

CONFINEMENT SUMMARY OF  
CAPTAIN JAMES BOND STOCKDALE, USN  
SENIOR U.S. NAVY RETURNEE FROM CAPTIVITY  
AS A PRISONER OF WAR

FROM

9 SEPTEMBER 1965 TO 12 FEBRUARY 1973

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CONFINEMENT CHRONOLOGY GUIDE

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SUMMARY OF CONFINEMENT OF  
CAPTAIN JAMES B. STOCKDALE, USN

PRECAPTURE PERIOD

For Captain James Bond Stockdale, Commander Carrier Air Wing Sixteen, the assigned primary target on his 9 September 1965 mission was the Thanh Hoa bridge. Because of the weather an alternate target was executed, and this was armed reconnaissance on rail siding about midway between Vinh and Thanh Hoa. At approximately 090413Z September 1965, in pulling off target at approximately 500 feet, all cockpit lights in his A4E came on (fire, hydraulics, etc.). Captain Stockdale tried to sneak along the bottom of a 2500 feet overcast but decided to eject after his aircraft control system ceased to function in longitudinal mode, was sluggish in lateral mode, and the A4E pitched down with estimated impact prior to feet wet. A normal chute and descent were experienced but Captain Stockdale suffered a broken bone in ~~his~~ back at the point where the left shoulder joins during the eject and chute deployment sequence. He also lost his wrist watch at this time.

CAPTURE

Captain Stockdale came down in a scrubby tree on the main street of a small village. He was pursued and gang-tackled by eight to ten villagers who were not in uniform and did not appear to be of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). He was repeatedly struck by the gang, was stripped and ripped completely naked, and sustained a severe left leg injury during this rough handling with the left leg bent 60-90 degrees out of its natural position and broken. While held in an open hut in the village under guard, an apparent village official ran up and asked in English, "Are you James Bond Stockdale?" After receiving an affirmative reply, he ran off. The villagers gave Captain Stockdale a well worn pajama top and worn dirty blue boxer shorts. The crowd's hostility was controlled after Captain Stockdale was placed in the open hut except for one man who determinedly attempted to lunge at Captain Stockdale but was restrained by the guards. Captain Stockdale passed out for several hours during this period in the hut, and this was the first of the two times he was unconscious or asleep prior to arrival at Hoa Lo Prison, Hanoi, on 12 September 1965.

ENROUTE TO HANOI

At dusk on the day of his capture, NVA personnel arrived and carried him approximately one half mile to a road, where he was loaded on a one and one-half ton camouflaged truck which was part of a sizeable convoy (estimated up to 30 trucks) heading South. After at least five stops to permit the convoy to escape detection from U. S. aircraft overhead, the truck stopped near a lane. Captain Stockdale was carried to a hut at the

end of this lane, which appeared to be a holding station. A man, probably the same man who had earlier displayed hostility in the capture village, rushed past the guards and struck two blows hitting Captain Stockdale in the stomach. This man later returned with a pistol, again broke in past the guards, and fired two shots at point blank range. The guards knocked this man off balance as he fired, and the bullets struck the bed near Captain Stockdale's legs, showering wood splinters over his legs and causing a shallow flesh wound on his left ankle. About midnight the NVA lugged Captain Stockdale down the same lane where they were met by three men and a jeep. These soldiers appeared in a hurry to begin the northward journey in the rain and were indifferent to his dangling leg. Consequently, he was loaded in a very uncomfortable position in the back of the jeep. They travelled until dawn with no relief until arrival at a crossroads where Captain Stockdale was carried onto a porch at the stopover station, which was a long low building with rooms opening out onto a porch. As he was placed on a bed and a crowd gathered outside, a man with the mannerisms of a doctor came in to check him. The doctor felt his leg and immediately brought out a surgical saw and a surgical knife. Captain Stockdale implored the doctor not to cut his leg off, and although they could not communicate directly the doctor seemed interested in, and able to comprehend, Captain Stockdale's remarks. The doctor took out a large syringe filled with colorless fluid and within the count of two, Captain Stockdale was out. Awakening that afternoon, he was relieved to find a huge cast on his leg rather than a stump. The doctor had also arranged a shoulder cast on the broken left shoulder. Two nonuniformed men and a "mousey," dirty girl placed him once again in the back of a one and one-half ton truck. The girl, who had some compassion but no apparent medical knowledge, gave him shots approximately every six hours for the remainder of the trip. Captain Stockdale remained conscious throughout the night of 10-11 September, until the truck arrived in a park area near dawn. There Captain Stockdale spent a chilly, rainy day in the bottom of that truck in the vicinity of a Ryan photo drone wreckage and a grassy barn lot near a large rock karst. This area appeared to be a regular truck park stopover. As the truck continued on during the night of 11-12 September, Captain Stockdale believed he might be near sea water and felt that he might be smuggled out of North Vietnam in a boat. He tore off his shoulder cast so that he could stay afloat during the anticipated boat trip. The truck continued on to Hanoi through more populated areas. The driver appeared frequently lost and in need of directions until finally on the morning of the third day, the truck parked, with a prison wall on the left and a large building on the right. Captain Stockdale did not then realize it, but this was to be his only chance for the next seven and one-half years to look down Hoa Lo Street. He was not blindfolded and for 20 minutes or so observed the upper parts of buildings along the street. Two men, "The Eagle" and "The Owl," came up to him. The Eagle's attitude toward Captain Stockdale's truck escorts was irritable and disdainful, and he said to Captain Stockdale in English, "I represent the Government, you are coming inside."



### ARRIVAL AT HOA LO PRISON

On Sunday morning, 12 September 1965, Captain Stockdale was carried on a stretcher through the main gate and courtyard at Hoa Lo into Room 24. In his company were Eagle, the primary military interrogator at Ha Lo at least through 1969; Owl, who claimed to be a college professor; and Dog, who unabashedly presented himself as the Commander-in-Charge of the prison camp system. Dog addressed Captain Stockdale as from ORISKANY, asked him for confirmation that he was the Air Wing Commander, and talked to him in a forthright military manner as a senior officer in the service of his enemy. This relationship was never again duplicated. Captain Stockdale was shown a sheaf of clippings, the top one of which was from "Stars and Stripes" and concerned an appearance of Henry Jenkins in Saigon. The remainder of this initial session was primarily devoted to tirades by Dog about the war, the Tonkin Gulf raids of 1964, and the anticipated Communist line on people's power, Vietnamese sovereignty, etc. Earlier, when Captain Stockdale had complimented Dog on his English and had asked about his education, Dog replied that the "revolution was my university" and that he had grown up in it. He stated that his wife was a doctor serving in SVN and had a formal education. Captain Stockdale was not slapped around during this session and concern was expressed over his leg.

After 15 minutes of this one-sided conversation, the three men left, leaving Captain Stockdale on his stretcher figuring out the geometry of Room 24. A guard, later known as "Dipshit," entered with a bowl of soup. He proved to be a sort of Mother Superior of all those at Hoa Lo at the time, as a part time medic and full time disciplinarian and guard. Although he was not hungry, Captain Stockdale decided to try to position himself to eat in spite of his painful leg and useless arm. After watching this struggle a short while, Dipshit jammed a stool into the stretcher. Captain Stockdale lay back and said, "Attaboy." Dipshit marched up in front of him and said in very poor English, "I am not boy, I am mister" something or other. Although not realizing it at that time, Captain Stockdale soon learned that one of the high priority items on the NVN list of "don't's" is to never enunciate guards' names to the prisoners.

This incident was meaningful to Captain Stockdale in realizing the psychology of the situation, associating it to Western ascendancy in the Far East when coolies were referred to as boys, houseboys, etc. This was to be the first step in learning that the gut grievance of the V was one of color and inferiority. This came up time and again and always in a clutch situation when he was really down to brass tacks in an argument. The old question arose in Captain Stockdale's mind as to whether Communists are mainly Communists who happen to be a certain race, in this case Vietnamese, or mainly Vietnamese who happen to be Communists. He could see that the riddle continued as Dipshit's outburst seemed to reveal a deeply held resentment of racial and national degradation. Nothing resembling rapport was established during that meeting as Dipshit proved rather obscure, cruel, and sulky.

As Dipshit left Room 24, Captain Stockdale had some soup and reflected on his serious situation. Going through his mind were four factors influencing how he plotted his course. First, fear, an overblown fear, but one instilled several years earlier at the Hoover Library at Stanford as he read statements made with cleverly staged authenticity by Korean War POW's concerning germ warfare. The thought that a man could be so manipulated as to become submissive enough to make treasonous statements against his government in an air of authentic style was disturbing. Secondly, Captain Stockdale felt that the Vietnam war was going to last for a while. As he came down in his parachute toward the village prior to capture, his one thought had been that the war would last five years. He was concerned that he would be recognized as a man of authority prior to shutdown, a concern that had already been warranted by Dog's statements. He also worried about extortable items and knowledge such as SIOP plans. But the third, and dominant concern that Captain Stockdale had, was the problem of the Tonkin Gulf incidents. Having just been shown the Jenkins clipping, he was keenly aware and apprehensive of his own connection with the Tonkin Gulf raids of August 1964. Dog had even alluded to the raids in the session just past although without any direct personal inference, and it was a propaganda line tenaciously held by the NVN. Captain Stockdale had led the three principal actions during the raids including the day strikes on 2 August against torpedo boats threatening MADDOX, the night raids on 4 August against PT boats threatening the destroyers MADDOX and TURNER JOY, and the 5 August strike against the Vinh POL storage area. As the strike leader, Captain Stockdale's name had been in U. S. newspapers in connection with the raids. His great concern was that the V would connect him with the raids and sink their teeth into a massive piece of propaganda. The fourth and final factor influencing Captain Stockdale was the fact that he was crippled, weak, and not in good fighting posture. He was prayerful that he could buy time and retain some sort of creditability as he plotted a pragmatic course to keep the most precious material from ever leaking out.

During that initial twelve day stay at Hoa Lo, Captain Stockdale was handled in a tentative manner by the NVN. Although he had several quizzes with Eagle, he felt that the V were tacitly concerned about his leg and that they had bigger plans in store for him later and, therefore, did not want to prematurely "burst the balloon." Eagle proved to be the one Vietnamese interrogator during Captain Stockdale's confinement who had a somewhat military grasp of tactical situations. He did not dwell on purely propaganda such as the bombing of churches and schools. Eagle at least had the decency to make inquiries, improper to be sure, but inquiries about targets, prospects for the war, etc. Captain Stockdale drew the line closely but not all the way. For example, if Eagle wanted to know if ORISKANY had F-8, A-4, and A-1 aircraft, he did not deny it, but he would not answer further, e.g., questions like, "How many F-8's do you have?" Of particular interest to Eagle seemed to be not immediate plans, but the mechanism of command and control. Here Captain Stockdale established another line, which Eagle more or less bought, and that was that he was a functionary whose primary mission was inward toward the mundane levels of

leadership such as organizing the Air Wing housekeeping, maintenance, morale, and the like, with no participation in, or concern for, the planning of strikes or development of targets. As a functionary, he just received orders with no idea where the plans came from. They did not press him as much as he thought they would as Eagle would terminate the quiz and leave Room 24. Dipshit would administer "discipline" by slapping him.

Captain Stockdale was in agony throughout this period in Room 24, and it was only with great difficulty that he could shift from his back to his side as he lay on the stretcher. He had been given a blanket and a pillow, which later proved to be a mosquito net. Unable to move or to communicate, and subject to fitful dreams, the days and nights merged into a grey area. He was concerned by the lack of circulation in his left leg, and he would awake with chills. One afternoon a man, later known as "Mickey Mouse," entered Room 24 and said, "My doctor would like to look at your leg." He was a young, English speaking, junior officer who appeared to be from a hospital staff. About half of Captain Stockdale's leg cast was cut away and blood was drawn from the leg by the doctor. Before they left, a large wooden table was brought into Room 24, and Captain Stockdale was placed on it. After a couple of days clouded by hallucinations, Mickey Mouse again appeared with his doctor. Captain Stockdale was placed on a stretcher, blindfolded, and placed on a truck. For about 15 minutes they drove around the city. When the truck stopped and the blindfold was removed, he saw that they were in a hospital yard. After a short period of confusion, and another drive of about 15 minutes' duration, he realized that he had been returned to Hoa Lo and Room 24. The doctor punched a few more holes in his leg cartilage and drew out more blood. This did not afford Captain Stockdale any particular relief, and his leg remained swollen and bent sideways, with the appearance of being detached. During periods of awareness, Captain Stockdale heard a shower and whistling. He learned later that the shower was the one in the wash area of Heartbreak, while the whistling was the tune, "I've been working on the railroad," to which Captain Stockdale eagerly responded with "Anchors Aweigh," drawing in further response the Air Force song. He later learned that this exchange was with Captain Bob Peel, who was at that time acting as nursemaid to several wounded guys in the Nobby Room (also known as Shu's Room after Commander Bob Shumaker, and as the Blue Room) at New Guy Village. That exchange proved to be the closest Captain Stockdale came to friends during this period.

#### THE HOSPITAL

On the night of 24 or 25 September 1965, Mickey Mouse came in once more with his doctor. The earlier move was repeated as Captain Stockdale was taken the six or seven blocks possibly northeast to the same large hospital courtyard, but this time he was admitted to the hospital. He believes that the earlier confusion and fruitless round trip could have resulted from the fact that he may have been the first POW to go to the hospital, and, as with other NVN actions during this period, trial and error prevailed. In this case there may have been a communications breakdown and the hospital was not ready to receive him.

After the preceding two weeks of severe pain, Captain Stockdale was immensely relieved at the prospect of finally having something done about his leg so that the pain would stop and his strength would return. As he was carried into the hospital room he remembers hearing a prop aircraft shooting touch and go landings. As soon as he was rolled onto the dirty bed, medical personnel removed the remaining portion of cast from his leg. This was to be the last real bed he was to see during his confinement. After drinking a cup of tea he slept for an hour, awoke, got out of bed and started across the room, but his flopping left leg suddenly sobered him. He struggled back to the bed, fell over it as he ripped the mosquito net down and lay crossways until help arrived. The next morning, Captain Stockdale was the subject of intense curiosity as the medical men arrived to begin treatment of the American, showing their desire to prove their professionalism. The corpsman wore a long frock, surgical mask and cap, while the doctor looked less professional but proved capable of fair English and indicated that he had been educated at the Sorbonne. He introduced himself as Boc Si (Doctor) Nguyen. Another man introduced himself as the hospital director and asked if Captain Stockdale was afraid to have a Vietnamese doctor operate on him. After a reassuring response from Captain Stockdale, the director continued, "Dr. Tuan (Mickey Mouse's doctor) has been chosen to build you a new knee. He has seen it done in Paris." Dr. Nguyen was to assist. The director further indicated that they had studied X ray's taken earlier and that two or three operations would be required. Like the first meeting with Dog, it was conducted on a professional basis.

The following days were spent in preparation for the surgery. His attendant, Mr. Loon, was somewhat congenial, Dr. Nguyen was civil, and only the corpsman was mean and brusque, deriving pleasure from giving painful injections in the thigh muscle. The hospital room was dirty and infested with rats at night. Thinking that the rats might be rabid, Captain Stockdale reported their presence to one of the doctors, only to be matter of factly informed that he would have to learn to live in the Orient and that rabies only occurred with European rats.

At 1330, one afternoon in early October 1965, Captain Stockdale was wheeled into an old operating room where he received an anaesthetic rendering him unconscious within seconds. When he awoke it was dark. He could see the cast on his left leg, but he was surprised that it was not in traction. His knee felt rather loose, and Dr. Nguyen told him that he had been unable to find the knee cap so it would take more operations. About ten days after this operation, Captain Stockdale was taken to a new part of the hospital where he was anaesthetized and the leg cast removed. Dr. Nguyen tried this time to manipulate the knee bone back into the socket. When he awoke he was told that they had failed and that the next operation would come when he was stronger.

Captain Stockdale continued to be an object of curiosity as nurses' aides came in for shots, some proving to be real amateurs. Around mid-October two men appearing to be Europeans wandered in, looked apprehensively

at Captain Stockdale as if they were lost, and quickly vanished despite his "Come in!" Also, during this period, Captain Stockdale asked for and received a piece of stationery to write to his family, and he wrote to his wife telling her not to worry. Although Dr. Nguyen assured him that he would take care of the stamps and mailing, this letter was never mailed. While in the hospital Captain Stockdale learned 25 to 30 Vietnamese words, and he believes he might even have been able to acquire a dictionary if he had asked. The language lesson abruptly ended on his return to prison since there it was against official policy to use any Vietnamese words except one, and that was "Bao Cao," literally "report," used to summon the guards.

#### BACK TO THE PRISON SYSTEM

Ominously one morning, Mickey Mouse showed up formally presenting soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste, and saying, "I represent the camp authority." The next day Eagle and Owl came to talk business. They were after "hard" military information such as the range capabilities of an A-4 with and without tanking and where on a chart the A-4's were refueled. Their questions indicated that they had come to pick a fight. A stalemate was reached, and they left, but the new era had begun. Owl came alone the following day and said, "You have made a very grave error. Things will not go well for you." He posed as a friend, acting as if he were personally grieved. Owl asked the same leading questions and left when the same stalemate was reached. They were clearly looking for trouble.

On the night of 25 October 1965, Mickey Mouse arrived with Dipshit. They hurriedly lugged Captain Stockdale in blindfolds out to a jeep for the six or seven block ride back to a new era at Heartbreak.

#### HEARTBREAK

The blindfold was removed as the jeep stopped, ending the short trip from the hospital to Hoa Lo prison on 25 October 1965. Captain Stockdale saw that they were parked at what later became known as the Heartbreak entrance about a third of a block inside Hoa Lo. Dipshit soon arrived with a pair of badly fitting crutches and led him down into a dingy cell block with four cells on either side, dim lights, and dirt piles on the floor. It was much worse than Room 24 and he realized that he was in the real prison for the first time. He had been given no advice at the hospital on care for his leg or on such details as whether he could put weight on it. Almost immediately though his spirits were lifted as he heard pounding and a voice later identified as 1/T Porter Halyburton saying, "God damn this hard bed!" This was the first American voice he had heard since capture and his reaction was, "I could've kissed him." The next morning Dipshit escorted Captain Stockdale from his cell, HB-3, to the improvised Heartbreak wash area. He saw his first American just before reaching the wash area - the grinning face of LCDR Dave Wheat peeking over the door of HB-1.

That first day at Heartbreak Captain Stockdale made contact with the four residents by whispering when the guard was out. Danger signals had been set up with whistled versions of "Mary had a Little Lamb" to start the conversation, and "Pop Goes the Weasel" to end it. At that time the communications crackdown had not come, particularly with Dipshit's inattention to detail. On the day that Captain Stockdale arrived, another resident of Heartbreak, LCDR Rod Knutson, had been hauled in to quiz to sign propaganda papers. After jamming the pen through the paper, Knutson wound up "in the ropes." This was Captain Stockdale's first contact with a torture victim.

He remained in HB-3 from 25 October to 30 December, gaining strength and confidence in his leg. A total of 20 or more prisoners came and went during this period, but, generally, prison activity was at a low level. Camp regulations, poorly phrased and preposterous, were posted saying that as criminals the prisoners must obey regulations or be severely punished, that they must answer any question asked by the Vietnamese, and that they must comply with the demands of a Vietnamese. Those who complied were promised favors, while those who didn't would get their just due. The Vietnamese had a methodology evolving, a sort of closed loop designed to produce products of propaganda. The main elements in this loop were the imposition of either guilt or despondency as prisoners were isolated or put in solo and ordered not to communicate. The prisoner had the general choice of living within himself without communicating, and almost certainly developing a degree of despondency or embarrassment for being so compliant in the eyes of his fellow prisoners, or he could communicate and risk being caught and brought in on a communications rap for violating camp authority. The Vietnamese, and Communists in general, always fabricate a pseudo legal system to establish the power of conscience and enable the imposition of guilt as they preach the rightness and wrongness. The prisoner could minimize his exposure by not exposing himself through the violation of regulations. But, implicit in this sort of reticent behavior, and of most serious consequence, was the two-edged matter of the prisoner's mental health and his obligation to his fellow prisoners, particularly those in need of physical or moral support. While the Vietnamese had the prisoner coming or going, Captain Stockdale at that early point began to assemble a line of resistance with the keystone being his reading of the Code of Conduct to direct, above all else, a course of action for taking charge if senior. To avoid this responsibility simply to minimize exposure to self did not seem reasonable to Captain Stockdale.

At Heartbreak during this period in the Fall of 1965, communications were at much less risk than later. Quizzes were tentative and exploratory involving biographic and general matters. Most questions involved trivia and to maintain a certain credibility, Captain Stockdale answered most of them. At one point he was asked to read a propaganda book and write impressions of it. He made light of it, writing a sophisticated criticism. At some of the quizzes he noticed the face of a non-English speaking bystander who turned out to be the architect of this emerging program, the "Cat," or MAJ Bai. In late November or early December, Captain Stockdale

was called out on a rainy night to quiz in Room 24 with Cat and Rabbit. The latter spoke English, appeared about 30, and later proved to have a natural aptitude for extortion, although at this session he served only as an interpreter. Captain Stockdale had come to this quiz with a comprehensive list of grievances, which he based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949, covering complaints ranging from food to isolation to medical care, his leg and treatment in general. Cat's response was to lecture Captain Stockdale that he was a criminal who did not understand his status, and that medical matters such as his leg could not be settled until political matters were settled. At that point Cat left and Rabbit ended the quiz with an ominous, "You've made a very great error just now. I feel I should warn you, you've made a bad impression." Two other themes emerged shortly from other quizzes with Cat, that of "Help me run the camp" and "You must tell people at home about the true nature of the war."

During November 1965 Dipshit left and a new guard arrived. This man, Pig Eye, quickly became Cat's right hand man and a master of torture.

On about 17 December 1965, COL Robinson Risner arrived at HB-2. He came from a difficult period of torture and starvation at New Guy Village after having been in trouble with the Camp Commander at the Zoo, the "Fox." He brought news, taught Captain Stockdale the tap code, and began what has become a great and close friendship.

By Christmas Day 1965 "We had Robbie next door, Pig Eye in the hall, and Cat in the wing." Called for a quiz that day right after COL Risner, Captain Stockdale was taken to a special sort of ceremonial room west of Room 24 where Cat, Rabbit, and Pig Eye shared tea, bananas, and candy with him. Cat's attitude was now that social and professional rapport had been established, "Let's get on with it."

Five days later it was Captain Stockdale's turn to face the wrath of the emerging extortion system. He was caught red-handed in an observation position in his cell that he had carefully convinced the Vietnamese that he could not reach because of his leg. At 2000 on the evening of 30 December 1965, he was marched along the second deck of the south building and down a circular stairway to New Guy Village Cell 3.

#### THE EXTORTION AND TORTURE PROCESS BEGINS

During the early Winter of 1965, Captain Stockdale felt he was caught in the web of a long range plan in which propaganda was the name of the game. It was clear that Cat ran the show, and Cat's business was propaganda. Captain Stockdale felt uneasy about the token emphasis the Vietnamese had placed on military information and about the seemingly low-keyed tension and leisurely pace Cat was taking with him. He was not surprised, therefore, to be moved to the inner cell block of New Guy Village that night of 30 December 1965 to a fate he anticipated would parallel that of COL Risner's

recent experience through the grinder. Waiting for Captain Stockdale in New Guy Village Cell 3 was Mickey Mouse with charges of violation of camp regulations in communicating with other prisoners. For his bad attitude, he was to be punished. His hands were bound behind him and his legs were locked in irons, and he remained in this upright position throughout the chilly night. For four days he remained bound and upright during the daytime, although after the first night his hands were bound in front at night so that he could at least lie down and cover up. This return to isolation was depressing for he soon learned that there were no other Americans in the inner cell block of New Guy Village, and that the Vietnamese prisoners on either side of him did not respond to his pounding. In an uncommon action, the Vietnamese cut him back to one half the usual meager food ration. This was unusual since Captain Stockdale found that starvation was not a normal part of the Vietnamese torture program. In only one case did the Vietnamese cut off all food for an extended period of time and that came during a particularly harsh torture period in 1969. Far more common was Captain Stockdale's counter tactic of resistance through use of the "nervous stomach" hunger strike technique.

After the introductory four days, the irons remained but the hand binding stopped and Captain Stockdale settled down to the cold and degrading filth during this period of watchful waiting and worrying about Cat's next move. He soon realized that he was going through an oscillatory pattern of carrot and stick actions which would continue throughout the whole winter. Cat was at that time concentrating on two Americans, Captain Stockdale and Colonel Risner, as he tried to establish the best operating techniques for the extortion of propaganda. Cat hoped that this sort of erosion program would dump the entire camp into his lap as enthusiastic members of the American left wing.

On the tenth day in New Guy Village Cell 3, Captain Stockdale was called to quiz. Rabbit was sullen and irate at his poor attitude and announced that the camp authority had decided that he must write to his government and explain the true story of the war and the determination of the Vietnamese people to fight on. As in earlier quizzes, Captain Stockdale went over the grounds of the Geneva Conventions and Accords. Rabbit presented a demeaning, treasonous "filthy piece of propaganda" which was to be addressed to the U. S. "Foreign Secretary of State." Captain Stockdale was sent back to New Guy Village Cell 3, out of irons and on a "full" ration comprised of watery soup and an eight inch long, small diameter, loaf of French bread. He had written nothing when they came back that afternoon so he was taken back to Room 18 to face an irate Rabbit. There Pig Eye introduced him to "the ropes," the Vietnamese primary instrument of torture, binding his arms in back, cinching the ropes up, forcing his head down, pausing, cinching further, and on and on for an extended period until Captain Stockdale said the words, "I submit." Rabbit left the room while Captain Stockdale copied the paper, and he was then returned to New Guy Village Cell 3, where he spent a sleepless night out of irons. He felt trapped and doomed to a life of long separation, of being a



cripple, and of being a man without self respect or reputation. The next quiz began with Rabbit telling Captain Stockdale that he would have to clean up the letter, which Captain Stockdale countered by pleading that nobody would believe a letter from a Navy Commander to the Secretary of State. Rabbit expressed interest as Captain Stockdale continued that the letter really should be sent to the Navy (CNO) people "who make decisions on political problems." In this play for time and maneuvering room, he wrote an obscure and flowery letter alluding to the primitiveness of the Vietnamese people and addressed to a CNO office where he knew personal friends would read it. Rabbit took the letter but the Vietnamese did not like it because they apparently did not know what to make of it and did not understand a number of sophisticated political science terms thrown in. Captain Stockdale did not at that point understand a basic fact which gave him considerable concern when he later realized the fact that the Vietnamese derive important byproducts from such letters by printing or using brief extracts. In this instance, probably because they didn't understand and consequently didn't like the letter, no use was made of it to Captain Stockdale's knowledge.

Captain Stockdale had been impressed with "the ropes" which had left his left hand numb. In spite of this physical problem, along with the serious problems with his leg and arm, he was resolved to think and hang on. He knew Cat and knew that he was engaged in a battle of wits. But he was depressed and concerned that he would be used, that he would not be able to salvage his self respect. Cat's next act was a humorous questionnaire wanting to know if Navy Chaplains acted as propaganda officers, the extent of political lectures, and the like. Captain Stockdale addressed both this and another paper he was asked to write on command and control in such a general fashion as to be worthless.

#### RETURN TO HEARTBREAK

The soft sell phase of the pendulum had swung back once more, and on a cold night in early February, Captain Stockdale was hurriedly moved back to Heartbreak (HB-4) to join COL Robbie Risner, who was in HB-2, as the only residents of Heartbreak, "Two sad, prayerful guys."

The carrot soon gave way to the stick in Cat's relentless campaign centered on Captain Stockdale in February 1966. Shortly after his return to Heartbreak and his re-establishment of communications with COL Risner, he was called to quiz in New Guy Village. Rabbit and Mickey Mouse were still hot on the scent as they explained the problem they were having getting prisoners to talk. They wanted Captain Stockdale to make a tape reassuring the prisoners that the questions asked by the Vietnamese were legitimate. With Chop Loi brandishing the ropes in the background, Captain Stockdale began the tape. In a flat and poorly worded statement he stated that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam did not honor the Geneva Conventions of 1949, that they were not treating prisoners as prisoners of war, and that "the man who is addressing you is not operating under rules

which we have been taught that pertain." The Vietnamese were not too fussy that night so that ended the session. Weak, dizzy, and sick at heart, he was led back toward Heartbreak. Passing through New Guy Village court a careless guard caused Captain Stockdale to accidentally step up to his crotch into a deep sewer drain with his injured left leg. Within days he became sick with a fever and a swollen leg. A doctor came to the cell, listened to his heart and gave him what may have been sulfa pills. It was during this period of about five days' sickness with what he believes was yellow jaundice that he learned "how great Robbie Risner was" for although he couldn't be seen, Robbie's scriptures and love saw him through. Captain Stockdale was never again seriously sick during his confinement although his left leg was to remain a problem for several years.

#### THE EXTORTION PROGRAM IN ACTION

As Captain Stockdale became stronger, Cat called him to quiz scoffing at his Geneva Conventions talk and accusing him of trying to mislead with tricks. Using Rabbit as an interpreter, Cat notified him that thus far the Vietnamese found him unsatisfactory, that the tape was not good enough, and that they were still studying his letter to CNO.

In late February 1966, Captain Stockdale was moved back to New Guy Village Cell 3 where he would remain for over two months. Before this move, COL Risner and Captain Stockdale had arranged basic signals, such as a circle on the bottom of a dish for Risner and a straight line in the same place to indicate Stockdale. Both had been shocked at the degree of attention the two of them were receiving with four guards and two officers more or less full time and Cat part time. Back in New Guy Village, Captain Stockdale was almost immediately apprehended by a guard for attempting to communicate with the Vietnamese or Thai's in the vicinity. So, in late February, back in the irons he went. Within several weeks Rabbit called him to Room 18 for an "informal feeling out" quiz on corrections to the tape and letter. Captain Stockdale said he would not be used as a tool to assist the Vietnamese in the exploitation of other Americans. After ten more days in irons, Rabbit convened a more serious quiz in Room 18. More emotional than usual, Rabbit read the riot act and demanded that Captain Stockdale confess his crimes and apologize. A refusal followed by a session in the ropes provided the prelude for Rabbit to settle down to three specific documents. First, Rabbit dictated a brief "confession" for Captain Stockdale to repent his crimes and to request mercy from the Vietnamese people. At that time the Vietnamese had not realized the significance of a signature, and it was only later that signatures became required. Second, Rabbit produced a short script to be taped. Captain Stockdale found this script unconvincing and "not a senior officer's directive." Third, the CNO letter materialized and Captain Stockdale was told to insert words to the effect, "If what we are doing is in accordance with international law, why would (either Maxwell Taylor or Dean Rusk) have said what he did in (Life or Look) Magazine?" Captain Stockdale was sent back to New Guy Village feeling "like two cents." Two days later the stick phase continued as Rabbit called him to quiz in Room 18


and said his orders were to clean up the "confession," put it in Captain Stockdale's own words, and get it on tape. In reply, Captain Stockdale said that he could not stand the content or the sniveling demeanor of the thing and that it was "beneath the dignity of a man to say something like that." In this long, tough session Rabbit left and returned several times giving Captain Stockdale a feeling like "an upside down cockroach being eaten alive by ants." Finally, Rabbit bought a simple statement that the bombing of North Vietnam was "aggressive." Like a fly caught in a web, that afternoon Captain Stockdale was called again to Room 18 and told that "the staff officer" was not happy with what he had said but was satisfied with his attitude. Therefore, he must repeat the tape while being photographed. He was moved blindfolded out to a jeep and driven to a location about 20 minutes away from Hoa Lo. The room was brightly lit as the blindfold was removed. Rabbit had a script and the demand that it be read before the camera. Down to his last ace in the hole, Captain Stockdale methodically and distinctly waved his hand in front of himself as he cut the tape. That hand was carefully positioned with the fist clenched and the little finger and the forefinger extended into what is commonly known as the "bullshit" signal. Although the tape and film sequence was completed twice, each time with the "bullshit" signal waving throughout, the Vietnamese were so preoccupied with the words that they did not react to the signal. Captain Stockdale felt rotten about the tape even though he knew the message was innocuous and the actions discredited any propaganda value although this film may have later been shown on Japanese television. Even though he had to settle for less than he wanted, he set two things as values above all else at that time. These values were his resolve to retain absolute loyalty to his fellow prisoners and his determination to avoid being "tamed" to the extent the Vietnamese could display him in public. He was anxious to be done with this isolation and extortion phase and get into a social environment where he could work with others, gain physical and mental strength, and more readily define his purposes. He wanted to establish contact so that he could begin to fulfill his leadership responsibilities.

