

Page 2 Dec 6 '74

"THE CUT OF MY JIB"

I have taken strong stands on issues during my four years as Chief of Naval Operations. I intend to do so in this book. I have been called controversial. I am glad that this is so because I served those four years during a period when the requirement was to be as Robert Frost phrased it, "And I have miles to go before I sleep."

But if the reader is to evaluate the merit of these stands which caused the controversy and which I will be recounting, it seems to me to be important that I try to present him with enough background for him to judge whether the experiences I have had gets weight and, if so, how much, both to my approach and to my substantive view. Let me therefore, in this chapter, present my own view of the influences that shapes me, as a frame of reference from which the reader can depart in making his judgments.

I was born in San Francisco, California, on November 29, 1920, by accident. My parents were on a trip from their home in Tulare, California. I arrived early. I grew up in Tulare where my parents were both doctors. My father was a General Practitioner. My mother specialized in Pediatrics.

My sister, Sara Lee (Mrs. Richard Crow), eighteen months older than I, and I, recall living in the very small, two-bedroom home which was all my parents could afford as they started out married life. By the time we were joined by two younger brothers, Bruce Craig and Jimmy, the home became too crowded and my parents, in the height of the Depression, moved to a larger home which they could ill afford.

In my youth, Tulare had seven thousand people. It was a typical American small town. My great-grandfather Zumwalt had been one of the first settlers there, bringing my grandfather as a young man to the town where my father was born. With the prestige that came from being one of the first families in town and with two parents practicing a distinguished profession, I recall the boyish content of my lot in the earlier years. The crash of 1929 to me was the time when my family had to do without new clothes and new cars and cut corners on other finances. However, we had heat and light and food and knew no real hardship. But my parents felt deeply the impact of the depression years. I can recall the long talks they had about its impact on the town and the country and their grave concern for the suffering of people. Both of them were careful never to

send bills to the truly poverty stricken. And many of their patients waited for a number of years before paying their bills while continuing to have the complete support of their doctors during this trying period. (One of the great rewards in my life was to see my father return at the age of 79 to this town in which he had practiced for 45 years - my mother had died in 1939 - to participate in Zumwalt Day where a grateful town renamed the city park in his honor, and turned out some four thousand citizens to honor him and his son for the lifelong service he had given them.)

Although my own circumstances were not dire, most of my friends and relatives came from families which had fallen on very difficult times. Their families had to struggle with the high mortgages on home and farms purchased in the inflated twenties. I recall asking my mother always to give me two sandwiches for lunch so that I could pretend at school to be too full and to give one to a friend whose family could not provide him with any lunch.

Most of our Sundays and holidays were spent with friends and relatives on their farms, so that I grew up close to the soil. Tulare had many

families of recent foreign extraction. There are many first generation Portuguese and Mexican families. There were also a few black families. In the depression, in the heart of "Grapes of Wrath" country we saw an influx of large numbers of the underprivileged "Okie" families. And so, early on, I came to know about ethnic, cultural, and economic differences. And I discovered through the children with whom I played at school and on the farm that these differences were no bar to friendship and understanding.

My recollections of the pre-high school years are the proud and close-knit town people, despite differences in background - vitally interested in and supportive of one another - and the parents who dedicated themselves to serving. I carry a sense of the roots of America from those years.

The high school years were as I suppose is often the case, a time for critical choice for me. I had discovered that I was a good student. My parents' pride in the consequent good marks and their conclusion that it portended a bright future, provided a standard and a motivation because of my love for them. Yet I had discovered girls, the thrill of long nights out with the boys, racing automobiles and playing the heartbreakingly foolish teenager game of "touch" with our cars. My busy parents were

less strict and more indulgent than I have been willing to be with my children. The lack of strict discipline and the temptation of youth led me to flirt very seriously with a less responsible life. It was a dichotomy. I played football on the high school team, was a member of the county championship debating team, and was elected vice-president of the student body - the latter in part because of the large number of friends I had among minority groups. Yet, as a senior in high school, I almost eloped with my steady girl friend. I was in and out of a few minor disciplinary difficulties. And I nearly chose not to go on to college.

