

An Admiral's Gift to the Nation

By Jack Anderson

Men who achieve in government often cash in after they retire by writing books. Lyndon Johnson collected \$1.2 million for his memoirs. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger reportedly are being approached with \$1 million offers for their writings.

But at least one prominent public servant is asking nothing except a couple of complimentary copies of his book. He is crusty, old Admiral Hyman Rickover, who rose from obscurity and overcame adversity to push upon the Navy a nuclear submarine that the brass didn't want.

Thus, Rickover, the son of a Polish pants presser, achieved fame in his time. He could have collected tens of thousands in royalties, therefore, for his book, "Eminent Americans: Namesakes of the Polaris Submarine Fleet." But the 316-page book would have cost at least \$10 if it had been published commercially in hardback.

The 72-year-old seafarer told us from his hospital bed, where he is recovering from a heart attack, that he wants to reach the kids of America who can't afford \$10 books.

For four years, Rickover and his wife, Ruth, put together—he writing, she researching—the life stories of the 41 notables whose names are on the Polaris subs. They range from George Washing-

ton to George Washington Carver, and include comedian Will Rogers, revolutionary patriot Casimir Pulaski, Hawaiian King Kamehameha, Daniel Boone and Indian hero Tecumseh.

Ruth died last May before she could see her work in print, but the book is dedicated touchingly to her.

The printing arrangement was unusual. Congress authorized its own printing of 12,000 copies, then specifically allowed Rickover to publish the book commercially if he wished. Rickover chose not to make a penny.

Footnote: The book is available for \$1.25 (mailing included) from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20042, Stock number 5271-00315, House Document number 92-345.

Greek Gift-Bearer

A Greek national made a secret \$15,000 gift to President Nixon's campaign and got a \$4.7 million contract a few months later to refuel the U.S. 6th Fleet in Greece.

The golden Greek is Nicholas Vardinoyiannis of Motor Oil Hellas in Athens, who once tried to break an international oil blockade around racist Rhodesia and now strongly backs the Greek military junta.

The swarthy, 41-year-old Greek millionaire made his generous contribution to the

Nixon campaign early this year, but it didn't get reported until Nov. 2.

The timing of the contribution could not have been better for a man bent on making money from the Republican administration. It came just as the Navy was deciding to give the 6th Fleet a homeport in Greece.

The gift raises a possible criminal question. If the Justice Department can prove that Vardinoyiannis was conducting even informal "negotiations" at the time of the gift, then he was in violation of federal laws governing foreign contractors. Formal Pentagon solicitation of bids did not begin until May, some weeks after the gift.

This is not the only slippery question in the Navy's deal with the Greeks on the use of Athens as a homeport. There is a mystery over a \$5-million "relocatable pier" being built for the fleet's destroyers there.

It began when the Navy chief, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, vowed to Congress that "we do not have any intention to build military facilities for our ships" that homeport in Greece.

Devious Dock

Yet, within weeks the Navy began to circumvent these assurances with plans to finance the \$5 million pier through an ingenious "lease" agreement with Greek entrepreneurs.

A crusading Greek exile, Elias Demetracopoulos, tipped off Congress to Zumwalt's seeming inconsistency. Now, Reps. Ben Rosenthal (D-N.Y.) and Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), chairmen of the House European and Near East subcommittees, have asked the General Accounting Office to investigate.

Still more trouble is in the offing. Assistant Defense Secretary Warren Nutter has assured Congress that the main reason for homeporting is to keep Navy "families together rather than apart" by bringing wives to Athens. But the Navy's guide for sailors gives a racier vista on homeporting.

In a "Q and A" section, the guide asks: "Does Athens have any 'action'?" Then it answers itself, "Yes... Ask another single man who has been here for awhile. In addition to the domestic variety, the tourist traffic is considerable... Also, American servicewomen and government secretaries are not exactly wallflowers."

Footnote: The Defense Department assured us that there was nothing political in the award of the \$4.7 million refueling bonanza to Vardinoyiannis. He got it because he offered the best deal among 38 proposals, the Pentagon insisted. The Navy said the dock deal had been "concurred" in by both the House and Senate.