On through March and April 1966 he remained in New Guy Village. At one point he noticed extensive construction work over at the Nobby Room including the plaster blob soundproofing which would give the room its "nobby wall" name.

Rabbit was ever present and one day he wanted written history. In response, Captain Stockdale wrote a school boy's written history of the United States, which "I would be proud to have read by the fourth grade of any school." Using a tactic which will be discussed in more detail later, he "planted" ideas which were designed to capitalize on the fact that he knew the Vietnamese were oriented toward and playing to the American people and that if the American people knew the Vietnamese were torturing U. S. prisoners of war, the rug would be pulled out from under their propaganda program. For example, when he came to the Korean War in his

history, he stressed that the American people did not understand that war until they started seeing American bodies coming home. In particular the reports of the brainwashing and the torture of prisoners by the North Koreans had united the American people.

On another occasion Eagle conducted a quiz centered around the question, "What will the U. S. run out of first - planes, pilots, or oil?" Captain Stockdale told him that the U. S. had untold resources of all three. In response to Eagle's question concerning how he was being treated, he replied "poorly" and indicated that he would like some kind of work such as typing. This comment would later prove to be important and it clearly revealed how closely the Vietnamese scrutinized the results of even the most casual quiz.

Rabbit came in one day and informed Captain Stockdale that he was to talk to a Vietnamese but that it would not be for propaganda. After a four to five block jeep ride, they arrived at a large office building and proceeded to a large assembly room. Rabbit sat in the corner while Captain Stockdale was brought before a civilian introduced as Dr. Vien, probably "the best thing they could come up with in the way of an intellectual," and a man apparently attempting to improve his knowledge of American motivation so that he could write better propaganda. Captain Stockdale's earlier apprehensions about the meeting were eased as the dialogue unfolded and a statement of views developed. Dr. Vien had been in charge of the Paris Peace Movement during the Dien Bien Phu phase of the Indochina War. Captain Stockdale realized that night through Dr. Vien's comments that the Vietnamese intended to try to win the war in Washington and that the Vietnamese were concerned and sensitive about charges of brainwashing. 

During the rest of the Spring of 1966, Captain Stockdale remained in New Guy Village, but by late March several Americans were nearby and covert communications were possible. In April Captain Jerry Denton was brought in for torture after being apprehended for the "grave crime" of inciting others to oppose the camp authority. Captain Denton set an exemplary pattern of loyalty and selfless patriotism throughout his confinement.

#### THE PRESSURE EASES

During Captain Stockdale's remaining days at Hoa Lo in April and May of 1966, occasional quizzes continued as Rabbit worked to obtain "improvements" on the CNO letter, the film-tape statement, and the "confession," all three of which had been extorted earlier in the year. In late April he was moved to Heartbreak (HB-1) where the covert communications with other prisoners and the somewhat eased quiz, torture, and isolation program made him feel that he might be getting "out of the trap." Early May was highlighted by his first bath since capture. Quiz sessions led to a repetition of the "bullshit" signal movie, this time with added Morse Code signals. After one night session with Rabbit, Captain Stockdale began to

sense that the pattern of continual rewriting with only meaningless changes involved "a problem of face" for the Vietnamese. On another occasion he was taken to a room in New Guy Village court where he was asked to listen to a portable radio. This innocuous session marked the first time that he heard Hanoi Hannah, and it may have been arranged to stash Captain Stockdale from Heartbreak while the Vietnamese were moving Captain Denton out, probably to the Zoo. The next day, on a night early in June 1966, Captain Stockdale, LCOL Jim Lamar, and MAJ Sam Johnson were taken by jeep to the Garage at the Zoo where Captain Stockdale remained until January 1967.

### THE ZOO

Captain Stockdale left Hoa Lo with a sense of immense relief to get "farther and farther from the clutches of that Cat and Rabbit, and Cat's friend, Pig Eye, and company." He believed that Cat's order of priorities during this extortion campaign for both himself and COL Risner had been first to obtain public appearances, and, second, to use them to influence other prisoners to any degree that Cat could arrange. Cat's carrot and stick "incessant pestering presence" sent Captain Stockdale to the "depths of contemplation and despair" as he put pressure against pressure to free himself and get out into the system where he could live as a normal prisoner. Captain Stockdale's defense against Cat's extortion program had been to make it unprofitable for Cat to spend so much time and effort on one man. He had not been "tamed" into a public appearance and he had not let Cat use him as he sensed Cat most wanted to use him. In retrospect, as Captain Stockdale reviews his years of confinement in the context of news photos of other prisoners of war and news releases collected by his family during that period, "If you could put yourself, as I can, back in those early years in prison when we were so willing to do anything to prevent a pose of compliance and association with our captors, you would share with me a feeling of futility. . . What I fought so long to avoid may have been received by the public as commonplace and although I wouldn't have done it any other way, it seems almost disproportionate and like a bad dream." Captain Stockdale fully realized the intrigue, the insidiousness, the intent, the purposefulness and the plans which he imagined were going through Cat's head, and he believes that as Cat realized that an impasse had been reached between them, the move came about. Therefore, it was with great relief that he went to the Zoo where he hoped to "gain a little strength and get my physical body ready for the action ahead."

Captain Stockdale's cell (Garage 5) at the Zoo was sandwiched between the west end Cell 6 occupied by MAJ Sam Johnson and Cell 4 which housed two Thai prisoners, T/SGT Jam Bumroonguom and M/SGT Praphan Sirion, known then as Papaya. For the next six months Captain Stockdale and Major Johnson spent many hours each day conducting a tap discussion of the camp situation and observations of Major Johnson from his slight vantage point of events outside the Garage. Although he was out of the near total isolation of the past six months, Captain Stockdale still was kept out of

the mainstream of prison affairs because he only had "dead end" communications with Major Johnson. His communications with the rest of the Garage were blocked by the two Thai's in Cell 4. Papaya and Jam brought water daily to the other Garage cells, and Major Johnson quickly established that Papaya could speak some English but that Jam showed no sign of interest in English. Major Johnson believed that Papaya was even trying to hide the fact from Jam that he was covertly talking to the Americans. Most communications with Papaya were by Major Johnson since Captain Stockdale in Cell 5 was more visible to patrolling guards than was Cell 6. On one occasion Papaya pointed to Jam who was locking elsewhere, and shook his head "no," giving Captain Stockdale the distinct impression that he did not want Jam to get involved or even be aware of the fact Papaya was talking. In hindsight, Captain Stockdale believed that at this time Jam was undergoing a period of regret at his shutdown and plight, and was apprehensive about threats of reprisals for fraternizing with Americans. In any case the result of their presence was to block communications from Captain Stockdale down to the main section of the Garage, and this, in turn, precluded action by Captain Stockdale as senior ranking officer (SRO).

This semi-isolation may have been by design of Rabbit, who remained Captain Stockdale's "patron saint." It was Rabbit with whom he still had to contend, for apparently Cat had assigned Rabbit to "keep an eye on me and keep me busy," while Cat moved on to other matters. He felt that Cat had stashed him until some sort of new exploitation campaign could be arranged. His quizzes were not frequent, and it seemed that Rabbit approached them "as more of a bother than anything else." Rabbit first had a plan for Captain Stockdale to read news over the prison radio. The Zoo at that time had a loudspeaker mounted in each cell and this was new to Captain Stockdale, since Hoa Lo was not at that time similarly equipped. The Zoo routine included a morning and evening dose of Hanoi Hannah, the Voice of Vietnam. So, Rabbit's first angle was for Captain Stockdale to supplement the news by reading Vietnam News Agency releases on the radio. This was his first hurdle at the Zoo, and he refused, defying Rabbit successfully.

Captain Stockdale had only one quiz with the Zoo Camp Commander, the "Fox." Fox seemed to be a career Army man with his complete focus at that time on the mechanics of running the camp, matters such as how to stop prisoner communications and how to combat the prisoner organization. He spoke no English and was not the sort of man who would be affiliated with the inner workings of propaganda activities. In short "he was not in the same league as Cat." The quiz with Fox resulted from a cell inspection during which needles and wires were found in Captain Stockdale's mosquito net. Some of the needles were of the damning variety and "long enough to kill a man." Colonel Risner and Captain Stockdale later derived some laughs from this incident since one of the fast paced shuffles of cells at Hoa Lo had led to an unintended exchange of mosquito nets between the two. The needles remained with Captain Stockdale in his move to the Garage although he was not aware that he had them. Fox issued furious warnings and threats, but Captain Stockdale maintained a posture of complete ignorance and the matter was dropped. It was clear through Fox's actions

that he had to check with Cat or Rabbit before anything went on vis-a-vis Captain Stockdale.

### THE EXTORTION PROGRAM EXAMINED

Having been unsuccessful in obtaining the press reading, Rabbit seemed to be looking for something for Captain Stockdale to do. A foothold had been gained by Captain Stockdale back at Heartbreak when he had refused the order to go to a press conference and had been successful in defying the order, thereby establishing a foothold to support defiance of another order up to a certain point. He had diagnosed the extortion and counterextortion "dance" along these lines, "Once they got you to perform task A by threat, pressure or torturing, then they figured that the task was in the bag. Henceforth, you would always do task A. You were on the hook for Task A. Not to do task A when asked the second or third time was not the problem in that the offense as they saw it was not just to do task A but to change your mode of operation. It was like a ratchet on an auto jack. Once they had made that point they felt they had moral assuasion over you, and you had to backtrack. You had to fight a battle to get off the hook." The fact that there was no easy way off the hook, or down the ratchet, Captain Stockdale believes was not readily apparent to many newcomers. He had quickly realized as he got into "this cobweb of extortion" back at Hoa Lo, that this was one of the basic ground rules of the Vietnamese extortion technique. Captain Stockdale further explains that, "You take a stand and they give you the ropes. You submit and do it, and you're broken to halter. You're taken a step up the ratchet. Henceforth, you are expected to complete that and then do it again and again and again. Once to change that behavior pattern and move back is triple jeopardy because you have changed your whole program. They are able to generate a rather convincing line of reasoning that you're violating what has been set as your normal mode of behavior. So they go on and on and they take the next step up the ratchet. That is what is so insidious about it. You can't get off with little because a little becomes common and then the next little, etc. Each time you back off the ratchet, you do so with a tumultuous break in the flow." That was the basic technique of extortion.

In Captain Stockdale's immediate past at Hoa Lo, he had been "worked up, massaged, and catered to between torture bouts" and the final payoff had come in the form of a public appearance that the Vietnamese had wanted. He had presented counter threats that he was "going to be dangerous" to them at the press conference with convincing enough credibility so he had stepped off the ratchet. This gave him a moral advantage, the momentum had been established. He judged that Rabbit was not so preoccupied with him as had earlier been the case for now Rabbit had the whole Zoo on which to concentrate. Back at Heartbreak in May 1966, Captain Stockdale had noticed that what new prisoners were being forced to do was basically to "confess their guilt" in violating international law and to establish this point as the first step in the road to degradation. Because of his frequent extended isolation at Hoa Lo, he can not establish an exact time when the Vietnamese had made it SOP to get a "confession," but he could

tell that what had been "tentative and experimental with Robbie and me was now becoming SOP." By 1967 this had become practically universal. Judging mainly from statements that Rabbit yelled into his ear during a rope session in March-1966, Captain Stockdale believes that by that date the general problem of "wanton bombing of churches, pagodas, schoolhouses and this sort of thing seemed to have become with them an obsession." To get the "confession" on paper and use it for persuasion and blackmail later was the "general mode" of the Zoo in the Summer of 1966, and this was a full time job for Rabbit. Thus Captain Stockdale believes that Cat had told Rabbit to "Keep your eye on Stockdale. Butter him up. Use him as you can. Try to involve him as much as you can so as to work a few steps up on the ratchet. The time will come when we can use him."

In this considerably changed status at the Zoo, Captain Stockdale was still under the control of the propaganda unit of Cat and Rabbit. He had already been through the ringer, and had proven, he so hoped, that he was not yet intimidated to the point where the Vietnamese could trust him at a press conference. The military virtues of self-control, dignity, and composure may, in Captain Stockdale's view, not be appropriate tools for outward display in fighting the game of extortion. As he read Cat, he realized that Cat was fearful of one thing and "that was suddenly being embarrassed with even a left wing group" by a sudden, unpredictable change in prisoner behavior. He wanted to be able to count on certain behavior, guaranteed of submissiveness at least to a degree. The "worst thing that could happen to him was to have somebody go haywire at just the wrong time." In fact he was stung on this time and again even though he was normally working with Communist reporters with which he could patch up things if a prisoner acted up, but there were the borderline cases, such as Japanese Communists and others. It grew more and more obvious to Captain Stockdale that it was to his advantage "to not be known as a man of calmness, dignity, and self control, but to be known as a man capable of losing control of himself in the clutch." During an all night session with the Cat and Mickey Mouse earlier that year, he found that they seemed to be "less and less interested in me the more erratic and emotional and flamboyant I became. I could sense their reaction, and I pressed my advantage a little bit." Thus the key to Captain Stockdale appeared to be to discover what strengths he could generate in this system which was so loaded against him. The mechanism of extortion was slowly taking form in his eyes and mind.

During the second half of 1966 at the Zoo, Captain Stockdale went for weeks without harrassment, quizzes or contact with anyone except covert communications with Major Sam Johnson. It was clear that Rabbit was going through a "basic confession" campaign or purge with the other residents at the Zoo. Ironically, this short range program in the end proved highly detrimental to the Vietnamese, Captain Stockdale felt. All the Vietnamese were able to get from most prisoners was a sort of copied statement of guilt and admission of preposterous crimes which had little credibility. But, the Vietnamese were not at that time sophisticated enough to realize that the American public was not going to swallow that line. Although the purge caused the prisoners much grief and suffering, Captain Stockdale



concluded that it had a good reaction on prisoner morale later. It so embittered most of them that any sort of soft sell program later implemented by the Vietnamese could never be accepted by the prisoners. Nothing the Vietnamese could have done would have more firmly united the prisoners than this "bad Summer" of 1966 purge program in Captain Stockdale's estimation.

During this widespread "confession" purge, Rabbit indicated that the program was universal and that there was no escape from a confession of crimes. By that time Captain Stockdale was familiar with the words the Vietnamese wanted, the fact that they seemed less concerned about how those words were used, and the problem they had in catching subtle innuendoes. So he wrote a note simply to the effect that he was guilty of "violation of the air space of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." Rabbit seemed preoccupied with others at the time, and accepted the note almost as if he was now able to mark off the slot on a check off list. Captain Stockdale was very likely exempted from further participation in the general purge during the Summer of 1966 because he and Colonel Risner had "been through the wringer" earlier that year.

As he analyzed his recent experiences, Captain Stockdale determined that another facet of the struggle with the Vietnamese, and in the broader sense with Communists in general, involved the matter of moral arguments. They do not like to go into a conflict situation, such as a purge or even a quiz, unless they feel they have a "bedrock position of justice on their side." The justness may be different and even distorted in our minds because they often don't bother with truth, but in their preparations for the struggle, considerable attention is given to preparation of moral justification. Therefore, whenever the prisoner can call upon moral arguments he may be one up on the Vietnamese. Captain Stockdale recommends that the prisoner try to base his arguments on moral justification, whenever possible applying the arguments to the Communist moral value system. Lessening the value of this defense, however, is the use of counter moral arguments by the Vietnamese. An example of the moral argument technique is afforded by Captain Stockdale's tactics during the forced taping sessions in the Spring of 1966. He had been clear and distinct on his position as a prisoner of war under the Geneva Conventions of 1949. He presented what he felt was a strong case, that it was "contrary to conscience, law, and common sense" for him to contribute to the persuasion of other Americans. His clearly stated position was that it was a matter of moral integrity. Captain Stockdale also used this stance in other quizzes, including sessions with Rabbit concerning the radio readings.

Another Communist technique, exercised extensively by the North Koreans, with which Captain Stockdale was keenly aware, was the use of "self criticism." He kept waiting for the time when the Vietnamese would introduce the tactic of getting groups of prisoners together. In the technique used among themselves, the Communists attempt to find people "so motivated as to feel guilt with regard to their violation of the norm set by the Communist society." If they get the groups together and can get one

man to stand up and confess his guilt to the others, thereby establishing an interpersonal relationship in which others are encouraged to do so, the stage is set for powerful intimidation. Although he feared that this tactic would commence at any time, it turned out to be a false fear. "I made the same error in my judgment there as I repeatedly made in forming tactics, and that was that I always overestimated the Vietnamese and underrated the Americans."

#### ON STASH AT THE ZOO

In fulfilling his obligation to keep Captain Stockdale at least somewhat busy, Rabbit asked him to do typing. Captain Stockdale did it reluctantly and set the ground rule that he would type only copyrighted material. His typing included articles by Quincy Wright, Felix Greene, and other "left wing American intellectuals." He refused to type the transcript of an anti-war radio broadcast called "Granny Goose," on the moral grounds that it was "an illegal program operating contrary to good ethics and that it was repugnant to me as an American to do it." Again he stated his case strongly in moral terms and it sold.

The typing program extended over about a three month period during which Rabbit otherwise left him alone. Physically he was gaining strength but the pain remained, and he still could not stand for more than 15 minutes at a time because of his badly injured left leg. His left arm was also getting stronger although it was not strong enough to support push ups. He was allowed to bathe weekly in a shed between the Garage and the Barn, and this afforded the opportunity to establish an occasional communications link with Captain Harry Jenkins. The food was meager and poor, but "that was the least of my worries."

Captain Stockdale did not participate in the infamous Hanoi March of 7 July 1966, he believes, because he was too crippled to walk or stand for more than 15 minutes at that time. Curiously, he later heard over a Hanoi Hannah broadcast a full description of the march including the fact that among those in attendance were "James Bond Stockdale, Commander of the 16th Tactical Fighter Wing." So, although he apparently was programmed to attend, he did not. The night of what they later learned was the march, Major Sam Johnson, from his observation point in Cell 6, tapped an account to Captain Stockdale of the general confusion around the Zoo as the participants left by truck and returned several hours later that night.

In an unusual interview during the Fall of 1966, Captain Stockdale was called in to discuss amphibious landings with a Vietnamese naval officer known by various names including the "Eel." He wore a pale blue uniform and spoke fairly good English. When Captain Stockdale responded that he didn't know anything about amphibious landings, Eel seemed unsure of where to proceed. Captain Stockdale believed that at that time the Vietnamese were "sweating out some sort of landing in North Vietnam," and wanted to acquire knowledge of how landings were made, etc. Eel wanted

Captain Stockdale to write on the subject, but he successfully refused. He didn't feel that Eel had any power over him so he pleaded ignorance and made it clear that he considered the question "improper and out of the question."

On another occasion, Captain Stockdale had a conversation with a small Vietnamese known as the "Literary Bug," who had a good knowledge of literature and spoke good English. The purpose of this low-key session may have been to determine how cooperative Captain Stockdale would be, although Literary Bug explained it as an attempt to improve his own understanding of American humor and story telling. He explained that he frequently met visiting American groups and was unsuccessful in striking a humorous vein with them. Although Captain Stockdale's association with Literary Bug was slight and he believed him to have no major role, he found Literary Bug later at Vegas.

LCOL Jim Lamar joined Major Johnson in Cell 6 during the Fall of 1966. With them Captain Stockdale maintained daily and near continuous tap communications, although communications with the rest of the Garage were still blocked by Cell 4. They discussed at great length the various possibilities for escape from the Zoo but execution attempts were precluded by his crippled leg and the approaching Winter cold.

Near Christmas 1966, Captain Stockdale was taken to quiz. He was given a tangerine, a bit of candy and "very sweet" conversation, and was asked for confirmation that he had read Felix Greene's book Vietnam, Vietnam. Captain Stockdale replied without amplification that he had met Felix Greene and his wife. From that quiz he limped down to another room where he was submerged in flashlights as a letter was handed to him with the comment, "Here is your wife and children and a picture of your Mother." Captain Stockdale commented that the photograph was not his Mother, and the Vietnamese asked for an explanation. But by that time he realized that a hand held microphone was being held behind him so he took his "Christmas present," the letter, and left without further comment.

The next stop on the Christmas tour was the Zoo auditorium where Captain Stockdale was told to sit down behind other prisoners present so that he could not identify or converse with them. He was caught off guard by this whole fast paced 30 minutes' sequence of events, but he believes that a camera in the rear was photographing the prisoners watching a movie circus scene. Because of the probable camera angle and location, he concluded that only back of head shots were obtained. This incident represents the only known attempt to photograph Captain Stockdale during his confinement at the Zoo.

A room shuffle took place on the night of 2 January 1967 with Major Johnson and LCOL Lamar transferred to the Barn and Captain Stockdale moved into Garage 6. Among the three new occupants of Cell 5, Captain Tom Browning served as chief communicator enabling Captain Stockdale to establish good communications for the first time throughout the Garage. The

situation in that part of the Zoo in January 1967 had stabilized as the purge had run its course with the methodical "confessions" and "biographic shakedowns" fairly well cleaned up by then. From the narrow observation point in Cell 6, Captain Stockdale was a fascinated observer of the Zoo camp life. He was able to exchange gestured greetings with Captain Jerry Denton who he felt had been carrying the brunt of punishment for Captain Denton's leadership of the camp at that time. With comms established, Captain Stockdale continued to analyze the program of isolation, extortion and torture. He attempted to develop a way to let the American people know the prisoners were under pressure, and he tried to devise a way for the prisoners to act in a unified manner. His turn to apply the results of this analysis and to assume camp leadership was soon to come. On the night of 25 January 1967 he was moved back to Hoa Lo, to the new Camp Vegas.

#### OUT OF ISOLATION AND IN COMMAND

Vegas was new and still not completed when Captain Stockdale arrived there in January 1967. The new residents in Stardust didn't know at that time they were in Hoa Lo, but Captain Stockdale suspected that this was the case since the water tasted similar to the water he drank in Heartbreak the previous year. Although the Vietnamese had "Americanized" Vegas to preclude tapping through construction of the new cells without facing doors and with passageways on three sides of the rooms, it took the plank owners in Stardust about ten minutes to establish communications by wall thumping and talking under the doors. With Major Sam Johnson in SD-2, Captain Stockdale in SD-3, Captain Denton in SD-4, LT George Coker in SD-5, Captain Jenkins in SD-6, and Major Flesher in SD-7, the news exchange and update process began.

Bug was Camp Commander, the man who had been charged to put Vegas in operation. Although he later became an infamous "hatchet man," in early 1967 Bug had the appearance and instincts of a junior officer, relatively unsure of himself. Captain Stockdale was taken over to Thunderbird (TB-6) in late January for a day in irons and a quiz with Bug on the charge of communicating. Captain Stockdale's defense in this "half-hearted shake-down" was that as a result of living alone so long he was given to daily prayer and undoubtedly this was what had been heard. At one point Bug startled Captain Stockdale when he claimed that everything had been recorded on tape, but it became evident that he was not going to press to the point of requiring a confession. The quiz ended with Captain Stockdale concluding that Bug was just trying to preserve some semblance of order in Vegas until he was relieved by more senior officers.

One morning soon after the quiz, Captain Stockdale and the other residents of Stardust were taken individually over to Thunderbird for the day. As they discovered on their return to Stardust that night, the Vietnamese had installed radios in each cell during their absence.

After a week in Stardust, the group was dispersed with Captain Stockdale moving to TB-6 on the west end and north side of Thunderbird. There he remained until June 1957, finally out of isolation for an extended period, with good communications, and able to take command as senior ranking officer. At that time early in February, the population of Vegas roughly doubled with the arrival of a contingent from the Briarpatch which was split between the Zoo and Vegas. With Vegas filled, communications were soon established between the cell blocks, Thunderbird, Stardust, and Desert Inn, principally through the bath stalls. There, in spite of guard surveillance, the bath stall arrangement and prisoner determination permitted tapping and even occasionally loud voice communications. Complementing the living cell blocks in comprising the total picture of Vegas at that time were the punishment cell block, the Mint, and the quiz rooms in buildings that were to become known as Riviera and Golden Nugget.

The newly installed radio system began to function in early February, with doses of Hanoi Hannah, and one day the first locally produced program. This was a recitation of a series of articles from the New York Times by Harrison Salisbury following his visit to Hanoi. The readings were done by a clever, bright prisoner who was able to make a mockery of the contents with such innovations as Ho Chi Minh pronounced as "Horseshit Minh." The Vietnamese were delighted with the presentation and unaware of the mockery, but Captain Stockdale was not. He was bothered by the great potential danger in having prisoners exposed to one another in vocal communications, participating in what were obviously Vietnamese activities. That alone, if done in the extremely clever way of the Salisbury readings could be accommodated. But a basic mechanism of Communism, in Captain Stockdale's mind, was the appeal to conscience and an abhorrence of guilt. He feared as time went on the Vietnamese would either successfully manipulate isolation through use of the radios or break the policy of isolation and begin meetings of selected groups of prisoners which could gravitate into the mechanism of Communist indoctrination in Korea, self-criticism. If the Vietnamese could get a group of prisoners together in so-called open discussion of camp life, politics, and the like, it would only take one prisoner who feels a little personal guilt for something he has done to stand up and in the presence of his peers express his regret at his shortcomings. Manipulated by a shrewd moderator, this could become a contagious thing, with others encouraged to be so "honest" and a resulting, rapid slide into a self-propelled propaganda mechanism. This is what struck fear in his heart and the realization that he had to try to bring the process to a halt before it could really begin. Complicating the solution, of course, was the fact that the reading was only being done under heavy pressure. As he pondered the problem, laughing with the rest as Horseshit Minh was quoted, a new voice appeared. This solemn declaration of a related type subject matter lacked the clever approach and improvisation of the first reading. With that Captain Stockdale knew he must act. But, he knew he must act with delicacy because there were now two prisoners on the first step of the extortion ratchet and, therefore, in a different category from the prisoner

who successfully refused to read over the radio. The latter would be categorized as an obstinate, noncooperative prisoner, but the two readers would be violating established norms of behavior if they refused second or third readings. A change in norm is an overt act of retrogression as contrasted to noncompliance in the first place, and in this basic extortion game the retrogression or digging out process usually requires the acceptance of more pain than the initial refusal. So, Captain Stockdale put out the order in late February or early March 1967 to all of Vegas as follows: "To read on the camp radio requires a license. The fee for this license is one week in irons. This license is good for only one week and thereafter must be renewed." For the two already involved, this policy permitted accommodation if it was absolutely necessary. Captain Stockdale's careful phrasing reflected a technique of leadership he feels essential under conditions of a torture and extortion regime. That is that when you simply say, "There will be no reading" or "There will be no whatever," you may wind up with a net loss rather than a gain. He was trying "to control the fire if not put it out." The policy worked magnificently as both prisoners faced up to the Vietnamese, refused further readings, served a period in irons but extricated themselves successfully. Others were called in, the Vietnamese got similar refusals and apparently dropped the reading program. To the best of Captain Stockdale's knowledge, from then until he left Vegas no more prisoners went on the air. He was gratified to find that a united front had worked. This was tempered by the realization that it was a relatively minor issue, that the Vietnamese had as he had judged not chosen to apply extreme pressure on that particular issue, and that the tactic might not work in every case. But, nevertheless, a realistic policy had been issued and a victory had been won.

In issuing his "radio" policy, Captain Stockdale had clearly affixed his name to the policy as it was issued. He believed that "Anonymous leadership is impossible if not immoral," and that prisoners following policies had the right to know the author. He steadfastly maintained that policy throughout his confinement.

#### OUT OF SOLO

Vegas began to fill in March 1967, and the Vietnamese implemented the so-called mixing movement. As near as Captain Stockdale could determine the process, a new guy was put in with an old one or a young prisoner with an old man. Captain Stockdale was soon called to quiz where he was told that he would be joined by a young pilot, LCDR Danny Glenn. In this first break in solo living for Captain Stockdale with much of the past in isolation, he was overjoyed to be able to converse directly with another human being, particularly this fine, courageous young officer. LCDR Glenn's story of capture was a chronology of mistreatment including spending Christmas Day 1966 hanging suspended upside down on a hook.

An anti-bowing campaign was underway at Vegas at that time as the prisoners tried to beat the "incessant" bowing program which had been

implemented about October-November of 1965, simultaneous with the organization of the "camp authority." At one point the issue had narrowed to the choice of saluting or bowing, but while the military salute was more dignified than bowing, it was repugnant to be required to salute a junior Vietnamese such as a guard. The Vietnamese reacted strongly enough to this campaign and the bowing program was sufficiently well established that there wasn't much that could be done. Pragmatically, each prisoner had to work out his own system, and most did evolve as disdainful and disrespectful a bow as the "market would permit."

LCDR Glenn had learned the tap code while in the Nobby Room of New Guy Village. During a short stay there he had spotted light marks etched on a table in the room with a sign reading, "All new prisoners learn this code." Captain Stockdale never learned who had set the code under the noses of the Vietnamese on one of the Hoa Lo's primary "confession" tables, or whether the Vietnamese ever found or understood it.

It was in part during discussions with Lcdr Glenn that Captain Stockdale began formulating the details of basic camp policies designed to preserve a posture and prevent the Vietnamese from achieving excessive progress with the prisoners. Captain Stockdale's abhorrence for directives that "can't be followed" and that "come from anonymous sources" set the framework for his guidelines. He realized that the prisoners could not at this point go back to name, rank and serial number, but everyone no matter where they were in the extortion program could set a line. A line that would be universally applicable and enough to thwart the Vietnamese plans. While he did not know their exact plans, a camp radio policy statement from the so-called camp authority, possibly read by Rabbit, had given a preview. It gave a general threat that "reactionary" behavior was no longer going to be tolerated, that the prisoners were criminals and must, therefore, accept the fate of criminals, and that the prisoners must pay for their keep, see the light, and atone for sins. Among the generalities, one particular statement impressed Captain Stockdale as fraught with danger. That was the decree that a prisoner who saw the light and complied in spirit as well as in action with the camp authority would be released before the war was over, and, on the contrary, the prisoner who persisted in violating camp authority would be "cared for in a special category and in a special place. A place reserved for the blackest of criminals." This long harangue was delivered four or five times with Vietnamese officers not normally seen in Vegas stealthily checking prisoner reaction to this policy statement of the Spring of 1967.

#### B.A.C.K. U.S. AND OTHER POLICIES

Captain Stockdale reflected on his thought of 9 September 1965 that it would be a long war, at least five years long, and thought of the importance during this long term of prisoner mental health, spontaneity, and compassionate leadership. Captain Stockdale knew that with Colonel Robbie Risner isolated he was senior prisoner at large and it was time to

act. His orders were brief and catchy so that all could remember them. He knew that Vegas at that time was a holding point for transfer to other prisons and that his orders would be passed not only in Vegas but to outlying camps as transfers permitted. Captain Stockdale's first order was in direct aim at Rabbit, "We'll all go home together." This was followed by the series of basic guidance "B.A.C.K. U.S.," a meaningful, simple slogan aimed at the lowest common denominator in the prison system. Each letter had a meaning:

B - Bowing. Do not bow in public. That is under camera surveillance of nonprison authorities.

A - Air. Stay off the air. Stay off the radios. Stay off the tapes.

C - Crimes. Admit no crimes. Avoid using this Vietnamese word for violation. He realized this could not be resisted entirely but the word crime should be avoided if at all possible.

K - Kiss. Do not kiss the Vietnamese goodbye. Aimed directly at the release program in which he believed the Vietnamese would require the prisoners to say "Thank you for your generosity." This he felt would be beneath the prisoners' dignity.

U - Unity over

S - Self. The U and S in combination formed "Unity over Self." This carefully chosen phrase had a profound meaning to Captain Stockdale since "the highest value that each one of us should cling to is our trust and responsibility for one another." From personal experience he knew that particularly for seniors once the interrogator had completed his abuse and coaxing the one final blow was always something like, "You must not temper with our work with other prisoners. You have your own battle to fight. Please fight it yourself." Captain Stockdale feels that in a sense there is a "great temptation to reduce exposure to the individual, exposure to punishment, exposure to criticism, exposure to all those things that meant: First, punishment; second, propaganda; third, more involvement; and, fourth, a more susceptible position to extortion." And, where does the Code of Conduct fit into the situation where a man self imposes isolation in an attempt to minimize his output and exposure? This man often has to make a choice between remaining in solitude or exposing himself to further problems by taking charge, assuming leadership responsibilities, opposing the camp authority and inciting others. The choice was crystal clear to Captain Stockdale - he made it official, clearly identified as to authorship, "Unity over Self!" His consistent choice throughout confinement was "Don't protect your ass by dodging your responsibility to take command."

