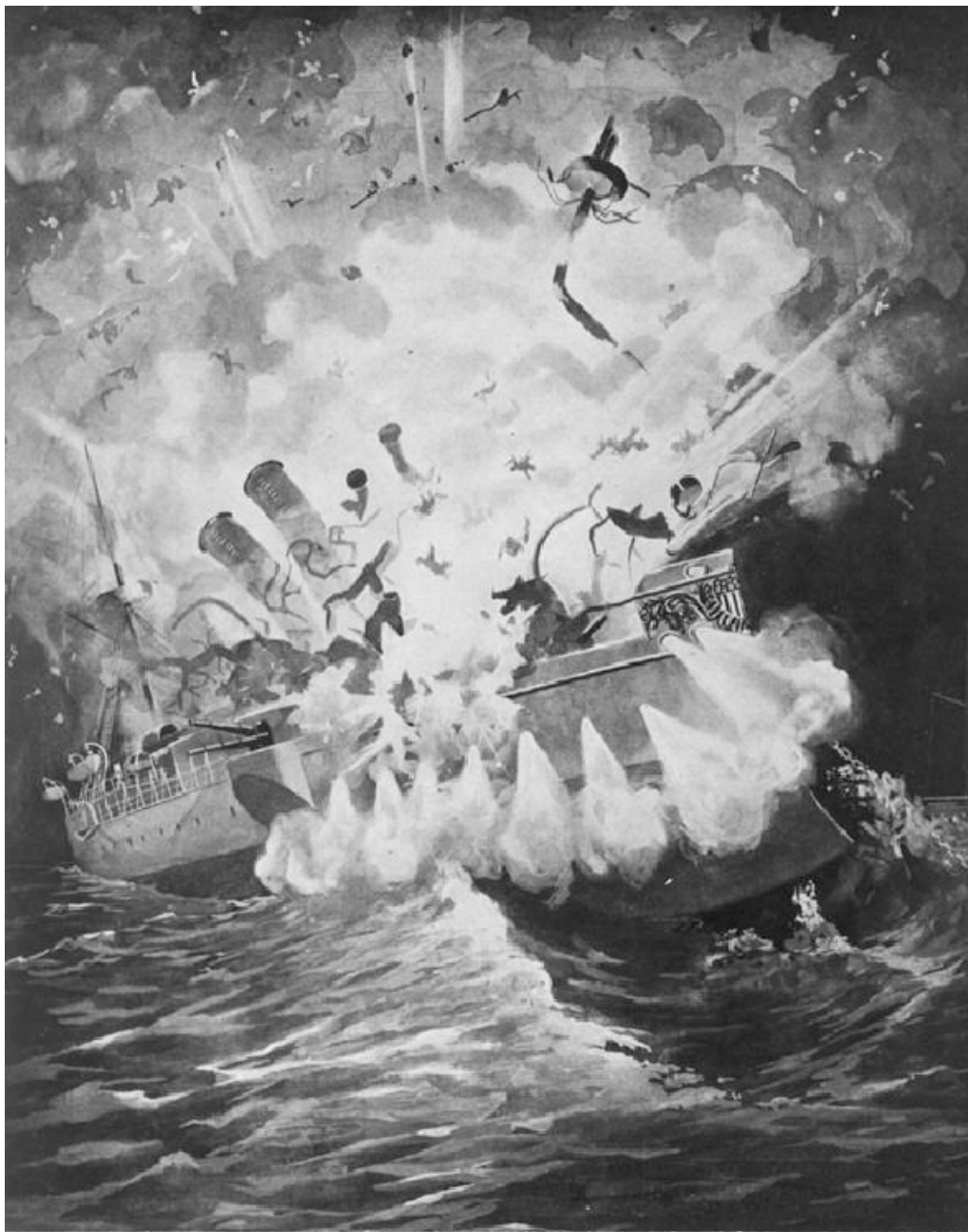


Photo # NH 61236 USS Maine explodes

# President Theodore Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt became president in 1901. Under his administration, the Navy added many more ships and became active in the politics of the world.

