

3/30/98

547 A. Avenue
Coronado, CA 92118
Sat. 28 March, 1998

Rear Admiral James Stark, USN
President, Naval War College

Dear Jim,

I had a good visit and lunch in Coronado with Porter Halyburton yesterday. He is in San Diego giving lectures on Strategy and Policy to non-resident NWC seminars in this area.

Porter told me of the upcoming changes at the NWC, including the incorporation of the Navy Doctrine Command - to be known as the Naval Warfare Development Command, under a three star holding the title you and I have held. Porter knows the Naval War College like few people do - he has been there for over 20 years - first as a student when I was President, then in uniform as a professor of Strategy and Policy for five years. In 1984 he retired and took a job in CCE and for 14 years has been right at the scene of decision making in the development of "Distance Learning". He knows what it takes to maintain quality education thru the correspondence route.

He knows that business inside out, and tells me that the head of CCE, like some other billets in what we now know as "The Naval War College", are being civilianized. Some of the billets to be civilianized are already being advertised. I strongly believe that the best man for the job as head of CCE is already civilianized and in place and that his name is Porter Halyburton. Right now he has three hats: he is the Head of Strategy and Policy, he is the Head of Electives, and he is a Technical Manager as CCE computers go on the world wide web. He knows the turf and wants the job, and I am confident that he has the character and experience to improve and expand what he has had no minor role in creating.

I have known Porter for over 30 years; he is a cultured southern gentleman and a graduate of the high calibre liberal arts Davidson College in North Carolina. We met on the night of October 25, 1965, when I was moved into the cell next to his in a place we called "Heartbreak Hotel" in Hoa Lo prison, Hanoi. We were not to talk - but whispered after hours. We only had six days side by side, when he was moved to an outlying camp and replaced by a man whose life Porter was destined to save. The man was an Air Force F-105 pilot, grievously injured on ejection and landing, a shoulder dislocated and a leg broken, and no medical attention given him. He was a black officer named Fred Cherry. He was the first black American captured in North Vietnam. He was in constant pain, and the Vietnamese were trying to get him to disavow his loyalty to a "white" hierarchy. He was taken away after 5 days beside me.

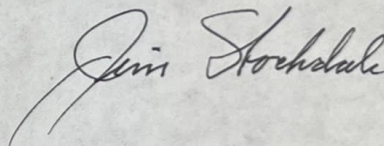
At the outlying prison, where serious interrogation/beatings

were commonplace, Porter was hanging tough and bowing to nobody. Cherry was a block away, in a serious downward physical spiral, lying in a pool of puss. The Vietnamese decided to put the southern aristocrat Halyburton in with the wounded Cherry, who was by then in and out of consciousness. Both were non-productive of propaganda; perhaps they would grow to detest each other and open up?

That's about as far as I can go on speculation as to what the Vietnamese had in mind, but what really did happen, was that Halyburton devoted himself to saving Cherry's life. He pressured the Vietnamese to get on with the criminally overdue surgery - which they reluctantly did, but ignored any post-operative care. In another fumble, they put Cherry in a crooked body cast that had to be cut off him months later, and so on and on. It is a story of two comrades together combatting torturing enemies, infection, and incompetent physicians, and in the end, winning. Fred Cherry is alive today, thanks to the tender loving care of Porter Halyburton. There are some scripts of this and we may see it on a movie screen sometime.

Porter Halyburton is a gentleman of intellect and character. He just turned 57 and his best years are still ahead of him.

Sincerely,



P.S. Thanks for the invitation to this year's Current Strategy Forum. I phoned your secretary and I'm sure she relayed the fact that we have a schedule conflict and must regret. - All the best.