Although the camp was new and designed to be communications-proof, covert communications at Vegas during the time when B.A.C.K. U.S. was issued in late March 1967 were becoming relatively highly developed. Within Thunderbird communications took place mostly during the noon hour with Captain Ron Storz in TB-2 serving masterfully as a calm, cool master of



ceremonies and keeping the news flowing. Flash communications existed between TB-4 and Golden Nugget while dishwashers carried notes to the other outlying cell blocks in Vegas. Communications were difficult with the high security cell block, the Mint, but Captain Stockdale knew that the Mint's only occupants at the time, Captain's Denton and Mulligan, needed no special instructions. Since Vegas was being used at that time as a holding point for prisoners prior to transfer to other prisons, a certain measure of intercamp communication was also possible.

LCOL Tom Madison, a black officer, was brought in to TB-5 across the passageway from Captain Stockdale. He was sick and had been under considerable pressure from the Vietnamese because of his race, but he proved to be a "source of inspiration for us all." Throughout his confinement, Captain Stockdale never, even in private conversations, heard any reflection on the color of any fellow prisoner of war. He anticipated that the Vietnamese would attempt a combination of the tangential issues of the war with that of American racial problems, but he was relieved to find that the Vietnamese were very late in making that connection which might have provided such a propaganda windfall. Captain Stockdale believed that this was a reflection of the fact that the Vietnamese did not know much about America and were not expert enough to connect the racial protests in the U.S. with the war protests and hang an overall anti-war label on them until years later.

During this Spring of 1967, Captain Orson Swindle, "A source of great spirit and morale," refused to cooperate with the new Vietnamese program of signing for such articles as soap. He based his refusal on the grounds that the Vietnamese might later try to charge the U.S. Government for materials for which he had signed. Although he considered the point valid, Captain Stockdale did not designate it as a camp issue, leaving each to follow his own conscience.

The Vietnamese abandoned the mixing movement on a hot night in May as they reshuffled all of Vegas. Presiding over this operation was the "Fox," the former Zoo Commander, who by then had apparently relieved Bug as Vegas Camp Commander. Captain Stockdale remained in Thunderbird moving eastward two doors to TB-8 joining LCOL Jim Lamar. Captain Stockdale's life was rather unmolested at this time with only occasional quizzes. On one occasion he was quizzed by Literary Bug of Zoo days to discuss a Jack London novel Literary Bug was reading. Captain Stockdale had earlier sized Literary Bug up as a man who might be approached for aid in an escape so he cautiously worked into a conversation placing Literary Bug in the context of America, saying that a man of Literary Bug's culture and ability could have a fruitful life in America. "I personally could guarantee you this. A man like you could have a job immediately in the Hoover Library at Stanford University as a foreign language interpreter. You would have a nice home, a car, and you would be a member of a community not conscious of racial differences." Captain Stockdale slowly and obliquely continued, asking Literary Bug how "he" would get out of North Vietnam and suggesting that Hong Kong would be a good way since Captain Stockdale had friends there. Literary Bug squelched the "feeling out" by replying that the best way out was through Russia.

A Vietnamese named "Frenchy" called Captain Stockdale to quiz once that Spring. Frenchy had been Camp Commander at Briarpatch and had established a reputation for "really going haywire when excited." Frenchy began by saying that he understood Captain Stockdale was an acquaintance of Felix Greene, to which Captain Stockdale replied that he had met him. Frenchy continued that the Vietnamese were preparing to read excerpts from Greene's work on the camp radio and to acquaint the other prisoners with Greene, he wanted Captain Stockdale to write an introduction. Captain Stockdale wrote something close to the following: "Felix Greene is an English journalist, temporarily residing in Palo Alto, California, who is well known as a Communist apologist and who has had access to travel in China along with other Americans undoubtedly on the basis of sympathy for their cause. His politics are not representative or are not part of any mainstream of America. Personally, he is a refined gentleman. I have met both him and his wife socially. I have no deep association with him and have never discussed politics with him, but his reputation is as an apologist for Communists." When Frenchy took that paper, Captain Stockdale never heard any more about it. In August 1967 he heard that several prisoners had been interviewed by Felix Greene. This led Captain Stockdale to conclude that the "introduction" was a ruse for the Vietnamese to find out if it would be safe for him to see Greene. Not only did the Vietnamese conclude that it was not to their advantage for the audience to be arranged, Captain Stockdale never heard Greene's name again.

#### NO REPENT, NO REPAY

In another hurriedly arranged quiz, Captain Stockdale's occasional selective typing paid a dividend by providing a timely advance tip on a new Vietnamese policy. U. S. bombing operations were near Hanoi at that time, and the prisoner living conditions were poor. The Hanoi water system was out most of the time and as a result of the water shortage the prisoners were not allowed to bathe frequently, although the Vietnamese had dug several wells in the Vegas court providing brackish water. The new Vietnamese policy which Captain Stockdale read that day said something like, "Criminals will be given an opportunity to atone for their crimes in a meaningful way by helping the Vietnamese people clean up the debris of bomb damage. Work parties are to start among volunteers, and the work will afford you the opportunity of fresh air and exercise. A bath will be available to each volunteer after returning from the bomb site area. You will be approached individually." Captain Stockdale went back to his cell pondering the problem, aware that "for every shovel of dirt moved there would be five cameras there." Although it would provide a chance for welcomed fresh air and for meeting fellow prisoners, he ruled against participating because of the propaganda certain to result. That night Captain Stockdale promulgated the following policy to the camps, "No repent, no repay. No work in town. No clearing of craters. No repent, no repay." Thus, the prisoner policy was out even before the Vietnamese had announced the program. No prisoner ever left Vegas to work on this propaganda trap project.

Soon more typing came and this time Captain Stockdale was to type a boring selection of Vietnamese history. He was irritated and let the Vietnamese know it. He refused the order to type and was put up against the wall in Riviera 3 while the Vietnamese left, probably to check the next move with Cat. Word soon came back "to throw the book" at him. His hands were tied in cuffs behind, and he was muscled out to a bath stall, placed in leg irons, and left. There he remained sitting in that position for three days, first in Bath-1 where the sun beat down upon him. Since he had not been in the sun for a long time, he soon felt weak. He yelled for "Bao Cao," and the guard struck him from side to side on the face. He asked an English speaking Vietnamese officer what kind of an operation he was running, and drew the defensive response that the guard "can do anything he wants." But he was moved to a slightly better position in Bath-3 and later to Bath-8. The indomitable prisoner communication system provided a great boost to Captain Stockdale's morale at this point as two prisoner dishwashers established voice contact for short words of encouragement in spite of close guard supervision. The guard on duty decided not to let him sleep and at one point accused him of dosing, punching Captain Stockdale right and left on the jaw. As the guard left the stall, Captain Stockdale remembers hearing with pride a towel snap "G B U J S," for "God bless you, Jim Stockdale." The camp knew where he was and that was important.

The next day Captain Stockdale was moved to Bath-10 where a "careless, mean, unpredictable" guard, "Abe," entered, took the cuffs from behind, put them in front on the meaty part of his arms and squeezed them down tightly. In thirty minutes without adequate blood circulation, Captain Stockdale yelled for a guard with Abe responding by stuffing a dirty rag in his mouth and by squeezing the cuffs a notch tighter. The process began again as Abe responded a third time, but Captain Stockdale felt slightly relieved when he saw that Abe was being supervised by a Vietnamese Warrant Officer. Because of Abe's amateurish actions his blood circulation was at a dangerous point leaving him in pain with his hands numb. About noon he was marched out in blindfold. As they passed what he knew was Stardust, Captain Stockdale yelled his name and that he was going to Heartbreak.

Waiting for him in Room 18 on the Heartbreak main court was Bug whom Captain Stockdale had not seen since January 1967. Bug opened by saying that he had heard that Captain Stockdale had refused to type and that he wanted him to sit for several hours and think about his crimes before they talked about the problem. With his hands throbbing, Captain Stockdale told Bug that his arms were numb and that Bug would be in trouble if he did not do something about it. Bug looked and immediately left. He rushed back with the keys and off came the cuffs to Captain Stockdale's great relief. Bug left him there saying, "I might have saved your arms." That afternoon, Captain Stockdale was taken back to Riviera, and two days later agreed to type several pages of history, a short "job of saving face" for the Vietnamese.

Captain Stockdale remained in Riviera Cell 3 for several weeks in isolation. Near the end of June 1967 he was not surprised to see this "cooling off" period end as he was summoned to Cat's quiz room. Cat was there, flanked by guards and Pig Eye ready to close in. Cat notified Captain Stockdale that now that he had learned his lesson and had been punished, he would be making a public appearance that night "to a place to meet some visitors." The typical sequence was unfolding. First, signals called by Cat began the application of pressure. Then, as the dust cleared, Cat, in an expansive mood, came in to make the awards. He knew that Captain Stockdale had been without his few personal possessions, including his enamel drinking cup, for several weeks, so he took that opportunity to "graciously" present a tin cup with the advice he was sure that Captain Stockdale would be wise enough to not take advantage of the situation. In reply Captain Stockdale insisted that he would not answer any questions and would say nothing. Cat's parting words were, "We will see! You will be there and I warn you to use good judgment. I trust you have learned your lesson." Cat departed, and Captain Stockdale was returned to isolation in Riviera where he was left to sweat out the forthcoming evening's activities. He was marched out that eventful evening and, in an unusual act, the Vietnamese failed to blindfold him until they got to the pedestrian gate just north of Hoa Lo's main entrance. This enabled him to survey the alley area opposite the gate including a previously unknown guard's bunk room. Even then the Vietnamese applied "less than a blinding blindfold" and this afforded Captain Stockdale his only glimpse of wartime Hanoi during the bombing of 1966-67. He observed many windows boarded up and a series of smudge pots lining the streets. The whole city impressed him as "being under siege." The jeep pulled into a courtyard and parked next to what may have been a large restaurant or hotel. Captain Stockdale's blindfolds were removed and after a short wait he was told to go on to a porch, turn left and enter a lighted room. He was told to bow as he entered, and this he refused to do, walking straight to the center of the room. He could see a table on the right with a smaller individual table toward the center of the room, presumably set up for the "star of the show." Blinding lights immersed him and precluded focus on the people at the large table. The lights seemed to be situated to support movie photography. With nothing to lose and "prepared to shoot the works" to make it perfectly clear that he was a noncompliant witness, he faced the table and furiously glowered. For several seconds pictures were taken of that unsubjected look before the silence was broken by a voice Captain Stockdale believes was Cat's saying, "Leave! Get him out!" In response, a guard grabbed him by the arm and led him back to the jeep.

Back in Riviera, Captain Stockdale spent that night and then several days without incident. He was moved back into Thunderbird West TB-6 solo with Major Sam Johnson and Captain Bill Franke next door in TB-7. Communications were immediately established, and Captain Stockdale gave them a report of his trip downtown and his impressions of Hanoi under siege indicating "they're hurting." Within a few days he was moved again, this time much to his surprise to the other TB-6 in Thunderbird East with his wall-tapping friend, Sam Johnson. "The water was short, the bombing was heavy, and the communications turned out to be good." Through LCOL Tom Curtis

and LCOL Will Forby, dishwashers at the time, they had direct access from Thunderbird to the other Vegas cell blocks.

### PRISONER ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

During the Summer of 1967 Heartbreak was overflowing with new shoot-downs and the Vietnamese frequently stashed initial shoot-downs in Thunderbird until room in Heartbreak and other camps opened up. Captain Stockdale and the other old guys made a concerted effort to pass on the B.A.C.K. U.S., No Repent, No Repay, and other prisoner policies to the newly arrived pilots so that a common line of defense would be established, and spread as widely as possible, as intercamp transfers occurred. One time Sam Johnson and Captain Stockdale were caught in vocal communications out of the back window of Thunderbird. An indication of how busy the Vietnamese were with new prisoners was provided when they were hauled in to a quiz expecting the worst and came out with only a restriction on bathing for several days. Through Captain Bill Lawrence, a new shoot-down, Captain Stockdale learned that his family was well and that he had been on the Captains' List during the Fall of 1966.

A revealing incident occurred during the early Summer of 1967 concerning the Vietnamese attitude toward prisoner cooperation among themselves. Captain Stockdale was temporarily in TB-8 with LCOL Lamar, with LT Dave Rehmann and CAPT Dave Hatcher next door in TB-9. LT Rehmann was having chronic asthmatic problems which prevented him from getting his breath. CAPT Hatcher, a very calm individual "not given to a lot of alarmism," became concerned about LT Rehmann so six or seven rooms in Thunderbird West began chanting "Bao Cao" to try to get medical aid. They were immediately and completely immersed in a flood of guards totally out of proportion to the simple cooperative chant crying out in unison for the guard to help a man who needed urgent medical care. Although the Vietnamese were aware of the medical problem, that aspect was immediately sidetracked as the Vietnamese focused on the violation of camp regulations by causing a disturbance. Thus the action was to quell the "riot" while the medical problem either took care of itself or received delayed assistance. It was obvious to Captain Stockdale that above all other items on the Vietnamese value scale, the quelling of any cooperative action on the part of the prisoners took precedence over all.

Later that Summer, Captain Stockdale decided that there was a place in their system for a unified prisoner response to an act of violence. He tried to think of a way to signal to the whole camp the need for riot action. Although he realized that such action would meet with immediate reprisal from the Vietnamese, he believed that if the participation were wide enough then any reprisal action would be diluted. Captain Stockdale derived the signal "Bao Bao Cao" to mean that an "atrocious act" had been committed and that everyone should join in the "riot." This signal was not executed at Vegas before Captain Stockdale left for Alcatraz but he believed it a valuable tool for execution at appropriate occasions.

## THE MAKINGS OF A PURGE

By early August, Thunderbird West was full of new shootdowns. Captain Stockdale directed that they be passed B.A.C.K. U.S. and all other orders in effect, together with his name and the word to hold on and the fact that "once we get organized we can live here and resist together." Shortly after that things began to happen. Without explanation prisoners began to move out of Thunderbird. The attitude of the guards and the atmosphere in Vegas became more and more irritated. Captain Stockdale later found out the reason for this building crisis. One of the new prisoners had thoroughly memorized all the orders passed by the prisoner organization. He went to his initial interrogation shakedown session, which by then consisted of the ropes, a quiz for targets of immediate value, and the extortion of as much propaganda as the Vietnamese could get including "confessions" and the like. In objecting to the Vietnamese extortion process, this new prisoner blurted out that the "business of guilt" was against the Code of Conduct and against the "orders of his Commanding Officer." Major Johnson went to quiz during this period and returned telling Captain Stockdale that the Vietnamese sure seemed to know a "lot about you. But, don't worry about it." Rabbit said that they had Stockdale "figured out" and "could make a domestic animal out of him." More prisoners were moved out of Thunderbird, and a special guard was posted right outside TB-6 throughout the night. It was clear that once again the "squeeze play" was on as the Vietnamese tried to obtain some direct proof to pin on Captain Stockdale before they moved in. There was pressure all over Vegas that hot August of 1967 including, Captain Stockdale later learned, a "riot" in Desert Inn. Inexplicably the guards had moved into a cell in Desert Inn one night and started pummeling several prisoners believed to include Captain Ron Storz, Major George Mc Knight, and WO4 John Frederick on a charge of communicating and participating in a camp organization. The loud noise was overheard by others in Desert Inn and all began "Bao Caoing." In retaliation for this "riot," residents of Desert Inn spent the night in irons, gagged and cuffed.

The day after the special guard was posted, Captain Stockdale and Major Johnson realized that their area had been further isolated and that the Vietnamese had unscrewed the light bulb in the passageway behind them. They were still communicating by light wall tapping with CDR Brady and LCOL Crow in spite of the new guard. The next night the lights went off throughout Vegas as a result of a bombing raid. A guard appeared with a flashlight and tried to provoke an argument. Finally he opened the door to TB-6 and revealed at least three other Vietnamese, including Rabbit, who normally did not enter the cell blocks. Rabbit was enraged to the point of unintelligible speech, talking about "You and your communications!" He led the procession into TB-6 and slugged Captain Stockdale solidly in the jaw. Captain Stockdale responded by "a kind of a bull rush" and pushed Rabbit out of the cell. The lights soon came on as did the camp radio with an announcement that a provocation against a Vietnamese officer had been executed that evening. Captain Stockdale never determined whether the direct cause of this radio broadcast was his action in throwing Rabbit out of TB-6 or the Desert Inn "riot" although he suspects the former.

In any case, Rabbit's brief radio announcement continued with the fact that camp discipline had reached intolerable limits, that all could expect severe punishment, and if communications continued all would pay. The next night, moves occurred all over Vegas and a part of this shuffle placed Captain Stockdale in Mint-1, Major Sam Johnson in Mint-2, and Captain Rutledge in Mint-3, all within the high security Mint cell block.

As Captain Stockdale analyzed the Vietnamese's extreme caution regarding corporate action by prisoners, he believed that it stemmed from a basic knowledge of life in prison that may have originated from the highest level senior Communists running the North Vietnamese Government. At least half of these men had spent five to ten years in prison under the French. As he read the propaganda books relating accounts written by them, he realized that they had been imprisoned in the same prisons as American prisoners of war, prisons like Hoa Lo and probably Alcatraz. Although they used different words, he recognized as a common theme throughout their accounts that the number one lesson learned was "Unity over Self." Of course there were differences. The French prison regime appeared to be more flexible and less oriented toward isolation. Further, they were involved in, basically, a three cornered war between Communists, Nationalists, and French so there was frequent interplay between Communists and Nationalists as the former tried to convert the latter. But, many of the themes were the same, such as self-inflicted wounds to obtain residence in the sick bay to permit communications with other parts of the camp. Thus it appeared that much of the basic guidance in handling U. S. prisoners had come from those aging Communist leaders who had lived in the same cells and intimately knew the do's and don't's of prison management. Foremost among these "do's and don't's" was "Do keep them separated, don't let them get unified, and whenever they start doing anything in unison the first order of business is to smash that unity and take care of the details later."

As Captain Stockdale and Major Johnson later pieced together, the move into the Mint in early August 1967 on the charge of "provocation" against a Vietnamese officer, was designed to place the two of them on opposite ends of the three cell Mint with a plant between them who could be tortured to admit that they had been communicating illegally. In almost a childish way the Vietnamese were after "proof" to fuel their mechanism of guilt during the imminent torture and extortion sessions. Captain Stockdale learned that the remaining residents of Thunderbird were generally disappearing into isolation in which they were being tortured to reveal everything they knew about Captain Stockdale. In spite of this growing collection of evidence, the Vietnamese were determined to set their scenario drama with a "caught red handed" arrest. Their plot in this case involved the isolation and torture of Captain Ron Storz after the Desert Inn "riot" incident. He was told that he was to act as an informer to confirm the communications between the two "black criminals," Captain Stockdale and Major Johnson. This was completely abhorrent to "a man of great conscience" like Captain Storz, so he stymied the Vietnamese plan to put him in Mint-2 by attempting a sort of suicide through laceration of his left forearm. With their plan upset the Vietnamese shuffled Mints-2 and 3, placing Major Johnson in 2 and moving Captain Rutledge back into irons in 3.

What had been an effort by the Vietnamese to rig the situation had proven abortive and within minutes the three prisoners were in communications. The next morning Captain Rutledge sent an official message confirming Captain Stockdale's previous conclusions that the Vietnamese had a considerable bank of information on Stockdale derived by torture and that several prisoners had been forced to make motion picture admissions of the text and meaning of his orders.

Operating below Cat and Rabbit, and presiding over the buildup for the purge were three Vietnamese officers, Greasy, Hog, and Literary Bug. Greasy was a handsome, slightly intelligent Vietnamese given on occasion to "drinking a bit." Hog was a squat, muscular, hard nosed officer who spoke fairly good English. Literary Bug has previously been described in detail and Captain Stockdale believes his name was "Vy," a name which has appeared in a number of propaganda books. Rabbit was rarely seen following the altercation in Thunderbird. Generally during the month of August 1967, Captain Stockdale believes the Vietnamese had "sterilized" him. When he went to the bath stalls to wash irregularly, but at times every second or third day, the Vietnamese executed a "Ted Williams shift" by vacating Vegas court and the immediate bath area within sight of Captain Stockdale. The Vietnamese were going to considerable trouble to build up for something and the whole period seemed to Captain Stockdale ridiculous. He knew it was time for the showdown, and if the Vietnamese had asked him if he was communicating he would almost have said, "Yes!" Just to get "on with this rotten show." As he analyzed it, "This was the way of camp life and this way is building and destroying. You build an organization and sooner or later it's tipped off and a purge follows. People are moved to other locations and new camps are built. This rhythmic building and contracting was the way of life." The prisoners had a good building process, had said all that was necessary, and were now ready to "spread the Gospel" so the more dispersal the better. Fighting public appearances was uppermost in their minds as the Vietnamese emphasized any "quote, paraphrase or picture" they could link with the growing anti-war movement in the U. S. The Vietnamese had standardized the processing of new shootdowns including the recovery of the next bombing targets and other military information of some logical consequence marking a distinct change from earlier years. Other immediate goals during this initial processing included getting a "confession" and biographic sketch details so when the prisoner appeared in camp he was usually already a "victim of the ringer." In summary, the active process was one of being beaten up, roped, and then stashed until Cat determined some specialized usage.

The mood of the times in the late Summer of 1967 involved the use of prisoners through beatings and harrassment until they would provide "some sort of crude manipulation and propagande." The bombing was severe, and the prisoners spent much time under their bunks. The falling of shrapnel in Vegas court had become commonplace. To Captain Stockdale, one of the most impressive occurrences was the shock waves of what he believed were low flying aircraft coming over. Hanoi's water system was broken most of the



time, and the electrical system was subject to frequent interruption. From his "worm's eye view of a prison cell" he believed the Vietnamese were excited, desperate, and "unglued," much more so, he later concluded, than when the B-52's were bombing in 1972. The prison system under Cat was "peaked up to a pose of seething rage."

On his second morning in the Mint, Captain Stockdale woke to the sound of Greasy saying, "I heard you. You cried out. You communicated!" so Major Johnson and Captain Stockdale went into irons. Captain Stockdale knew that that incident had provided evidence too flimsy for the case the Vietnamese were building, but from that time on he was bothered by the thought that the case being built might feature some future legalistic manipulation, perhaps a charge of "endangering the security of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." The Vietnamese seemed unusually insistent upon making sure they had a clean case. This feeling was strengthened when he was called to quiz with Hog one afternoon. Hog said, "I want you to understand this set of camp regulations. You must obey them. I have a copy of them and I want you to sign this paper officially binding you to them." At last the Vietnamese had learned the "great sanctity of the American signature." From about that point on the Vietnamese viewed signatures as impressive and as "a seal of honor." Hog asked if Captain Stockdale knew anything about "B.A.C.K. U.S." and when he replied that he had never heard of it, Hog dropped it as if he had inadvertently asked that question in the first place.

The wait continued as the Vietnamese built their case. Captain Stockdale was neither surprised nor offended that the policy story was coming to the surface. Back in February and March 1967, when the promulgation process began, he had discussed the ramifications with Danny Glenn and while Glenn advised that the policies could be withheld from the Vietnamese, Captain Stockdale knew that the policies would eventually get out to the Vietnamese and that there would be a backlash. This process was further assured when the guidance and policies were put out to the many new shoot-downs that Summer, many of whom had not yet undergone the initial quick but brutal shakedown. Thus it was no surprise when in July or early August, the new guy revealed that it was against his commanding officer's orders to provide propaganda and was then forced to tell who the commanding officer was. Notwithstanding his certainty that exposure of self and policies would come, Captain Stockdale, as previously reported, issued all policies under his name. He did not agree with those who floated policies from "Mr X" or "The bull of the woods," or "Your friend," or "The senior officer." This anonymity would be particularly ineffective and repugnant for a new guy just coming into camp to be given orders "that would require some degree of inconvenience to say the least to carry them out and yet not even find out the name of the SOB who ordered them."

After seven to ten days in the Mint in August 1967, Captain Stockdale was handed a razor, an indication that something was up because prisoners living in the Mint did not often shave whereas those in Thunderbird were on a routine schedule of once or twice a week. He was in the learning process at that time that would lead him to conclude that when "you come out of punishment and are handed a razor you had better check your six o'clock

because something is about to happen." Indeed it did! He was called down to quiz with Literary Bug who opened with, "The staff officer insists that you go to another location and talk to a friend of yours." Captain Stockdale assured Literary Bug that he was not intimidated and that he would not contribute anything if they made him go, and he concluded with, "I won't go!" However, at that point in his learning process he had not yet devised a means by which he could back up that resolve. The means he would later devise was self-defacement.

Although this report has not emphasized the North Vietnam prison regime's deliberate and near total deprivation of basic sanitary and health facilities to prisoners, two of the countless indications which could be related ad nauseam were the fact that Captain Stockdale had not been permitted a single bath in his first eight months of confinement and the fact of his personal appearance at that time in August 1967 when he was having the quiz with Literary Bug. As Captain Stockdale relates, "I had no shoes. I had on my old prison uniform which was pretty foul. I had all this time a terrible crotch itch that had engulfed my whole crotch. It was a constant mass of pus. I had only one pair of shorts while in the Mint. On the rare occasions when I would get out to dump my honey bucket, I would turn my shorts around the other way so I could put this mass of pus on the front, and then alternate it front and back so it would cake. My turnkey, Drut, came in one time and saw me changing these shorts around. He thought I was delaying the game and the filth disgusted him so he gave me a couple of sharp punches in the belly to speed me up." His trousers had rust marks around the ankles from being bound in irons.

With "borrowed" sandals, Captain Stockdale was blindfolded and taken to what he later determined was the Big House at the Plantation. He felt "unusually relaxed and aggressive" and marched into a room filled with an audience of Vietnamese officers but no civilians. There may have been a camera, but he focused on the Cat who sat at the head of a table with two men in civilian clothes. Captain Stockdale glared at Cat, whom he had not seen since June 1967, and sat down defiantly without bowing. To his surprise, Cat introduced the two men as Russians and said that one was a Russian novelist "who wants to talk to you." With a Vietnamese translator the conversation began with the question, "How do you feel about the war?" Captain Stockdale replied, "I back the President," and he may have added, "LBJ all the way is my motto." The next question was, "What possible gain can the U. S. have by continuing the war?" He responded, "We can preserve the reputation of loyalty to our allies." After another question in the same vein, a runner came around behind Captain Stockdale and said, "The staff officer says you are to quit looking at him. You are not to look in his direction." Rapidly a stalemate was reached and the Russians became very bored and irritated. They had probably "been roped in to see what they could do in the way of further intimidation." They seemed to bear down on just one thing, and that was "Don't you as an American see a similarity between the American Revolution and the revolution in Vietnam?" That was the payoff punch. They wanted time and again to get that documented and once they got that document they could always say as Captain Stockdale says, "There is a certain similarity between revolutions in

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general, and, in particular, the Vietnamese fight for freedom and the Americans' fight for freedom from the English." Captain Stockdale continues, "I was blessed with a spontaneous answer that destroyed that. I even overstated the case. I said there is absolutely no comparison between the two, that we were Englishmen in 1776 who were merely trying to lessen the ties between us. I tried to dramatize that there was no historic parallel between the two, and I'm glad I killed it". I think all they wanted me to say was, 'Yes, revolutions are similar.' I think that would have been sufficient. By this time working close enough to that Cat and knowing propaganda and reading it, I realized that they didn't want you to perjure yourself. All they needed was an angle. They were getting smarter. They looked for something they could add to. This business that I bombed churches, schools, etc. was rotten propaganda, and they began to realize it. They were ready to buy a soft sell, and you didn't have to even say it. All you had to do was appear as a prisoner in good health and make a statement that they could add to and manipulate." At this point the interpreter lost track of the situation so Literary Bug took over translating duties from English to Russian to Vietnamese as the Russians asked if Captain Stockdale had any questions about world affairs. He said, "Yes, I have a question. I want to know how the Russian-U.S. track meets are coming on. I want to know who is winning the meets, both men's and women's divisions." The Russian response was "that meet has been canceled due to the American Imperialists' aggression in Vietnam." Captain Stockdale ended that short conversation with a leading discussion of the Russian high jumper, Brummel, and limped out. He was not blindfolded until he was put in the back of the jeep and this gave him about 90 seconds to look the place over and realize that he might be in a prison camp, although he saw no prisoners. He observed the French colonial style mansion and the buildings in the back which turned out to be cell blocks, and he knew the distance was seven or eight blocks from Hoa Lo. This discussion proved to be the closest that Captain Stockdale came to a "public appearance" during his confinement although by definition he did not at that time consider it possible to have a "public appearance" in a prison camp. Rather, his definition of public appearance then required that the prisoners "be taken outside prison camps to meet somebody and say something." This definition was later changed when in 1972 it was refined to include any interview which was photographed or taped by anyone or transcribed by noncamp personnel regardless of location. These refinements were in reaction to Vietnamese actions in preparing several rooms in Hoa Lo for what were anticipated might be public appearances.

Within a few days the 2 September 1967 Vietnamese National Day came and for this special day "for joyous recollection of the similarity between the Vietnamese and American fights for freedom" a relaxation of tensions was in order. Tangibly, this meant several days free from irons for the Mint trio and possibly a couple of egg rolls and a half bottle of beer for some. Even on this day, however, the benevolence of the Vietnamese was less than complete for it was on this day that Captain Jenkins' cell mate in the Desert Inn, Norm Schmidt, was taken to quiz on a minor rap, never to be seen again.

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## THE CAMP ORGANIZATION AND POLICY PURGE

In early September, Major Johnson opened the morning communications in the Mint. Captain Stockdale had his cup on the wall ready to respond when he was startled by a scream from the back of the Mint. There in what he had considered an inaccessible position was a guard known as "Jap, a patriotic mean cuss." At last Captain Stockdale was caught red-handed in black activities and he went to Cat's Quiz Room where he was seated on the floor while Hawk brought out irons and ropes. The prelude was a one way exchange about the content of the communications with Captain Stockdale maintaining that there had been no communications. He was blindfolded and taken by Jap out to the court of Vegas where dirt mounds had been formed earlier in the Summer when wells had been dug in the yard. In an apparent attempt to disorient him, Jap at times led and at other times jerked Captain Stockdale over and around the mounds. In his crippled condition, Captain Stockdale was up and down as he stumbled and rose. Jap's final act in his allotted several minutes of "complete freedom with the prisoner," was to back Captain Stockdale against the wall of the Desert Inn and hit him four bruising blows in the kidneys knocking his wind out. At the end of this yard tour, Captain Stockdale was held in irons in Cat's quiz room until the next day when he was moved over to the Hobby Room in New Guy Village. The long buildup was over and the camp organization and policy purge had begun.

In hindsight, Captain Stockdale analyzed the actions of the Vietnamese guards as basically in two phases which were consistent with the overall prison regime. In the early years the guards were given the propaganda line that the prisoners were individually responsible for the acts of government. The guards were encouraged to have, and frequently demonstrate, personal animosity against the prisoners, as had Jap, for example, in venting his wrath on Captain Stockdale. As time went on, the Vietnamese changed their line and the prisoners were presented to the guards as "capable of black activities but basically tools of the Johnson or Nixon administrations." And, accordingly, at most times the guards went out of their way to avoid personal contact. While the prisoner was at the "mercy of his own emotions" in taking out his wrath on the guards, Captain Stockdale wonders if it is profitable to "wage a personal war against the guy who brings you the food and water." While the prisoner can't be too compliant, or a man like Cat will conclude that he is "workable," an aloof, impersonal relationship should be attempted. In any event, emotional statements should not be made without the possibility of deriving some advantage. Captain Stockdale can recall no instance where it proved to his advantage to take out his wrath on a guard. Any emotional outbursts were usually paid back sooner or later with an added personal touch by the offended guard.

As the purge began to unfold the two primary manipulators remained behind the scenes. Captain Stockdale was not to see Rabbit for over a month after the time he "left my room under my power and some of his" in August 1967. Cat was not personally to appear before Captain Stockdale for over a year after the Plantation session with the Russian "authors."