A combination of my ties to my parents and the sobering experience of the tragic recurrence in 1937 of an earlier malignancy experienced by my mother led me to select the responsible alternative after all. I went, after Rutherford Prep School in Long Beach in 1939, to prepare for the U.S. Naval Academy. I have always felt that the flirtation with an irresponsible course in high school and the near miss I had has made it more possible for me to understand the transgressions of others who are seeking to find their way.

I find it more difficult to analyze the impact that Annapolis had

on my development. I enjoyed a wide spectrum of the subjects taught there: especially English, Spanish, Mathematics, Electrical and Marine Engineering. But I did not feel that the academic system of the Naval Academy was particularly sophisticated or challenging. I found my real challenge in the field of extracurricular affairs. I was a member of the

Q Society - a public speaking club - and twice the winner of the U.S. Naval Academy Annual Public Speaking Contest. I was a member of the Trident Club - a literary society. In my last year I served as vice-president of the former and as president of the latter club. I found this to provide the real opportunity for excitement - a leadership situation. Similarly, in my last year as a Company Commander and later as a Regimental "Three Striper," I relished the opportunity to lead. Cruises to the West Indies, Panama and Venezuela convinced me that the Naval career brought adventure. But unlike the growth and maturing that took place in high school, Annapolis seems in retrospect not of itself to have stretched my mind. It was the outside reading and self education rather than the system itself which produced what growth then I had. And as a member of the three-year class, speeded up because of the war, despite my cum laude

status, I believe I was not competitive at that time with graduates of other academic institutions. Graduation from Annapolis in June of 1942 brought my class into the thick of World War II.

My class graduated in time for 70 or 80 of us to sail from San Francisco to catch our ships preparing for the invasion of Guadalcanal. On board the U.S.S. _____, a troop transport, where I was trenchant manning a machine gun, I cheered a fierce naval encounter on the night of _____ August 1942, which led to four huge fires. All of us thought this was a great U. S. victory. In the early morning hours we learned the sad news that these fires were on board the U. S. cruisers Quincy, Vincennes, and Estoria, and the Australian cruiser Canberra. We learned soon thereafter that this now historic battle of Savii Island, on board these cruisers, gallant officers with whom we had served at the Academy and had sailed across the Pacific, had gone down with their ships.

The consternation that prevailed on board my ship after that battle was a lesson to me. The Commanding Officer, trained in the peacetime virtues of meticulous preservation of equipment, but under orders to sail immediately to avoid being sunk by the Japanese Fleet, held on while all of us on board furiously threw marine equipment out of the boats and into

the water so that the boats could be retrieved and sail with the ship. Neither we nor the Marines could understand why the boats were merely not sent into the beach with the precious equipment on board to make them better able to survive the tough days ahead. Next morning as I stood on deck beside a Warrant Marine of some twenty years' service and as he surveyed the flotsams floating around the Bay which had been jettisoned from the boats, he turned to me and said, "Anybody who stays in the Marines twenty years is a masochist."

Transferred from the _____ to the Carrier Saratoga, again still a passenger enroute to my Destroyer, U.S.S. Phelps, I witnessed the famous carrier-air battles of August 22nd and 23rd, 1942. During this battle I witnessed the U.S.S. Enterprise hit by Japanese bombs and the torpedoing of the Battleship South Dakota. By the time I was finally transferred to my destroyer in September 1942, a number of my classmates had already died in conflict and I had had demonstrated vividly to me the extent of the challenge I would meet as a Naval Officer on board a wartime vessel.

This was the period of massive expansion by the U. S. Navy. As ships began to be commissioned at an impressive rate, officers of even modest

experience were withdrawn from ships already afloat in order to man them. When I came aboard the Phelps in 1942, I was the most junior of about 23 officers, yet by the time I left her a year later I was third or fourth in seniority. The transformation in times like this is remarkable. When I reported aboard the U.S.S. Phelps, my wonderful Chief Petty Officer in charge of the Electrical Division to which I was assigned as a Division Officer said to me, "Ensign Zumwalt, there's only two times a day when I want to see you in the beginning. One is at morning quarters and the other is when I bring someone around for you to put on report." The Chief, of course, had in mind that I had a lot of study and orientation to get done and that it would take a few weeks to do this. As I learned, he gradually delegated my rightful responsibility upward to me and within a matter of a month had reverted to his normal and proper role as a true subordinate. And within a matter of two months I was by necessity performing at the level of those of several more years of seniority in peacetime and by the end of the year was the evaluator of our combat information center in battle, while serving both as Assistant Engineer and Radar Maintenance Officer. This kind of expansion and acceleration