At the end of 1907, Roosevelt had 16 new battleships, which he sent on a cruise around the world. This cruise demonstrated the US power and capabilities.

The US power was taken seriously by the nations around the world. However, President Taft failed to continue the Navy's building program.

# World War I

World War began in Europe and the United States declared it neutrality. In 1915 the Lusitania was sunk and the U.S. reactions was to increase funding for the Navy.

When war began for the U.S. in 1917, the Navy's role was mostly limited to convoy escort, troop transport and the laying of a minefield across the North Sea.

During World War I, the Navy was the first branch of the United States armed forces to allow enlistment of women in a non-nursing capacity.



## **Sinking of the Lusitania**



# Control the size of the World's Military

After World War I, all nations began a rapid military build up in preparation for the next war.

The fear of this build up, resulted in the Nine-Power Treaty, the Limitation of Naval Armament, and limitations on the size of submarines and poison gas.

The Naval limitation treaty restricted the size ratios for the navies of the treaty nations.

# Control the size of the World's Military

One result of the treaties, was the development of light cruisers and aircraft carriers. The first carrier, the USS Langley was commissioned in 1922.

In 1934, the Navy's modernization was helped by another Navy assistant secretary turned president, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1940, the Congress authorized a 70% increase in Navy ships.

# USS Langley



# World War II

Japan attacked Pear Harbor on December 7, 1941. The US Navy was off-balance and was unable to counter Japan's takeover of the Far East.

In quick succession the Philippines were occupied, the Battle of the Java Sea was lost, the Dutch East Indies were taken over, and Wake Island was lost.

The Japanese attack united the people of the United States - the urge for vengeance was strong.

# US battleship sinks during the Pearl Harbor Attack



# World War II

Following American entry into the war, the U.S. Navy grew tremendously as the United States was faced with a two-front war on the seas.

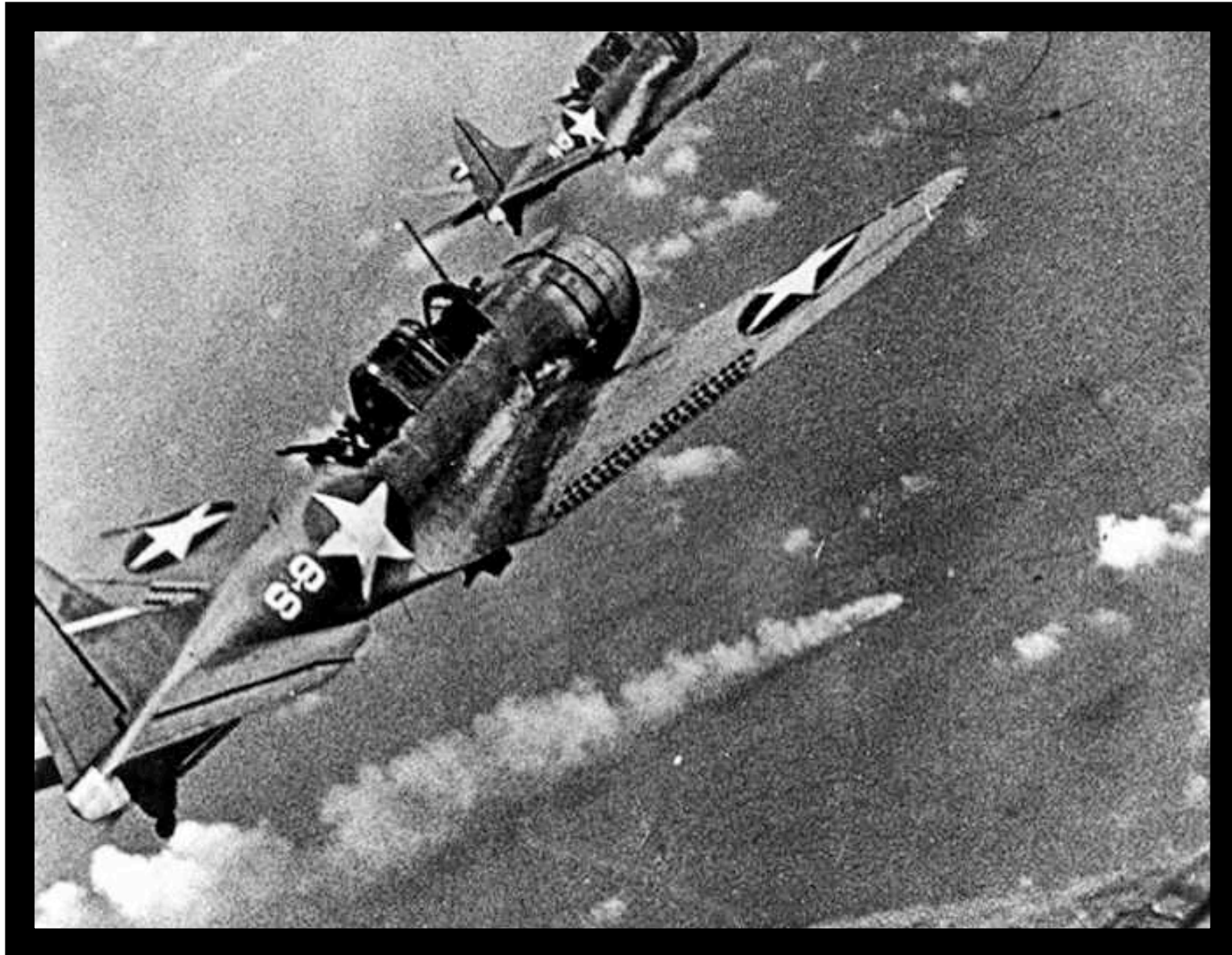
The Navy was vital to the Allies' successful "island hopping" campaign.