Captain Stockdale was greatly relieved that he had successfully withstood the three confrontations with Cat thus far over public appearances. He felt that in the session in the Spring of 1966, at the downtown session in June 1967, and in the August 1967 meeting with the Russians, a combination of "adrenalin, consciousness, conviction, and drama had pulled the prop out of Cat's basic mechanism, that is mainly fear." Captain Stockdale knew that "the handmaidens of Communist manipulation are guilt and fear." Guilt can be manufactured to a certain extent, and, in fact, the Communist system was built to manufacture this guilt. Fear is to some extent "an option of the recipient" of the torture and degradation process. As Captain Stockdale eloquently explains, "I'm not saying that I wasn't afraid, but I am saying that I was running on such a high adrenalin content that it didn't show. I was willing to say anything necessary to get myself out of that vulnerable position where I could be shown, or, in fact, behave in the presence of propaganda seeking crowds. I later developed a prayer I said whenever I went to quiz which went, 'Above all do not be afraid.' Do not let your eyes show fear. The Vietnamese can read that. It's awfully hard to avoid that when you realize not that their power includes the breaking of your arm for that can be accommodated by any American particularly one used to contact sports, but fear of loss of reputation, and maybe even self-respect. That is real fear. You can never break free of them until you can convince them, and yourself, that you are not afraid." Thus fear and guilt are the basic tools of the extortion process. Any resources that the prisoner can muster should be grasped including such secondary defenses as disinterest or ignorance in the political thought process. Captain Stockdale concludes, "I wish I could just wave a magic wand and say 'I will have no fear today.' I can't do that, but I can become familiar with modes of behavior specifically designed to achieve the end of making them understand that I am willing to go all the way and that I am not, in truth, concerned about the consequences. This, of course, is easier said than done. It is a matter of dramatics, faith, and self-mesmerization."

The first order of business on Captain Stockdale's arrival at the Nobby Room in early September 1967 was a continuation of the earlier quiz of "What have you been communicating about?" He knew the Vietnamese were not interested in his minor communications violations so there wasn't much question about it. He took the ropes. Big Ugh administered this rope session, and Big Ugh worried Captain Stockdale because of his unpredictability. Big Ugh had an improvisation in which he added a special leg iron arrangement. He took the heavy 50 to 60 pounds leg irons and Captain Stockdale's legs placing both on an elevated level through use of a stool so that the upper trunk of the body was twisted as well as squeezed. Although Captain Stockdale doesn't believe Big Ugh was smart enough to have "conjured this thing up," it gave a special feeling of claustrophobia, helplessness, and pain more acute than the normal ropes. Big Ugh was even more effective because he was so careless with the heavy bar, and Captain Stockdale feared that Big Ugh would overdo the pressure on his slowly mending left leg. Captain Stockdale submitted after "a respectable show" and said that he had been in communications discussing several matters

such as how long they were going to be there, family information, and speculation about why a movie had been set up in Vegas court a few days previously and then cancelled. He knew the Vietnamese were not interested in these trivialities, but it all apparently had to go on file as they built up to what he knew would be the more serious charges concerning the camp policies and prisoner organization which he had created.

The "trial" came the next day. As the scene unfolded in the Nobby Room, Captain Stockdale felt "like Jesus about to go on the cross." Present was a big, husky man Captain Stockdale called "Mao Tse-Tung," who introduced himself as the Camp Commander. Captain Stockdale believed this man was a staff officer and a front office man in the prison regime staff, probably junior to Cat, but often used as a sort of troubleshooter. Mao was flanked by several officers including Greasy and Literary Bug. In this formal ceremony, Captain Stockdale stood facing the wall with his hands bound in front of him while seven men with fixed bayonets formed a semicircle behind. Big Ugh was there as was Pig Eye. The whole trial did not last long but the formality was unusual and impressive. Mao began, "I have not been Commander of this camp very long, but I have heard a lot about you. All of it has been bad. Now we have come to the point where we must investigate you and your urging others to resist the camp authority." Mao asked for a comment and Captain Stockdale refused, so Pig Eye opened the show, hitting him twice in the face with blows carefully calculated not to break any teeth but strong enough to make him "see stars." From there they went to the floor and into the ropes and then head down between the knees with Pig Eye working swiftly and expertly. For several days now, Captain Stockdale had been anxious to get the preliminaries over and after a short but appropriate show in the ropes, he responded to the persistent "Are you ready to talk?" He said, "Are you talking about orders I've given to the camp?" The Vietnamese answered, "Yes," and he continued, "Well let's get on with it! I've been trying to talk about it since yesterday." Looking back, "It was ridiculous. They had been so braced for this thing. I knew me and I knew them. I had some things I wanted to say because I wanted to fight back. I wanted to explain a few things." It became obvious that the next order of business would be the extraction of a "general confession," and this was dictated as Captain Stockdale remained on his right knee with Pig Eye twisting his arm. He was required to say something like, "I am a war criminal who has wrecked destruction on your country and now I have violated the good treatment you have given me by urging others to oppose the camp authority. I confess my guilt and I beg the authority for mercy." It was poorly phrased and worse when read. It was nothing the Vietnamese could use on the radio, but they were pleased as they paraded the guards by to see "this man apprehended and punished." Mao left with great ceremony as the soldiers marched out leaving Captain Stockdale in the Nobby Room where he would remain for several weeks while the "investigation of crimes" began.

For two days Captain Stockdale was left without further interrogation in the pause that the Vietnamese alluded to "as a time to think,

collect your thoughts, repent your sins, and realize your mistakes." He was stashed with no bedding or personal equipment except his drinking cup. The Nobby Room had been stripped almost bare of the trial furniture and only a long table remained. The rusted-out honey bucket had been left full to the brim from others before him. As was commonplace once in punishment, the guards ignored all requests for additional equipment, bedding for chilly nights, or medical assistance. The guards did appear regularly at the door but only to make sure Captain Stockdale did not lie on the table. Pig Eye or Big Ugh checked hourly and yelled something that meant "sit" if he was lying on the table or pacing the floor. Because of the full bucket, he would as secretly as possible, and usually at night, urinate under the door to avoid giving the Vietnamese the obvious opportunity to create an incident over filth. During this hold period the Vietnamese were setting up the interrogation process which would attempt to extort the details of the prisoner organization that the Vietnamese were committed to destroy. On the third day this campaign was begun by the visit of one of the two officers who for the next three weeks were assigned to sort out information that the Vietnamese could use to stop further prisoner organization, and to destroy the existing organization, and Captain Stockdale feared, that possibly could be used as positive evidence for reprisal acts against other prisoners. As Captain Stockdale analyzed it, "The mechanism of this torture was not a random matter in which they merely put you under pressure and said tell us all you know. They understood the mechanics of pain well enough to realize that this was usually not productive. They were careful to apply pressure to specific points, and their best posture was the one they almost always selected, that is the posture in which they had a particular point of clarification or fact that they wanted, and that they knew you knew. In time we came to understand this technique, and the thing the prisoner had to fear most was being drilled on a point that was obviously something he knew. The common psychological situation was one in which they knew you knew it. You did know it, and you knew they knew you knew it. Only then did they know that muscle could be applied dramatically, pointedly, purposefully and painfully."

Captain Stockdale derived considerable inner satisfaction from knowing that he "had gotten the attention not only of my immediate tormenters but higher-ups in the power structure who were probably telling the Cat, 'I told you so.' " This belief was fostered by the nature of the interrogations that followed. He knew that the Vietnamese had assembled a mass of background data and roughly the time frame in which the policies had been issued. The task at hand was the extraction of the details. In this framework, Captain Stockdale assessed his strengths and weaknesses with an eye toward the future of the prisoner's group resistance to the Vietnamese extortion and manipulation program. He was still unable to stand for long periods of time because of his left leg, and his left arm remained weak, but the most immediate problem was the extremely irritating pus-filled crotch itch which had resulted mainly from his inability to bathe regularly during the previous year. When he was permitted to bathe, the soap also proved to be an irritant so that he could never fully decide whether it was worse to scour the irritation with soap or to let it go to become filthy. He

discovered one place in the Nobby Room where for a short period each day he could lie down and allow the sun to shine down on the rash.

As Captain Stockdale waited for the axe to fall, he was delighted to find through his observation peephole that Colonel Robbie Risner was being held in the New Guy Village high security cell block. Either daily, or every other day, Colonel Risner was taken by one or two guards past the Nobby Room to dump his bucket. Captain Stockdale had not seen him since the Winter of 1966 although they had covertly talked at the Zoo during the Summer of 1966. Captain Stockdale attempted several times to communicate to provide the always important position report since it was "the most worrisome thing to any prisoner to be lost from the others." A couple of times he snapped his initials out with his clothes under the guise of shaking out dirt from his shirt, but Colonel Risner was so closely guarded he was never able to acknowledge.

The axe did fall in the form of a two-on-one combination quiz team that began visiting Captain Stockdale daily. The two Vietnamese were not Rabbit and Cat who were remaining "aloof officially" from the proceedings, but it was Greasy and Literary Bug who were assigned the task of gathering the details. In one of the first sessions, Greasy played the role of antagonist, laying out the program with statements that Captain Stockdale had upset the camp authority and "that your instructions have even been understood at camps many kilometers from here." Therefore, the problem was not just local but general. Greasy continued, "You set this program, you set our treatment regime back two years." Even discounting for probable overstatement, this gave Captain Stockdale "gratification." As the program emerged, the problem was to find out "How, when, who, and to establish all the details of Stockdale's black activities that had precipitated all the difficulties in which they found many of the prisoners members of a prisoners' organization." At that time shoes were a "status symbol to the Vietnamese," and Greasy's "badge of superiority" during that quiz was a pair of boondockers. He frequently made the point that Captain Stockdale was "stupid, crippled, old, making trouble" for himself which he would regret. On more than one occasion when he was at a peak of emotion, Greasy would circle around as Captain Stockdale sat on the floor and kick his bad leg, although this was done with "some measure of caution." Greasy's overall image was one of complete abandon as he tried to show he could with ease make Captain Stockdale "into a domestic animal." The questions asked by Greasy and Literary Bug remained rather generally phrased such as, "How did you communicate in such and such cell block?" "Do you know what we mean by Stardust?" The Vietnamese did not know the cell block names at that time, but they tried to show that they knew the entire story, and they did know much of it.

As the quiz continued, the "starting point" finally emerged, and that was for Captain Stockdale to provide his "central committee." The Vietnamese could not understand the American policy of single point command. They absolutely refused to believe that there was no committee. There had to be a group that got together to set the line. Once the policy was set,



the Vietnamese would accept the possibility of execution through a single man chain of command structure. The other essential information the Vietnamese sought included how communications occurred between cells, and the line that Captain Stockdale found most obnoxious, the names of the key individuals in the communications link. This involved prisoners who were in many cases not senior and who because of their strategic cell location or because of their aggressive communicative capability had become deeply involved. So, mixed in with the active seniors like Navy Captain's Denton and Rutledge, were the junior officers like USAF Captain Ron Storz and USMC Captain Orson Swindle who were the men "who made such an organization possible." Captain Stockdale also did not want to expose others who might be vulnerable to individual torment and torture to the point of giving away critical information such as the "sophistication of our tapping and our flashing methods." Captain Stockdale first hoped that he could get by with a complete admission of his personal guilt, and it was on that that he focused during the quizzes. His line to Literary Bug and Greasy was, "I issued the orders. They were carried out. Each order was prefaced with my name. Those men to whom I addressed those orders had no choice but to obey them because that is military law. This is the way we operate as prisoners of war in conformance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949," and so on. He carefully constructed his case so that all roads led to Stockdale. He was the "source of all evil," and it was merely a matter of punishing him. Captain Stockdale's reasoning was based on his belief that it was possible to lead the Vietnamese "to the end of their string," for "if there is one man who has done something he can morally justify on the grounds of the traditions of his military service or on the grounds of law as he interprets it, there is just not much else for them to do. Once they come to the end of the tunnel it is up to them. If the truth is clear and distinct and based on facts that the man under pressure can conscientiously justify as correct, the Vietnamese kind of system of interrogation really does not have any place to go." Even for the Communist "there is not much gratification from imposing misery on a guy with whom you have no further plan. Although there are notable exceptions which will come out of other debriefings, the Vietnamese normally don't torture just for spite." In fact, spite, as gratifying as it may be to some individuals, is viewed from the top level as a pointless avocation.

As the intensive daily quiz sessions continued, Captain Stockdale could see that he was not going to be able "to sell this personal sacrifice angle." It was obvious that Greasy and Literary Bug were not personally interested in what they were finding out for there were frequent interruptions as one or the other would leave, and then come back saying, "They want to know the names of the people who actually executed your organization," or, "they want to know who was on your central committee." Clearly, Literary Bug and Greasy were collecting and reporting information to Cat and Rabbit and were then receiving further direction for each step. Another idea was forming in Captain Stockdale's mind at this point. He concluded that this was the time to show the Vietnamese the strength and unity of the prisoners and give the Vietnamese the full picture of the American camp organization as it was designed, one of unity and one of

senior officers in command. As the days passed, threatening gestures were being made by the Vietnamese such as placing the big iron bar on the outside of his room, then bringing the bar inside. It was obvious that his "central committee" was going to have to be produced, and Captain Stockdale was not going to produce it. One morning in came Pig Eye. He had at hand his whole torture kit. Captain Stockdale was ready to "have another go at it" so the ropes were applied amid shouts of "Tell us who! Tell us who! Tell us who!" But this time, in the heat of battle, the master torturer "goofed." Always before Pig Eye had selected the right leg to apply as a fulcrum when he bent Captain Stockdale double, but this time he grabbed the bad one. Captain Stockdale relates, "I was trying to tell him that he had the bad leg, but this was lost in the shuffle. He didn't understand English, and he was trying to dramatize the situation." The ropes were carefully woven and Captain Stockdale's arms were twisted up behind him around his neck. "He was soon sucking his big toe or near that" as the circulation stopped while the rhythmic "Who! Who! Who!" continued. Somewhere in the midst of this, he heard a pop in his knee. Although Pig Eye may also have heard it, the pressure and process continued. By then Captain Stockdale had decided "what I was going to do. Of course, I submitted. I cussed and complained about the fact that my knee cartilage had been broken," but no official cognizance was taken. Without recourse to medical assistance, the leg began to swell. The Vietnamese had "chosen their point and had turned the screws." Captain Stockdale agreed to provide the organization, so paper was provided, and the Vietnamese left him as he said, "I will write this out. Give me some time and you will have the complete organization of the American military command." He had already decided on a course of action so for the next couple of hours he listed every prisoner's name he held in his memory bank at the time, regardless of camp. The list came to about 212, complete with bum names which on occasion entered the name circuit. This could easily happen, as for example, a new guy in Golden Nugget would yell out, "I am Jim Brown, Roger Jim Brown," and then since he was not accustomed to the system he might add, "Backseat was Pete Jones but I don't think he made it." The man reading this occasionally wouldn't get the last part of the sentence so "Pete Jones" would enter the system. Later name checks might or might not cull Pete Jones out of the circuit. With the names, Captain Stockdale gave ranks for most and though he didn't know the exact seniority, the list he turned over two hours later was "proclaimed to be in order of seniority." The "organization" had Stockdale at the top, then Captain's Denton, Jenkins, Franke, Mulligan, and Rutledge, and so on down through the O-6's, O-5's, O-4's, etc. Colonel Risner's name was omitted since he was in isolation and only Captain Stockdale really knew where he was at the time. Captain Stockdale's stand was, "This is the organization. It is an unbroken line. There is no way that you can beat it. It is like a living organism and if you take a man out of the middle the gap will be filled. You take me away and nothing will change. Denton will take charge. Everything will remain the same. If you take Denton and me out, Jenkins will take charge. If you remove LT Kramer, nothing will happen, the gap will fill in. This cannot be broken. This mode of operation is the American military custom. Everybody knows this, and there is nothing you can do to stop it. This is the organization. There is no 'central committee.' So, there it is. Take it or leave it."

Of course, the Vietnamese took it. Took it away to study it. Captain Stockdale knew that he had chosen a risky path for in the process of "saving what I knew to be the key communicators, I exposed everybody to censure by reason of either offering their name or relaying it." Some of the prisoners on the list had never communicated, but they had been seen or known by others who put their name in the circuit. All on the list could have been brought in by the Vietnamese and quizzed as to, "How do people know your name?" and so forth. But, Captain Stockdale felt that he had given the Vietnamese a problem of sufficient magnitude that it would "set them back so far that they would lose interest in this concentrated pinpoint attack on people."

After study, Greasy and Literary Bug came back saying they did not believe that this was the "organization." Captain Stockdale insisted that it was with enough credibility and conviction that the list prevailed as "the organization." Of course, this was not the end. They still wanted specific information on the ringleaders. They had bought the seniority plan so mentally Captain Stockdale drew a line below the bottom O-5 name. For these "ringleaders," the Vietnamese demanded a condemnation and a statement that they had "opposed the camp authority and that they had violated camp regulations." With Literary Bug at his right, Captain Stockdale wrote a paragraph on each O-5 or above in Vegas at the time. For example: "Jeremiah A. Denton, CDR, USN, served under my command as officer in charge of his cell block. He carried out all of my orders in a forthright manner, and thereby opposed the camp authority. He organized communications in his cell block so as to execute my orders and did so with great diligence and efficiency." With another line or two in the same vein on Denton, he moved on to the next sheet of paper and the next senior O-5 and began, "Harry Jenkins, CDR, USN, followed my orders, etc." After about the fourth one, Literary Bug began to squirm. Finally, with the writing completed, Literary Bug took them and left.

The review process took at least half a day. Literary Bug returned saying, "Well, the senior officers are not satisfied with this. You have not made it clear. You are obscure. You have not given any details as to what 'he' did and when 'he' did it." Captain Stockdale said, "Of course, I do not know those details. I issued general instructions and the details are up to 'him.' That is our military custom." Literary Bug then stated the next demand, "There is one very important element that you have left out of these. That is that 'he' not only opposed the camp authority, but that 'he' has the capability to oppose the camp authority." What they wanted was another statement for each man, saying that "Not only could he follow orders but he has the innate capability of doing damage to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." Captain Stockdale's thoughts flashed back to a previous discussion with Rabbit months before, when Rabbit had given the four qualifications for the Communist Party membership as age, intellectual ability, selflessness, and a combination of "influence and the ability to influence," i.e., charisma. Now he could see that the Vietnamese wanted to sort out "not who is motivated against propoganda, but who had the quality that the Communists honor, namely charismatic leadership ability, innate

cunning and planning ability, the capability of original thought." Captain Stockdale took the statements and wrote them again, this time saying essentially, "He also has the capability to do so and so." After all had been rewritten, they were again carried off for review.

Although every statement extorted "cut me to the quick to have to do it," Captain Stockdale had managed to maintain a strict seniority and comprehensive approach. Ironically, if the O-5 statements could now be attached to service records, each man would get a medal for Captain Stockdale said essentially that "This man was a diligent opponent of the regime to which he was subjected, and he was doing everything in his power under my orders to counteract this regime. What's more, he had the innate capability to do damage to the Vietnamese." Through the 12 or so O-5 statements he rambled on with Literary Bug becoming increasingly irritated with the repetition. Some of the more obvious were torn up such as the statement on CDR Bill Lawrence who the Vietnamese knew had only just arrived in Stardust at Vegas and who obviously could not have been a ringleader months before. But, the Vietnamese bought the statements as the "condemnations" they were after. Captain Stockdale had drawn the battle line. The Vietnamese had gotten the names of the key communicators, but they had gotten the names buried in a comprehensive prisoner list where they could not be distinguished.

The next problem was the matter of how communications were conducted. By this time Greasy and Literary Bug were getting as tired of the excruciating process as Captain Stockdale was. He admitted that it was possible to overhear conversations in the bath stalls. He described a communications system in the camp that never once mentioned the tap code or the flash code or anything but voice. This fit in with what seemed to be a natural bias on the part of the Vietnamese to want to believe that the main mode of communications was voice. Taking advantage of this, Captain Stockdale described in general terms a camp communication system that relied entirely on voice and depended heavily on careless guards. He planted the impression that it was just a matter of a prisoner waiting until the guard was out of the room. He left the unmentioned, but obvious, remedy as doubling the guard force. The current status of camp communications was written off as in a period of "decay and falling back," but leaving a final threat that the prisoners were ready to go on with communications as long as the Vietnamese persisted in their treatment regime.

The final blow in the extortion process during the active torture phase in September 1967 occurred when Literary Bug and Greasy returned to the Nobby Room one day and said, "You must now beg the mercy of the Vietnamese people." They had a draft in the rough to which Captain Stockdale added such touches as, "I want to thank you for saving my life from death," and "I ask that I be afforded clothes, shelter, and, particularly, food so as to sustain my health." So the pattern was complete from general information to specific details and now the final statement that "somehow satisfies the top echelon that you have received your punishment, that you admit you were wrong, that now that it's over you are sorry about it, and that you want to thank them." While this sounds like a pitfall of possible propaganda and sometimes it is, often it is not for "anybody

with common sense can read it out as pure staff obligation. Most could be printed in the New York Times and the Vietnamese would have been made a laughing stock of the world." Such statements, even though of limited or no propaganda value, were an important part of the game to the Vietnamese. "They've got to win. They've got to go back and report, 'All right, we've handled this case. We've busted it wide open. We've got the organization. We know the communications. The guy has apologized.' So that case goes into the completed file." But what the Vietnamese really got for their efforts was an "organization" listing most U. S. prisoners of war held at the time. They got the understanding that the prisoners relied on only verbal communications permitted by shoddy guard performance, and they definitely got the understanding that "putting Stockdale down wasn't going to stop anything." His greatest apprehension was that his O-5 statements would be used as evidence to individually charge the seniors like Captain Denton with special trouble. Captain Stockdale was later relieved to learn that none of the O-5's were ever approached on these statements. His calculated risk had succeeded. By spreading the "confession" so widely, and so completely, he had created such a big project for the Vietnamese that it wasn't worthwhile. Captain Stockdale later concluded that at the same time as the communications purge was in progress in September 1967, the Vietnamese "already had better plans in mind" for the incorrigible group. When Captain Stockdale arrived at Alcatraz later that Fall, he noticed on a newly refurbished concrete ramp that a Vietnamese workman had scratched in the concrete the date "25 September 1967." Apparently the Vietnamese had concluded that the way to handle this problem was group isolation. This also dovetailed with Rabbit's policy statement of May 1967 which indicated that those prisoners with a poor attitude would "in time realize the truth" while for those prisoners "so brilliant and so understanding" as to cooperate, the prospect of release before the end of the war was extended. So, as the O-5 statements were being extorted in the Nobby Room, the finishing touches were being made at Alcatraz and the Vietnamese were setting the stage for the birth of "the Alcatraz gang."

#### THE POST PURGE STASH

About 24 days after it had begun, the intensive interrogation, extortion, and torture phase of the camp organization and policy purge had ended.

The third and final rope treatment during the communications purge had snapped Captain Stockdale's left knee cartilage and had left him unable to walk because of the feeling of weakness and pain. It was possible for him to crawl. The usual procedure when a guard or officer entered the cell was for the prisoner to stand up, bow, and then respectfully take his place on the floor while the Vietnamese paraded around and then began the interrogation. Always after his knee cartilage had been snapped by Pig Eye, Captain Stockdale made a big production out of it. When the Vietnamese would come in and demand to know why he didn't stand, he replied, "I can't get up. I can't walk. I want to see the doctor." The Vietnamese standard reply was, "You are a criminal. You are in punishment. You

do not deserve medical care."

Early each morning in the Nobby Room, Captain Stockdale would crawl over to his primary observation peephole, a one-half inch gap under the door. This afforded about 20 minutes of "recreation" viewing some of the major changes which had occurred in New Guy Village court since he had last been there. The court had been cleaned up somewhat, and the quiz rooms located on the south end of the court had been converted into cells with new inmates, a pair of Vietnamese women. These were not "ordinary peasant gals which were held in great quantities back in what is now called the Unity area." These women had certain rights and privileges and were cared for by "civilian guards," that is guards in light tan coats and trousers, some of whom wore what were very similar to Army insignia. At five in the morning, the women would come out in patent leather shoes, black trousers, white blouses, with their hair neatly arranged, and usually with personal laundry. After the laundry was hanging on the line, they swept New Guy Village court right up to the Nobby Room door. The guards appeared fascinated with them, opening doors for them and in general deferring to them. Captain Stockdale almost whispered to them several times, "Good morning, gals. - You look great," but he did not want to cause them needless trouble. He believes "they were definitely anti-Communist prisoners." They brought civilization to the place and he enjoyed knowing that he was "within forty feet of people that had seen better days," but he let it go at that.

In another change to the New Guy Village court, civilians had moved into other parts of the south side. These were not prisoners, and were probably functionaries involved in a growing bureaucracy in that area. Later most of the New Guy Village court became an administrative section of what probably was the Vietnamese overall prison system authority.

On one occasion Captain Stockdale observed a Vietnamese prisoner sitting at a small quiz table writing some piece of material for the Vietnamese. As Captain Stockdale passed within about four feet of the cell, this prisoner displayed a big grin, held his nose, and gave Captain Stockdale a thumbs down signal. This incident reminded Captain Stockdale that what was occurring with U.S. prisoners of war was "an incorporation of Americans into a basic mode of intimidation, corruption, guilt, fear, and repentance" that he had long before learned was the "basic way dissidents of Communist society were made to conform. Those in America who object to the establishment as such don't know the half of it, 'cause that is the way the big establishment really works." It certainly was not unique to Americans. "The quiz, the interrogation, the statements, the apology, all this is the way" the Vietnamese ran their whole prison system. The ropes and other forms of torture techniques may have varied, but the basic process was designed to handle all "dissenters."

Since the Summer of 1966 when there had been much talk of "war crimes trials," the prisoners had given such trials considerable thought. Captain Stockdale and others had determined that to make any sort of plea of guilt or innocence would unacceptably dignify the affair. Although the

policy would not be enunciated until later (at Alcatraz), he had decided to pull the same stance he had seen depicted in movies, that is no plea. However, he was a little concerned about the possibility of the current purge leading into a war crimes trial. The whole procedure was clearly a remote control operation as Literary Bug and Greasy shuttled between Captain Stockdale and what he recognized was the hand of Rabbit, and, on occasion, "a hand more sophisticated than Rabbit's!" Sometimes he thought that the guidance had an input from a legal counsel, all very carefully documented as if to support a charge of threatening the security of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

As horrible as these extortion and torture periods were, Captain Stockdale believed they provided valuable sources of information for the man being pressured. If timed at just the right instance, they could be used in the midst of the heated arguments both to clear up points and to plant ideas which could prove profitable. Captain Stockdale was able to end forever his occasional typing duties by feeding into a heated quiz over "No Repent. No Repay.," the fact that he had learned of the Vietnamese policy when he was required to type it. Never again was he permitted near a typewriter. These "points" always had to be in response, never volunteered, or the Vietnamese were very quick to recognize the fact that something was being planted, for these were experienced extortionists who knew that anything volunteered would likely have a second motive. But, by listening carefully, and waiting, and having an available shopping list, Captain Stockdale learned that under duress you could blurt out what seemed to be a creditable, spontaneous answer or comment.

Captain Stockdale knew the prison population was growing rapidly throughout the Summer and early Fall of 1967. He kept thinking, and hoping, that his isolation in New Guy Village would be broken by the arrival of overflow from the other areas. Although never verified, he had heard that because of the crowded conditions the Vietnamese had even dispersed some prisoners in private homes in Hanoi. But, New Guy Village remained the sole domain of Captain Stockdale and Colonel Risner on into early October 1967. Captain Stockdale was sleeping on the filthy floor of the Hobby Room without blankets, mats, or nets. His legs were covered with skin abrasions, cuts, and sores, since any scrape or scratch on the concrete resulted in a pussy sore. Such things as iodine were not part of his "regime of treatment." A sign of "how life really was" is afforded by the time he noticed a spot which he thought had been a sore was suddenly black, and that black spot was a colony of black ants affixed to his leg. His disinterest was such that his only action was to just brush them off.

The mosquitos and the cool nights were bothersome problems. Back in December 1966, Captain Stockdale had learned the technique of putting his pants on upside down, and this helped alleviate both problems. A knot was tied in the waist of the pajamas, and the pajamas were then put on upside down with the legs run up towards the knotted waist. One night, around 4 October 1967, the door burst open and Greasy followed by several guards entered to find Captain Stockdale lying on the middle of the floor with his

pants on upside down in what was initially interpreted to be "some black trick" by the Vietnamese, but was soon assessed as the result of Stockdale being "off his rocker." A blindfold was produced and the stay in New Guy Village had ended as Captain Stockdale was taken to Riviera Cell 1 in Vegas. The anxiety of not knowing what was next made the period in Riviera particularly difficult for Captain Stockdale as the weeks passed in October 1967. His hands were cuffed behind him, and he was blindfolded throughout the three weeks stay except twice daily when one cuff and the blindfold were removed for meals. Additionally, once a week he was able to go to the bath house for a few minutes to wash up. With both hands cuffed, he did not have enough strength in his right leg to get up from a squatting or laying position although he soon devised a way to slowly slither over to a corner and inch his way up the wall to position himself to use his honey bucket. The Vietnamese returned his blanket roll the morning after his arrival, and this included a thin rattan mat and two blankets. Riviera-1 was bare of all furniture. The combination of not knowing, of being blindfolded, crippled, and bound made this an unnerving and frustrating experience.

Two vacant cells separated Captain Stockdale from LCOL Jim Lamar in Riviera-4, the only other resident in Riviera. Early the first morning, LCOL Lamar tapped a big "good morning," and communications were established. LCOL Lamar's first message advised Captain Stockdale to be careful since he was being heavily quizzed by Rabbit on Captain Stockdale's "connection with the CIA." LCOL Lamar had obviously been tortured and had done a "masterful job" in the kind of controlled leakage that was so necessary in the game of extortion and torture being used by the Vietnamese. Based on his intimate knowledge of the process, Captain Stockdale explains, "We all knew the rules of the game and what the Vietnamese could do with torture. As time went on we incorporated this into our policies and cover stories. We realized that it was so easy in survival school to say 'I will give only name, rank, and serial number, or they will have to kill me to get more out of me.' This is a naive viewpoint when you realize the anatomy of pain and the anatomy of purposefulness when the Vietnamese want a particular thing. You have to plan on this. You have got to know when you issue instructions that you will have to accept this leakage, yet still control the extent of that leakage. The fact that Jim Lamar had been tortured and had to give my name as author of B.A.C.K. U.S., No Repent, No Repay, and so forth gives the Vietnamese nothing new - that is commonplace. But the fact that he was able to hold the line, plead ignorance on more sensitive matters and pick up intelligence to report back - that is 'man bites dog' news."

LCOL Lamar tried to keep Captain Stockdale's morale up during this "stash" period through a complex process of acquainting him with other prisoners in Vegas. After a fashion, Captain Stockdale was able to work the right arm cuff up far enough so that he could ease his mask down to where he could see out of a small peephole in his door. He couldn't always do this because it depended on how tightly his cuffs were on and how sore his arm was. But when he could see out, and when a prisoner would emerge in Vegas court to dump his bucket or pass by enroute to the bath



stalls, LCOL Lamar would tap the man's initials while Captain Stockdale mentally photographed him. In this way Captain Stockdale was able to learn at least 20 new name-face associations. Because of this experience, Captain Stockdale was able to walk up to Major Smitty Harris six years later in the Unity court and know exactly who he was though they had never met.

The dreaded crisis of the day for Captain Stockdale was the end of the evening meal when the cuffs were put back in place for the night. One guard, "Bo," would place a reasonably loose set of cuffs on him and Captain Stockdale could then probably doze off that night although he had no way to brush off mosquitos or cover up. If the other guard, Drut, arranged the cuffs after that evening meal, Captain Stockdale could count on them being placed high on the arms, and cinched tight enough that the "bone tension" would grow through the night into pain by morning, of course precluding sleep. Another determinant of sleep was the decision as to how to dress for the night. In October the "can't win" choice for the immobilized man was to dress as warmly as possible at 1600 in the afternoon and then sweat in the tropical heat until about 0100, or to remain prepared for the heat without extra "sweatshirt" and be chilly the rest of the night.

