

GT 16 1992

To: E.R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Admiral, U.S. Navy ret.
1500 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22209

From: Ron Kirkwood

(405)524-2989 (w)

October 12, 1992

Dear Mr. Zumwalt:

I just finished reading, "My Father, My Son." It's an excellent book and I found there are some outstanding coincidences in my life and your son's. We both went to Vietnam in the early Fall of 1969. We both were in the Navy and both served on river boats near Saigon. (I was stationed in RIVRON 15 on a "Zippo Boat.") We both went through agent orange. We both developed cancer.

I'm extremely sorry to hear about your son. Although writing, at times, comes easy to me, I now find it very difficult to put something into words. All I can say, I'm sorry. I can barely imagine what it would be like to loose a son. I have a boy and girl ages 16 and 14 and have an idea of what it would feel like to loose one of them.

In 1985, I developed brain cancer. My doctor believes it was from my agent orange exposure in Vietnam. I have met the qualifications of the "agent orange payment program" and receive a check for about \$800 a year.

About a year ago I started writing a book (It hasn't been published yet) for my children. It started out to be autobiographical record of my life. I soon realized that the section on "Vietnam" was more interesting so I put that chapter in the front. Because it is similar to "My Father, My Son", I thought you might be interested in reading it. I'd be honored if you would.

I call the book, "Fear of Living." It is named this because all of us on our boat feared living in the "hell" we were going through in Vietnam. Dying didn't seem so bad and living under those conditions was somewhat feared.

Sincerely,



Ron Kirkwood



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

October 22, 1992

Mr. Ron Kirkwood

Dear Ron:

I was deeply touched by your letter of October 12 and interested at the close correlation between your experiences and that of my son, Elmo.

As you may know, I have been carrying on a running battle with the government concerning the need to provide compensation for diseases resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. Thanks to President Bush and many others we have been able to win compensation for four such diseases. If I live we will win more such rulings.

I enclose a report I did for the Veterans Administration in that regard.

I wish you well in completion of your book and your battle with brain cancer.

Again my sincere thanks.

Sincerely,


E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

1500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209

(703) 351-8297

Enclosure

file