Christening of new *Zumwalt*-class Guided Missile Destroyer, the Michael Monsoor

Gary Lehman, The Scuba Sports Club (photographs and text)

On June 18, 2016 the *Michael Monsoor* (DDG-1001) was christened with great celebration at the General Dynamics / Bath Iron Works shipyard in Bath, Maine. The ship is named after Medal of Honor recipient US Navy Petty Officer and SEAL Michael Monsoor (posthumously-awarded), who was killed in the line of duty selflessly protecting his comrades by throwing himself on an insurgent's hand grenade to save them in Iraq in 2006. The ship's sponsor was his mother, Sally Monsoor. She spoke with such warmth, love, affection and respect about her son, receiving a standing ovation from all assembled. Michael Monsoor's sister and two sisters-in-law were the Matrons of Honor. All were escorted to the ship's bow for the christening by five members of Monsoor's SEAL team. Sally Monsoor then broke the champagne against the bow with a great display of foam and streamers. The American flag and US Navy Color Guard was provided by the *USS Constitution*. (Thus the span of time represented: from the oldest commissioned warship in the world – and the only commissioned US Navy ship in the Fleet to have sunk an enemy vessel - to the newest and most 'high tech' ship in the fleet!) The principal speaker was Vice Admiral Joseph Maguire, president and CEO of the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. Undersecretary of the Navy Janine Davidson also participated in the christening. The event was attended by over 1,000 members of the public, the executive team and personnel of General Dynamics/BIW, and Maine's Senators and local political representatives. The *Michael Monsoor* DDG-1001 (Ship's motto: "I Will Defend") is the second *Zumwalt*-class guided missile destroyer, and follows the *USS Zumwalt* DDG-1000. Her homeport will be San Diego, California. [1]

Michael Monsoor – Distinguished US Navy Warrior, Medal of Honor

Petty Officer 2nd class Monsoor was a Navy SEAL and Master-At-Arms who served as combat advisor to the Iraqi Army. For his combat leadership saving the lives of troops under his command, and meritorious service Monsoor was awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star with combat "V" device. He was KIA on September 2006 protecting teammates from an insurgent's grenade. "Monsoor's other awards and decorations include: The Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon, Rifle Marksmanship Medal with Expert Marksmanship Device, Pistol Marksmanship Medal with Expert Marksmanship Device, and the Navy and Marine Corps Parachutist Insignia" [2]

The circumstances of his death were the subject of several of the speakers. Monsoor's death was not circumstantial or accidental casualty; it is not that he was "at the wrong place at the wrong time". On September

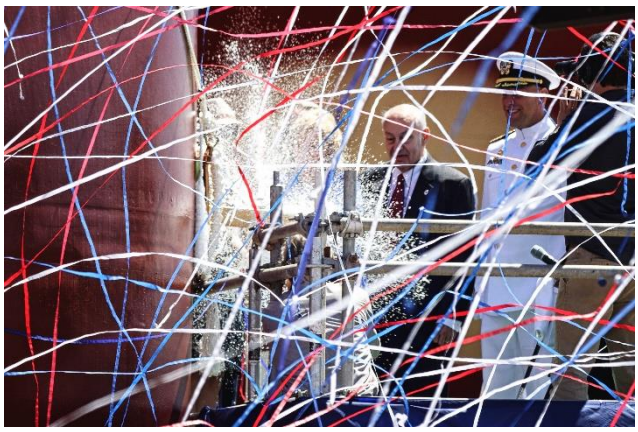
[1] By US Navy protocol, the designation "USS" in a Navy ship is conferred only after actual commissioning of the vessel. Therefore, in this article DDG-1001 will be referred to as *Michael Monsoor*.

[2] *Michael Monsoor* Christening, June 18, 2016 General Dynamics Media Press Kit, P.4

29, 2006 he was on a rooftop position in Ramadi Iraq, positioned near the roof exit area with other Seals and some allied Iraqi soldiers. An insurgent's grenade flew in, hit him in the chest, bounced off and landed at his feet. He personally could have escaped through the exit area, but if he did that his comrades would have all been killed. Instead he shouted out "Grenade!", throwing himself on the grenade to have his body absorb the blast, saving all the others. For this action he was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously by President G.W. Bush in April 2008.