The mounting mental anxiety of not knowing where this period was leading and not being able to account for the Vietnamese actions was a great strain on Captain Stockdale. The Vietnamese provided only one break in the monotony. One morning Rabbit entered, as usual wanting to make a deal. He began with the usual nonsense about sinning against the Vietnamese people and said, "Here's the deal. We have what we call the camp newspaper, and prisoners write articles for this newspaper." Rabbit handed a copy to Captain Stockdale and gave him a chance to read it. Most articles were cleverly written and some were particularly funny to Americans. It was Cat's "idea of a good propaganda vehicle." Rabbit continued with his plan, "Since this is a document written by Americans, we want a summarizing article explaining that it really exists. There are two ways to go. You either write the summary and I will get someone else to tape it, or if you refuse to write it I'll guarantee that you will tape it." Rabbit brought in a table, a pen, put the paper down, and said, "I hope you will make the right decision." That decision was, "of course, not to write it." The table was removed and that evening heavy irons were brought in. Captain Stockdale spent that night sitting up with 50 pound irons across his legs in preparation for the taping exercise. In a day or so, he was taken to Cat's Quiz Room where Rabbit was all set up. The script that Rabbit provided was a cleverly written "not very damaging" description of the camp paper. That whole day was spent reading and rereading as Rabbit sought to obtain a usable tape only to hear again and again the Stockdale vocal distortion technique, a slow, slightly mispronounced, droning, monotone process. A torture guard stood by, and at one point Rabbit even complained that Captain Stockdale was wasting their electricity. They kept grinding away with Rabbit emphasizing anonymity and then becoming increasingly enraged as the voice droned on. By mid afternoon, Rabbit, in a rage, said the tapes wouldn't be used anyway.

He continued, "Now everything that leaves this place is scanned by a group of specially trained people before it goes out because we have been hurt by some of this material. There have been some black activities and tricks that have hurt our country." And so the session ended and Captain Stockdale was returned to Riviera-1. About two hours later Rabbit stopped by, complaining that "This will never pass. I'm wasting my day. I don't know why they told me to come down here." That night Captain Stockdale heard unmistakable sounds coming from the Vietnamese assembly room in Vegas, the ranting of Greasy loudly celebrating what he apparently considered a triumphant night for "even Dan (Captain Stockdale) had made a tape," albeit unusable. Rabbit who was more concerned with the content of that tape was not heard celebrating.

While there was a natural tendency to attribute discreditable habits to the guards, Captain Stockdale was generally skeptical of reports such as "The guards were all drunk last night." Clearly there were occasions when punishment or abuse was meted out by a drunken Vietnamese, as for example the time Captain Rutledge was punished by an inebriated Slopehead, but this was not a common practice among the Vietnamese as a group. A notable exception was Greasy, who was known by several of the prisoners as an imbibier. During the heavy bombing period in 1967, beer was made available to the guards, although to what extent Captain Stockdale was not aware. The guards "were pretty damned scared" during the Summer of 1967 and either by manufactured design, or indecision, or fear, the Vietnamese appeared to Captain Stockdale to be considerably more riled up than usual.

The B.A.C.K. U.S. purge of August 1967 "caused a lot of people a lot of grief." Among the many prisoners who were under considerable pressure and torture in the shakedown were WO John Frederick, LCDR Dan Glenn, and Captain Ron Storz. WO Frederick spent a month in irons, cuffs, and blindfolds while he was grilled unmercifully on Captain Stockdale's connection with the CIA. Given similar treatment was LCDR Dan Glenn who "took it on the chin" but valiantly weathered that storm. There were many others, but none were more heavily pressured and tortured than Captain Ron Storz. From that August day when he had refused to be made a stool pigeon to spy on Captain Stockdale and Major Sam Johnson, he had been under great pressure. At one point Captain Storz took a pen with which he was to write something and tried to commit suicide by gouging a big hole in his arm.

#### THE ALCATRAZ GANG

Moving day finally came on 25 October 1967. Mao Tse-Tung was in charge as Camp Commander since the Fox had apparently lost the Vegas Commander's job during the great camp purge. The whole camp was in an uproar as prisoners were frisked and moved out blindfolded to a variety of places. Captain Stockdale was about to come "unglued" as his door slammed shut after the evening meal leaving him sitting with the tight cuffs. As he normally did when he was moved to a new situation, he had earlier calculated the length of stay he felt he could endure under his Riviera-1 conditions, and he was fast approaching the end of his 28 day estimate. So it was with feelings

of immense relief and happiness that his door opened around 2100. He was taken outside Riviera-1 where his hands were loosely bound so that his blanket roll could be slipped under his arms. He didn't know what was coming but whatever it was would be more easily accommodated than that depressing stay in Riviera. After a jeep drive that he later learned was about ten blocks, he was led a short distance on foot when he fell flat on his face to the bottom of an unexpected flight of three steps to the sound of derisive laughter. Shortly after that, Captain Stockdale was placed in a mint-sized cell with a raised platform encompassing most of the deck area, leaving about a 4 x 3 feet walking area in front. A guard came in and put on the travelling irons. There, on the night of 25 October 1967, Alcatraz was opened and the gang was there - eleven in number.

Shortly after arrival at Alcatraz communications were established. Captain Stockdale, on the north end of the small building, was separated from Captain Jim Mulligan by an empty cell used by the Vietnamese as a storeroom. The east-west oriented long building had the other nine residents located from west to east as Captain Jerry Denton - empty cell/storeroom - Major George McKnight - III George Coker - CDR Nels Tanner - Captain Ron Storz - CDR Bob Shumaker - Major Sam Johnson - Captain Harry Jenkins - and Captain Howie Rutledge on the east end. The membership was largely composed of the leaders of the prisoner organization at Vegas during 1967. In addition to the activist leadership and communicator group, Nels Tanner had just completed 125 continuous days in irons as partial punishment for "making a fool of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam" through his Clark Kent ploy. The other two, McKnight and Coker, qualified for membership through their escape from Dirty Bird earlier in the Fall. They had been recaptured, brought back, tortured, and banished to this camp for irreconcilables. In Captain Stockdale's words, "The Alcatraz gang, so constituted, became one of the closest knit, easily managed, single purpose groups of men I have ever been associated with. Leadership among them was effortless and a pleasure. It was not to where do we jump, but how far!"

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Through the tap code, communications were immediately established in the long building. The big link and only real communication problem was how to tie the small building with the long one. The camp arrangement permitted Captain Stockdale to most easily see Nels Tanner's room so this became the primary relay link. Cdr Tanner had a small clearance area under his door whereby positioning himself upside down with his head resting on the cement, he could flash with his hand far enough back so that the guards could not normally see it. Captain Stockdale's situation was complicated by two factors initially, the more narrow clearance under his door and the weakness in his left arm. The geometry of the situation required him to perform a left-handed flash, and this he was not able to do for about three months until his arm had gained enough strength to permit extensive flashing. As a temporary measure, Captain Stockdale would peek out of his door bottom slit and tap responses with his big toe.

In anticipation of the need for emergency back up communications, Captain Denton invented one of his many communications innovations, the vocal tap code. The same format of the 5 x 5 diagram was used but with natural sounds such as coughs, sneezes, and throat clearing substituted for taps. Additionally, each of the eleven prisoners had chosen a unique song which could be whistled for identification. The songs ranged from Captain Mulligan's "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" to Captain Storz' "Sidewalks of New York" to Captain Stockdale's "Chicago," which was changed with usage to the easier to whistle "I Used to Work in Chicago in a Big Department Store."

Security during periods of communications depended primarily on the dim light within the rooms at Alcatraz. At times CDR Tanner was not able to provide warning to Captain Stockdale as a guard would slip up to the door and open the viewing port hole. But Captain Stockdale soon learned as the guard would stand looking, then close the port and go away, that it was so dark that he couldn't tell whether Captain Stockdale was lying on his bunk or on the floor. Thus the greatest hazard to communications was the possibility of someone seeing CDR Tanner's hand flashing, and this caused some tense moments. But in spite of the risk, long, long sessions were held on matters ranging from philosophical discussions about prisoner organization to the question of early release. CDR Tanner's relay spot frequently required him to send both directions, especially since the dialogue and exchange of messages occurred principally between Captain Denton and Captain Stockdale, with many inputs from the other nine. An indication of the volume of traffic and the skill of the communicators was provided when CDR Tanner signed off one evening saying he had processed 10,000 words that day.

#### THE FINK RELEASE PROGRAM

The Vegas B.A.C.K. U.S. and other policies were retained with added refinements concerning writing. The group was small enough and composed of highly experienced resistors so that Captain Stockdale's brief orders could be promulgated, understood, and followed by all. "We will not write" was understood by everyone to mean "We don't want to write," and so "We won't write unless we consider it absolutely necessary, in which case we'll let you know." Minimizing the Vietnamese gain, that was the name of the game. The gang was "sufficiently in cahoots, and motivated, and knew each other's experience level well enough to permit the use of more sophisticated orders."

A major debate began under the abbreviated name "Fink Release Program" when the Alcatraz gang was shocked one day to hear the tape recordings of the first prisoner release. These recordings violated the "All Go Home Together" idea as well as the Alcatraz consensus understanding of the Code of Conduct. The Fink Release Program discussion lasted for weeks with inputs from all, as, for example, the exchange one day between Captain Storz and Captain Stockdale which led to the conclusion that the first releasees were in effect paroled, and, of course, that was against the Code which says no paroles. The Fink Release Program, or Alcatraz Release Policy, was promulgated by Captain Stockdale at the end of this long discussion. This release policy was later put out at Vegas by Captain Denton while Captain Stockdale was still in isolation. The policy required that as the prisoner

was pulled out for what appeared to be a release sequence, he would drag his feet and insist upon seeing the Senior Ranking Officer to obtain movement permission. While this was not expected to work, the foot dragging would provide time while the prisoner tried to determine answers by any means possible to three questions:

Are all Americans being released?

Is it to the U.S. Government?

If not to the U. S. Government, is the release to a neutral country under conditions where a relatively sterile or manageable propaganda effort would occur? (Peking would not qualify, Cambodia in 1967 might have, and India probably would have qualified.)

Captain Stockdale knew Colonel Risner was still isolated so he directed that this release policy be forwarded to any group in other camps as contact was established. Basically, it at first involved yelling for the senior officer and stalling until the answers could be obtained to the three questions. The policy was further refined by Captain Stockdale to cover cases where answers couldn't be found. He said, "If in doubt, unless there is greater than a 60 percent chance the answer is 'No,' then assume it to be 'Yes.' If any one of the three questions had to be answered 'No,' then go ahead and accept release. But if two questions had to be answered 'No,' then the prisoner was to oppose release and behave in such a manner as to require continuous physical restraint." Simply put, Captain Stockdale was "committing Alcatraz to a release to a neutral country if all Americans went but not a release to a neutral country unless 100 percent went."

#### THE ALCATRAZ STORY

And so the debate and discussion went at Alcatraz, "some of it quasi official, some of it social, and some of it rigorously official" on such varied subjects as the question of what camp reaction should be in response to "a gross act" committed by the Vietnamese, plans for an Alcatraz gang reunion, details of families and future, with lots of time for all of that.

Late one cold night in December 1967, Rabbit "happened to be in the area" and had Captain Stockdale called to quiz. He began innocuously but then said something that "struck fear" in Captain Stockdale's heart. Rabbit began sarcastically, "How do you like your new home? Well," he continued, "you will. You will bow. You will be on the air. You are a criminal." And he concluded, "You and your tricks. Is there really a political policy department in the Navy?" Captain Stockdale remained silent to Rabbit's last comment which referred all the way back to that letter he had draft written to CNO almost two years before. But the problem was definitely with him for shortly thereafter Rat brought in a crudely edited draft of the letter saying, "They want you to copy that and sign it." Captain Stockdale refused and was "put on the wall" where he stood for all of that night and all the next day while Rabbit's draft, complete with sentences without verbs and addressed to the CNO political section remained on the bunk beside a pen.

After a day on the wall, Captain Stockdale copied it using penmanship indicative of extorted material. Depressed and tormented, apprehensive about the fact that Rabbit clearly had something more in mind, feeling sure that he would be back and not be easily satisfied, Captain Stockdale began a hunger strike on the advice of Captain Mulligan who indicated that he had had good success with fasts. Captain Stockdale knew that Cat did not "give a damn whether the Navy got that letter or not." All he needed was a few usable extracts from it.

Lying on his bunk one night in his fast posture, Captain Stockdale determined that he would make himself "a Gandhi," who would have to be carried on a litter around the prison. That would be "one way" to get even with them for even their conscience might be offended by that." In retrospect, Captain Stockdale has analyzed the motivation of the starvation syndrome that proved the downfall of others, particularly Captain Ron Storz, but, he comments, "I wasn't built that way." As the fast progressed, Captain Stockdale devoted considerable attention to his next move, and with an inspired thought one night he decided to ask CDR Nels Tanner why the Vietnamese were not bothering him and apparently hadn't bothered him for propaganda (punishment, yes, but not propaganda) since his Clark Kent victory. Eagerly the next morning Captain Stockdale flashed the message, "Do you feel you are innoculated against propaganda?" CDR Tanner replied that the Vietnamese had not been bothering him. It suddenly occurred to Captain Stockdale that CDR Tanner "was poison (to the Vietnamese). He had poisoned himself and that was his best defense." No matter what CDR Tanner said now, it was not going to be accepted by "the screening process" that Rabbit had inadvertently mentioned during a fit of rage earlier that Fall. The plan that Captain Stockdale formulated as the "best way to get at that Rabbit" began with the acquisition of cigarette ashes and water to make a writing paste. With a piece of paper he wrote a note designed to be found by the Vietnamese. The stage was fortuitously set by an alert guard who caught Captain Stockdale peeking out of the peephole on his door at Captain Denton who was out sweeping his morning "thought for the day" to the camp. Thinking rapidly, it all started to fit together. "This was gold" because he now had an official reason to know that Captain Denton was in camp. In the mechanics of extortion, he had "scored a point," he had now "seen Denton in camp," and was ready for the next step. By flash communication relay he passed the word to Captain Denton that the next time he came down the walk with his bucket past Captain Denton's corner room door he would throw a note under the door, and "For God's sake don't touch it because I'm depending upon the guard behind me to see the note and intercept it. Use complete ignorance as to its contents and don't touch it when it comes in!" The note was crudely written and said roughly, "Dear Jerry, I saw you through my port the other day. I hope you're feeling well." Continuing on to build the credibility, he wrote, "Jerry, I want to thank you for all the great leadership you supplied in the days back at the last camp. I was forced to write a paper admitting to your leadership and I hope this has brought you no grief." So far, highly credible, but now for the coup de grace, "Now I am in a hell of a mess because that son of a bitch, Rabbit, is

trying to get me to reproduce an old pre-Panner letter that I wrote that is loaded with tricks against the DRV. As soon as that information hits the States and the feedback gets back to the DRV of the tricks in my letter, my ass will be grass." The idiom was interjected to give the Vietnamese "something extra to work on." Captain Stockdale closed by saying something like, "GBU. I just hope the bastards will leave me alone. Jim." Now Captain Stockdale had "to build up" his courage to throw the note. It had to be done when he was being escorted by a guard sharp enough to see the action but the theatrics had to be credible enough so that the guard would interpret it as a clandestine maneuver, one in which he "could score himself a hero for intercepting it." As Captain Stockdale pondered this problem, he seriously hid the note in a place he had previously thought inaccessible to himself, on the top of a sill above his window. At this point the visit of a group of young English language students from the Ministry of National Defense School combined with the showoff nature of one of the turnkeys to solve the dilemma. The turnkey, "Turd," decided to "show these guys how to treat prisoners" one day while Captain Stockdale was returning from the wash area. Through his open door they trouped, and Turd began by showing those neophytes how to conduct a room inspection. After hearing considerable banging and clattering, Captain Stockdale arrived in the cell to be confronted with a display situation. Captain Stockdale explains, "There Turd had found that damn note and all of the students were standing around while he was confronting me with positive evidence. He was giving them an object lesson with the whole thing, and I, of course, was theatrically thunderstruck, 'Oh! My God! What could have been worse? How can I deny that it was there?'" With that triumphant Turd and his class left. Captain Stockdale delightedly placed his bet that the note was on its way up the chain from Turd to Rabbit to Cat to the so-called screening committee, and he hoped they would take the bait. Everything quieted down as Captain Stockdale continued his fast. After more silence he began to eat a bit, "Eating and praying" until finally one day he was called in for a quiz - on another matter. Never again was that CNO letter ever mentioned.

Several days after Captain Stockdale had begun to eat, as the silence on the CNO letter continued in December 1967, he was called to quiz by "Slopehead." This "old, rough, tough" Vietnamese senior captain (four star one bar) served as military commander at the Plantation and, on occasion, visited Alcatraz. Logistically, as well as militarily, Alcatraz appeared to be administered under the Plantation, which was located two blocks away, e.g., the food for Alcatraz came from the Plantation. Hoping for the best, Captain Stockdale was brought before Slopehead for a formal quiz session on the charge of communicating, "The only thing the Vietnamese had left." This was about ten days after Turd had found the note. Captain Stockdale assumed his "thunderstruck, caught red-handed" pose.

Each cell had a copy of the camp regulations posted on the wall, although Captain Stockdale was unable to read within his cell because of the dim light. He had LT Coker memorize these camp regulations "because if we could print that in the New York Times today it would be the best indication of the Vietnamese benevolence you could have." These regulations

were replete with pidgin English and included such points as: Rule 1 - You are criminals; Rule 2 - You will answer all questions; Rule 3 - You will not communicate with other criminals either by wall tapping, shouting, or something else. Slopehead began, "You have been communicating." Captain Stockdale replied, "No, I did not communicate with anybody." Slopehead continued, "But you were preparing to communicate and that's against camp regulations. But the thing I'm here to talk to you about is the use of your language. You called us 'bastards' and in Vietnamese that is a very bad word. You called Rabbit a 'son of a bitch.' You have violated camp regulations in attempting to communicate." When Captain Stockdale responded, "There's nothing in camp regulations that says anything about notes," Slopehead jumped from his chair, called Rat, and both went outside. After a hurried consultation they came back, Slopehead pompously sat down, and Rat said, "You have just told a falsehood! The camp regulations say there will be no communicating by shouting, wall tapping, etc. And this is et cetera! You will be punished." Captain Stockdale's punishment consisted of ten days around the clock in irons.

The next significant trouble period at Alcatraz for Captain Stockdale was over communications at night. With cell lights on all night, the prisoners never communicated at night. It would have taken "the world's biggest fool to communicate at night," but the Vietnamese had the idea that night must be the time communications were occurring. Although he had one more blanket in 1968 than he had the year before, even with two blankets Captain Stockdale was cold at night. "When I'm cold and when I'm disturbed, I talk in my sleep and all I was doing was having nightmares." After several nights of being awakened by a guard saying, "No! No! No!," Captain Stockdale was called in to quiz for communicating. He went in, sat on the floor, and was charged by Rabbit with communicating, talking at night, "The guard heard you. He heard you talking." Turd was stationed to straddle Captain Stockdale, and every time the Captain said, "No," Turd would launch a one-two punch combination to the jaw. This process continued until it was as clear to the Vietnamese as it had been from the beginning to Captain Stockdale that an "admission was out of the question," and would not be forthcoming. Punishment for this black activity was around the clock irons for about ten days. Around the clock irons punishment was far more severe in some other instances, as for example, the time that Captain Jenkins was maliciously accused of communications by a guard and was put in full time irons for a period of 85 days.

Christmas 1967 was an occasion for each prisoner to have a short individual "Merry Christmas" quiz, marked in Captain Stockdale's memory only because he may have received a letter that night, and by the vase allegedly made of F-105 parts on the quiz table, and, further, by the exceptional circumstance that the irons were removed for the night. For the Alcatraz gang on only four nights of the year were they normally free of those irons - Christmas Eve and night, and the eve and first night of Tet. At all other times the travelling irons remained on about 15 hours a day, coming off in the mornings when it was time to dump buckets and going on at the end of the evening meal. Each prisoner had a unique set of irons. Captain Stockdale couldn't turn over in his although he was "no longer a



cripple" in the sense that his left leg had gained strength. If he had an urgent message in the morning before the irons came off, he was able to get down into position on the floor to flash under the door to CDR Tanner. This, however, was a poor position because with his stiff leg it took to the count of ten to get up. When he was in around-the-clock irons, he did exercises such as 100 pushups with irons on. The travelling irons were so tight that he was forced to sleep flat on his back, though, luckily, that position did not bother him.

Captain Mulligan's success with fasting as a counterextortion technique resulted from his ability to faint after a period of several days without food. This technique had saved him several times when the Vietnamese would put him on the wall or on his knees, and he could pass out so that the Vietnamese would have to carry him back to his cell. Unfortunately, this device was not physiologically available to Captain Stockdale although he practiced it several times in attempting to develop the ability to lose consciousness. Captain Stockdale's body reaction was such that he could not faint and was still able to do 10 to 15 pushups after 7 days without food.

During Captain Stockdale's confinement at Alcatraz, flash communications were so good that note passing via the drop system was not necessary. Notes could be written using a bamboo stick and the cigarette ash and water paste, and after Captain Stockdale's removal from Alcatraz he was told that some note passing occurred between members of the gang left out in the punishment rooms. But during his stay he almost always had flash contact with all other prisoners within five minutes during daylight hours. The Vietnamese knew the gang was communicating. CDR Tanner was told in quiz one day by a Vietnamese officer, "This goes for you, and when you get out there you tell all your friends the same thing." At one point during the Summer of 1968, CDR Tanner became "sick with fever from being eaten up by mosquitos as he worked some of my long messages," Captain Stockdale relates.

In the Summer of 1968, the Vietnamese subtly began what later became the biographic blue book. It started with primarily a repetition of personal information that had been extorted much earlier. In reaction the Alcatraz gang "went down the line" on this issue, deciding that the Vietnamese were not going to get the information without torture. So the extortion and torture process began with the prisoner being taken to the quiz room where the legs were bound in two sets of leg irons complete with lacing chain. In this double irons arrangement, Captain Stockdale was placed "on the wall" all night with a guard named "Cuntface" to ensure that he stood and did not lean against the wall. After several hours, Cuntface, who had a large vertical scar on his forehead, came in and accused Captain Stockdale of leaning. By this time his ankles were becoming badly swollen from the strain of double irons and from the rampaging mosquitos in the room. Captain Stockdale glanced down at his feet and thought, "Those aren't my feet. They were six hours ago, but they don't look like it anymore." Adding his personal touch to this torture, Cuntface would kick the irons. On the second evening Captain Stockdale began writing in the biography blue book on matters such as personal family background and service itinerary. He had earlier gone to meticulous pains to memorize a military

service chronology of duties that could not possibly place him in the Western Pacific during the Summer of 1964, at the time of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents. As the Alcatraz gang took the Vietnamese down the line on this, Captain Stockdale saw such unforgettable scenes through his peephole as CDR Shumaker returning after a long stay in there with badly bloodied kneecaps, and Major Mc Knight coming back with "the foulest looking knees" the Captain had ever seen but looking up toward Captain Stockdale's cell as he passed by and giving him a big grin and a thumbs

### TO CAG WITH LOVE

On special events days "chain messages" would sometimes be sent. Such an occasion was Captain Stockdale's shutdown third anniversary, 9 September 1968, when in "one of the proudest moments" of his life he received a message in parts as the nine residents of the long building swept their buckets. "Here's to CAG for three great years. We love you. We are with you 'til the end." Although in solo, in irons, in a dark cell with too much cold in the winter and too much heat in the summer, and all the rest, this action portrays some measure of the love and camaraderie that sustained the morale and being of the Alcatraz gang. As Captain Stockdale explains, "I don't believe I received any message that meant any more to me than that (anniversary greeting). It's pretty hard to think of saying 'love' to those guys back here at home, but it didn't seem strange there."

As 1968 passed by "camp morale was not bad," but Captain Ron Storz "started looking bad." He had been a cocky kid from New York, "one of the finest looking young men" Captain Stockdale had ever seen. He talked at length to Captain Stockdale about his plans, although they didn't often have the opportunity to converse. Captain Stockdale felt a deep personal indebtedness to Ron because he had gone to the ultimate extent of trying to kill himself to keep from implicating the Captain back at Vegas. One cold day as they talked under the door, Ron told about his wife, Sandra, his little boy, and little girl. Sandra was living in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, teaching school while the children stayed with her mother. Although Ron had last kissed Sandra goodbye in Texas, he went on and on about all the things happening in Portsmouth. After that conversation, Captain Stockdale confirmed with CDR Tanner what he had previously thought, that Ron had received no letters from home. "This whole thing was something in his mind. He had made it up, and Captain Stockdale could see that Ron was starting to drift as his swagger and friendly grin slowly evolved into a stumbling shuffle and a vacant stare. He wouldn't eat, yet he would go out and argue with the guard to get more food. His body started to resemble that of a skeleton rather than of a man, and his eyes became hollow as he began to lose touch with reality. Although this slow downhill process continued past Captain Stockdale's departure from Alcatraz, before he left he could see Ron "was dying of a broken heart right there among us. We all did what we could for him, but we all saw a man disintegrate before our eyes." For Ron Storz, sadly, the "with you 'til the end" would soon come.

## CHRISTMAS 1968

Late Christmas Eve, 1968, Captain Stockdale was loaded into a jeep for a two block ride to the Plantation. It was around 2300, and Captain Stockdale was the last of a series of prisoners to have a visit with Cat and another Vietnamese known as the "Eel." As Captain Stockdale entered the big house he spotted a photographer in the hallway, and he was sure from the blackmail tone of the remarks that followed that the room was bugged. Cat's message was, "Merry Christmas. We want to thank you for all you've done for us." A bottle of beer was served, and at one point in the proceedings Cat reached over to grab Captain Stockdale's hand for what may have been a picture. It was a "disgusting display" and an indication of the extent of Cat's failure in his major program that after progressing from isolation to torture to compliance, then to the carrot and the stick, he finally had come to the phase where he could only imply a fictional gratitude for services rendered, "Thank you! Indeed!" Cat didn't make too big a production of it since it was late, and he was "getting kind of tight" from beer by this time, after having quizzed 15 to 20 prisoners.

Captain Stockdale recalls that Christmas Day in 1968 provided a "little extra meal but no letter," until that evening when his door opened and he was handed a letter from Mrs. Stockdale. He suddenly discovered at that time that his eyes were going bad as he struggled to read the letter that brought the sad news of the death of his mother, and he wept. Mrs. Stockdale's clever wording in the letter kept the impact of this news from the Vietnamese since she had written "your mother's things are still stored," and so on.

In the past Captain Stockdale had been told that one "measure of good (from our side) prisoner conduct was to have had as many guards employed as possible in watching you." The Alcatraz gang determined with some pride that counting turnkeys, watch guards, officers, and direct maintenance force, it required 1.4 Vietnamese for each prisoner at Alcatraz.

The long hours in irons began "getting on people's nerves" as the Vietnamese ignored prisoner requests and demands that the irons be eliminated, at least during periods of illness. The rationale for the irons seemed to have run out for the Vietnamese knew that covert communications existed, and the irons could hardly be justified on the basis of security with a special 24-hour guard surveillance and the secure Alcatraz cells. But the irons remained. Methods were devised by some whereby on occasion one leg iron could be left off under the mosquito net. Once Captain Denton passed an escape plan to Captain Stockdale in which Denton and Mc Knight would deceive the guards at the time the evening leg irons were put on into believing the irons were on when they actually were not. Thus, freed of irons, they would use the bars to break the cell doors open, then crawl over the head roof and drop down to the street. Captain Stockdale knew that physically he could not handle the drop required in this plan. He could do pushups and at last was able to stand on his left leg, but it wasn't until a year later, late 1969, that he could do exercises such as jumping jacks. He knew he couldn't take the long drop into the street. Although it was a

long shot plan, Captain Stockdale was enthusiastic about it to the extent that he told Captain Denton that he and the other remaining prisoners would provide diversionary riotous action, if necessary, to cover the noise of breaking out of the cells. This plan was still being discussed when Captain Stockdale left Alcatraz.

### THE ALCATRAZ RIOT

The pressure was rising, torture was on the increase, hints of blackmail by the Vietnamese were in the air, and Captain Storz was failing. "We had had about enough, we were living like animals, we were living in the dark, our eyes were going" in those small dark cells that formed "a huge blindfold." Some of the gang wanted to refuse Christmas dinner. Captain Rutledge was removed for interrogation and torture over the old incident of his having shot a Vietnamese during time of capture. Captain Denton had made at least two trips to the torture room on charges of communicating with Major Mc Knight, and it was plain that he had received considerable punishment on that. Mickey Mouse had taken over as Officer in Charge of Alcatraz. He was not a first team member of the propaganda unit, but he was a member nevertheless, and Mickey Mouse "was bad news." Captain Stockdale "was getting itchy and it seemed that it was time something happened."

It all came to a head shortly after midnight on 24 January 1969. As others had been during confinement at Alcatraz, Captain Jenkins was sick and full of worms, a problem which the Vietnamese ignored. That night, about 0200, he began, loudly, "Bao Caoing." The guard reacted nastily, insisting, "No! No! No! No doctor." Captain Jenkins, in pain, lost his temper and started yelling. This touched off a spontaneous prisoner reaction to "a Vietnamese gross act," and all stood at their cell doors yelling for help and action: "We have a sick man, get a doctor, you SOB," and so forth. The Vietnamese woke up and reacted in numbers, ordering prisoners back to bed and taking the names of all since all had participated. But the defiant act had occurred for the Alcatraz gang had reacted with riotous actions. Early the next morning, before the Vietnamese came around, Captain Stockdale sent an urgent message to the long building saying that now was the time for group action. His message to CDR Tanner was, "These are my orders. For 48 hours nobody takes chow." At noon that day Captain Jenkins sent a message to Captain Stockdale saying that he'd lost his temper the previous night and didn't want the gang to go to all that trouble for him. Captain Stockdale believed Captain Jenkins' actions fully justified and replied that the Vietnamese action in denying medical aid "was just symptomatic of the problem," and the fast was still on. As morning progressed with no Vietnamese action, a cover story was arranged to explain away the united action in the hunger strike. Captain Stockdale established the cover that during the yelling the previous night, he had shouted to all, "Your orders are do not eat." The morning meal came, and one by one the prisoners came out as they did each day to get chow from a table in the court. But this morning they took only the water and left the ration on the table before going back to the cell. It was a small act but a direct and open confrontation which they knew the Vietnamese could

not ignore. By the afternoon meal tension had grown, and a crowd of Vietnamese officers gathered to watch the procedure, as the fast continued, and that night all were called individually to quiz.

Captain Stockdale's quiz was with Slopehead. Captain Stockdale stated the case for improved treatment saying, generally, "We are sick and tired of being treated like animals. We are prisoners of war and under the Geneva Conventions of 1949, we expect to be treated as such." Slopehead took all of this down in what was probably a report he was preparing to Cat to explain the "riot."

Before dawn the next morning the cell door opened as Mickey Mouse and five guards arrived with orders to "roll up." Captain Stockdale was taken out, blindfolded, bound with baling wire, and put in the back of a jeep. From the top of the blindfold, he could peek out to see dawn just breaking on 25 January 1969.

#### THE PRISONER CONTROL PURGE

After the eight block ride from Alcatraz, Captain Stockdale was roughly led into a place which he recognized by smell as Hoa Lo prison. He was unblindfolded and left in Room 18, New Guy Village. Remembering the location of a peephole, he spotted Rabbit and Pig Eye approaching. A cover story was rapidly assembled to explain away the recent actions at Alcatraz, and this story centered around crying out in protest against the inhumane treatment. But Rabbit hurriedly entered and abruptly cut short any of the usual preliminaries saying, "My superior has taken me away from camp, from my job, because of this mess you have caused. I don't want to go into the details of what happened at that other camp. I have only one question. Will you be my slave, or not?" Thus, at 0600 on 25 January 1969, Rabbit began a sustained and vicious campaign designed to force Captain Stockdale to serve as Cat's tool in the control of the prisoners.

In January 1969, Captain Stockdale believes that "peace was in the wind." Through his peephole he could follow the action in Heartbreak court, and the proximity of Room 18 to a Vietnamese assembly hall afforded an opportunity to hear the tone of propaganda lectures presented to the civilian workers in the prison authority. Alcatraz had been out of the radio pipeline of propaganda since only on special occasions such as during the 1968 Tet Offensive, had portable radios or a bull horn been brought in to present Democratic Republic of Vietnam-style news. But at Hoa Lo, Captain Stockdale believed that the major propaganda theme at the time for the consumption of the Vietnamese people was that peace was at hand. This Democratic Republic of Vietnam theme was based, Captain Stockdale has concluded, on a total misunderstanding of the full significance of the election of President Richard M. Nixon. Consistent with that miscalculation, in retrospect Captain Stockdale believes that a major goal in Cat's program at that time was to so intimidate Stockdale that he would make a movie for prison consumption in which he would advise the junior prisoners that peace

was at hand, that President Nixon had a secret plan to end the war; that, therefore, the situation was very delicate; and that, accordingly, all prisoners should be mindful of this situation and do exactly as the camp authority directed.

