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SUBJ/2025 NAVY AND NATION 250 CNO NAVAL HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST//

GENTEXT/REMARKS/

1. The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) announces the 2025 CNO Naval History Essay Contest, commemorating the U.S. Navy's 250th anniversary and highlighting America's Warfighting Navy's contributions to our great nation and our 250 years of independence.

On 13 Oct 25, we mark our Navy's 250th birthday and 04 Jul 26, will mark our Nation's 250th birthday. We invite participants to submit their essays no later than 30 Apr 25. This contest is an excellent opportunity to engage in the rich legacy of naval history.

2. The Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) is the lead for the contest. The United States Naval Institute (USNI) supports it.

3. The CNO invites essay submissions that draw on insights from naval history to address the serious challenges confronting today's Navy.

a. In a globalized world in which 90 percent of international trade by volume and a significant proportion of global communications rely on the seas and undersea cables, the importance of navies, sea control, and strategic partnerships with allies and partners has increased, underscoring the critical role of maritime power in maintaining global economic stability and security.

b. The U.S. Navy faces a major transformation fueled by a shifting strategic environment and technological advancements. Over the course of our and our Nation's 250 years, there are rich examples of shifting strategic environment and technological advancements that can inform and enlighten our current thinking and discussions.

4. Areas of Historic Interest:

a. Historic Approaches in Countering Disruptions to the Rule of Law in the Maritime Domain. Current Day Context: Potential adversaries' increasing opposition to the rules-based global order poses a serious threat to the security and prosperity that benefit all who rely on the global stability afforded by these rules.

b. Historic Approaches in Addressing Change in Maritime Philosophies, Techniques, and Capabilities. Current Day Context: The rapid growth of uncrewed systems and artificial intelligence

(AI) advancements are revolutionizing autonomous naval operations and decision-making processes, impacting all aspects of planning and warfare, from force structure to combat strategy.

c. Historic Approaches in Addressing Maritime Competition.

Current Day Context: From seabed to space, in cyberspace, and in the information environment, the Navy delivers power for peace. China's emergence as an important economic and maritime competitor underscores the need for the United States to develop integrated, multi-domain operational concepts and capabilities that leverage the unique strengths of our maritime services (the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine), industrial base, and the complete Joint warfighting ecosystem.

d. Historic Approaches of America as a Maritime Nation.

Current Day Context: For 250 years, America's Warfighting Navy has Deterred aggression, defended our national security interests, and Preserved our way of life. Since before our nation's inception, America's Warfighting Navy has sailed the globe in defense of freedom. How has the Navy's ability to control the sea and project power kept conflict far from our shores?

e. Historic Approaches of the American Sailor leaving their mark on

our Navy and Nation's 250 years. Current Day Context:

America's Warfighting Navy operates the world's most sophisticated weapons systems, how have our Sailors and Civilians given us an unmatched strategic advantage over the last 250 years?

5. CNO Intent:

a. Navigation Plan 2024 and her philosophy of America's Warfighting Navy of Warfighters, Warfighting, and the Foundation that support them emphasizes that strategic agility stems from proactive and practical thinking and that there is no time to waste.

This essay contest aims to harness the collective expertise and intellectual engagement of the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine, as well as cadets and midshipmen.

b. The goal of the contest is to examine and reflect on historic approaches to similar conditions and stimulate discussion and insights on achieving and maintaining maritime superiority in the context of renewed great power competition and how our 250th birthday is a unique, once-in-a-generation opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the U.S. Navy and the exceptional contributions of our active and reserve Sailors, and Navy civilians.

6. Eligibility. Essays are accepted from entrants qualified in the Professional Category, the Rising Category, or the Midshipmen and Cadets Category.

a. Professional Historian Category:

(1) Historians, professors, history curators, archivists, and persons with history-related doctoral degrees;

(2) Authors of books on naval history (not including self-published works); or

(3) Civilians who have published articles in an established historical or naval journal or magazine.

b. Rising Historian Category: Those that do not fall in the Professional Category and are either:

(1) Active duty, reservists, veterans, and federal civilian personnel of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine; or

(2) Members of foreign militaries that have orders and are serving in an official billet in one of the above services.

c. Midshipmen and Cadets Category:

(1) Students enrolled at the United States Naval Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, United States Merchant Marine Academy, and the State Maritime Academies or

(2) Students enrolled in an official Naval ROTC Program.

