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December 27, 1989

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt  
735 N. Water St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

Could you please answer a question for me?

Of all the many combat situations that you were in, which one is the most vivid in your mind, and why?

I imagine that this question has been asked of you many times before, but I would love to have an answer for my own curiosity.

Happy New Year!

Thank you for taking some of your valuable time to assist me, I remain

Respectfully,

*William W. Stanhope*



**E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.**  
ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

10 January 1990

Mr. William Stanhope

Dear William:

Of the many combat situations that I was in, the one that stands out most vividly occurred during the Battle of Surigao Straits.

I was serving as battle evaluator on the USS ROBINSON (DD562), leading a section of three destroyers down the east side of the Straits to attack the Japanese battle force with torpedos. The Japanese battleships opened up on us. Their first salvo was short. The second salvo was over. We were all holding our breath waiting for the third salvo which would have hit when suddenly our battleships opened fire and the Japanese trained their guns to return that fire. There was an immense feeling of relief followed by the guilty feeling that someone else was being shot at.

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

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