With Cat lurking in the background, Chihuahua actively providing the detailed propaganda tools, and Rabbit supplying the master extortionist's touch, the first phase of Cat's campaign began with the assemblage of a "blackmail package." After three years with the Vietnamese, Captain Stockdale understood the methodology of the extortion process, and when "you can understand what goes through the mind of a real extortionist, you are one up." He could, by this time, "track the thinking of these guys." Although a good hard post-capture intelligence shakedown had been added over the years since 1965, something which other returnees will relate in detail and a process with which Captain Stockdale is unfamiliar, throughout the confinement period from 1965 through 1969, he "worked with" Vietnamese such as Cat and Rabbit who had different interests. To Cat the kind of bombs dropped was no big thing, but to know the number of men in a squadron was significant, not because Cat cared about the total, or that the number had any intrinsic value, but because he knew that the total number of men in the squadron was listed on a BUPERS document that was classified Confidential. So he didn't "give a damn" how many men were in a squadron, but in trying to go by American psychology and what would give him access to an American's guilt, Cat would try to find out "that something" which is held by an American as sacred and which the American is conditioned to hold as sacred. When Cat could extract "that something," a piece of classified information which the American knows is "sacred," Cat had an opening, a wedge into the average American's guilt processes, and Cat knew how to handle that kind of opening. He wouldn't know the difference between a MK-84 and a CBU if they were both lying at his feet, but he did know the difference between classified and unclassified information, and he knew "what this does to a guy's insides." (Debriefers' Comment: As obvious as this extortionist frame of reference appears to Captain Stockdale now, it took him considerable time to "dope out the methodology." He believes it worth remembering from three aspects: To prepare aircrews to best handle the extortion process and to develop counterextortion techniques; to be considered in determining what classified information to pass out to aircrews; and to be considered when determining what information should be classified in the first place.)

On Day One, 25 January 1969, the first phase scenario drama unfolded with Rabbit, Chihuahua, Pig Eye, and Captain Stockdale in intensive quiz. Rabbit began, "Do you submit?" In response to the "I do not submit," Pig Eye administered the ropes. This began the extortion and torture process which over a six day period led to Captain Stockdale's torture in the ropes five times. He calculated his actions, and consequently his receipt of torture, carefully. Captain Stockdale explains, "There came a time in the process when you had to establish a credibility of defiance, and it had to be paced in a way that would never erase the credibility as I tried to contain the onslaught." Captain Stockdale submitted and signed a prepared statement which said, "I understand that I am a criminal. I have

opposed the camp authority and incited others to oppose the camp authority. I know the nature of my sins, and I now submit to you to do whatever you ask, write, say, or tape." At the end of Day One, Rabbit had gotten the program off the ground with an entry for the blackmail package.

Day Two began the next morning with questions about the "names of everybody in your wing, numbers of personnel in your squadron, numbers on your ships," and other quantity data and specific information. This required another rope job, and then much to Captain Stockdale's relief they accepted almost anything as long as it fit the question category. Question: "Names of wing personnel?" Answer: Without trying very hard, Captain Stockdale could only remember about 20 names but Rabbit wasn't too concerned with that, "He just wanted something that had names so he got the names of sailors" and a short general hodgepodge. Rabbit got no pattern, and Captain Stockdale kept up "my credibility of defiance and my credibility as an incensed victim." Question: "How many on the ship?" Answer: Captain Stockdale said, "In the newspaper one time there were over 3,000 people on a carrier of that size." Rabbit considered that answer all right. And, so on through numbers of men in squadrons with answers pulled out of the air.

Days Three, Four, and Five progressed and merged with more of the same blackmail quiz process, with more ropes and arm twists in the absence of the ropes. Question: "Give us specific information on the defenses of your ship." Answer: "They had fighter defenses and I think they had anti-aircraft guns, but I don't know the caliber." Result: "It doesn't matter, we've got enough on that." Question: "What are your tactics of flight?" Answer: "We go to the beach with fighters and bombers. When we would get near the beach, the fighters would deploy to the north to guard against the attack of MIG's, the bombers would bomb targets and when they finished we would all get together and go home." Result: "Fine." Question: "What targets did you hit?" Answer: "There were two targets I hit, there was the road recce target, which resulted from individual surveillance of the road. That was predominant. And, occasionally, I hit Vinh Airfield." Result: "All right." The next question worried Captain Stockdale and spurred him to the closest he ever came to beating the ropes. Question: "Tell us all of every conference you attended on this cruise and what was said at that conference." On to specifics, "Is it not true you attended a conference in Honolulu on the way out here?" It was time for the ropes again, Captain Stockdale determined, and he describes the process. After the "accident" in 1967, "Pig Eye was meticulously careful now to put my right foot in my mouth and not my left, and he was keeping this left foot out of the program. I could remember my black box treatment, if you can just get your mind out of the box! I can remember relaxing, and I was really getting so I knew when to expect pain, how much, and where it was going to be. I couldn't beat it. I'm not that tolerant of pain, but I can remember getting down there, and I went around Alcatraz thinking, 'You've got to get your mind out of the box; you've got to get your mind out of that box.' What's Jim Mulligan's song, okay, 'Irish Eyes are Smiling'; What's Howie Rutledge's song, 'Oklahoma'; Who is next door to Harry Jenkins, 'That's Sam Johnson.' Somehow I really felt that this

thought process helped me to relax. That's the closest I ever came to beating the ropes because I remember I got up out of those ropes and I said, 'Yes, I attended a conference in Honolulu,' then I turned to Chihuahua and said, 'What in the hell is going on around here?' I don't suppose that really is 'beating the ropes,' but I can remember I got up madder than when I went in. I said, 'There is a conference in Honolulu. It is given to everyone who goes West. It concerns mainly unclassified subjects. We talked about the V.D. rate in Manila. We talked about V.D. rates in Japan. We talked about liberty restrictions and the Seventh Fleet curfew. There are so many ships in the Philippines, and there are so many in Japan, and they trade places and there's a schedule, and so on.' I gave them the peacetime briefing which was really what we got on the way out. Of course, I had a hell of a lot more that I didn't tell them, but they said, 'Okay, what were the other meetings?' This was the one I was amused at. I said, 'All right. I'll tell you about those meetings.' I said, 'On the way out on this cruise I told my captain, Bart Connolly, that I intended to do some tactical flying out there, and I wanted him to know that if he knew anything that he didn't want me to tell about in the Communist prison camp, he'd better keep it to himself.'" This captured Rabbit's imagination and it was carefully recorded on paper. Captain Stockdale knew this was credible and was being accepted as true, and so Rabbit's writeup for submission up the chain for that day would go, "Secret briefing. The secret briefing was in Honolulu, and it concerned the general organization of the far Western Pacific fleet, its scheduling, what was done, etc. As far as meetings went beyond that, Stockdale had given his captain this word and thereafter he obeyed the flight schedule that was prepared for the day." And that was it! As Captain Stockdale states, "This was unbelievably bland, I know, but so help me, those guys didn't give a damn, and it was all obvious the next day because they had completed their binder and were ready to move on."

On the Sixth and last day of Phase One, the payoff came, "You will write a letter to the senior staff (or Intelligence) officer." This was dictated, "From James Bond Stockdale" and said, "Dear Sir, here is a summary of the military information that you requested. I would like to present this and would be willing to do so at your office if you so desire. This material should be of value to you, and it is the first installment of more to follow upon your request. James Bond Stockdale." This was the climax to complete Phase One. It had been painful to Captain Stockdale, both in morale and physical ways, but "so far so good, rightly or wrongly."

During the week just past, Rabbit had withheld food from Captain Stockdale, and this was the only time during his confinement that the Vietnamese denied all food although for an extended period he had been on half rations back in early 1966 in New Guy Village. This action developed into a game between Rabbit and Captain Stockdale as the contest continued in January and February 1969. When Rabbit finally did bring food, Captain Stockdale refused to eat it. So then the tables had turned with Rabbit demanding that he eat it while previously Captain Stockdale had been demanding that he be fed on the grounds that he was being mistreated.



Another touch added by Rabbit during this initial phase involved a photo of Captain Stockdale's oldest son, Jimmy. Captain Stockdale's blanket roll and gear had been impounded by Rabbit so that he was sleeping on the floor at night in irons and normally in loose ropes. At one point Rabbit brought in one of Captain Stockdale's most prized possessions, the photo of Jimmy. Rabbit held it up and warned, "If you ever want to see this boy again you had better wise up!"

#### THE SELF DEFAACEMENT TECHNIQUE

Phase one, the intimidation phase of Cat's campaign was over, and the blackmail package was neatly wrapped. Candidly at one point during this phase, Rabbit admitted that in response to Captain Stockdale's badgering he had checked the dictionary and was ready to admit that what was going on was in fact blackmail. The next step, the "things are going to get better now" phase, was begun when Rabbit asked, "How long has it been since you've washed and had a shave?" Captain Stockdale replied, "Almost a week." Rabbit continued, "Well, why don't we take a break and get some rest. It's time for you to go have a bath, and your beard is long." Captain Stockdale knew Rabbit, and he knew Chihuahua, and he was certain that he wasn't going to go and take that bath and shave for nothing. He knew their business was not military, but propaganda, business. Escorted by Pig Eye, Captain Stockdale marched down to the Heartbreak improvised wash area where he was given a new razor and soap. He knew that he had to act quickly, and he had already decided exactly what to do. Getting down into a hunched position as if preparing to shave, he frantically started digging with the razor. He began to cut the top out of his hair in "sort of an inverse Cherokee" in an attempt to make himself unpresentable so that he couldn't be photographed. In his panic, he actually dug the razor into the scalp several times without feeling it. Pig Eye, who had been busy getting gear together, suddenly realized that Captain Stockdale was not working on his whiskers. He stormed in through the door and saw the blood streaming from the cuts in the scalp. Realizing his blunder, Pig Eye jerked Captain Stockdale out of the wash area and rushed back to Room 18. There this sudden, unexpected return caught both Rabbit and Chihuahua completely unprepared. They were both under the quiz table with binder twine trying to tie a tape recorder to the bottom of the table. While the Vietnamese may have used some sophisticated bugging at times, this "caught in the act" scene could not qualify for anything beyond comedy. Captain Stockdale could see their surprise turn into rage as they saw his bloody head and leaped to their feet and to the conclusion that it was a suicide attempt. Captain Stockdale immediately took a seat on the floor in the rope's position, poised "as much as to say let's get on with it." Pig Eye turned red while Rabbit and Chihuahua struggled to control their rage, saying, "No. No. Get up," and the gist of that situation was, "No, you're not entitled to the ropes." They blurted out, "Why are you taking your own life? You've got things to do. You've got an appointment to keep tonight. The senior officer wants to see you tonight." The whole scenario drama for the night unfolded as they went on for Captain Stockdale was to have worn civilian clothes and was to have been accompanied by a "strong guard" who would make sure he obeyed. He was to have memorized a dialogue and with another prisoner on the other side of a screen, a movie was to have been made for viewing around the camps. The synopsis was a man in civilian clothes giving words of advice to a young prisoner. But that plan was shattered. They quickly

sant for a guard with clippers to try to shape the remaining hair, and a medic to dab iodine on the head cuts. The hair was beyond salvation, and they were frantic. Not only was Cat going to be furious because of the extremely slow progress in the extortion process but even Pig Eye, Cat's most "trusted agent," had permitted this disaster to the plans. They hurriedly said, "You've made your point, but we will get a hat." Slamming the door to Room 18 they left at about 1600, a time when many civilians were milling around Heartbreak court. Alone for the moment Captain Stockdale knew he had a problem and would have to act quickly. In panic he realized that the hat would beat him in spite of his determination. He was not going to be used as a tool for in his hierarchy of values the very top of the list was "not to betray my fellow prisoners or mislead them." By this time he was about nine days into a fast and was neither too strong nor too alert. He thought of the honey bucket as a device to cut his wrists. He went over to the corner, glanced at the badly rusted filthy thing, and rejected that idea because of the certainty of infection from the rust and filth. He glanced at the window glass panes and thought of breaking a pane and cutting his wrists, but he knew there were Vietnamese close by outside, so he picked up his heavy mahogany stool, and in Captain Stockdale's own words, "I just started pounding my face. I bruise easily and I stood there thinking I could be heard. Pretty soon a crowd of curious civilian workers were looking in awestruck horror through the panes of glass at this mad man standing in the middle of the room pounding his face with the stool. I kept working because I knew I would get some swelling. I could feel my eyes coming up. There was a commotion at the door and here were Chihuahua and Rabbit frantically trying to get back in. I never did see the hat for they apparently had been hailed before one had been located. They finally burst in to find both my eyes almost closed up, my eyebrows and eyelids cut and bleeding, and my appearance pretty well unfit for photography." They left Captain Stockdale in cuffs as they hurried off to see Cat, "wondering how in the hell they were going to work this out." Captain Stockdale had known generally what the evening planned events had been, and "in true abandonment," he put the finishing touches on his new counterextortion technique, self-defacement. His eyes still weren't quite as swollen as he wanted them so he went to the wall and began pounding his face against the concrete. Rabbit and Chihuahua finally returned, apparently unable to locate Cat and obviously feeling the pressure for having dropped the ball. Captain Stockdale had "lost all reservation" and proudly remembers Chihuahua's comment, "Now look what you've done. What are we going to do? What are we, you tell me what we are going to tell the senior officer after the way you have behaved." In a classic response, Captain Stockdale told him what to tell the senior officer, Cat, "You tell the Major, the Commander decided not to go!"

Captain Stockdale really felt like he was "getting someplace" as the minutes or hours elapsed before the reappearance of Rabbit, Chihuahua, and Pig Eye. After their earlier complete loss of control of the situation and the sudden end of Phase two, they produced the results of their hurried improvisation. It was a full written sheet of fine penmanship probably written by Chihuahua. The Vietnamese began, "You are going to read this. We are going to make a tape recording. We can't photograph you, so we are

going to make a tape of this paper." In the long night session that followed until about 0200 the next morning, Rabbit and Chihuahua traded off while Pig Eye maintained the physical pressure at most times with an arm lock. Captain Stockdale assumed his posture designed to maintain a credibility of defiance and a credibility of retaining the capability to lose control of himself. In preparing his posture he thought of a book by Thomas C. Shelling, "The Strategy of Conflict," which emphasizes that the power of bargaining is dependent not on obtaining or maintaining control but on having the ability to appear to have lost control. Captain Stockdale knew by that time the Vietnamese were operating under certain restraints, and as Captain Stockdale explains, "It was their job to convince me that they were willing to exceed those restraints. The counterpart of that was for me to convince them that I was not operating under restraints. If they try to tell me that there is no limit for them to go, then it's my counterplay of logical necessity to convince them that I have no limits in the other direction." Captain Stockdale knew in the immediate test at hand that he had to retain a credibility of defiance at the exact point where he would read, the torture would make him do that, but he would not read well enough so that his voice would be natural or that the tape would be useable.

The document was clever and slightly humorous and began something like this, "You don't know me, and I don't know you. It is not necessary that you know my identity nor that I know yours. I am a businessman from the U. S., recently arrived in the DRV, and I want to tell you that big things are happening at home. We have a new President, and he has a secret plan for ending the war. We hope that this conflict will end. A delicate situation is in the making. Take hope but act with caution. Observe all the regulations that are naturally required of any group. Take this advice from me as a man who knows that the best way for you to act is to do what you're told, and things will work to your advantage." This was Chihuahua at his best. Rabbit "wouldn't be smart enough to write this, but Chihuahua had a kind of overblown French indirectness" that would yield this type of propaganda. The reading began, the pressure from Pig Eye, the Stockdale vocal distortion, "Read faster," "Read slower," "Read louder," "Read softer," and so on. About 0200 Pig Eye put on loose ropes and as Captain Stockdale evaluated it in "sincere disgust they left me to my own devices." They brought in his gear, rolled out a mat, and his blanket, and a medic cleaned and dabbed his eyes and cheeks. They left him in travelling irons. He knew he had won!

As Captain Stockdale lay there in Room 18 he was overcome by the feeling that he had something going. As he explains it, "I wasn't eating, I had that on them. I had disfigured my face beyond recognition. I was able to hold both the credibility of defiance and the point where I would not go beyond the brink to be so compliant that I would talk the way they wanted. I knew I was riding a winning horse." Captain Stockdale continues, "I was over the learning process and at last realized the anatomy of extortion. I knew their weapons, and I had developed those of my own. Their weapons were intimidation, fear, guilt, and blackmail. I had improvised

new weapons to combat them, and I had been able to maintain my two cardinal rules, first that at no time was I going to permit myself to be shown in any kind of conversation with any kind of American, and second that I would never do anything to betray or mislead my fellow prisoners. Now those are fairly modest goals, but under the circumstances they were the ones I had long before set as realistic goals that I could hold in spite of intimidation. I realized that part of that second goal had really been achieved when I left Chihuahua and Rabbit defeated. For one of the three or four times in my life in prison I was overwhelmed with inner joy as I sat there on that pallet, in irons and with my arms bound. I cried like a baby. I cried for joy because I had seen that it was I who had the purchase on them for a change. They had nothing on me."

Captain Stockdale never officially saw Cat during the whole campaign of January-February 1969, but he did follow Cat's activities through his peephole as Rabbit and Chihuahua consulted with Cat and received direction and guidance. The next morning, after his wild episode in self-defacement, Captain Stockdale heard the night's tape being played over and over down in Cat's office. Rabbit came to quiz that day saying, "The tape is no good. I want you to write this in your own words. You know what we are saying. You've got a new President. There is a peace plan. And all you have to say is obey camp regulations and everything will turn out all right." Captain Stockdale refused to write, and he was able to hold to that refusal. The Vietnamese seemed "sort of out of the rope mold," since Captain Stockdale had presumptuously taken the rope's position after the head cut episode. Soon another piece of paper was brought in, more "soft sell peacemaking," this time even with attempts at humor through use of colloquial phraseology such as "President Johnson stepped on to a job on his Texas ranch for which he is more obviously suited." The next night a four hour session featured more of the same until the following morning when Rabbit came in saying, "We don't want all of that. We only want part of it." And he began crossing out portions until what had been a monologue became a dialogue, which Captain Stockdale describes with Rabbit's comments interjected. "I would say, 'You don't know me, and I don't know you.' That's all we want there. Now 'Do you have any information from the U.S.?' And I would say, 'Yes, I have good information that we have a new President, and he has a secret plan for peace.' Cut. 'Oh, is that so. Well, tell me more about it. Do you think there's a chance the war will end?'" And then more would be spliced in to form a dialogue. Rabbit said, "Someone else will say the other part. After all what you're saying isn't much. Wise up." Thus the methodology became clear as Rabbit's "compromise" unfolded. By this time the Vietnamese were "starting to get a little bit less concerned, a little less interested in this thing" as the days passed. Each morning Captain Stockdale would get up bound in his loose ropes and, as he describes it, "I was freshening up my bruises because I knew I had to keep them up. This was more painful than the original, but I wanted to keep my eyes closed or nearly closed. I wasn't looking any better, and I wasn't eating. I felt that my two programs would win in the long run if I could just hold on."

And so the "businessman" tape program died slowly without ever really working into a climax. The last time Captain Stockdale talked to Rabbit about the proposed dialogue, Rabbit was still trying to get beyond Captain Stockdale's gutteralized vocal distortion.

During one of the frenzied sessions on military information with Rabbit, Captain Stockdale used a tactic he had used before and had found valuable on occasion. Whenever he went into a torture situation he tried to assemble some sort of ammunition to have at his disposal to "plant" at the right moment. Captain Stockdale and Rabbit had long since "lost all pose of legitimacy" between themselves, and these sessions were no holds barred. In the midst of this heated session Captain Stockdale said, "Don't you realize that this exploitation program is a loser? Do you remember that film that you forced me to make back in 1966? You get that film out and look at the hand motions in front of it." And he formed the "BS" signal as he continued, "You know what this means? It means bull shit, and everyone that saw that film knows that it means bull shit." Rabbit stammered, "I don't know, get back to the subject." He would not look directly, but Captain Stockdale could see that Rabbit's eyes were on the hand so he pressed on, "You get that film out, and you look at it. If you do that again, you'll see that you are going to get stung. I'll find a way to repay you in kind." Rabbit took no official cognizance, but he knew exactly what was going on. Captain Stockdale figured that enough time had elapsed since the film had been made and that it was worth trying to develop the type of immunization a la Tanner. He had been able to fit this incident into an angry exchange so that it would be credible and not seem planted. As Captain Stockdale explains, "I know this sounds kind of dramatic, but there is some dramatics in this horrible, rotten business of extortion and terror. I had been seen first as a guy with a high sounding title, air wing commander, to exploit. Then I had become an instigator in the counterplay program of prisoner organization. They were just trying for quick winners instead of losers."

#### A NERVOUS STOMACH

By this time Captain Stockdale began to attract visits from Rabbit, Chihuahua, and several of the guards who were trying to find out why he wasn't eating. With each visit he went through the same story, that he had a "nervous stomach, was being exploited, and was suffering physical discomforts" and all this aggravated his nervous stomach. Rather than forcing a direct confrontation with the fact that he was on a hunger strike, Captain Stockdale was using his "puke ball" technique to convince the Vietnamese that he really couldn't eat. It was usually an English speaking guard named "Hack" that came to check why he wasn't eating, so when Captain Stockdale would see him approaching, he would quickly down a couple of puke balls. Hack would arrive, "Why are you not eating?" Captain Stockdale would respond, "Because I have a nervous stomach. I am being exploited," etc. Hack would carefully record all this, and Captain Stockdale, aided by the puke balls, would usually come up with a convincing show of retching before Hack departed. After several visits of this type,

the Vietnamese began talking in terms of an operation to cure the nervous stomach, but, fortunately, this didn't develop. By now at least ten days into his fast, Captain Stockdale was getting rather hungry, and he was getting "kind of goosey" about how long he could continue to go on without food. The fact that the Vietnamese always left food around Room 18 didn't help matters. One night he recalls cheating a bit and taking one heel of bread, "I can remember the way it felt when it went down. I could imagine my organs absorbing this thing. I could feel the strength that came from this little thing." As the Vietnamese extortion pressure decreased, Captain Stockdale began to eat a little although not enough to take him "out of the fast category." He explains his tactic, "Once the pressure was released (by the Vietnamese), I released a little bit of pressure so I was just starting to nibble a little bit, and they were trying to work on the other end."

Rabbit came in one morning after the end of the "businessman" phase. He was enraged, and Captain Stockdale felt that "this was his payoff." Rabbit's plan unfolded, and it was clear that he was trying to re-establish "a credibility of intimidation that he had no bound which he would not cross." The whole approach "was very juvenile." Rabbit revealed, "You are going to write a letter to your wife, nervous stomach and all. You will tell her you are sick. You will tell her you have malaria. You Americans don't know what that means, but I'll tell you right now you can get black malaria, and you will be dead in two days. There's nothing you can do about it. You can write and ask her for some medicine." So the long session began with, "Dear Sybil, I'm sick. Your friend Jim." That went into the trash. Slowly, through many drafts the letter evolved to something resembling, "Dear Sybil, sorry to inform you that I'm very ill. I'm told I have malaria. It's a very serious illness, and I'm weak. I want you to know that I send you my best regards, Jim." Although "a bit corny and not natural," this version received Rabbit's blessing. Okay, now the next step was to tape it for Hanoi radio. So Captain Stockdale growled it onto tape using such pronunciations as Illinoise for Illinois, his home state which together with his date of birth was required on the letter form at that time. But Rabbit "was just looking for a way out" and soon dropped the whole matter. Captain Stockdale never again had to face off in quiz against Rabbit, the man Cat appointed back in 1965 to serve as Captain Stockdale's personal extortionist.

The process of extorting the "black malaria" letter consumed many drafts and several hours. During the typical interrogation session, Captain Stockdale would be seated on the floor while Rabbit would assume his typical attitude of disdain and personal invectiveness bringing up points which he thought pertinent such as Captain Stockdale's handwriting. The Captain had a peculiar flexibility in writing with printed letters, script letters, upper and lower case, all in a rather random pattern. Each time Rabbit asked for a new draft it would appear in a different form. Rabbit would ask why the writing methods were mixed, and then as he goaded Captain Stockdale about his writing he would knee the Captain in the jaw, not so much in a blow to raise stars but just the "gesture of a man working with somebody he despises." Rabbit was particularly insistent that

lower case script be used, "We are going to get this standardised. That won't be permitted anymore." In general, there seemed to be concern among the high level Vietnamese about handwriting that didn't seem to follow what would appear about the same as U.S. elementary school copybooks.

The same night as the letter quiz, Chihuahua came into Room 18 for a "Let's change the pace" quiz, offering Captain Stockdale a cigarette. By this time Captain Stockdale was so suspicious that he took the cigarette, but then got up and moved to better light so he could check it to make sure it wasn't some sort of marijuana loaded cigarette. This offended Chihuahua a little for after all "He was a man of some stature," a member of the camp authority aristocracy, but he understood Captain Stockdale's concern. Chihuahua said, "How you have misbehaved. What would your boys think if they saw you as you are today?" After no reply from Captain Stockdale, Chihuahua continued, "Tonight you will be photographed as you are, in that disfigured condition, as you have made yourself. That picture will be sent home to your boys. We will see what they think of their father after they see that. You will go at 1900, and the photographer will take you. Your boys will really enjoy this picture." Captain Stockdale assured him, "I'm not going to any photographer at 1900. You can depend on me to resist. I know the guard is very strong and I'm very weak, but you'll have to drag me out of here and you can stand by for some action." Captain Stockdale couldn't imagine what Chihuahua had in mind. His first thought as he tried to analyze the situation was that it might actually be, or seem to be, embarrassing to a Vietnamese to be photographed in a battered condition, like the losing boxer leaving the ring, but he couldn't convince himself that it was as simple as that. Captain Stockdale believes that once more, as he did again and again, he "overestimated the Vietnamese and underestimated the American spirit." But Chihuahua had been so insistent on the photography and his obvious intent was to embarrass the Captain in some way. What could he mean when he kept talking about "What will your boys think?" As Captain Stockdale explains, "We had been fighting dog against dog so I figured those rotten guys would stoop to pornographic pictures. I couldn't imagine my boys being anything but sympathetic of a picture of their old man with his head cut and shaved, his eyes black, his eyebrows scabbed, but I couldn't imagine how to defend myself from being thrust out there in some dark room and have some Vietnamese dolly in the nude put on my lap. This was all in my mind but there was only one defense. I could think of to improve my position before I went into that melee." Although through diet and general physiological strain, he had not had a single erection or very few, if any, erotic thoughts since his capture, he knew the Vietnamese would find some way to excite sexual vigor. His only defense was to somehow decay any vigor the Vietnamese might be able to manufacture so he clinically, and with some effort, masturbated in order to be immune to sexual excitement. The appointed time of 1900 passed, nothing happened, then 2000, then 2100. By then his hopes were raised.

The next morning Hack, who was "kind of a guy with a heart, if you want to call it that," came in with a doctor and a medic, mentioning no photography, only soup, "Can you eat soup? You must eat a little. Your

stomach has shrunk. You must try to eat." Captain Stockdale had eaten a puke ball before their arrival, so he excused himself, went over to the bucket and retched. But he said, yes, he would try a little. As Hack went out, Captain Stockdale could see that Sunday morning in February 1969, Cat crossing Heartbreak court and approaching Room 18 personally carrying a bowl of soup. Cat handed the bowl to Hack and stood by in the wings to see if Captain Stockdale would start sipping it. It was clear who held the upper hand in the contest at this point.

#### A KEEN OBSERVER

For the remainder of his 56-day stay in Room 18 the Vietnamese displayed a "sorry, slow decay in interest" in Captain Stockdale. Despite the intensive extortion and torture campaign, Rabbit and Chihuahua had been unable to obtain useable material, and Rabbit had disappeared, probably returning to the Zoo. Captain Stockdale spent each night in irons with a check every 60 to 90 minutes, day and night, by the guard from Vegas. The routine called for the two Vegas red tab guards to abandon their patrol in Vegas and split in the Heartbreak court as one remained to patrol the courtyard while the other proceeded over to New Guy Village to check Room 18 and at times Room 5. From his peephole Captain Stockdale could see the occupant of Room 5, Colonel Robbie Risner, receive his food and go down to the wash area. Since communications were impossible between Room 18 and Room 5, and Captain Stockdale seldom was allowed out of Room 18, he became an active observer of Hoa Lo life through the peephole. In the Vietnamese office across the passageway to the west of Room 18 was the camp paymaster. One day each week, normally Saturday, civilians would file into the office and come out counting a few pieces of currency. Considerable painting and work was going on in New Guy Village and Captain Stockdale avidly followed the movements and storage of several large ladders.

As he became familiar with the camp routine, Captain Stockdale actively began to consider escape. He knew this depended on a very special set of circumstances in which he would find one night that his door had been misrigged, his irons had been left off, and a ladder was still stored in its regular place during the construction work on the south side of New Guy Village. On occasion the turnkey would sloppily rig the leg irons, which were used to latch Room 18 from the outside, in such a way that they appeared positively secure, but in fact could be popped open just wide enough so that Captain Stockdale could have crawled through. He had practiced this maneuver through a similarly spaced back side of a chair left in Room 18 after one of the quizzes. The other key factor was the slim chance that the "infernal irons" would be left off one evening. In the remote chance that the door, irons, and ladder conditions were right, he believed it was possible to edge out the door, down New Guy Village passageway and evade the guards. The guard force at this time included the two Vegas guards on their regular rounds and one or two civilian guards at a desk in the Heartbreak south area, which at that time formed two rooms. These



civilian guards made a check of the high security cells in New Guy Village about every two hours but didn't move outside the guard office to any great extent at other times. The civilian guard force formed one of the three basic security units at Hoa Lo, the other two units being the green tabs and the red tabs. The civilian force wore light tan uniforms and insignia resembling the regular Army insignia. They were generally older, included both men and women, seldom carried guns, and were responsible for the details of food and Vietnamese civilian prisoner security. The largest portion of the overall guard force was NVA, numbering probably several platoons, headquartered on the top side of the south building. They had a Major for Commanding Officer and could be identified by the green collar tabs that distinguished them from the third group, the prison authority guards with red tabs. The red tabs, such as the Vegas guards, handled the American prisoners exclusively while the green tabs formed the prison security force, analogous to Marines at U.S. Navy bases. This security force kept three guards on watch at night with two gate guards and a single man roving patrol. All were relieved at three hour intervals, and gate guards were armed with infantry rifles while the roving patrol carried an AK-47. At 0300, after having been awakened by the roving patrol, two green tabs would come down the stairs from the second deck of the south building, and disappear out the Hoa Lo entrance tunnel. Almost immediately another green tab would return, apparently the offgoing guard from the pedestrian gate front entrance guard box, while in about ten minutes the fourth green tab would return after having been relieved. Because of the ten minutes delay Captain Stockdale felt that surely there was a third entrance to Hoa Lo in addition to the front vehicular entrance which was kept locked at night and the front pedestrian gate located north of the vehicular entrance. This possibility of a third entrance was later carefully searched with great care as communications with other prisoners became frequent, but to no avail. In hindsight, Captain Stockdale believes that the second green tab guard was not relieving the watch at another gate but was manning the machine gun tower around to the northwest end of Hoa Lo, a tower which commanded the court of the section which was to later become Unity but which in 1969 held a large number of Vietnamese prisoners. The nightly routine called for both the inner and outer gates of the vehicular entrance to be closed. The pedestrian gate required the entrant to pass through a reception room where he was checked in and out. The green tab force was also tasked with supervision of the Vietnamese prisoner working parties. They had very little to do with American prisoners for this was the domain of the red tabs. Of course, both red and green tabs were there to prevent escape, and as Captain Stockdale schemed he considered the actions of both. Although his planning continued, the opportune set of circumstances never afforded a chance for escape.

In observing the activities of the camp officers, Captain Stockdale could see that Cat went home at night usually after dark and returned about 0615 each morning. Bug lived in a room known as Bug's office within a set of iron gates on the northwest end of Heartbreak court. This dual room area served as both Cat's office and Bug's office and quarters. Bug at that time in 1969 appeared to be running Vegas. Cat had a sort of sophisticated "reverse snobism." He owned a very old, battered bike which he

carelessly left parked each morning. This was in marked contrast to most Vietnamese who were very proud of their bikes and were careful to lock them to prevent theft. This great concern for locking every private thing up, Captain Stockdale felt, was an index "to how far the Communists had gotten in wiping out the Bourgeois tendencies." Even in a prison yard none except Cat dared leave his bike unlocked.

