



**REMARKS OF LCOL. JAMES ZUMWALT (USMCR, Ret.)
UPON DESIGNATION BY PRESIDENT CLINTON OF DD-21 CLASS DESTROYER AS THE ZUMWALT CLASS
ONBOARD THE USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67)
July 4, 2000**

Our family boasts a long and proud military history. Since the American Revolution, a Zumwalt has served in practically every war in American history. From Jacob zum Wald's service in 1775 in a militia unit under the command of Patrick Henry, to my son, James E. Zumwalt, who has just begun his service this year in the US Navy, Zumwalts have been proud to serve their Nation.

Despite 225 years of our family's military history, however, we have had no one single member have such an impact on the service in which he served as did our father, Admiral Elmo R. ("Bud") Zumwalt, Jr. A charismatic and dynamic leader who dedicated more than three decades of his life to serving the Navy he loved, he was also a man of compassion. As Chief of Naval Operations from 1970-1974, at a time when Navy re-enlistment rates were at an all-time low, he committed himself to improving life for those who served under him. He committed himself as well to improving opportunities for minorities who had long suffered under the inequalities inherent within the Navy system. While accused of being soft on discipline, he stood his ground, firmly believing if the men and women who served in the Navy were treated as adults, they would respond in kind. Re-enlistment rates tripled by the time he retired. As far as the sailors whose lives he improved with his reforms were concerned, it was no coincidence he shared a common name with the patron saint of sailors-Saint Elmo.

When his Navy career came to an end in 1974, although he took off his uniform, he continued his battle on behalf of veterans. He turned personal tragedy-the loss in 1988 of an elder son and namesake from Agent Orange-related cancers-into a personal triumph, winning benefits for veterans similarly exposed after proving many earlier Agent Orange studies were severely flawed. In an effort to help heal the wounds of the devastating war in Vietnam, he took the initiative to establish a manufacturing facility in Vietnam to provide disabled Vietnamese veterans with prosthetic devices and wheelchairs.

I know my father is very honored the DD-21 Class will bear his name. It is a double honor this is being announced on Independence Day-a time when the sacrifices of our ancestors and the freedoms they won for us over two centuries ago are recognized.

A humble man, my father is immensely proud. I use the present tense, as I believe he is among us even now. As family members, we have occasionally felt his presence. While we miss him in the physical sense, we take comfort a spiritual presence will always be there. It is now comforting to know his spirit will live on as well in the DD-21 class destroyer-and that, as the 32 ships of this class take to sea crewed by the men and women of our 21st century Navy, a four-star envoy of Saint Elmo will sail with them.

On behalf of the Zumwalt family, we thank you for the great honor you have bestowed upon a great man.