The Invocation was led by Reverend W. Petruska, Captain USN, who commented that Monsoor was named for St. Michael The Archangel (The Defender and Protector, and slayer of evil dragons in the *Book of Revelations*), who was thus personified on this Earth by Navy Petty Officer Michael Monsoor. Others enjoined Master-At-Arms Monsoor to continue his protection of his comrades and shipmates from on high, quoting Psalms, 107:23-3 ("They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep…"). And several speakers commented about Monsoor, from John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Another theme by the speakers was the naming conventions in the US Navy – submarines are named after fish or cities, aircraft carriers often are named after Presidents, eminent statesmen or victorious battles, and other ships are named after states – but *destroyers* are named after *heroes*, of which Master-At-Arms Monsoor was a shining example.



Ship Christening Tradition

Over the years the particulars of ships' christening have changed across time, geography and culture - but the basic purpose remains constant through the ages – to celebrate the inauguration of the ship into the fleet, and to extend best wishes for safety and success in all missions to the new ship and her crew. These days, a bottle of champagne is vigorously broken against the ship's bow by the ship's sponsor with a triumphant display of foam and a loud report from the bottle and applause from all participating in the celebratory christening![3]

[3] *Michael Monsoor* Christening, June 18, 2016 General Dynamics Media Press Kit, P.3

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt and the *Zumwalt* Class of Guided Missile Destroyers

The *Zumwalt*-class is named after Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, a WWII-era destroyer sailor ('tin can' sailor) who rose through the ranks after a brilliant academic career at the Naval Academy, and who served aboard a succession of destroyers. Ultimately Admiral Zumwalt became the youngest Chief of Naval Operations, and advanced progressive personnel ideals in the US Navy. It is fitting that the *Zumwalt*-class bears his name given his 'tin can' heritage and the revitalization of the naval gunfire support role provided by the ship class.

The head of class is DDG-1000 *USS Zumwalt;* followed by *Michael Monsoor* and DDG-1002 *Lyndon B. Johnson*. Additional hulls may follow. The 15,000-ton, 600' *Zumwalt*-class brings operational multi-mission capability and transformational technology to the Fleet. Automation is ingrained and cooked into the ship. Ship's company is approximately 158 sailors and officers – an astonishingly small crew for a ship with this massive warfighting mission and capability. As noted, the Zumwalt-class reestablishes the traditional role of naval gunfire support for combined littoral operations, while at the same time maintaining the traditional destroyer anti-aircraft, anti-submarine, and anti-shipping missions. The most obvious manifestation of the advanced stealth capability of the *Zumwalt*-class is the futuristic (and simultaneously seemingly *retro*) hull profile. Instead of an inward-sloping prow, the bow is *outward sloping.* Physically the appearance is reminiscent of the prow of the battleship dreadnoughts of President Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet; a fleet of sixteen battleships which circumnavigated the globe between 1907 and 1909 demonstrating the US 'blue ocean' (transcontinental) naval capability. The best (and probably only) example remaining is the *USS Olympia* C-6, which was Commodore Dewey's flagship during the Spanish-American War. During that war, and during the Battle of Manila Bay May 1898, Commodore Dewey famously directed "You may fire when you are ready, <Captain> Gridley."). (*USS Olympia* moored at Penn's Landing on the Delaware River in Philadelphia -- well worth a visit when in that area!) [4]

[4] http://www.hnsa.org/hnsa-ships/uss-olympia-c-6/

The shape of the *Zumwalt*-class hull is termed 'tumblehome', in which the beam (ship's width) at the waterline is greatest - decreasing progressively with distance from the water line. This gives the curiously-retrograde impression of a Civil War-era ironclad (e.g. the *CSS Virginia*, which battled the *USS Monitor* during the Civil War at the Battle of Hampton Roads). In fact, the design goes back further in time, at least to 1750's, the time of the French and Indian Wars. A floating fort (called a 'radeau') was discovered in 1990 in 100 foot of water in Lake George, New York by archeologists. The British sank it there with the intent to refloat it, but never got around to that. The radeau (or "*Land Tortoise*") was a 52 foot floating fort with 7 sides and upward sloping sides to deflect cannonballs and musketry [5]. The *Land Tortoises'* cannon are *inside*, just like on the Zumwalt-class. Thus the tumblehome design was instrumental in deflecting shot and shell in the ironclad duels and the earlier period 'radeaux'; and *today's* tumblehome design is the essential component of radar stealth - deflecting not artillery, but radar signals. This it does so effectively that the radar signature of the *Zumwalt*-class is comparable to that of a 40-ft fishing trawler. And the inverted bow slices stealthfully through the waves, further reducing the radar return footprint - while achieving speeds in excess of thirty (30) knots!