The Hoa Lo prison commander appeared to be a uniformed "civilian" with one bar four stars, tall for a Vietnamese, and about 55 to 60 years old. He ran the prison which at that time was populated with about 95 percent Vietnamese prisoners. His relationship with Cat was revealing in that he clearly deferred to Cat.

A civilian hierarchy existed back in the vicinity of New Guy Village court, an area where much whitewashing and painting had occurred since Captain Stockdale had last observed the area several years earlier. The civilians in this area kept different working hours and had nothing in common with the rest of the prison. Their function could have been anything including the Hanoi City water works.

One day during Tet 1969, Captain Stockdale saw a familiar face being released from prison. This was one of the two goodlooking, morale boosting Vietnamese women he had seen in the Fall of 1967. A small release ceremony was held for this gal by several including the gardener. About one week later this woman returned with gift "holiday packages" for several in the prison.

An unusual old man resided in the small room west of Bug's office and Cat's flop house, a room known as the nurse's quarters and later as the gardener's room. This old man tended the flower beds and other vegetation in Heartbreak court with considerable skill and care. On those infrequent occasions when Captain Stockdale got out of Room 18 to dump, "this man became a pal." He was a gray haired, crew cut, trustee, about 5 feet nine inches tall, and over 60 years old. This man had apparently been a Vietnamese officer of some stature and possessed considerable poise and bearing. He kept close tabs on all prisoners, "probably knew who was undergoing torture," and although discreet, could be counted on for a "friendly, sincere wink" when no other Vietnamese were around. He had certain privileges, including, apparently, an endless supply of cigarettes, and he appeared on fairly good terms with Cat and those in the prison authority. This man, who may have been a Vietnamese Nationalist or an officer under the French, eventually left prison, Captain Stockdale heard, after having served his term.

The major observation made by Captain Stockdale was the high level of activity centered around the top deck of the north building. Through the courtyard and the open windows he was able to account for at least nine NVA Majors and 15 Captains engaged in some sort of staff operation which Captain Stockdale designed as the "PW staff." The boss of these career Army officers was a Major who frequently engaged in conversations with Cat, although Cat as a general staff member had override authority. Cat's work

took priority because he was the party man, a propaganda man, while this PW staff apparently ran the prisons, provided the soap and toothpaste, and handled personnel assignments. They provided the working environment while Cat and his men planned and ran the extortion and torture program within that environment. Captain Stockdale also observed the PW staff at work on a massive document that he later learned was the biography blue book for the prisoners. The only one of this group that Captain Stockdale could identify, and an active member of the group who was probably the number two or three man, was Mao Tse-Tung. Mao had acted as Commander at Vegas back at the time of the great communications purge in September 1967.

As Rabbit faded from the scene Bug assumed the position as "personal antagonist" to Captain Stockdale although Bug approached his room "only infrequently and only when necessary." Bug was in charge of the torture program in Vegas at this time and was consequently infamously known to many prisoners. He came to quiz Captain Stockdale one day in carrying out his direction from Cat "to intimidate Stockdale as much as possible." Bug asked, "Are you feeling better now that you're eating? Do you want to return to your old camp?" Captain Stockdale's affirmative answer brought a retort from Bug, "I know you. All you want to do is communicate. We have plans for you." The only manifestation of those plans was the fact that Captain Stockdale became one of the first to be forced to complete the new biography.

The biographic blue book was a product of the PW staff and as such was "no better or no worse than the usual" staff paperwork in which each officer thought of a question and all were included. It came out at the same time as another series of blue books from the PW staff was distributed to all camps to cover such matters as signing for the monthly bar of soap. The biographic blue books were format type books to be completed in the rough, checked by the Vietnamese, and finally to be done in the smooth. Captain Stockdale filled it out incompletely in the rough although he found the entire project offensive and would have withstood torture again rather than fill any of it out if he had "had full speed." As it was, he was trying to "ease out of a near catastrophe" and decided to let well enough alone since it was primarily repetitive of previously extorted statements. The concentration on family background and other related questions appeared of interest to people writing a sociological book on the background of the U. S. officer corps. Captain Stockdale "hopes our intelligence community gets a copy of one of the darn things some time and tells me exactly what they were trying to get at. I suppose most of it was fill material but when I got through it I had the feeling that I had been talking to a sociologist instead of a military interrogator." The military questions, such as previous duty station, were answered with statements to match those finally extorted in Alcatraz in the Summer of 1968. In answer to the conditions of shutdown question, Captain Stockdale stated that he had parachuted into the street of a town where he was knocked down by a mob and his leg and shoulder broken by mob action. The Vietnamese would not accept that, and he would not say anything else,

so this together with other parts remained blank. Bug bought off on the blanks, and Captain Stockdale hoped that the Vietnamese would lose interest in the whole project before it progressed further. Captain Stockdale later learned with pride that many of the prisoners, including the Alcatraz gang, had gone down the line on the biographic blue book much as they had done with the forerunner in Alcatraz in 1968.

Sometime in late March 1969 in the couple of weeks between the rough and the smooth biographic books, Captain Stockdale observed with great interest the departure of Colonel Robbie Risner early one morning. His heart sank as he heard what he thought was a jeep and assumed that Colonel Risner was being moved to some other camp. But this proved not to be so for the Vietnamese had taken Colonel Risner in through the pedestrian gate to Vegas. Colonel Risner's place in Room 5 was soon taken by what appeared to be a heavily bandaged "corpse." This, Captain Stockdale later learned, was Major Steve Long, who spent only about ten days there. Shortly after his departure Pig Eye moved Captain Stockdale to Room 5, and, much to his dismay, his grim period of isolation on stash continued.

#### A GRIM STASH CONTINUES

On Captain Stockdale's arrival there in late March 1969, Room 5 was a mess. It was dirty and had bandages strewn all over, particularly in the wood-covered three foot hole in the northeast corner of the room. A new, cadaverous looking guard named Chink, whom Captain Stockdale at first glance wrote off as "surely having the job of transporting dead bodies around" added to the general depression. Captain Stockdale still was on stash, had no communications, and was under the building pressure of long term isolation.

The flimsy door to Room 5 was repaired almost immediately as Pig Eye came in one morning, took the door off the hinge, and with Captain Stockdale's "something to do" help, strengthened the door and arranged a crudely designed guard's peephole. Captain Stockdale's ulterior motive in assisting Pig Eye was to protect an existing nail hole, a fairly good peephole, by surreptitiously sticking lint in the hole so that it would remain undetected as Pig Eye worked on the rest of the door. Further refurbishing of Room 5 led to provision of a raised platform bed, Captain Stockdale's first "bed" since Alcatraz, and a mosquito net.

Captain Stockdale couldn't see but could hear through the flimsy wall on the north side of Room 5, and he soon concluded that his room adjoined the "Doc's office," in other words the office and usual sleeping residence for the camp medical officer. This man was probably a mediocre doctor but nevertheless a medical man. He was the only M.D. known by Captain Stockdale to be in the whole camp system at that time, and he worked for the PW staff upstairs in the north building. This doctor reportedly made visits to other camps, as for example the visit he paid to Alcatraz the day after Captain Stockdale's removal and two days after the Alcatraz "riot."

A medic, named "Tonto," shared the doctor's office and had a fairly good reputation, not as a benevolent man but a man who at least would bring something like iodine quickly once it was authorized. Also, during early 1969 another medic appeared and this man, who may have been a doctor, appeared to make daily trips down to Heartbreak.

The Heartbreak area was a "mystery" to Captain Stockdale and his immediate challenge was to figure out what was going on there. In his occasional trips down to dump in the Heartbreak wash area, he had several times coughed in code with no response, but he realized that the Alcatraz vocal tap code was not widely known. He also thumped on the wall to no avail, yet he suspected new shootdowns were there because of the daily medic trip over to Heartbreak.

Captain Stockdale had devised three ways of observing events outside of Room 5, though none of them were very good. He had the nail hole which, packed with lint, had successfully passed Pig Eye's final inspection of the reworked door. A second way was to stand on the concrete shelves or bench in the back of Room 5 and look out through a barred area over the door, a sort of transom. This afforded a very poor view since it would only permit observation of the head of a tall man walking on the sidewalk on the opposite, south side, of Heartbreak court. Besides Pig Eye was conscious of this possibility and had warned "No!" by gestures which clearly included the ropes signal. The third method was devised by working Pig Eye's new guard's peephole in the door back to where it could be opened from the inside. The hooker in this was the slow process involved in closing it and the fact that the open peephole could be easily spotted from outside.

With his primary interest focused on Heartbreak, Captain Stockdale began a regular schedule for dumping his bucket. Every other day at about 1700 he dumped in the Heartbreak wash area. This respite from Room 5 was supplemented by an occasional shave, about once a week. The shaving process was now watched with great care and caution by Pig Eye, who was determined that the head cut episode would not be repeated. Captain Stockdale also believed that since he had never clarified his intentions for the Vietnamese in that earlier incident, they were not quite sure whether he "was a possible suicide case or not." In spite of Pig Eye's close supervision during shaving periods, and his great instincts, his average to below average intelligence and tendency toward "doping off" ensured that Pig Eye would not pick up the tap signals. Thus with "almost obvious abandon" Captain Stockdale would sweep his initials and other messages such as "cough if you read," as he cleaned out his honey bucket. But it was clear that the new guys in Heartbreak didn't know the tap code in any form. One Sunday morning Captain Stockdale was escorted by a Vegas guard known as "Half-Hearted Hal" in honor of his "give a damn" Alfred E. Newman attitude. Taking advantage of Hal's "alertness," Captain Stockdale vigorously thumped on the Heartbreak wash area wall, but still no response. About this time Captain Stockdale began to notice that Pig Eye assumed a position each noon hour on the north sidewalk pacing methodically and looking toward the south side of Heartbreak court. Captain Stockdale had just concluded that Pig Eye's actions meant prisoners exercising when he observed through his nail

hole that six prisoners came out each day, individually in set order at 10 to 15 minute intervals for exercise. These were the Heartbreak residents and the names, as Captain Stockdale later learned, were Colonel Jack Finlay (HB-1), CDR Ken Cameron (HB-2), Captain Jim Mehl (HB-3), Captain Leo Profflet (HB-4), Colonel Norm Gaddis (HB-5), and Colonel Jim Bean (HB-7). Captain Stockdale soon determined that the other resident (HB-6) was Max, VNAF LT Dat, although he didn't exercise with the Americans. The clincher on this came one day during a Pig Eye-supervised wash period when Captain Stockdale noticed that the prisoner in HB-6 was taken over to the future Unity area for exercise. Captain Stockdale couldn't see this prisoner, but he could hear him speaking Vietnamese. In his excitement over hearing Max's presence, Captain Stockdale tried to climb up and look out the window of the Heartbreak wash area but wound up dropping his soap down the drain. Since he knew that the drain ran a considerable distance before entering the ground, he "Bao Cao'd" until Pig Eye returned. Catching Pig Eye in an unusually good moment, he talked him into taking action to retrieve the soap. Soon a stick with the soap speared through one end and "the friendly brown hand" of Max attached to the other, handed it back through the drainage line hole.

As soon as Captain Stockdale saw the second man in the exercise sequence, he knew from the haunted expression and the vacant stare, by the thin gaunt look and the hair standing straight on end, and from the aimless shuffle, that this poor prisoner was in trouble. He looked notably different from the others. He didn't run, he walked, and walked slowly. In this "rather unprecedented example of exercise in an area where there was possible contact with civilians," and where the Vietnamese stern instructions were undoubtedly "keep your eyes in the boat," this man ignored all of that and would stoop over and stare closely at passing civilians. These observations albeit impressionistic, led Captain Stockdale to conclude that the guy was out of his head, that the Vietnamese knew it and were acting accordingly. Captain Stockdale later learned this was CDR Ken Cameron and that he was not eating and was, indeed, in serious trouble. Captain Stockdale never saw him again.

A "friend" during this demoralizing stretch period of total isolation was the elderly trustee, dressed in amber suit, who occasionally brought Captain Stockdale's chow. Because of a mix-up on the guard's part, Captain Stockdale's small honey bucket had not been emptied for three days and was overflowing. He finally "Bao Cao'd" his way out to dump the bucket but stumbled enroute and spilled a portion of the contents of the bucket. This set the sarcastic woman guard, Dragon Lady, into a tantrum. Captain Stockdale paid no attention and went on to the wash area intending to clean up the mess on the way back. The old man had already begun cleaning by the time Captain Stockdale returned, and he refused offers to help and "although a trustee and long time prisoner he was a friend."

About a week after Easter 1969, the Vietnamese threaded a wire under the door to Room 5 and installed a "radio," putting Captain Stockdale "on the line" for the standard Vegas fare of propaganda. He was happy to hear

American voices at long last, and it was reassuring "in an oddball way" to have confirmed his expectation that Vegas was still there. But he was not so happy to find that prisoner read camp news had become such an established routine after having choked the Vietnamese program off in his last stay in Vegas in 1967.

Since Captain Stockdale could not tolerate most of the standard fare including the Sunday diet of Vietnamese music, he found a way to shut the radio off by removing a wire in back. He was later disgusted with himself for not being more ingenious when Captain Harry Jenkins related a technique used with some success to take advantage of the series wiring of these loudspeakers. This technique, also independently discovered by Captain Chuck Gillespie, involved shorting out the circuit to superimpose a tap code message over the regular program. Although the message would have been in the blind and the radio series leading into Room 5 was not known, Captain Stockdale would have leaped at the opportunity if he had "had enough sense to think of it."

Of considerable concern to Captain Stockdale at this time as May 1969 approached was the fact that as far as he knew no one had had a position report on him since he left Alcatraz in January 1969. While he had seen Colonel Risner frequently during February and March, the viewing he was fairly certain was one way for his own time outside Room 18 was near zero and had afforded Colonel Risner little chance for spotting him. One of the more important goals of any prisoner was to have his position known to other prisoners and this weighed heavily on Captain Stockdale's mind as the long term isolation droned on.

In retrospect, Captain Stockdale states "I'd probably still be there (on stash in Room 5) if it hadn't been for two guys, one of them is Richard Nixon and the other is John Dramesi." The immediate reason for his removal from Room 5 as he progressed from isolated step to isolated step toward Vegas, was the escape and subsequent recapture of Atterbury and Dramesi. Apparently he was moved to make room for one of the two of them in Room 5. So, one muggy May night in 1969, Captain Stockdale was told to "roll up" and found himself in this improvised move back in Cat's Quiz Room, the "best the Vietnamese could come up with on short notice."

#### CAT'S QUIZ ROOM

The Vietnamese's best was not good. Cat's Quiz Room was dark with the door window panes covered, soundproof with plaster blobs in Nobby Room fashion, and stifling from the total absence of ventilation. For the first couple of days, Captain Stockdale suffered to the point of headaches and sickness. The humidity and heat combination proved more oppressive than at any other time during his confinement, and this together with the lack of ventilation led to a very real feeling of suffocation. He had ceased to eat, not in this case for retaliatory reasons, but simply because he was sick. Eventually he "Bao Cao'd" until he finally got Bug in there and convinced him that somehow air had to be provided. Part of Bug's quick fix was to remove a "Ho Chi Minh blue" drape covering a barred panel section at about head top level on the north wall of Cat's Quiz Room. This space opened into an old passageway which, in about 1967, had been

reconfigured into a small room separating Cat's Quiz Room from the Vietnamese assembly hall and Buddha's office. The small room on the north side of Cat's Quiz Room had served for a time as a storeroom but by 1969 had become the camp radio sound room. This sound room was also a closed room except that above its entry door on the narrow east side was a transom. The second part of Bug's quick fix to the ventilation problem had been to open the transom and this permitted air to come into the sound room and then on through the newly uncovered barred area into Cat's Quiz Room. As a result of Bug's actions, the ventilation was not by any means good but at least an indirect supply of air became available.

Bathing became a regular event, every two days at first and later daily. The trip to the Vegas bath stalls, normally to stall 6, was made during the noon hour when there were never any other prisoners around except a guy in bath 10. Captain Stockdale was able to spot this prisoner one day by peeking out of bath 6, and it was Colonel Risner. The normal Vegas bathing and exercise program for prisoners not in isolation was conducted in the morning and was completed before the pair in isolation were brought out carefully separated to preclude communications.

The Vegas Camp Commander was a small, smiling, non-English speaking Vietnamese named Buddha. He was a military man, probably a Captain. Buddha would peek into Cat's Quiz Room from time to time, lifting the paper on a window pane in the door, "looking almost benevolently" at Captain Stockdale, never saying a word but probably checking to see if the Captain was still alive. At one time Captain Stockdale observed Buddha, with pistol on hip and a roll of gear on his back, leave on his bike for some sort of field trip. He did not return to Hoa Lo until four days later.

Another officer joined the camp during the early Summer of 1969. Captain Stockdale designated this rather tall, gaunt Vietnamese as the "X.O." because he became the Executive Officer of Vegas. Captain Stockdale observed the arrival of the X.O. with his wife and two small children. The children were clearly not the products of a peasant background. As the children played outside, Captain Stockdale was amazed to see that not only the X.O. but also his wife received detailed briefings on the camp. For a solid week the new pair apparently received a complete rundown including the philosophy and details of the camp operation through a series of rather formal appearing presentations by Buddha, Bug, Chink - the cadaverous-looking guard, and others. Although Mrs. X.O. participated in these briefings, and Captain Stockdale could hear her asking questions, she never took part in the prison activities or had contact with any other prisoners. He saw her only one other time and that was later when he was a resident of Calcutta. However, he saw the children on several occasions, and it is likely that the family resided at Hoa Lo. The top floors of several of the buildings were used for family residences. The X.O. was a "soft sell guy" and eventually may have "sort of superseded" Cat as a kind of transitional relief upon the demise of Cat and his regime. In any case, the X.O. joined the political hierarchy of the prison system at this time, a bright young, Vietnamese who spoke very poor English.



On occasion the guards would forget that a prisoner was in Cat's Quiz Room. In one of these candid moments a guard, apparently in charge of marksmanship practice, brought in a target and scored it where Captain Stockdale could see but out of sight from the rest of Vegas. As the sequence unfolded before Captain Stockdale, one of the guards, known as "Bodoi" had been the "marksman" and had missed the target completely. Bodoi, who was "the most improbable looking soldier" Captain Stockdale had ever seen and the fall guy for most of the camp guard jokes, tried to laugh off his failure to qualify but was being held up to ridicule. Captain Stockdale had not heard the firing and never learned the location of the firing range or the frequency for this small arms qualification practice.

The PW staff, with Cat usually included, during the noon hour period each day individually traipsed along the back alley to a wash room on the street side of the Mint. Although Captain Stockdale was having no contact with Cat at this time, on several occasions as Cat passed by he would stop outside Cat's Quiz Room and peer into the dark room believing Captain Stockdale to be asleep. Captain Stockdale knew Cat, and explains, "If Cat had known that I knew he was there, he would have been horror stricken."

The guard who maintained custody of the sound room and played the camp radio tapes, spoke English and was called "The Kid." Once in a while as he played tapes he would climb up and peer through 'Bug's opening" into Cat's Quiz Room. In the evening the Kid would frequently arrange tapes for the next day and fool around with a radio receiver. One night, suddenly in a loud and clear voice, the radio boomed in with "This is the Voice of the United States of America." Captain Stockdale sat up, the Kid rushed around to the front of Cat's Quiz Room, and, as Captain Stockdale narrates, "We had eyeball contact. I think he was teasing me, but it was real. I think they did listen to the Voice of America among other things to get taped music that they could play for interlude stuff when they had others reading Vietnamese news releases because sometimes the music was pretty good." Not while Captain Stockdale lived in Cat's Quiz Room, but at later times, he heard what he was certain was taped Voice of America. In this instance the live Voice of America came in loud and clear until the Kid quickly shut it off.

#### COMMUNICATIONS AT LAST

The Vegas guards during the Summer of 1969 were housed in two locations, one was the guard's room near the pedestrian entrance gate accessible to the eastern walkway, while the other guard room was located between Stardust and Desert Inn in the room later named the Ping Pong Room. Often at night the guards would be assembled for a lecture and patriotic songs. One July night as Captain Stockdale paced the floor listening to the guards singing in the distance, he heard a very loud "J.S." coughed. He knew in an instant that the sound had come from Stardust and at long last he had communications.

Besides staving off suffocation, the real blessing resulting from Bug's "benevolent act" of opening both the area between Cat's Quiz Room and the sound room and the transom at the entrance to the sound room was finally revealed as Captain Stockdale responded to the Stardust cough. He peered up over the north wall to Cat's Quiz Room, out through the open transom at the entrance to the sound room, over the top of the wall separating Cat's Quiz Room from Stardust and into the high window in Stardust-3, and what he saw made him immediately realize that he had direct line of sight communications with Stardust. There, on the top back (east) side bunk in Stardust-3, were prisoners signalling. With the night lights on and a fan for flashing, a temporary communication system was quickly established and over the next few days the Stardust lineup was passed starting with the identity of the two communicators in Stardust-3, LCOL Will Forby and LCOL Tom Curtis, two old friends.

The temporary communication system was dangerous, standing in the lighted room flashing with the fan, and within three days they arrived at a complex but solid and reasonably secure system. During the noon hour Cat's Quiz Room was dark and there was little probability of the Vietnamese opening the door. The sound room was deserted and secured during this Vietnamese rest period and by standing in the northwest corner of his room, Captain Stockdale could lay his hands up through the bars and into the recording room so that Stardust-3 could read the flashes. Captain Stockdale could in turn just barely make out the return signals from Stardust-3. With this system they began communications at 1200 and continued until about 1330 depending upon when the Kid opened the sound room door. There were several qualifications and dangers to this ingenious communication system. The sound room transom had to be open, and it normally was except when it rained. Occasionally it was left shut after rains, and Captain Stockdale would have to "Bao Cao" until he got it opened again on the convincing argument that had caused Bug to open it in the first place. Visibility was important, for when it rained communications were out, and in cloudy weather they were marginal. A guard with particularly sharp eyes such as Big Ugh could see through the dim light in Cat's Quiz Room and catch Captain Stockdale in the act so communications had to be scheduled around Big Ugh's watch rotation. The primary danger was that the Kid would suddenly return to the sound room, open the door and catch Captain Stockdale waving his arm and fan. Fortunately the Kid had his personal possessions such as rice bowl and chopsticks stored in there so after he ate he always padlocked the door as he left for his nap. He came back normally after the sound of the 1330 gong signalling the end of the rest period to the guards. But he surprised them a few times and only the noise and delay from opening the lock provided Captain Stockdale with time to quickly retrieve his arm and fan. On the Stardust side, LCOL Forby did the communicating while LCOL Curtis provided security. So, in spite of the hazards and the fact that the over-the-wall flashing had to be slow and methodical, Captain Stockdale estimates that communications were up about 80 percent of the intended time, and, basically, this was 1200 to 1330 every day.

The first order of business was, naturally, official business, and since nothing could be written down they could only proceed as fast as memory processes permitted. LCOL Forby named the Vegas senior officers as COL Flynn and COL Winn in Desert Inn and Colonel Risner in Riviera-3. It later developed that another prisoner at Vegas was senior to Captain Stockdale based on the shutdown date of rank system then used to determine seniority, and that was LCOL Vern Ligon, but no information on Ligon was held in Stardust in July 1969. While the presence of these seniors was known to the livewires in Stardust, in fact, however, none of these seniors were in communications. Colonel Risner was isolated in Riviera and the other three including the two Colonel's resided in Desert Inn, and Desert Inn had been out of communications with the rest of Vegas since about January 1969. The last active Desert Inn communications had been note communications with a foursome in Desert Inn-1 which included Captain Al Brudno, Captain James E. Ray, and Major Wesley Schierman, so there was effectively no camp senior ranking officer and no clearly established Vegas-wide policies.

Captain Stockdale passed the official word back to Stardust-3 that his previous orders such as B.A.C.K. U.S. with which they remained familiar, still pertained except for the radio policy. Whereas before his orders had been "stay off the air," it was clear to Captain Stockdale that since he had counted at least 19 or 20 different voices on the Vegas radio during this Summer of 1969 that this broken floodgate could not be instantly repaired. So, Captain Stockdale's orders were to get off the hook, down the notch on the ratchet, "as soon as you can." This was disappointing but radio reading had become so institutionalized by the Vietnamese since Captain Stockdale's 1967 successful prohibition against it that nothing else appeared practical.

The Vietnamese program at Vegas in the Summer of 1969 called for individualistic torture by enlisted Vietnamese under Bug's tutelage to intimidate the prisoners into reading on the radio and writing articles for the so-called camp newspaper. Some prisoners had been under considerable pressure such as CDR Byron Fuller who had been in Stardust, then in the Mint, and finally came back to Stardust. Captain Stockdale proudly recalls the message he received upon CDR Fuller's return to Stardust, "To CAG, Cdr Byron Fuller sends his respects and reports as senior officer in Stardust and requests any special instructions." Stardust was a "hub wheel of activity." It had daily continuous internal communications, good morale, and was being very well run. Captain Stockdale later was told that Thunderbird was under the good leadership and firm control of Captain Bill Lawrence but their communications were externally blocked except for limited voice communications between Thunderbird and Stardust in the bath stalls, and somewhat sporadic internally in some parts of the building. And, Desert Inn was "totally out of it, for nobody could communicate with them."

From LCOL Forby Captain Stockdale received and memorized the lineup of every cell and every man's name in Vegas, except for Desert Inn-6. Even after months of effort that aggressive group in Stardust still had not been able to find out the occupant of Desert Inn-6.

Captain Stockdale's flash communications were in good order with Stardust and momentum was building for the next step in communications. Through the bath stalls a note drop system was established as a backup communication system between Stardust and Captain Stockdale in case of compromise of flash communications or in case of a move of Captain Stockdale to the Mint. He was normally taken to bath 6 and his stall was monitored by the Stardust gang for two-way note traffic. Each bath had a sink and the system provided that a vertical wire above each sink would be used to signal: straight vertical wire meant no note present; wire bent north meant a note for Captain Stockdale hidden under the sink; wire bent south meant a note from Captain Stockdale; wire bent flush up meant "cool it until further notice." Once the action was taken the wire would be changed before the recipient left the bath. In case Captain Stockdale's routine was changed by the Vietnamese from the east side bath 6 to the west side, bath 3 was designated backup to be monitored.

One of the most disappointing moments that Captain Stockdale experienced in Cat's Quiz Room came one noon when a tape was broadcast. This long and depressing prisoner dialogue, apparently between roommates, discussed their shutdown experiences and then went on to say that the Code of Conduct did not apply to their situation, that the war was illegal, and so on.

About this time the senior ranking officer in Stardust, either CDR Fuller, LCOL Brady, or LCOL Crow, sent word over that the Vietnamese had a new gimmick, pen names. The Vietnamese would have the prisoner write something and then sign by pen name. The Stardust position was that this was just as bad as writing under actual names and asked Captain Stockdale's concurrence. This he heartily gave. So the Vietnamese had progressed from the unsigned to the signature and now to the nom de plume. The word was put out and the Vietnamese had no luck with this program in Stardust through the Summer of 1969. Captain Stockdale was "sure that they didn't do any better" with it over at Thunderbird either.

All during this summer the Vietnamese left Captain Stockdale alone. He was on stash, apparently as long as he "behaved himself and didn't interfere with the Vietnamese's operation." This free ride was designed to last until Cat came up with some new scheme or until Captain Stockdale "misbehaved." Of course, the Vietnamese didn't know that he was in communications almost every day for an hour and a half. Captain Stockdale marveled at the geometry in that communication system as he looked at it on his way back from the bath stalls. As he explains, "It was a great accident of geometry and a tribute to the imagination of Will Forby and Tom Curtis. I don't think that there was any mathematical way that we could be caught if we observed those certain basic precautions. Those were happy days." He learned good news and bad news, many new names and much new background on what had been going on. He heard about Dirty Bird and Trolley Tracks and pieced a lot of history together. In turn he passed on the Alcatraz story and the condition of the Alcatraz gang including Ron Storz. They told Captain Stockdale that a man named Cobell

out at the Zoo was in bad shape and had to be force fed. "It was a very productive cross-fertilization program there, and we established firm friendships." Every night Captain Stockdale could hear them cough "good night" to him and this brought back a considerable measure of comradeship sorely missed during the long months of total isolation.

One mid-August day Bug arrived for a surprise room shakedown, the first since Captain Stockdale had been in Cat's Quiz Room and this was a tip for the usual prelude to a move was a thorough room inspection to weed out any contraband material. Sure enough, the next day he was moved to the Mint and the summer interlude was over.

#### MORE BLACK ACTIVITIES

The Mint had not changed since Captain Stockdale's stay there in 1967 and he found himself back in the same cell, Mint-1. Since Mint-3 was vacant the only other resident was in Mint-2, and that was the Thai Special Forces Sergeant, Chai Charmne Harnavee, known to Captain Stockdale then as "Tin." Captain Stockdale knew Tin understood some English, but he didn't know what his overall ability was. The opportunity for communications in the Mint was nearly nonexistent, particularly with the heavy guard surveillance, and so with only occasional winks and thumps they became friends without communications. Tin probably had been "severely warned against communications" with Captain Stockdale, and as the Captain explains, "I don't know what pressures Tin was under. I know he was watching me very closely in terms of where I went because when I later went over to Calcutta, he was right with me all the way. Through some sort of magnetic contact when I was around him, he knew that I was his pal."

In spite of the very heavy surveillance, Captain Stockdale immediately began working the prearranged note drop system through the bath stalls. Luckily he was still being taken to bath 6, so he received a series of "very good morale building notes" from Stardust. Since Captain Stockdale had no radio in the Mint, he could only hear of events such as the Hegdahl release through note descriptions. He asked the Stardust group to keep him updated on news and this they did together with meaningful extras such as a full copy of the poem "Invictus" by Henley, "I am the master of my fate and the Captain of my soul," and so on. Captain Stockdale's return notes were written on toilet paper using a variety of crayons ranging from toothpaste to "rat turds" although it was only later that Max taught him how to make good rat turd crayons out of a charcoal and soap mixture.

During the summer days back in Cat's Quiz Room, Captain Stockdale had introduced the vocal tap code to the Stardust guys. There had been some occasion to use this code of coughs, spits and hacks, and Captain Stockdale had noticed that the spit couldn't be heard so he substituted the sneeze as an alternate sound. So the vocal tap code provided another means for brief words with Stardust. Even simple initials or a "GBU" let Captain Stockdale know that the Stardust gang was with him.

Early in September 1969 Captain Stockdale received a note from LCOL Dave Hatcher, "a clever guy and old friend." This note was signed "Yo friend, McKinlay Knowland," a name well known to all prisoners on the Vietnamese propaganda broadcast circuit. Knowland was a black soldier who had defected in South Vietnam and his broadcasts were full of "funny things about his enthusiasm for the Vietnamese people." Captain Stockdale decided to respond to Hatcher's note with thanks and a few words on how he was doing in the Mint. It was not yet dark outside that day so the cell light had not been turned on. He had just seen a guard disappear down the hallway after apparently having just made his hourly check. So carefully positioning himself in that tiny cell with the door at his right elbow and his few pictures from home spread out just to his left so that they could be used as an excuse for being in one position for an extended period, he broke out toilet paper, toothpaste, and a comb tooth as a stylus and began, "Dear McKinlay." He continued saying that he still didn't have a radio, that he was reading the vocal tap code and was glad to get the information on the fink releases. About half way through this note a very quiet voice from behind said, "What are you doing?" It was the Kid. Captain Stockdale's response, "I'm looking at my pictures," didn't satisfy him and he persisted, "No, I mean what are you writing? I see your arm moving." As Captain Stockdale repeated his denial, Kid called for the turnkey standing by in the Mint outer hallway. Captain Stockdale describes the action, "I grabbed that toothpaste, threw it aside and headed for the wall. He again called the turnkey and said for me to go to the wall. While he was standing there staring at me I walked back to where I'd been working and picked this note up, walked away and stuck it down my pants up in my crotch, all while he was standing there. I don't know why he didn't realize what I had done, but he was preoccupied with the tardiness of the turnkey. He came in, and they searched me. They searched the room, and they searched all over, except the sacred crotch area. So I stood at that wall, but they didn't find anything." The Vietnamese were excited all over the camp that day, as it later turned out, because Captain Stockdale believes it was the day Ho Chi Minh died. Several other Vietnamese had gathered in the Mint by now including Hawk, the senior turnkey, and the sneaky little guard who had passed by the cell just before the note was begun. After an unsuccessful search, the Vietnamese took Captain Stockdale out into the Mint ante room and lined him up against the wall as they continued their ransacking of Mint-1. By this time, in spite of a shuffling walk, all the movement had caused the note to begin to slip. Just one instant, one quick motion of the hand was needed to get the note back in place, but as luck would have it the guard who had originally caught the Captain stood there with fixed bayonet watching him closely. The Kid came out of Mint-1 disgusted at the failure of the search, exclaimed his dissatisfaction, and left. Hawk came out and ordered Captain Stockdale back into the cell. Looking back, Captain Stockdale wishes this comical sequence was on film, "I started walking back to the cell, with my stiff leg a disadvantage anyway, and by the time I started walking, the note was already half way down to my knee. I'm shuffling even more than usual to keep that note up and then finally the damn thing fell to the floor." Hawk locked him in Mint-1, picked up the note, and ran off.

