

23 May, 1974

Admiral E.R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Office, Chief Naval Operations
Navy Department, Washington D.C.

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

I am twenty-two years old, and an honors graduate of Yale University, where I studied naval history. I realize the rather unusual circumstance of this letter, yet I need your special counsel and advice.

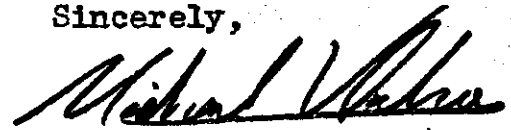
My one love since early childhood has been naval history, and I had hoped to pursue its study through graduate school and beyond. I had chosen as specific focus periods of challenge and crisis in the British, Japanese, and United States Navies.

Graduate school was more than a disappointment. It was a cul-de-sac, offering no hope for any real application of all that I had spent a lifetime in learning. I came to realize that what I really wanted was to be a part of a great navy.

In order to give you an idea of my background, I have attached my undergraduate senior essay, which won a small prize from the History Department. I think it speaks as well for my belief that naval greatness and national greatness are synonymous and inseparable.

I want to thank you for your patience in bearing with me. I really have but one question: Is there a place and a career for me in the United States Navy?

Sincerely,


Michael Vlahos

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GRANDSTORY NO.

19 June, 1974.

Office, Chief Naval Operations
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

Gentlemen:

I would appreciate your assistance. Would you be able to inform me as to whether my letter to Admiral Zumwalt, postmarked the 23rd of May, arrived at your office?

If it was impossible under circumstances to forward the letter to Admiral Zumwalt, would it be possible to reach him through other channels?

Barring this, I would be grateful if my package was returned, as it contains a paper of some importance to me.

Thank-you.

Sincerely,


Michael Vlahos

28 JUN 1974

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CLEARANCE

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Dear Mr. Vlahos,

Thank you for very much for your letter of 25 May 1974 concerning your desire to become a Naval Officer.

First, let me say that we are certainly in agreement that, as far as the United States is concerned, naval greatness and national greatness are synonymous and inseparable. Secondly, there are many programs that could be open to you in the United States Navy.

The Officer Candidate School (OCS) Program is available to college graduates who possess a baccalaureate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university. Candidates selected for this program undergo nineteen weeks of indoctrination training at the Officer Candidate School, Newport, Rhode Island. Upon successful completion of this training, they are appointed to commissioned rank in the Naval Reserve and are required to serve at least three years on active duty. The Navy makes every attempt to assign OCS graduates to billets that are compatible with their backgrounds.

Since all applications for appointment to commissioned rank through the OCS Program must be initiated at a Navy Recruiting District, I suggest that you contact the Navy Recruiting District Office, Boston, Massachusetts. Information will be available there, describing all current programs along with necessary application forms. Personnel will also be available to assist you in completing an application should you decide to apply. Brochures describing the OCS Program are enclosed.

Your interest in obtaining a commission in the Navy is appreciated.

Warm regards,

Bud

E. R. MURPHY, JR.
Admiral, U. S. Navy

Copy to:
OP-OC: 5644

Mr. Michael Vlahos

Prepared by:
MRS. B. RANKS
Room 1011, Ext.

Dated: 17 June 1974

Retyped: 20 June 1990
Official Correspondence File Copy
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20 July 1974

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Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

I must tell you how very much I appreciated your kindness in responding to my son Michael's query about a career in the United States Navy. Though my tour of duty as an officer during World War II was limited to three years (the Marianas Operation, thereafter serving as Publications Officer for Radio Guam), I had been steeped enough in Naval tradition to encourage him in his desire to become a part of the Service. He would, I think, bring to it (even at his comparatively young age) a grasp of the role of Naval power in world history to the present time, and a vision of its place in the future, such as very few applicants, at even rarer moments, possess.

I run the risk, I know, that all of this may have the ring of parental hyperbole, yet even that thought is not enough to make me pause. Not when someone is involved who, as a child, collected Jane's Fighting Ships as avidly as comic books, learned ships' specifications along with the multiplication tables, reconstructed historic battles in the tub, and held as heroes Nelson and Farragut and a handful of other great Naval commanders, then continued the learning chase ashore into the back rooms and chancelleries of the nations that shaped those events. Because he felt inadequately prepared in higher mathematics, he backed off from a try for the Academy and opted instead for an alternative future as a Naval historian. He has found that too restrictive of his present energies and drive, but will surely return to it one day--renewed and enriched by the actual experiencing of Naval Service.

He has begun the process by making application at the District Recruiting Office in Albany, New York, and is awaiting the results. Whatever they may be, he will come away with his longtime sense of Navy As Reality not merely untouched and secure still, but reinforced by your warmly encouraging reply.

As for myself, I am already vindicated: having assured him that I knew you would not ignore his letter. For which, as his father, I am deeply grateful.

With the very best of wishes for you,

John Vlahos

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Admiral, U. S. Navy
Department of the Navy
Washington, D. C.

VLAHOS, J.