The mission of the *Zumwalt*-class – to stealthfully ingress to the area of operations, ***strike hard,*** and then egress to deeper waters – mirrors the tactics of the father of the US Navy, John Paul Jones – whose attacks against British targets in England and Great Britain diverted a large percentage of the British Navy in his pursuit – an unsuccessful endeavor on their part! In this fashion John Paul Jones significantly contributed to the military defeat of the British in the American Revolutionary War. Thus we can be sure that John Paul Jones is beaming down on this ship class -- as the very personification of his own strategy.

Thus - from the standpoint of naval architecture- the *Zumwalt*-class presents the observer with a visual journey through American naval history and references to American naval strategy which heralds the arrival of the United States as a world power. Admiral Mahan, who wrote the definitive *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* would be very proud indeed of this ship!

The *Zumwalt*-class can deliver pinpoint accurate precision-guided munitions artillery fire in excess of sixty (60) miles away with two 155mm (6.1") artillery batteries, at a rate of up to ten rounds per minute from each turret. Shore bombardment/naval gunfire support of American troops fighting their way inland off the beach is a fundamental mission for Navy ships-of-the-line, and always has been since the very beginning. The Navy's gunfire support capability was greatly diminished when the last two WWII-era *Iowa*-class battleships were decommissioned. The *Zumwalt*-class steps up to this task brilliantly. The Navy gunfire support mission is cooked into the DNA of BIW's ships. In particular, (by single example among so many in WWII), BIW-built destroyers *USS Jouet* and *USS Emmons*, both of which (among other destroyers) closed to within a couple of hundred yards of the Normandy beach (risking being run aground) rendering effective counter-battery fire in support of the US troops trying to get off the beach under heavy German defensive fire. Some of the BIW destroyers' return fire against the German Normandy artillery batteries was so accurate that their shells *went right through the German bunker embrasures*. The ultimate success at Normandy owes heavily to these BIW destroyers and the bravery of the tin can sailors who sailed them, and they are immortalized on the front cover of Admiral Samuel E. Morison's encyclopedic *The Two Ocean War*[6] – the definitive study of US naval operations in WWII. The *Zumwalt*s have powerful shore bombardment capability as described, and will serve admirably in that role

[5] http://alloveralbany.com/archive/2009/08/05/the-lost-radeau-a-shipwreck-in-lake-george
[6] http://www.usni.org/store/books/battle-midway/two-ocean-war

whenever needed. The *Zumwalts* are (and will also be) ready to deploy the latest, ongoing offensive armaments and defensive systems currently on the drawing boards -- and even those not yet there -- in service of our country and protection of US interests worldwide.

Critics snipe at the untested sea-faring capability in rough seas of the Zumwalt hull design. However, a legacy of warship experience, marine engineering excellence from this shipyard and extensive scale model hull performance testing is a lot more convincing than speculative 'sound bite' criticism. Other criticisms focus on the automated damaged control capability, which comes at the expense of manpower (the ship has a crew of just 158 sailors and officers). However, Bath Iron Works has built astonishingly battle-damage resilient vessels (see below,) so this base of experience has been incorporated into the damage control capability of the ship design. As for the mission of the Zumwalt-class -- in every fleet each ship category has a specific mission for which it is optimized (with an ability to pinch hit in other roles). The Zumwalt-class can't - and was not designed to – be optimized for or do *everything*, but it *uniquely* and brilliantly provides the role of naval gunfire support. (Ask any veteran who has benefited from – or who has been on the receiving end of – pinpoint artillery bombardment – and you will get the 'boots' view of the criticality of this capability). The Zumwalt-class can outperform airpower in this role owing to the latter's requirement for ground-based forces to laser-designate the target (not needed by Zumwalt's main batteries). Furthermore, the Zumwalt-class also has extended 'loiter' capability to closely support troops in excess of 60 miles from the shore - in all weather and on demand (rather than advance scheduling a carrier-based strike package or long-range bomber mission). Sea lane protection and littoral support is provided by carriers, destroyers, submarines, amphibious assault ships, fleet oilers, supply ships, tenders and ocean-going tugboats among other ship categories - and now naval gunfire support (which has been lacking since retirement of the *Iowa*-class battleships) is provided by the Zumwalt-class.