to positions of responsibility was occurring in thousands and thousands of cases throughout the Fleet, and the great capability that those professional trained Naval Officers and citizen sailors coming directly from civilian life demonstrated in these circumstances contributed in future years to my willingness to delegate responsibility very early.

After going through the Aleutian campaigns of the invasion of Attu and the occupation of Kiska on board U.S.S. Phelps, I transferred to new construction, U.S.S. Robinson, where I served the balance of the war. This two-year period was the second half of the last maritime experiencing period during which all of us were settling down into the jobs with which we would end the war where individuals were left long enough, the personnel expansion and construction program having reached the flat of the curve, that they were able to become exceedingly expert in their jobs and with a quality of the personnel available with enlisted men of college background and high technical skills from civilian life having come into so many assignments, that the second half of the war was very literally a piece of cake. One had to be highly trained and ready and alert when on watch, as one generally was for eight hours a day. But during the remaining parts of the day with no relief from monotony except bull sessions and

an evening movie, there was ample opportunity to carry on courses of self-study. I read widely and began the study of the Russian language. In my readings, I progressively focused on the background and history of the Soviet Union and by the end of the war was convinced I wanted to know more about it firsthand. I requested assignment as Assistant Naval Attache to Moscow. This request was disapproved.

Service on the Robinson encompassed the invasions of the Palau Islands, Guam, Saipan, Tinian, the invasion of Leyte Gulf, the battle of Surigao Straits, the invasion of Mindoro, and the invasion of Lingayen Gulf. My last campaign involved the occupation of Zamboanga. Of all of the campaigns, the one which brought the greatest personal satisfaction was the battle of Surigao Straits. Here, in October of 1943, ensued the classic Naval battle in which U. S. old battleships which had been struck at Pearl Harbor very literally capped the "T" of the Japanese battleline moving up the Straits. First torpedo boats and then destroyers progressively struck this Japanese force. It was a great professional experience to participate in and observe the nearly perfect execution of a classic operation which had never been carried out as a whole by the units involved, but the subsets of which

had been practiced time and time again by each ship and each team within a ship. The excellence in Naval warfare, as it has been achieved by virtue of constant training and continuity of position on board ship and by virtue of the high quality talent filling the jobs, gave those of us of my generation a high-water mark standard against which to measure the readiness of crews in all the subsequent years. In peacetime, of course, similar readiness has never been achieved because of the constant turnover in personnel, the constant shortages in technical ratings, and the constant lack of adequate support from Congress for maintenance and spare parts. These inadequacies tick on so far from the norm of performance that is readily achievable that it requires an adjustment in ones evaluation as to just what capability the Navy has at any given time.

An adventure which occurred at the end of the war is best described by the following fifty-four page letter which I wrote at the time to my father and which he saved and delivered to me three years ago.

(Place here the letter.)

The morning after my marriage, I was to report at four o'clock aboard the Robinson which was scheduled to get underway from Shanghai.

The Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Tex Winslow, and the Chief Yeoman met me at the gangway at that time with my baggage packed, my orders written and my pay accounts closed out. My orders had come in from Washington by radio the night before detaching me from Robinson and transferring me as Executive Officer of the U.S.S. which was to come into Shanghai in the next few days.

