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ZUMWALT'S IMPACT ON PEOPLE

Admiral Zumwalt knew the primary force-multiplier of the United States Navy was its Sailors and, as a social reformer, began quality of life improvements throughout the fleet. One of the most outward ways he reformed the Navy was through his Z-Grams.

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Z-Grams [\'zē\'gramz\]

[noun] A series of Z-NavOps, naval messages sent directly to the fleet, affectionately known as Z-grams, implemented by Admiral Zumwalt with the goal of improving Sailors' quality of life. The messages dealt with seemingly small issues like reenlistment ceremonies, as well as larger social issues like the Navy's fair treatment of minorities and women.

121 THE NUMBER OF Z-GRAMS SENT THROUGHOUT ZUMWALT'S TENURE

#24

Ombudsman Program

THEN:

"The importance of the Navy wife as a member of the Navy team cannot be over emphasized...these dedicated women have never had an official representative to express their views."

NOW:

Today, an Ombudsman is a volunteer appointed by the commanding officer to serve as an information link between command leadership and Navy families. Ombudsmen-at-Large are tasked by the Chief of Naval Operations to improve family readiness by advising him and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on matters affecting Sailors and their families.

#66

Equal Opportunity for African-American Sailors

THEN:

"There is no black Navy, there is no white Navy—just one Navy—the United States Navy."

NOW:

Minority firsts in the Navy in the succeeding years can trace their roots to Z-gram 66. African-American Sailors progressed from messmen and stewards to some of the most distinguished positions in the Navy. Notable examples include Samuel L. Gravely Jr., the first African-American to command a Navy ship, command a fleet, and become an admiral, and Michelle Howard, the first African-American woman to become Vice CNO.

#116

Equal Opportunities for Female Sailors

THEN:

"I believe we can do far more than we have in the past in according women equal opportunity to contribute their extensive talents and to achieve full professional status."

NOW:

When Zumwalt eliminated the assignment of women exclusively to certain billets, he transformed how America sees a U.S. Navy Sailor. In 1974, the first women earned their wings; in 1978 women were allowed to serve on non-combatant ships; in 1994 the first women were permitted to serve on combatant ships. Today, women serve in every rank from seaman to admiral and in every job from naval aviator to deep-sea diver.



DID YOU KNOW?

To combat what he felt was a mass exodus of Sailors, Zumwalt set up a series of retention groups allowing junior officers to provide leadership recommendations. One such recommendation was to create a warfare device, similar to that of the submariners and aviators, to boost morale and community among Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs). He took their advice, and today the SWO pin signifies individuals who have mastered their craft.