(At this point we can offer a stealthy *rumor* about the *Zumwalt*'s stealth capabilities… the apocryphal rumor has it that upon *USS Zumwalt*'s sea trials in late 2015, she was trailed by a US Coast Guard cutter (as is the custom...). What is *not* normal however, was that the Coast Guard cutter *lost track of USS Zumwalt*! Which begs the question – how in the world can you lose a 15,000 ton, 600' ship?!?! We *know* the answer to that question….)

Bath Iron Works

General Dynamics' Bath Iron Works (BIW) has a venerable history of shipbuilding and in particular, building the fighting ships of the United States Navy. BIW is located on the Kennebec River in Bath, Maine and has been engaged in the design and build of many US Navy destroyers, cruisers, frigates as well as a variety of commercial vessel categories since 1884. BIW has been instrumental in the projection of sea power and securing sea lanes worldwide in support of the interests of the United States through the most important periods in our Nation's history and emergence as a world power. [7] In addition to leadership in the design and construction of the Zumwalt-class of guided missile destroyers, BIW has been responsible for so many famous and storied ships-of-the-line which have been on the forefront with the rest of the fleet behind. Many of the '4-stacker' destroyers on lend-lease to the British in the early years of WWII were built at BIW, and they served valiantly in an anti-submarine role to help secure Britain-bound trans-Atlantic convoys before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which brought the US into WWII. BIW was churning out destroyers at the rate

[7] https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/9780738510590/Bath-Iron-Works

of one every 17 days during WWII. Our country thus owes a great debt to the legacy of Bath Iron Works shipbuilders and the 6,000-strong workers at the shipyard.

BIW prides itself on its relentless mission for procedural and operational quality improvements. Many process improvements were implemented after construction of DDG-1000 with significant benefits (20% fewer person-construction hours) realized in DDG-1001. In turn, further improvements are being engineered into DDG-1002, and this process will continue for all follow up hulls of the class.

These BIW ships are tough! Thus the logo: "***Bath***-built is BEST built!" The *Perry*-class frigate *USS Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) struck an Iranian mine of approximately 350lbs, which cracked her keel. But brilliant damage control by the crew and the tough BIW construction allowed *Roberts* to survive, be repaired, and returned to the Fleet[8]. The *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer DDG-67 *USS Cole* is another dramatic example telling the BIW story. *USS Cole* was crippled by a sneak attack on October 12, 2000 by an Al-Qaeda 700lb shaped-charge directly against the ship's hull at the waterline while being refueled at the Yemeni port of Aden[9]. 17 sailors were killed outright and 39 injured. Those killed are memorialized in the hallway near the ship's galley on the Memorial Wall. Brilliant counter-flooding and damage control by ship's engineering and crew, combined with the tough BIW construction, enabled the ship to remain afloat. *USS Cole* was repaired in the US and, like *Roberts*, returned to the Fleet. The author had the great privilege of touring USS Cole below decks, stopping to pay respects at *USS Cole*'s galley Memorial Wall / Hall of Heroes when *USS Cole* was at Stapleton in Staten Island Homeport in NY several years ago in New York City's Operation Fleet Week 2014. [10]

The membership of The Scuba Sports Club[11] and community at Dive News Network[12] pay respects and offer gratitude to Petty Officer Monsoor and his family, extend thanks to the General Dynamics /Bath Iron Works community for providing such great ships-of-the-line for our country over the years, and most of all – extend best wishes for *Michael Monsoor* ship's company for success in every mission, and always home safely to family, friends, community, and home to the shores of our great country. ***Haze Gray and UNDERWAY!***

[8] http://navysite.de/ffg/FFG58.HTM
[9] http://www.hazegray.org/features/cole/
[10] https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152522419474575.1073741904.743149574&type=1&l=911c403bcc
[11] http://www.thescubasportsclub.org/
[12] http://www.divenewsnetwork.com/