After this most fortuitous extension of a Naval career, I reported as Executive Officer of returning her to New York and Charleston for decommissioning in March of 1946, and then reported aboard U.S.S. Zellers as Executive Officer. I had achieved the position of Executive Officer, as had many others, in just three years of commissioned service. In 1950, after eight years of commissioned service, I returned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel seeking another position as Executive Officer of a destroyer and was told that I was too junior. Thus, the difference between war and peace. The period of service aboard U.S.S. Zellers was the most difficult of my Naval career. The assignment itself was challenging. The Navy had gone from one that had great power and confidence to one which was almost prostrate. We were in the midst of

the "Louie Johnson" economy era when supplies and spare parts were so badly curtailed that it was extremely difficult to keep the ships operating. Personnel of any real experience had been released from the Navy by the millions and with the exception of very experienced chief petty officers there was a great gap in experience below that level. At one time the numbers of personnel available to us was so inadequate that we were able to steam only eight hours at a time and then if we were not in port we had to anchor or stop the engines and drift until everybody had had some sleep. I had a skipper who was a tremendous seaman and ship-handler who believed in letting the EXEC run the rest of the ship completely, and this gave me the opportunity to deal with problems ranging all the way from readiness in maintenance to personnel. Yet at the same time, I found myself longing to go through medical school and follow in the footsteps of my parents and perhaps enter into my father's medical firm. In this period I was twice accepted for medical school and each time at the last moment deferred the decision to leave the Navy. In 1947, just prior to six-months' deployment in the Mediterranean, my wife became quite ill. With no relatives on the East Coast, and with a wife who was not yet familiar with life in

these United States, I concluded that the time had come for me to fish or cut bait and I turned in my letter of resignation, planning to go to medical school as soon as she recovered. My very wise and thoughtful Commanding Officer, Leon S. Kittburger, merely held my letter of resignation until my wife had recovered and then persuaded me to withdraw it. His point of view that I had quite a future in the Navy was a persuasive one to me, and another major ingredient was my increasing concern with the state of the world. This was the era when the United States, having ended the war and overwhelmingly the most powerful military force in the world, had proceeded to liquidate its power literally almost over night. It was an era of detente with the Soviet Union. Good old Uncle Joe was one whom the American people in the main had come to trust. The domestic pressure to bring the boys home was overwhelming and no political authority could possibly have resisted it. Rapidly the United States military establishment became almost impotent. Had it not been for our exclusive possession, together with our British associates, of the atomic weapons, conditions would have been even worse. As it was, Stalin, through a combination of power and policy, was proceeding to establish his hegemony over eastern

Europe. I viewed these developments with great concern for my country and concluded that I should remain in at least a little longer to do my part to get ready for the next war which I assumed was inevitable and would occur very soon.

I continued with the deployment of the Zellers, dealing with a ship literally crippled with lack of personnel and spare parts and somehow with a heroic wardroom and chief's quarters, keeping the ship in operation.

During my six months, I visited and had the opportunity to talk with people of all walks of life in the United Kingdom, Italy, Yugoslavia, Algiers, Cyprus, and through them and diplomatic acquaintances to

additional familiarity with the problems of Turkey and Greece in that post-war era. It was clear to me that the Naval presence of the United States was providing already a signal of support for the southern tier of nations and a deterrent effect on the Soviet Union. And I was one of those who strongly advocated permanent and high-force level commitment in the Mediterranean. In February of 1948, I was detached from Zellers and reported to the University of North Carolina where I became a member of the Faculty as an Assistant Professor of Naval Science in the NROTC. These

were two very rewarding and educational years. I had the opportunity to teach a variety of Naval subjects and to complete a large number of the correspondence courses from the U.S. Naval War College to improve my professional knowledge in those areas with which I had not yet had adequate experience. Included among these were courses in International Law and in Naval Logistics.

In 1950, I returned to sea and had the thrill of achieving my first command (if one discounts the stint as Prize Crew Officer on HJMS Att ?) the U.S.S. Till, a destroyer escort operating out of Charleston, South Carolina. Soon after the Korean War broke out, I was transferred from this command to the Battleship Wisconsin, where I served as navigator, deploying with that ship twice to Europe and once to the Korean War. In the Korean War, the United States Navy regained some of the prowess it had achieved by the end of World War II, but in order to do it as quickly as we did, in the case of the Battleship Wisconsin for example, we had to call back turret captains of World War II experience, since the Navy no longer had enough qualified ones remaining. Since the era between World War II and the Korean War had been fairly brief, this was a feasible way to recapture

