

James Bond Stockdale

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Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale served for more than thirty years as an officer of the regular Navy, most of those years at sea as a fighter pilot aboard aircraft carriers. Shot down on his second combat tour over North Vietnam, he was the senior naval service prisoner of war in Hanoi for eight years — tortured fifteen times, in leg irons for two years, and in solitary confinement for four.

Normal tours ashore during his naval career were few in number: three years as a test pilot school instructor at Patuxent River, Maryland, two years as a graduate student at Stanford University, a single year in Washington, D.C. (as the director of the Chief of Naval Operation's strategy, plans and policy division), and, finally two years as the president of the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. Physical disability from combat wounds brought early retirement from military life. He left the naval service as its most highly decorated member, wearing twenty-six personal combat decorations, including two Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Distinguished Service Medals, four Silver Star Medals, two Purple Hearts, and the Congressional Medal of Honor. The United States Navy in 1981 initiated the "Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale Award for Inspirational Leadership," the first such award ever issued in the name of a living person, to be presented annually to a command naval officer in the Atlantic and the Pacific fleets.

Jim Stockdale has authored dozens of articles on leadership, moral philosophy, and the prison/hostage circumstance and the anatomy of extortion. He is the recipient of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge George Washington Honor Medal for writing. As president of the Naval War College, he broke precedent by becoming a teacher on a regular basis. He expanded the graduate electives program and added classic philosophy to the curriculum. He has nine honorary degrees.

As a civilian, James Bond Stockdale has been a college professor and a college president. He is the Chairman of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors of St. John's College of Annapolis and Santa Fe, a member of the Academic Policy Board of the United States Naval Academy, and Special Advisor to the American Leadership Forum.

Admiral Stockdale is now a Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. There he writes articles for a variety of periodicals and is completing books for Harper and Row, the Hoover Press, and the Portable Stanford series. In addition, he is a lecturer in Stanford's Philosophy Department and teaches undergraduate courses.

