



ADMIRAL ZUMWALT AWARD FOR VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

The Admiral Zumwalt Award for Visionary Leadership honors those who most clearly exemplify the extraordinary qualities, vision & incisiveness of the nineteenth Chief of Naval Operations. Two awards are presented annually, to active-duty Navy personnel in pay grades E3-E6 and E7-04 who are nominated by an active-duty member equal or junior in rate/rank, and who best exemplify the ideals of Admiral Zumwalt.

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E3 – E6 WINNER

ICSN SADE SAMUEL, USN

USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)

*MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN, WORK CENTER
SUPERVISOR*

Interior Communications Electrician Seaman Sade Samuel is an exceptional leader whose determination, technical expertise, and influence far exceed her paygrade. In a division manned below 50% with seven gapped billets, she took it upon herself to drive and press for qualification training for all ICs onboard, naturally pushing her peers to match her level of knowledge and expertise. She is focused on achieving maximum efficiency, quality, and value by continuously improving work progress and influencing a culture of excellence across the entire division.

Seaman Samuel became the driving force of the Interior Communications suite, leading qualification efforts and assisting in restoring critical systems such as steering, Moriah Wind System, Boiler Control Console, Boiler Camera System, TV-DTS, and the ship's Integrated Voice Network. As a Work Center Supervisor, she provided clear direction to her technicians which resulted in a 100 percent preventive maintenance accomplishment rate. Her leadership directly contributed to safety of flight operations and to USS Iwo Jima passing INSURV, COMPTUEX and ultimately deploying on time. She has been praised by multiple outside and shipboard organizations for her willingness to strive, grow as a Sailor, and influence her shipmates to meet the same standards she demands of herself, solidifying her reputation as the division's cornerstone.

Her commitment to excellence and caring leadership, whether mentoring peers, pursuing advanced qualifications, serving as one of her ship's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocates, or learning new responsibilities to keep the ship mission-ready has created a culture of pride, professionalism, and continuous improvement across the command. A model Sailor and visionary problem-solver, ICSN Samuel embodies Admiral Zumwalt's legacy and is the clear and deserving choice for the E3-E6 Zumwalt Award for Visionary Leadership.

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E7 – O4 WINNER

LT LUIS ECHEVERRIA, USN

*TASK FORCE FIVE NINE
COMMANDING OFFICER*

Lieutenant Luis Echeverria, the Navy's first Unmanned Systems Task Group Early Commander. He commissioned and led Task Group 59.1, transforming unmanned concepts into operational combat power. Under his command, TG 59.1 executed Digital Talon 3.0, integrating unmanned surface and aerial platforms with loitering munitions and achieving the first remote launch of a loitering strike munition and Group 3 UAV from a small USV. He further proved unmanned resilience by deploying sUSVs in GPS-denied environments to deliver persistent MDA/ISR in the Red Sea, establishing the Navy's first operational standards for unmanned tactics.

LT Echeverria built a high-performing, innovative command climate marked by trust, curiosity, and excellence, achieving exceptional Sailor retention in a mission set with no precedent. He transformed Sailors' skepticism into belief, retention, and pride. He brought allies, partners, and special operations into the unmanned fight. He delivered warfighting relevance today while laying the foundation for tomorrow.

His leadership elevated unmanned integration across the Navy. He briefed the Chief of Naval Operations at Task Force 59 Headquarters, shaping senior-level understanding of unmanned warfare, and spoke at the Surface Navy Association National Symposium. He ensured his Sailors also had a voice in shaping the Navy's future by bringing enlisted Sailors to speak at SNA Waterfront East.

In total, LT Echeverria oversaw more than 1,200 hours of autonomous vessel operations, integrated 15 unmanned platforms into daily fleet operations, executed multinational unmanned maritime exercises with nine partner nations, and developed the Navy's first AI-enabled maritime surveillance framework.

LT Echeverria is a bold, visionary leader whose work has accelerated the Navy's transition to a hybrid manned-unmanned fleet. His operational breakthroughs, strategic foresight, and commitment to his Sailors reflect Admiral Zumwalt's legacy and make him exceptionally deserving of this prestigious award.