talent. But after longer periods of time we will never be able to do so. There were two other major differences insofar as I was concerned between World War II and the Korean War. World War II was a good war. There was total unanimity at home. All of us felt like a band of brothers and a band of heroes as we were fighting that war. Whenever we came home we were welcomed as heroes. And at the end of the war the country was almost euphoric in its reception of its military back into its bosom. The Korean War was never so popular because the United States itself was not attacked. And it was more difficult for the people in general to recognize the importance of President Truman's decision to send in U. S. troops. Nevertheless, support was sufficient at the outset, but by the end of the period after the long months of fighting our way back up the Korean Peninsula and then grinding to a halt while the Chinese sued for peace, the war at home began to be very unpopular. By the time of the termination, discontent back home had helped bring President Eisenhower to office and had removed the desire on the part of the American people to welcome back its military men with the same epic quality of their reception at the end of World War II.

For me, World War II was an adventure. I did not relish the fact that the United States had to be at war, but given the fact that it was, there was no place I would rather have been than fighting for my country at a time of need. I enjoyed the brotherhood of the wardroom and the ship: the sense of danger and the sense of adventure. I had no wife or children to worry about and therefore felt none of the concerns about what would happen to those I left behind. By the time of the Korean War I was married and had two children. I learned then of the much greater sacrifices that my married World War II shipmates had made as they left their families behind and wondered what would happen to them in the event of a personal tragedy. This experience added another dimension to my compassion for others.

I left the Battleship Wisconsin upon her return to the United States from Korea in June of 1952, and reported to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, as a student in the junior course there, called the Command and Staff Course. This was my third opportunity to study and read in depth, the first having been the two years aboard Robinson in World War II and the second the two years at the University of North Carolina. Here once again I found myself increasingly drawn to the problem of

understanding better the Soviet society, its national drives to thrust to the sea, and the theological fervor of the communist movement. In the midst of a program designed to improve the performance of middle-grade officers at the tactical institute level, I found myself devoting all my spare time to reading into the military-political background within which the Naval war for which we were preparing might come.

At the end of my year at the Naval War College I reported in 1953 for my first tour of duty in Washington. I was assigned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, the compliments from the _____ section.

(I think I've dictated a paragraph or two on this, Bob.)

My experiences here made me familiar with the problems of long-term planning in the personnel field. I dealt with and determined the requirements for numbers and types of enlisted and officer personnel, and before I left set up a new requirements shop to improve our capabilities to do this work. Admiral Holloway, the father of the present Chief of Naval Operations, was Chief of the Naval Personnel at the time. He soon broadened my responsibilities to include work in the field of personnel legislation. I was part of a task force learning to solve the problem of retaining

sufficient Naval doctors to provide the requisite care for Naval personnel, and when this work was completed I had a responsibility to help get the legislation through the Congress to provide the Doctors' Incentive Pay Bill. In dealing with this problem it was completely apparent that if Naval personnel were to have adequate medical care, increased benefits were going to have to be brought to the medical career in the Navy. I therefore strongly advocated the concept of increased pay for doctors as being what it required to compete in the market place for a speciality which was in such short supply throughout the country. This was not a very popular action among the line officers whose view in general, not having looked at the problem in depth, was that there should not be greater pay given to doctors than to those of the line who had the much lighter percentage of sea duty and much greater responsibilities in war. As a result of my support of the doctors' pay bill, some of my good friends began to refer to me as "Doctor Zumwalt." Thus, for a time I acquired the title to which I had aspired in earlier life. I worked also on the adjacent of the concept known as the "Medicare Bill" - a bill to make it possible for Naval personnel and their families who were assigned in places where military

medical facilities were not available to be cared for by doctors within the community at governmental expense. I learned something about the congressional process when I undertook this assignment. When I first approached Mr. Russ Lanford who was then, and for many years thereafter, the Chief Counsel of the House Armed Services Committee on this matter, he said to me flatly, "I can give you my personal assurance that the Medicare Bill has zero chance to pass." Knowing that this quite likely to be a realistic judgment, but knowing also that no military man can be immediately deterred, I embarked upon a long and careful effort to brief as many members of Congressional Staff and as many members of the Congress as I could get to or as those working with me on the assignment could get to. It was remarkable to see how, when one mustered all the resources available, a mature and professional judgment like Russ Lanford's could be turned around. Russ, himself, of course, a long-term supporter of the military, was one of our best helpers in making his prediction come untrue. The experience gained here served as valuable background for me when I assumed the job of Chief of Naval Operations. I learned the slow, deliberate and painstaking methods necessary to get programs through in the face of many

other lobbies that impact upon Congress.