7. Submission Requirements:

a. Deadline: 2359 Eastern Standard Time, on 30 Apr 25.

b. Citations: All entries must include numbered footnotes or endnotes; a bibliographic list is not a substitute.

c. Word Count: Please adhere to the following limits: 3,500 words for the Professional Category and 3,000 words for the Rising and Midshipmen/Cadets categories.

d. Co-authoring: Essays in the Rising Historian category may be co-authored, with both authors meeting the Rising Category qualifications.

e. Original Work: Submit original essays that have not been published, are not under consideration elsewhere, and have not been previously submitted to the CNO Naval History Essay Contest.

f. Multiple Submissions: Entrants may submit multiple essays, but only one winning essay will be selected per individual.

g. Entry Submission: Entrants must submit essays electronically as a Microsoft Word attachment using the appropriate link:

(1) Professional Historian Category, go to:  
<https://www.usni.org/essay-contests/2025/2025-cno-naval-history-essay-contest-professional-historian>.

(2) Rising Historian Category, go to:  
<https://www.usni.org/essay-contests/2025/2025-cno-naval-history-essay-contest-rising-historian>.

(3) Midshipmen and Cadets Category, go to:  
<https://www.usni.org/cnonhessaycontestmidn-cadet>.

h. Eligibility confirmation: When completing the electronic form, ensure the short biography provides necessary details about the author and the author's eligibility for the contest.

i. Word Count: Include the word count (excluding footnotes, endnotes, and sources) on the essay's title page.

j. Essays will be judged anonymously; please do not include the author's name or any identifying information within the essay.

8. Essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

a. Relevance to the topic: leveraging naval history to address current challenges;

b. Clarity and readability;

c. Thoroughness of research;

d. Quality of insights derived from historical events; and

e. Originality and uniqueness of ideas presented.

9. All essays will be evaluated through a blind judging process:

a. A six-member panel will determine the winning, second-place, and third-place essays in the Rising Historian Category.

b. A separate six-member panel will select the winning and runner-up essays in both the Professional Historian Category and the Midshipmen and Cadets Category.

10. The winning authors will receive:

a. Invitational travel orders to the 2025 CNO Naval History Essay Awards Reception (to be determined) to meet the CNO and present papers.

b. Contest Awards Reception (to be determined) to meet the CNO and potentially present their papers.

c. Cash prizes (courtesy of USNI). Cash prizes for co-authors will be split equally:

- (1) First Place - \$5,000 (Professional and Rising Historians);
- (2) First Place - \$4,000 (Midshipmen and Cadets Category);
- (3) Second Place - \$2,500 (Professional and Rising Historians);
- (4) Second Place - \$2,000 (Midshipmen and Cadets);
- (5) Third Place - \$1,500 (Rising Historian Category); and
- (6) Third Place - \$1,000 (Midshipmen and Cadets Category).

d. Publication of the essays in the USNI's Proceedings magazine and Naval History periodicals (first-place essays) and on the NHHC website (all winning essays). Some non-winning essays may also be selected for publication. Submission of essays constitute consent for such publication.

e. Copper sheathing from the USS CONSTITUTION (provided by NHHC).

f. Recognition on the NHHC website.

g. A one-year USNI membership and a one-year subscription to USNI's Naval History Magazine (courtesy of USNI).

11. Responsibilities. The Director of NHHC shall:

a. Coordinate receipt, acknowledgment, and blind judging of submissions;

b. Nominate three senior staff members as judges, one for each category.

c. Coordinate with the staffs of the Offices of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV), U.S. Naval Academy, Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School, and USNI, each of which shall nominate two judges, one for each category;

d. Coordinate announcing the contest winners;

e. Coordinate the 2025 CNO Naval History Essay Contest Awards Reception with the USNI and invitational travel for the winning authors;

f. Coordinate NHHC website publication IAW paragraph 9.c. and dissemination to Navy leadership of winning and selected essays; and

g. Capture and forward lessons learned.

12. For more details about the contest:

a. Please visit: <https://www.history.navy.mil/get-involved/essay-contest.html>.

b. For questions, please contact Mr. Steve A. Hill, NHHC, email: [stephen.a.hill6.civ\(AT\)us.navy.mil](mailto:stephen.a.hill6.civ(AT)us.navy.mil).

c. For advice and guidance on writing essays, please email: [essayquestions\(AT\)usni.org](mailto:essayquestions(AT)usni.org).

13. Released by VADM Michael E. Boyle, Director, Navy Staff.//

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