

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN JAMES S. ELFELT, UNITED STATES NAVY

James Sidle Elfelt was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on December 28, 1929, son of L. D. and Helen (McGuire) Elfelt. He attended the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration in 1951. While there he was a member of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit and upon graduation was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy, June 16. He subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1971.

After receiving his commission in 1951, he reported on board the USS RUSH (DD-714) and in January 1952 was assigned to the USS SHANNON (DM-24). In November 1953 he joined the Staff of Commander Mine Division TWO as Chief Staff Officer and in January 1955 became Prospective Commanding Officer of the USS WARBLER (MSC-206), building at the Bellingham (Washington) Shipyard's Company. He assumed command of that coastal minesweeper upon her commissioning, July 26, 1955 and subsequently deployed to Sasebo, Japan. From November 1956 to May 1958 he led duty in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., after which he attended Stanford University, Stanford, California, from which he received the degree of Master of Arts in Personnel Administration in June 1959.

Following service as Missile Officer in the USS HELENA (CA-75), he reported in May 1961 as Executive Officer of the USS HENDERSON (DD-795). He returned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, in July 1963, where he served as Assistant Lieutenant Commander Detail Officer until July 1965, then attended the Command and Staff Course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. While there, he received a Master's Degree from George Washington University, Washington, D. C., in June 1966.

In July 1966 he assumed command of the USS HENDERSON (DD-78), which, under his command, deployed to Southeast Asia in January 1967. For the next four months, that destroyer supported attack carrier operations and conducted extensive shore bombardment assignments. For meritorious service while in command of the HENDERSON, during operations with the SEVENTH Fleet, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V". Detached from command of the HENDERSON in November 1967, he next joined the USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62) as Executive Officer. He was awarded the Legion of Merit and cited in part as follows: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...from April 3 to December 1, 1969...Commander Elfelt performed his duties with outstanding skill and resourcefulness, thereby, gaining the cooperation and admiration of all members of the crew..."

Assigned in January 1970 to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, he served as Europe, North Africa, Middle East and Southeast Asia Policy Officer and later as Head of the National Policy Section until ordered detached in February 1973 for duty as Commanding Officer of the Naval Support Activity, Naples, Italy.

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In addition to the Legion of Merit and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", Captain Elfelt has the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star and the Vietnam Service Medal with bronze star.

Navy Office of Information
Biographies Branch (OI-0111)
5 March 1973