The U.S. Navy participated in many important battles, including the **Battle of the Coral Sea**, the **Battle of Midway**, the **Battle of the Philippine Sea**, the **Battle of Leyte Gulf**, and the **Battle of Okinawa**.

# Crew abandoning USS Lexington during Battle of Coral Sea

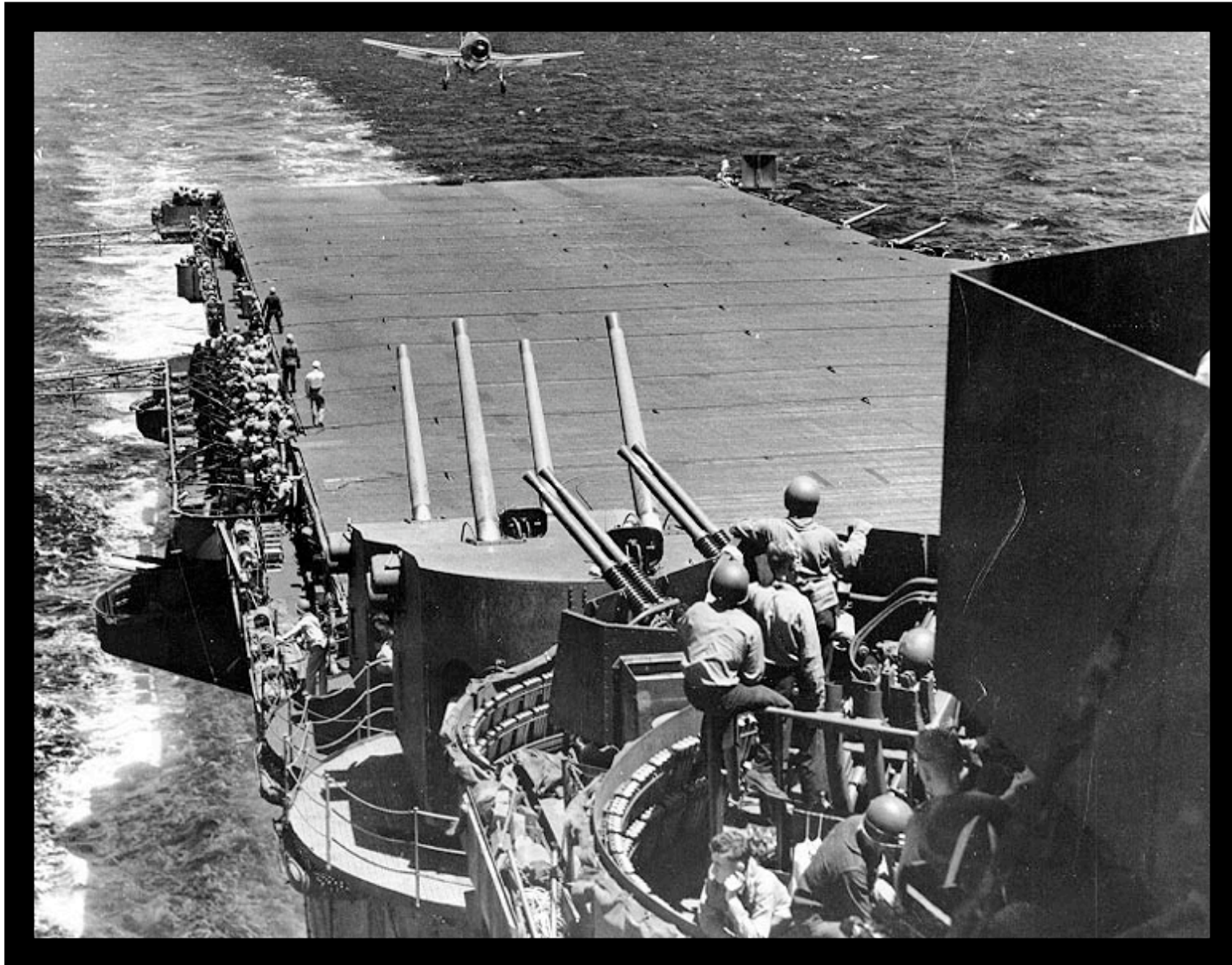


# American planes head for Battle of Midway





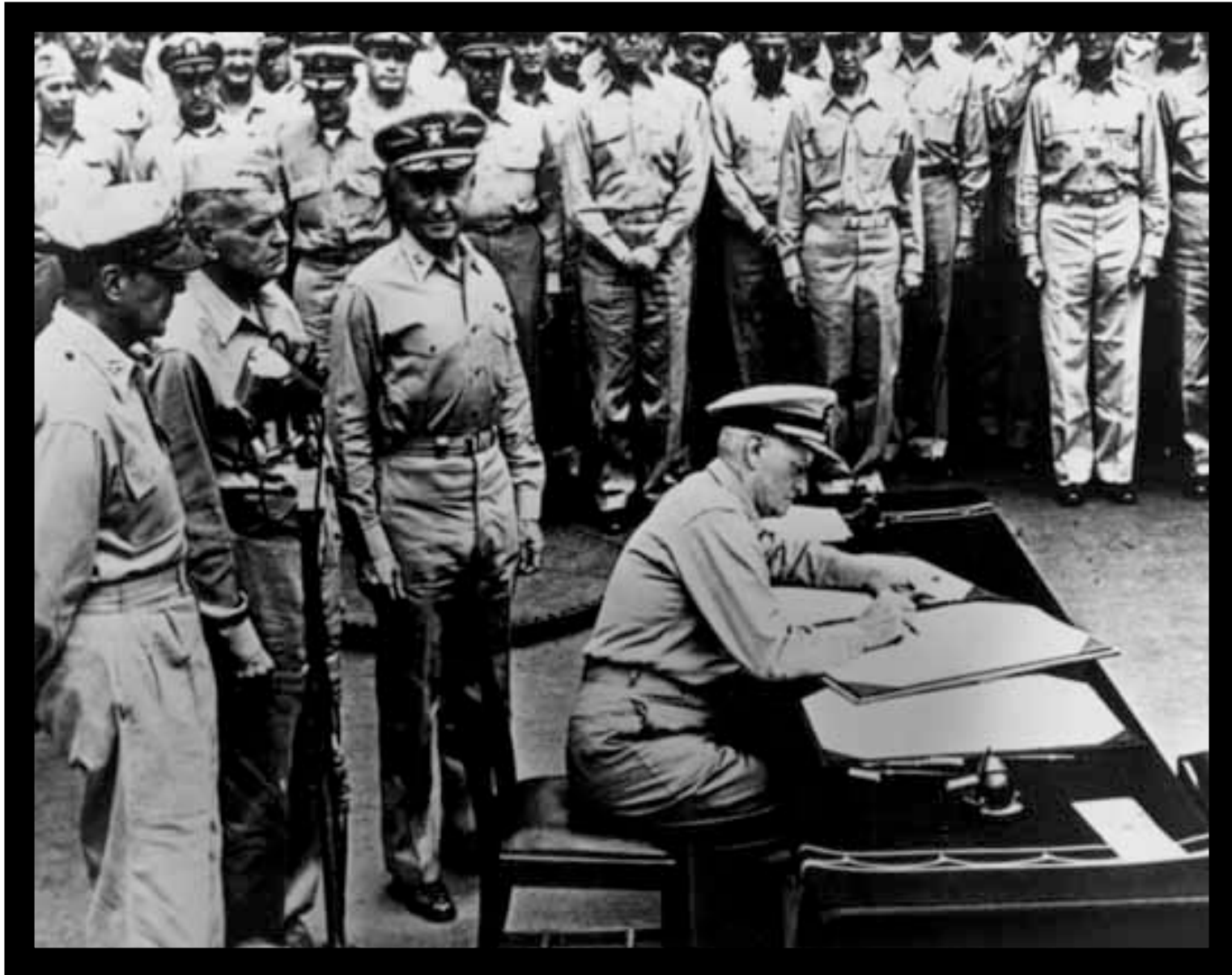
# F6F-3 lands of USS Lexington - Battle of Philippine Sea



# Essex under attack during invasion of Okinawa



# Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri



# Cold War

With the potential for armed conflict with the Soviet Union after World War II, the U.S. Navy continued to advance technologically by developing new weapon systems, ships and aircraft.

United States naval strategy changed to that of “forward deployment” in support of U.S. allies with a emphasis on carrier battle groups.

# Carrier Battle Group



# Cold War

The 1950s saw the development of nuclear power for ships and the development of missiles and jets. The ballistic missile submarine grew more deadly and quiet.

A combination of Navy ships fought in the Vietnam War - aircraft carriers offshore launched thousands of air strikes, while small gunboats patrolled the rivers.