In 1955, I was selected for Commander and was able immediately to win assignment to Command of U.S.S. Arnold deIsbel, a tour about which I shall speak in the chapter on Mickey Mouse. In 1957, I returned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel to the Officer Assignment Section where I worked for six months on the entirely new-to-me science of proper distribution of of inadequate number of officers - very literally management of shortages. At the end of six months, Admiral Holloway sent me to the Pentagon to be the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Naval Personnel, and this in turn was followed when the Captain who was his Executive Assistant left the office by my assignment to fill that slot of the over-all office manager and Executive to the Assistant Secretary. Thus, within a period of six years, I had had the opportunity to learn the personnel business from three different vantage points: that of the requirements establishment function, the distribution function, and from the level of policy management. These tours served to drive home to me, as I had never understood it before, the extent to which bureaucracy on the part of those preoccupied with plans and operations were impacting

on the ability of the Navy to solve its personnel problems. And I resolved that if I ever reached a position of authority I would do my best to solve these bureaucratic constraints. Upon completion of my tour in the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, I went through the competition for the nuclear destroyer Bainbridge.

(Note to Bob: I have dictated this under the Ray Pete Story.

Also under the Rickover Interview - MEM CON.)

Having been spared the trauma of the tour with Admiral Rickover, I went happily to my assignment to command the world's first guided-missile frigate, the first Naval vessel constructed from the keel up to be a guided-missile ship, U.S.S. Dewey DLG-14. Here, once again, I experienced the luxury of personnel quality as I had known it in World War II and the Korean War, because this Ship was first of class and a new type, and the Bureau of Naval Personnel from its scarce assets had provided me with a full allowance of the highest quality personnel available. Command of U.S.S. Dewey was as easy as command of U.S.S. Tills and Arnold DeIsbel had been challenging. Once again it was driven home to me the difference between the readiness of the Navy which is well-manned with well-trained,

high quality personnel, and one which is plagued with shortages, turnover, and inadequate quality. The Dewey problem was not personnel but material.

(Insert the page to be prepared.)

At the end of my nearly two years in command of the Dewey, we were able to make a deployment to Northern Europe primarily to show the Flag of an impressive new ship, but secondarily as a reward for the very hard-working officers and men on board. This cruise was by all odds the all-time high in my Naval career for fun and jest. In roughly six-day visits at each, we were in Helsinki, Finland; Copenhagen, Denmark; Stockholm, Sweden; Oslo, Norway; and Kiel, Germany. Visits to new and exotic ports like these which are not frequently visited by U.S. Naval ships require a great deal of preparation to insure that all those on board understand the local customs, the local foibles and pitfalls, and to insure that all hands are on their very best behavior so that the reputation of the United States Navy will in no way be smirched by the conduct of the officers and men. We initiated a program to insure that all hands were well prepared for the local customs by requesting the assignment temporarily to the Ship of a very talented man named, Rosenberg, who was steeped in the customs of

the local people. He fascinated the officers and men with his stories of the good, clean fun to be had and of the customs of which to be aware. In addition, we organized intensively and in a sophisticated way to insure that all hands understood the importance we attached to circumspect personal behavior. During the entire cruise we had only one example of misconduct of any significance and that was the disappearance, absent without leave, of one young sailor who left us in Sweden and did not return until some six-weeks later when the ship reached Portsmouth, England. When he was brought to "mast" after those six weeks, he was smiling contentedly. I lectured him sternly, asking if he remembered the briefings he had been given about the importance of good behavior. He averred that he did, continuing to smile happily, and I ordered him the maximum punishment available for his offense. He thanked me and left "mast" still smiling contentedly, obviously convinced that his six-weeks absence was worth every minute.

At that same time, my officers and men were pleased to receive the following message from Admiral Arleigh Burke upon the completion of this tour.