

September 23, 1998

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt USN (Ret.)
1000 Wilson Blvd. Ste. 3105
Arlington VA, 22209-3901

Dear Admiral Zumwalt,

I am writing a biography of Admiral H. G. Rickover. Mrs. H. G. Rickover is making the Admiral's papers available to me for that purpose.

I am the coauthor, with Richard G. Hewlett, of Nuclear Navy 1946-1962 published by the University of Chicago Press in 1974, and the sole author of Rickover and the Nuclear Navy, The Discipline of Technology published by the Naval Institute Press in 1990.

The relationship between you and Admiral Rickover are clearly set forth in your On Watch and in his comments to me.

My concern is somewhat different. Writing the biography has been a terribly complicated task and taken far longer than it should have. I am now at the stage where I need perspective on the impact that Admiral Rickover has had on the Navy.

I think that your thoughts on Admiral Rickover's legacy to the navy would be most helpful.

I do not tape interviews (unless the person being interviewed wishes me to do so), and I do not cite interviews as a specific source of information on a given topic, and I do not quote from them. I do, however, take handwritten notes to guide me in my writing.

Could you give me, and my associate, John M. Maloney, an hour or so of your time? My calendar can usually be rearranged at short notice. There is, however, one date I cannot make. It is Wednesday, November 4.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francis Duncan".

Francis Duncan



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

October 6, 1998

Mr. Francis Duncan

Dear Mr. Duncan:

Thank you for your letter of September 23 regarding your work on a biography of Admiral Rickover.

I am out of town on various business trips until the week of November 9. Let me suggest we do the interview on Tuesday, November 10, at 2 pm. If this time does not work for you and Mr. Maloney, please call my assistant, Priscilla Barry, to arrange another time. For your information, I would plan to tape the interview for my own files.

All best wishes.

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Admiral, USN (Ret.)

1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 3105
Arlington, VA 22209-3901

Tel: (703) 527-5380
Fax: (703) 528-5795

enclosed document

Nov 10, 98

2

October 10, 1998

Admiral E. R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN (Ret.)
1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 3105
Arlington, VA 22209-3901

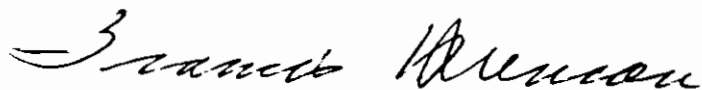
Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

Thank you for your letter of October 6, setting Tuesday, November 10, 2 p.m. for an interview.

Time and date are fine for me.

Mr. Maloney will not be with me because of another commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis Duncan".

Francis Duncan

Tel. (301) 530-5418

November 6, 1998

*Read
Z*

Admiral E. R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN (Ret.)
1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 3105
Arlington, VA 22209-3901

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

I am enclosing a list of questions for the interview
scheduled for November 10 at 2:00 p.m.

I thought it might be helpful for you to know the subjects
in which I am interested, though there may not be enough time to
cover them all. And there may be subjects you might want to add.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Acciano

Questions for Interview

Pre McNamara

You mention in On Watch that, as a mid-grade officer, you thought Rickover ought to be promoted. Was this a widespread feeling among other middle grade officers?

What about his promotion in 1958 to Vice Admiral?

In your Rickover interview, you mentioned the professional way in which Dunford, Laney, and Crawford conducted the preliminary interviews. Later in your career did you have any contact with Rickover engineers? I ask the question because Rickover used to remark that if he were like he was portrayed, no one would be willing to work for him.

McNamara era

Rickover loathed McNamara, and believed his organization and centralization of authority in OSD was bad for the Navy. For one thing it led to increased bureaucracy in the Navy to counter the growth of OSD. What is your appraisal? Is it the same now as it was when you were working for Nitze in International Security Affairs?

Rickover and some of his senior engineers believed the McNamara approach to procurement weakened the Navy technical strength, in that it placed more technical decisions in the hands of contractors. Do you think this reaction was justified?

Rickover was certain that systems analysis under Enthoven was used by McNamara to justify decisions already made. Was Rickover correct in his belief?

In 1963 and 1964 the question of Rickover's retention came up when he reached retirement age. Secretary of the Navy Korth and Seaborg, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, thought that Rickover working for the Commission as a civilian was the way out. That would preserve Rickover's leadership and keep intact the organization he had created and trained. What would have been the Navy reaction if this approach had been followed? Would the Navy have accepted a civilian leader of the program?

You were director of systems analysis when Rickover's 688 was slipped by you. Were you and your organization studying the "conform" submarine that was being designed by the submarine desk and which was a rival to the 688?

Laird era

Rickover was very friendly with Laird when Laird was on the appropriation committee, had made speeches for Laird in Laird's district, etc. Did Rickover's relationship with Laird cause you difficulties?

Rickover wanted 22 missile tubes instead of 24 missile tubes on the Trident submarine. He saw Laird about it. What did you think?

What reaction did you find in the officers and men in the nuclear program to your personnel policies?

After your retirement

Was Rickover way out of line on his fight against the shipbuilders? I note that in On Watch you insisted that Litton live up to its contracts.

What is your opinion of the Electric Boat contracts for the Trident submarine?

Finally

Why do you think Congress backed Rickover?

How do you assess Rickover's influence on the Navy as it is today? Pluses? Minuses?

November 11, 1998

Admiral E. R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN (Ret.)
1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 3105
Arlington, VA 22209-3901

2

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

Thank you for the time you gave me yesterday to give me your views on Admiral Rickover.

Biography is a most difficult undertaking, far more so than I thought it would be. One of the great problems is getting a perspective; this is particularly the case with an exceedingly strong personality such as Admiral Rickover.

You have helped me a great deal and I appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Francis Duncan

Francis Duncan