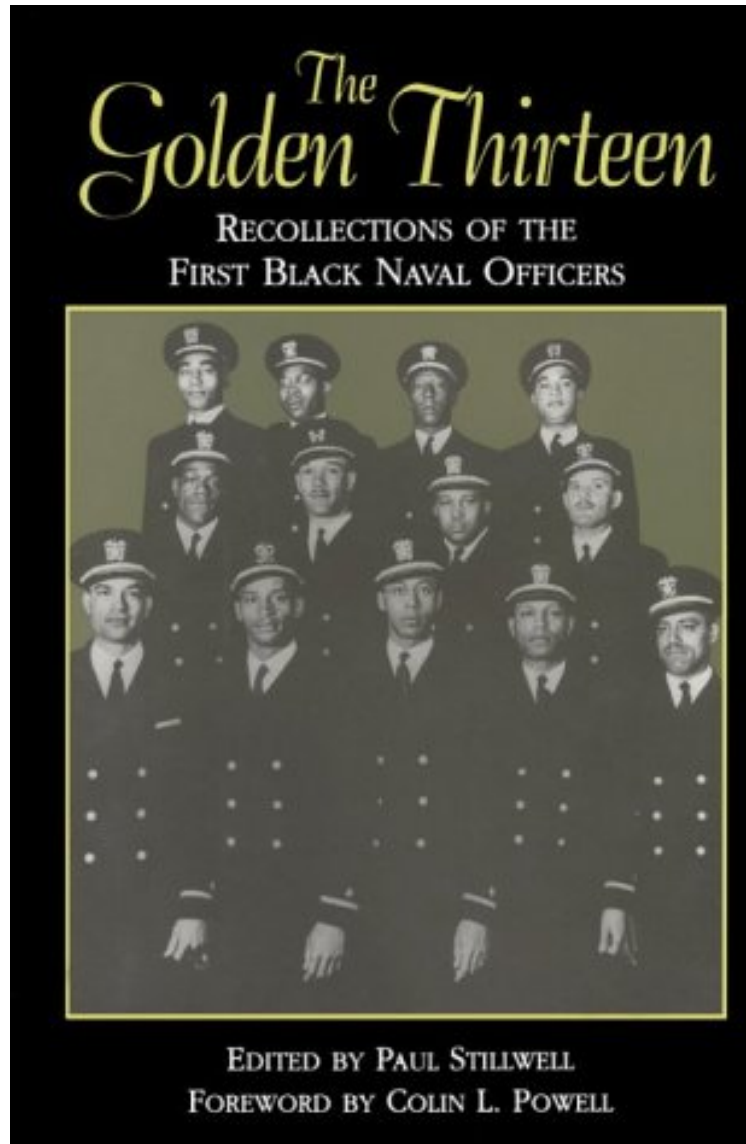


[FREE] The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers

## The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers

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OfficersBy ZephyrThis book is particularly precious to me; learning more of the history of what these men experienced has been important to me and to my ability to encourage my grandson to be a responsible person in our society--given the sacrifices that were made by others, long gone. This historical accounting is not so very far from my lifetime, as I am aware of and in contact with some of the names of persons mentioned in this book. The courage and determination of these men are astounding, as they traverse the undercurrents, undertow, and waves of racism in order to emerge the splendid officers they became. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good ReadBy Iva MarshallI purchased this book for my husband. He enjoyed it, but wondered what happened to the men who passed the course, but did not get promoted, and why one was promoted to a Warrant Officer and not a Commission Officer? Book just left some unanswered questions that would have made the read much clearer. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. First Person HistoryBy Juliette D'CostaAn interesting history told from the point of view of the actual Golden Thirteen

In January 1944 sixteen black enlisted men gathered at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Illinois to begin a cram course that would turn them into the U.S. Navy's first African-American officers on active duty. The men believed they could set back the course of racial justice if they failed and banded together so all would succeed. Despite the demanding pace, all sixteen passed the course. Twelve were commissioned as ensigns and a thirteenth was made a warrant officer. Years later these pioneers came to be known as the Golden Thirteen, but at the outset they were treated more as pariahs than pioneers. Often denied the privileges and respect routinely accorded white naval officers, they were given menial assignments unworthy of their abilities and training. Yet despite this discrimination, these inspirational young men broke new ground and opened the door for generations to come. In 1986, oral historian Paul Stillwell began recording the memories of the eight surviving members of the Golden Thirteen. Later he interviewed three white officers who served with and supported the efforts of the men during World War II. This book collects the stories of those eleven men. Introduced by Colin L. Powell, they tell in dramatic fashion what it was like to be a black American.

From Publishers WeeklyIn 1944, responding to pressure from Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson (the latter then serving as assistant to the Navy secretary), the Navy reluctantly turned 13 black enlisted men into officers--the first African American officers in the branch. Not knowing where to assign them, the Bureau of Personnel put them to work on harbor craft and supervising stevedores. Though their naval service was not in itself particularly interesting, their commissioning represented an important breakthrough, for it led to an increase in opportunities for African Americans in the armed forces. As Gen. Colin Powell remarks in the foreword, this collection of interviews with eight surviving members of the group (plus three white officers who served with them) is not so much about their years in the Navy as it is about "what it was to grow up, to make a living, to be American, to be black" in the middle years of this century. Only one of the 13 made a career of the Navy; the others, after serving honorably, returned to civilian life and became, variously, a football coach, a teacher, a dealership service-manager, a city planner, an NCAA official, a judge, a social worker, an Urban League official. Stillwell directs the oral history program at the Naval Institute. Photos. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library JournalStillwell, the editor of Naval History magazine, has compiled a fascinating collection of reminiscences focusing on the first black naval officers in America. The recollections include eight black officers (commissioned in 1944) and three white officers involved in their training. Two major themes emerge: Most of the blacks were well-educated former athletes whose families stressed self-discipline and the need for formal schooling. In addition, the 16 candidates (three of whom were not commissioned) saw themselves as a coherent group who cooperated rather than competed in their training. Filled with interesting detail, especially about differing white and black perceptions of the military, this is a welcome addition covering a little-explored area of African American history.- Anthony O. Edmonds, Ball State Univ., Muncie, Ind. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A fascinating collection of reminiscences." ---Library Journal