# Navy Seals in Vietnam



# Navy Gunboats in Vietnam



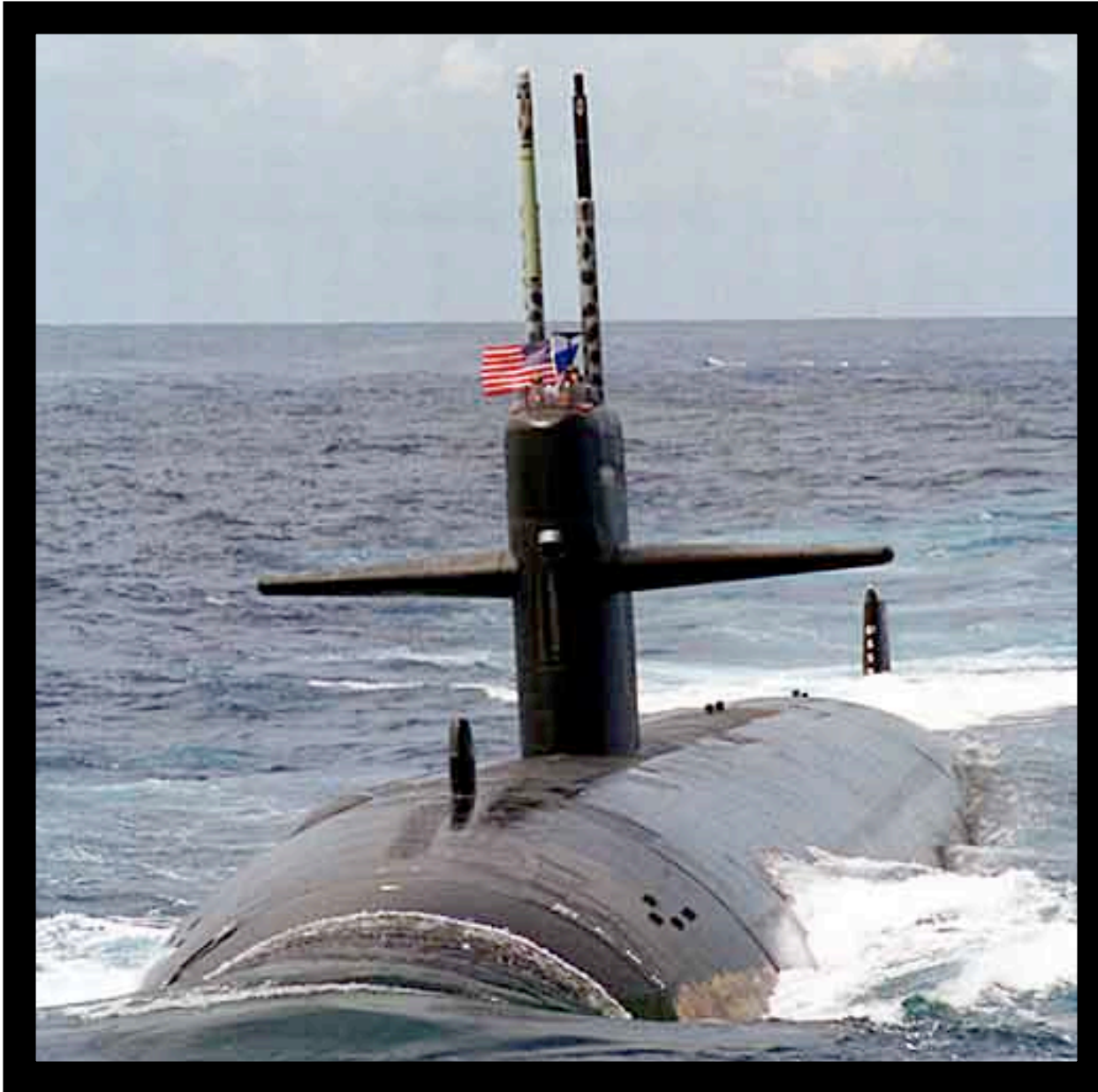


# Cold War

Despite the naval activity, new construction was slowed down by President Johnson and President Nixon to save money.

By 1978 the fleet had been reduced to 217 surface ships and 119 submarines.

The Cold War on the oceans was dominated by war games in which the United States and Soviet submarines would trail each other for days on end.



# The USS Key West

# Cold War

The Soviet fleet had been growing and outnumbering the US fleet in every type except carriers. This concern led the Reagan administration to set a goal of 600-ship Navy and by 1988 the fleet was at 588.

Several of the old battleships were reactivated after 40 years in storage, modernized and made appearance off the shores of Lebanon and elsewhere.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Navy fell apart and the United States is the world's undisputed naval superpower.

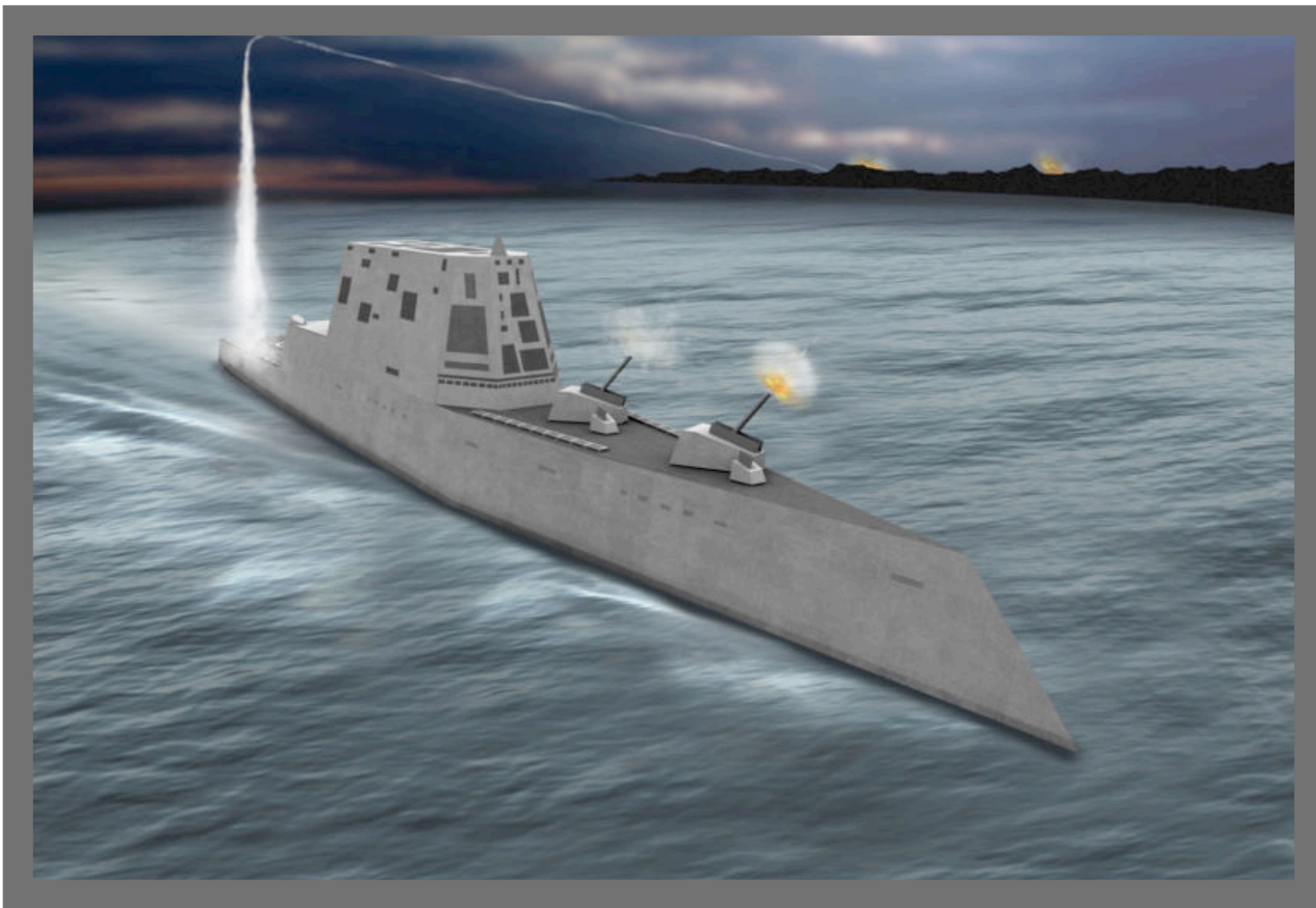
# United States Navy

The United States Navy advantage over other nations is more than just numerical - The United States Navy enjoys technological superiority.

All the world's oceans are dominated by the United States Navy with its 13 air craft supercarriers and their supporting battle groups.

Since September 11, 2001, the U.S. Navy has been undergoing reforms, designing several new classes of ships - like the Zumwalt class destroyer and the LCS, or Littoral Combat Ship.

# Zumwalt Class Destroyer





# Littoral Combat Ship