Captain Stockdale knew he was in trouble, and he knew during this lull before the storm the Vietnamese were pondering the question, "How! How in the world could Stockdale have transmitted that note?" They had kept him isolated since Alcatraz, they knew nothing of the Stardust contact, they didn't even think Harnavee spoke English. He knew "this was going to get messy in a hurry." The very subject to whom he was writing, if answered, would in turn tip off his previous contact with Stardust. "It was going to involve all of them, it was going to involve the bath and goodness knows what from there." It was a sleepless night, ending when the door opened early in the morning, and the order came to roll up. Taking part of his gear Captain Stockdale was blindfolded and led off to the first of his four stays in a place he had never seen before, Calcutta. "Completely in its own world," this small single cell had no furnishings, a low ceiling, a narrow slit which looked out toward the roof of the back of Cat's Quiz Room building, and what had to be at least a half inch layer of dust on the deck. Almost immediately Captain Stockdale was told to lie down for he was to go in irons. The Vietnamese first put on a regular set of travelling irons and left. Soon the door opened again and from the outside the X.O. supervised while Chink came in with another set of irons. These were squeeze irons, and Captain Stockdale soon found that the fat, tight lugs on these irons applied bruising pressure to the legs. There he was left, not cuffed, but lying in the dust in the tiny Calcutta cell in squeeze irons. He knew with great apprehension that the process was building again, another purge was underway.

Captain Stockdale lay on the floor of Calcutta for three or four days. He was "very low" because he felt that he was seeing another purge unfold. In the last Vegas communication purge of 1967 many prisoners had suffered as the Vietnamese struck wildly back at the successful prisoner attempts to organize and communicate. He began to construct a cover story, "I was going to tell them that I was desperate for companionship, that I was going to put that note in somebody's clothes on the clothesline at the first opportunity in the hope that I could make some sort of contact."

Early September 1969 was a time of great emotion in Vietnam. From his poor vantage point in isolation and under pressure, Captain Stockdale believed that the death of Ho Chi Minh had a tremendous effect on the Vietnamese people. The only real manifestation he had was the frequent appearance of Big Ugh. None of the other guards considered a man in squeeze irons subject to anything but surveillance, except Big Ugh, and he was personally and emotionally involved. He would say "Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam" and insist that Captain Stockdale stand and bow in spite of the squeeze irons. Lying there in Calcutta, Captain Stockdale heard what sounded like the actual funeral services for Ho Chi Minh. These did not seem like the sounds that came through the radio, they sounded direct and original. The music accompanying the funeral was some of the most unique music Captain Stockdale had ever heard, and he describes it, "One (piece) was a dirge, which I think they played when they put the old guy in the box. It was a discordant piece played by a military band. I've never heard it again."

There were two or three songs praising Ho Chi Minh, these were later popularized but even now they're saved for ceremonial occasions. The whole mood of the camp seemed like doomsday to me. I figured I was sitting on the top of something. I had regrets about writing that dumb note at the wrong time."

#### A COMMITMENT TO DEATH

A day or so after the funeral the Vietnamese were ready for action. Captain Stockdale was taken to Room 18 where he was placed in travelling irons. He was relieved to see not Rabbit, but Bug, and the "best guards the Vietnamese had," Chink and Hawk. They were not experienced torture guards. With Captain Stockdale lying on the floor, the irons were removed, and the process began as Captain Stockdale relates, "On your knees!" "I can't, I have only one knee." "On your knee then!" And they applied pressure through soft ropes, not in the expert way for this was not the quick rope treatment I usually received, it was just pressure enough to induce numbness over a period of time." On his knee, Captain Stockdale was addressed by Bug who had the note laid out in front of the Captain. Bug was clearly preoccupied, as he began, "Do you know where I have just been? I have been to the funeral. Do you know what that means to the Vietnamese people? Do you know what it means to have our country destroyed by criminals like you, and here you are again trying to incite others to disobey the camp authority!" For that whole day this went on. Bug had at his disposal a two foot strip of auto fan belt which he used to lash Captain Stockdale across the face. Chink was the guard as the vicious sequence went on and on - there would be a harangue and a lecture, and the rope pressure and the slashing blows. Captain Stockdale had already come out with his cover story, but it was weak and wasn't sounding very convincing. Bug spent the morning on questions such as how in the world Captain Stockdale could have known enough to write a note to anybody in view of the careful isolation, what the note had meant, who it was to, and so forth. Over the noon hour Chink remained as custodian and seemed to arrange an absence from Room 18 to afford Captain Stockdale a short breather during which he could relieve the pressure on his swollen right knee. But the process soon resumed and continued on into the late afternoon when Bug "who seemed to want to get this over with" began to get to the point, "You will confess your intention to oppose the camp authority. In writing you will confess your communications," and so forth. Captain Stockdale was ready to buy this because no names had yet been mentioned. He would "confess as long as it didn't bother anybody else." Sweating from the hot day and the intense action and with his dirty pajamas soaked through to the skin, Captain Stockdale felt like he'd been saved, "I can remember it was almost dark as I sat at that table writing a confession of guilt. I knew all the adjectives that would possibly throw them off. I said everything but what was important, namely what I was up to. It wasn't a war thing, it was a personal thing, opposing the authority of the camp, the illegality of my actions, not obeying their regulations, and so forth." As he wrote he looked up, and there was Buddha peeking in. Captain Stockdale yelled, "Nook, nook"(water, water) and Buddha waved and disappeared. Soon a guard brought a cup of water, Captain Stockdale's first that day.



As soon as Captain Stockdale finished writing, a guard brought in his blanket roll, tightened his loose ropes, left his travelling irons on, picked up the "confession" papers and departed. He thanked the Lord for his good fortune, relieved with anticipation that the "confession" would get him back to Calcutta or wherever to buy more time. Almost immediately these thoughts were jolted when Bug arrived, appearing as though he had been out of touch with the situation. Bug began, "What are you doing there? Get back up in that chair. We haven't even begun this process. Tomorrow you'll see some real punishment. Get in that chair. We have no details yet." Complying, Captain Stockdale got in the chair to sit for the rest of the night. The props had suddenly been pulled from under him. He realized that his self-congratulations had been premature, that the purge had only just begun. Rapidly calculating his resources he knew that the long months and years of isolation had badly eroded his resources. He explains, "So I sat there and I said tonight I'm going to have to do something to stop the flow. I figured the only way to stop this flow was to show them deterrence in excess of the commitment they were willing to make in the other direction. I was in the same room where I faced the same problem earlier in 1969. Whereas before I thought about the bucket, thought about the pane of glass, and had then used the stool, it was clear to me that the way to go this time was the glass route. I felt the only way I could really deter and stop the flow was to show a commitment to death. That was my ace in the hole." His thoughts went back to his readings at Stanford, to Shelling's "The Strategy of Conflict." His experience with the Vietnamese had confirmed some of Shelling's points. Captain Stockdale realized that in the conflict or bargaining situation the name of the game was to find the other man's limits, to know your own, and to demonstrate a commitment that he will find unprofitable to challenge. That commitment in this case was suicide. Captain Stockdale continues, "I don't think that I intended to die, but I intended to make them think that I was ready to die. You have to be in kind of a state of euphoria, if that's the right word, to do something like this so I wasn't careful or clinical. I felt for my pulse. I thought you had to cut arteries to get enough blood on the floor to make it worthwhile, and I felt my pressure points. I knew a guard named "Engineer" was on that night and he was checking me about every hour. He would come in, peek through the window. The light was on. He could see me sitting there, his orders were to pass by and make sure I was still there ironed and roped after a completely exhausting day, being prepared for the real business the next day." Room 18 was unique from the others because the light switch was on the inside and the window had a small crack in it. About 2030 on the night of 11 September 1969, Captain Stockdale watched Engineer check and leave the area. Waiting about half an hour he slowly hobbled over in his travelling irons, and in a spirit more or less of "here goes nothing," switched off the light, broke the window pane, grabbed several glass spears about four inches in length, flicked the light back on, went back to his chair and started to chop. Feeling no pain because of the numbness in his hands left by the extended period of loose ropes, he began work on his left wrist, chopping a few holes. As he describes, "I didn't see any red blood but I noticed that I was getting a good hand full of blue blood. I started milking that one

and I was a little disappointed that I hadn't hit pay dirt so I started on the right saying I'll get something better out of this one. My arms at this time were bound in loose ropes so that my elbows were next to my body, and I had to work with less than full freedom of my hands so that my aim and control were not as good as had been intended. So I chopped away and was gratified that more blue blood was coming out. I found out that I could milk my hands and get a little more out. I went back to the left and chopped awhile. I was squeezing out a pretty good flow and I was starting to feel a little pain. What I wanted was to be almost unconscious and surrounded by blood when Engineer reappeared. I was getting a little woozy but had not yet reached that correct level of deterrence when I heard footsteps. I stashed the glass daggers and sat there and hoped. Engineer looked in, saw the pool of blood on the floor, and I said nothing as he became wild-eyed, turned on his heels and ran back toward Vegas yelling. I was still bleeding and had lost maybe between a quart and a pint of blood by that time. Within minutes a thundering herd appeared and the door was flung open. Everybody and his brother from Vegas was there. Buddha remained outside directing traffic. Bug came in first, he didn't know what he had done. Bug had certain restraints, and I think that's why Buddha was there that evening to see just how far this political expert had gone. Bug appeared to be thinking it over, he undoubtedly had pressures on his mind from Cat, not to go too far but to get the desired information. I think I had ruined Rabbit by my past actions and so here they wound up with an even bigger mess on their hands. Bug said, 'What have you done? You have no right. You have made a terrible mess.' They couldn't decide what to do but finally Bug went out, and they talked, then somebody, I think the X.O., came in and said, 'Get him on the floor.'" From his ring center position on the floor, Captain Stockdale watched this frantic parade as the ropes were removed, and a medic came in and began working on his arms, washing and scrubbing and ultimately wrapping them to try to stop the flow of blood which was still oozing. Next they started scrubbing the floor using something with a pungent odor like newly cut Timothy hay, the kind of stuff Captain Stockdale imagined undertakers would use to clean up the laboratory after embalming a body. He was kind of woozy by this time and somewhere along the way Hawk and Chink took all his clothes out to wash them leaving him in shorts. They then washed him off. A crowd of green tabs gathered around "sort of mystified" with eyes wide open and excited expressions. There was no more interrogation that night, and although Bug was frequently in and out, the X.O. seemed predominant. It was finally decided that a guard would sit with Captain Stockdale the rest of the night to "see how far this nut was going to go." About 0300 the Kid came in saying, "The Camp Commander was not at home. We can't get in touch with him. Do you want your irons off?" Captain Stockdale replied, "That's up to you." Kid added, "If you request them to come off I can probably get the Camp Commander's permission if I can get hold of him at home." Captain Stockdale reiterated "That's your problem," for he did not want to give the Vietnamese the satisfaction of doing him a favor. About 0400 Kid was back and removed the irons, and Captain Stockdale lay there the rest of the night with his arms wrapped up to his elbows and a guard sitting a few feet away.

That whole evening and, in fact, the whole week had been "a kind of symbolic crescendo of activity." As he lay there watching geckos on the wall and listening to the background music which had been broken out specially during this mourning period after Ho Chi Minh's death, he knew they were seriously torn by that death. In retrospect Captain Stockdale believes the Vietnamese "were starting to get a little heat in Paris from our wonderful friends and families at home. The whole prison camp treatment regime was in the crossroads so it didn't help matters at all to have me laid out on the slab there with self-inflicted wounds."

The morning after the hectic night, Bug came in "with a bothered look, and a cup of tea," and the question, "What made you do that terrible thing?" Captain Stockdale's response was something like, "I don't like extortion. I don't like torture. I'm a prisoner of war and you're treating me like an animal" and so on. Bug ended with the news, "You will be moved this morning. You must think about your actions." But he never again mentioned that note. And as Bug went on, "You're a criminal! You're a trouble maker! You're..." he did not that morning say, "You're a communicator!" Captain Stockdale thanked God and was apprehensively delighted in his feeling that he had broken the flow.

During the morning of 12 September 1969 Captain Stockdale was moved back to Calcutta. The earlier elation at ending the communication quizzes had passed, and his mental state was one of depression for he had no assurance that the heat was off. He was in isolation and was never allowed to leave that small cell even to dump. His arms were painful although fortunately they were sporadically dressed very couple of days by a medic. Generally, his physical status at that time was also depressed with a variety of injuries including a numbness in part of his left hand, particularly the little finger, sort of an accumulated result of the ropes from as far back as 1966. Movement in his left arm was impaired, a result of the neglect of a broken bone in the back located at the junction with the left shoulder and arm. This injury had never been treated by the Vietnamese since shutdown in 1965. He had instigated a daily regimen of exercises, to try to make it possible to raise that left arm, but movement was still restricted. Captain Stockdale's left leg had slowly gained strength since Pig Eye rebroke it in September 1967, but he was still not able to absorb even slight shock. It would not be until several months later, about November 1969, that he would be able to do a few jumping jacks, absorbing the strain of the three or four inch jump in that exercise.

#### A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

This stashed period was broken by a quiz with Bug, a "menacing" quiz which Captain Stockdale analyzed as the Vietnamese "just searching for some methodology to get Stockdale back, at least into quarters more convenient for the Vietnamese." A resident in Calcutta was an inconvenience to the camp system, and although the Vietnamese normally had amazing patience with inconvenience, in this case it involved bringing food over into a separate courtyard and having the honey bucket dumped by a guard.

Captain Stockdale describes Bug's visit, "You get used to this system of arrest, torture, extraction, and then confinement. You soon realize that they come to a point where they must re-enter you into the system, and that is normally accompanied by some sort of a face saving move that over a time I think I learned to make as innocuous as possible. The demands were that I contribute to the effort, pay for my keep!" Bug was searching for an appropriate vehicle as he said, "Christmas is soon coming up. Haven't you any thoughts about the Vietnamese people at Christmas?" Captain Stockdale thought it over for a few days and realized that one point he did want to make, that had yet to be firmly established, was the maltreatment of his leg. So he wrote a paper in which he reviewed his days in the hospital back in 1965, describing in some detail the interest the doctors had shown, the fact that these Vietnamese doctors had considered it feasible to completely repair his leg, and that they believed that additional operations would be necessary to complete the articulation of the knee. Then tying in the present, Captain Stockdale described Doctor Tuan's preparation, the fact that he had been returned to the camp system after the first operation, and that he was sure that by Christmas 1969 he would finally receive proper medical care. He then left it at that point. In so many understated words, Captain Stockdale said that the Vietnamese had refused to complete what should be considered routine medical treatment. Bug took it away without comment to check it. Captain Stockdale believed that it was a "positive guarantee" that the Vietnamese would never dare confront him together with that paper in front of any news media because it was a built-in opportunity for him to display the leg as it was, and to say, "Look at this leg. It still has yet to be operated on."

#### NOTES, KNOTS, AND VOCAL COMMUNICATIONS

As Captain Stockdale had predicted, after about a month of the inconvenience of having a man over in Calcutta, the Vietnamese finally moved him into the Mint, back to Mint-1 and the same situation he had faced in early September before that note. Chai Charne Harnavee still resided in Mint-2. In spite of intensive surveillance which was even heavier than before, Captain Stockdale immediately tried to rejuvenate the wire note drop system in the bath stalls to provide Stardust with a position report and a summary of what happened. To set the note drop signal wire required the good fortune of being able to take his honey bucket into the bath with him, for otherwise Captain Stockdale was too short to reach and work the wire. It was not the normal procedure for the Vietnamese to allow this, but as a result of the special circumstance that only the two, Captain Stockdale and Colonel Risner, were out there at the same time, Captain Stockdale was usually able to carry his bucket from the dump area back on into the wash area. His first note to Stardust merely advised them he was back in business and that future messages would be sent by a communication system called "The Knot." The Knot entailed use of a knotted string read by the braille system. Another part of the code involved the addition of one digit to each symbol, thus

an "A" would be two two rather than the normal one one, a "B" would be two three vice one two, and so on. This was a crude system involving the number six which "any half-baked cryptologist could have probably broken" but it seemed to be sufficient. So the toothpaste and comb tooth was of necessity replaced by the knotted string. Captain Stockdale would stay up all night under his mosquito net pulling a thread out of his blanket and tying the tiny knots on the thread. The guard checked about every 30 minutes, but the peephole port on the outside of the door was normally left open so a check could come at any time. With some of the longer messages the string would get tangled up under the net and one morning he almost panicked about dawn when a particularly good message got all snarled up as he folded it out of his net. Another aspect of his heavy surveillance was the fact that he was usually frisked when he left for the one daily trip out to dump and usually on then to the bath area. This search was foiled by a development Captain Stockdale dubbed the "scrotum suspension" which involved folding the knotted string and then suspending it about his testicles. Consistent with the peasant background of most of the Vietnamese and their "middle class morality which held a special sacredness to the private parts," they would, during the search, reach down into his pants, but they never actually touched the scrotum and consequently never intercepted the suspended notes. There were hairy moments also out in the bath since the guard, usually Hawk, had nothing else to do but watch Captain Stockdale so he would frequently pop the viewing port on the door to bath 6. At one point Captain Stockdale was caught standing on his bucket but since he had fortunately not yet reached for the wire, Hawk did not react. That was, however, enough to throw the danger signal, and Captain Stockdale bent the wire up in warning and left it there for about a week before putting it back to the vertical position. Through the drop system Captain Stockdale described to the Stardust crew the immediate past events, the fact that he had been caught with the note, that he had been tortured but that all was safe and nobody was in trouble and that the previous month had been spent in Calcutta.

Captain Stockdale received a clever note one day from Stardust. It reflected the fact that the Vegas prisoners "were getting pretty near the end of their string." Probably composed by CDR Jerry Coffee and LCOL Dave Hatcher the note stated that with his concurrence and action Captain Stockdale should plant the note in a certain rubber glove that was located near the dump area. This glove was occasionally used by the Vietnamese in some cleaning process. It was an imaginative soft sell line to the Vietnamese saying that if they would only wise up and realize that better treatment for the prisoners would make life much easier for the camp administration, the Vietnamese would be much better off. This point was prefaced by considerable fill-in material. As he normally did when he had a note to read, Captain Stockdale assumed a position over his bucket. This precaution saved the day in this case for he was caught in the act reading that note by the sharp eyes of Big Ugh. Captain Stockdale's immediate defensive action was to wipe himself with the note and drop it in the bucket. This satisfied Big Ugh and that was what counted, though it, of course, destroyed the note. Captain Stockdale later got back to

Stardust with word that the note was a good idea though he had been unable to plant it and that if conditions had not improved by 1 January 1970, they had his permission to plant such a note.

The camp was alive with vocal communications, and Captain Stockdale could hear the cough, hack, sneeze exchanges. He realized that the vocal code had been spread by the Stardust gang to Thunderbird and Golden Nugget so progress had been made and this result of Alcatraz experience and Captain Denton's imagination had given Vegas a new dimension in communications.

The vocal code provided Captain Stockdale another, albeit minor, means of communications with Stardust. This was normally only possible when LCOL Tom Curtis or LCOL Will Forby dumped buckets in the head in back of the Mint or Desert Inn, and then time was only sufficient for a quick exchange of greetings.

#### AN AIR OF CHANGE

One day about dusk in November 1969, Captain Stockdale was summoned to quiz in Cat's Quiz Room. There "in a rather casual pose" sat Cat and Chihuahua. They had apparently been busy with other affairs and this was a clean up matter. Captain Stockdale's wrist bandages had been removed only a few days before, and Cat opened with, "Well! Are you well?" Captain Stockdale concluded by Cat's tone that, "This last episode had caused Cat a good deal of necessity to make explanations." The Captain replied, "I am fair." The climax to that short quiz was Cat's most unusual action in handing over five form letters from Mrs. Stockdale. This was his first mail in nearly a year.

The shock of the quiz just past and Cat's demeanor in the next indicated that changes were taking place. Several days after the letters, Cat came to Captain Stockdale's cell and said, "All right, I am now commander of this camp." To Captain Stockdale, "That was like the Admiral coming up and saying, "I am now C. O. of this destroyer."

There were other tips of significant changes in the air in that late Fall of 1969. Captain Stockdale could tell by the number of buckets that were being dumped in multiples that things were changing and that prisoners were starting to get doubled up. The Vietnamese were even working on addition of a bolt on the door to the anteroom of the Mint. Captain Stockdale did not believe the Vietnamese would ever put him in with an American again, but he longingly thought if he could only live there in the Mint anteroom with Chai Charne Harnnoeve they could learn each other's language and the years of solo living would be broken. He was on the verge of challenging Cat that if he was indeed the Camp Commander, and if he was truly interested in returning Stockdale to health as his questions had inferred, then approve just such an arrangement. But, in fact, Cat called Captain Stockdale to quiz on 18 November 1969 and said, "You've been alone. I'm going to put you with a roommate. You'll meet him soon."

Two days later Captain Stockdale was told to roll up and he was moved to Thunderbird, to a cell on the southwest corner, numbered by the Vietnamese as Thunderbird-3 but known to the prisoners as Thunderbird-1.

There had been many prisoner moves in Vegas on the 20th of November, the day Captain Stockdale moved into Thunderbird and there were more moves a week later. One day shortly after these shuffles, Captain Stockdale was called to quiz in Cat's Quiz Room where he was startled by Cat in his new posture as Camp Commander. Cat said, "I have a letter for you. It is from Jeremiah A. Denton." This was "unprecedented" for the letter was, indeed, from Captain Denton. Captain Stockdale learned later that the letter had been written and rewritten many times. It informed Captain Stockdale that the Alcatraz gang was aboard Vegas and in Stardust. In a weasel worded way to get past Cat's scrutiny and in a way only Captain Stockdale could interpret, the letter said essentially, "I have been advised by Cat that things will get better. Do you believe that this officer (Cat) is on the level?" It was signed in a formal way with full signature, Jeremiah A. Denton. Cat asked if Captain Stockdale would care to reply, and, of course, he did, quickly improvising a reply which in so many words said, "Rog, Jerry. Watch your step and God bless you." To pass Cat's censorship these words were carefully disguised in terms like "I am sure that the current commander is a very highly motivated career officer who will do all in his power to carry out his duties," and so on.

Although he had tacitly admitted many things to Captain Stockdale in the past, Cat now openly said that "This is a very unprecedented move to exchange notes like this but don't get the idea that I am a mail man in the future." Cat continued saying, "I am thinking about getting Denton a roommate, maybe Mulligan. What do you think of that?" Now Cat had never done anything like that before. Captain Stockdale said, "I think that would be a very good idea. They are very compatible, and I think that would be a very good idea if you make them roommates." In "mock seriousness" Cat took this recommendation, and Captain Stockdale went back to his cell "whistling Dixie" because he knew Jerry Denton and the Alcatraz gang were back and "that all was not lost."

#### BLOCKED COMMUNICATIONS

Captain Stockdale knew that he had to get the word to Captain Denton and advise that his communications were blocked and that for an indefinite period he would not be able to communicate. As Captain Stockdale explains the Denton-Stockdale relationship throughout the years of confinement, "Jerry and I all the time we were there ran what we called the blue and the gold system. This was named after the submarine procedure of blue and gold crews. I would trust Jerry Denton with my wallet and my wife, and vice versa I am sure. At times over the period, time and again we swapped off leadership, he took over at the Zoo when I was boxed in there behind a communications void, and I took Vegas in 1967 when I had communications. I am senior to Jerry, but by a mere matter of class standing.

I am not senior to him in any meaningful way. He never took advantage of this situation. He was meticulously scrupulous about my having a few numbers in the book ahead of him, but we worked this blue and gold all the way."

Since there were still no communications with the seniors in the Desert Inn, some of whom had been moved out without his knowledge, Captain Stockdale knew he and Captain Denton were going to run the camp, but without communications of his own he had to get word to Captain Denton to take over camp leadership. As Captain Stockdale searched for a method to get word out, the Vietnamese came around asking for prisoners interested in going to Christmas church services to be held in the ping pong room between Desert Inn and Stardust. Grasping for some way to communicate, Captain Stockdale agreed to go. This effort to establish contact proved unsuccessful as he was marched in, seated in an isolated chair and "warned by no less than Chihuahua" that if he made any moves, motions or voice communications he would be severely punished. He sat through the ceremony "which was offensive but not so offensive as some of the earlier broadcasts," and the message was something along the line that the rich Americans should have pity on the poor Vietnamese. It did afford the opportunity to see many prisoners, LCDR John McCain, Captain Bill Lawrence, Colonel Dave Winn, Colonel Swede Larson, Colonel Norm Gaddis, and also LCOL Vern Ligon whom Captain Stockdale had never seen before. But he was not able to do what he had come to do, and that was to find somebody from Stardust. Even with the warning and the strict security, Captain Stockdale was sure that he could have gotten word over to a contact during that church service for Captain Denton to take charge, if only a contact had been there. He knew that Captain Denton would automatically take over when he realized that Captain Stockdale had no communications but he wanted to clearly pass on the con and clarify the situation. He was finally able to pass his message to Captain Denton via Captain Lawrence in the bath stalls.

Without explanation, in early January 1970, Captain Stockdale and his roommate were moved over to cell 3 in the Golden Nugget. This move did not ease Captain Stockdale's communication problem. Captain Denton had taken command and he had problems. Vegas was a far different camp in 1969 than when the Alcatraz gang left it in 1967. Reading on the radio was widespread although this was one of the less urgent matters in terms of seriousness because it was clear that the Vietnamese were just trying to pump out slanted propoganda over the camp radio, and they were not apparently trying to start the much more dangerous self-criticism program. Nevertheless, Captain Stockdale didn't like it. Another problem was the fact that there were still a few prisoners left in solo, CDR Doremus and Major Sam Johnson, for example, and that problem needed work. But the main problem was the new program the Vietnamese were starting down in Desert Inn, a favored treatment program featuring an arrangement for those in the Desert Inn to eat out in the Vegas courtyard properly protected by bamboo screens. This dining out and the Desert Inn failure to communicate needed work. It was from the Desert Inn that the long, depressing dialogue had originated that Captain Stockdale heard in the Summer of 1969, the tape in which two



prisoners denied the applicability of the Code of Conduct to the current situation, openly stated that they were not in their minds obliged to abide by it, and then by inference incited others not to abide by the Code. The Desert Inn was still an intolerable situation. Captain Denton was, in fact, actively working on these problems in a series of dialogues with Cat.

#### CAT'S DEMISE

One immense problem had, in fact, been resolved, although because of his blocked communications Captain Stockdale "was robbed the knowledge of the fact that Cat no longer had any teeth," that he had lost his power, and that the prisoner treatment regime was undergoing significant change. Captain Stockdale had noted changes in the air, but he did not know the extent, and "that was one hell of a disadvantage."

In early February 1970, Captain Stockdale and his roommate were moved back to their old cell, Thunderbird-1. About this time Cat came up with a film in the yard which he said was a film describing the damage of the bombing. Through his agent, Hack, Cat asked Captain Stockdale for his views on that film. Captain Stockdale found the film grotesque, complete with Vietnamese children with stump arms and legs displayed. He took the opportunity to write that it was disgusting that a political state would so abuse their poor children and wounded people by displaying them on film ignoring their right to privacy. In terms of the number of casualties in North Vietnam resulting from the bombing by his calculations using their own propaganda broadcast figures, only something like one tenth of one percent of the total population were civilian casualties. He went on saying that in the history of warfare that was probably the lowest percentage of civilian casualties thus far known. He happened to remember that in the Hundred Years War of Germany, civilian casualties exceeded some 55 percent. Captain Stockdale further used this as a vehicle to say that in terms of physical, humanitarian and medical attention, the Vietnamese government was on very weak grounds when he personally had been told by a "senior officer" that his leg could not be fixed because of his political attitude. He signed it, and it was taken to Cat, who was, of course, the "senior officer involved. This film review broadside griped Cat as he made clear when he called Captain Stockdale in and said, "I am going to have to explain what you wrote to the general staff and you're going to have to accompany me," but nothing came of it.

During this period in early 1970, Cat called Captain Stockdale in along with many others to make a news tape, but they didn't ask him to make the news tape. Instead they handed him an old book, "Vietnam Today," which was Volume One of a long series "that everybody had heard many times." Captain Stockdale growled his way through it using the Stockdale vocal distortion technique and the Vietnamese got nothing of value, but as Captain Stockdale explains, "Again I would not have done even that had I known that Cat's teeth had been removed." He was unable to take advantage of this great tactical change in the situation because he wasn't aware of that change.

Captain Denton is a better judge of Cat's deterioration because he had frequent quizzes with him during the first half of 1970. Captain Stockdale's quizzes with Cat at that time were infrequent but he had long known him. Cat called him in one day in April 1970 and Captain Stockdale could see that he was growing thinner. In "almost a pleading voice," Cat said, "You've been here a long time. I have an obligation to get somebody to talk to a professor from MIT" who was visiting Hanoi. Cat continued, "I assure you there will be no propaganda. You will not have to say anything. The old days are gone and no longer do we dictate. All I want you to do is to see him." Captain Stockdale said, "No. You know I won't do that." Cat replied, "Well, you and I are the same age. We have some college, and I just hoped that you would do this. You know I have obligations to meet, and I have pressures on me just as any military man does. You know as well as I that I have served on the general staff." Cat went on saying these "odd things" and then called for a guard to return Captain Stockdale to his cell. Captain Stockdale relates, "Cat walked to the door with me. The guard was a little late. I almost felt that he was about to put his arm on my shoulder. He never did. He always held that poise. But he said, 'How long has it been,' and I replied, 'It's been four and a half years.' Cat said, 'I am afraid it's going to be a while longer.' I left and that was my last contact with Cat."

During the Spring of 1970 Bug came to the door one day asking Captain Stockdale and his roommate if they wanted to go to the art museum. They declined, but Captain Stockdale much later found out that several prisoners did go on this trip to the museum in civilian clothes. This matter of civilian clothes had not previously been covered per se by instructions issued by Captain Stockdale because he had never specifically thought of it. He was later able to attend to this problem. He also eventually learned that there were actually two art trips, one several months before Bug's invitation and then the second which Captain Stockdale refused.

#### A VEGAS FAST

In the Spring of 1970 Captain Denton was working on the resolution of the Desert Inn special treatment problem and the solo living problem. By the time Captain Stockdale was able to establish limited communications in April, Captain Denton had floated various instructions to the camp including the Alcatraz release policy. Captain Denton had been negotiating with Cat and had concluded that Cat's posture was weak, and it was time for the prisoners to show their teeth. He decided on a diet and fast program whereby prisoners would eat less than half their chow as a camp-wide protest for a specifically defined period of time.

Because the Vietnamese knew that Captain Stockdale had finally been able to establish limited communications they were confused, as they became from time to time, over who was running things. The fast was in progress and the chop date established for the last meal of the fast as it turned out by sheer coincidence exactly matched the time the Vietnamese had decided

to close in and move the man they believed was the instigator of the strike, Captain Stockdale. So in late May 1970, he was moved to the Mint into his old cell, Mint-1.

With a feeling of immense relief Captain Stockdale began his short stay in Mint-1. He did not know exactly what the Vietnamese had in mind, but he was happy to leave what had been "one of the most tumultuous periods of personal frustration" that he had experienced in prison. He was happy to have the long period of blocked communications over, even though he knew that he faced an immediate and probably extended period of isolation. He was happy to know that in his absence, Vegas was being run by Captain Denton and was thus in fine hands.

The stay in the Mint extended only a few days until early June when one day Captain Stockdale was called to quiz by Bug to face charges of inciting Vegas to "protest" and of "threatening the security of the DRV." He never returned to the Mint after that quiz, but was instead sent to "that little box" where he probably holds the residence record, Calcutta.

Captain Stockdale immediately began searching for a way to put out a position report. He was allowed to bathe once a week but was not permitted out of Calcutta at any other time. From a peephole over the door he could see the guy who picked up his bucket and dumped it daily, and it was his old pal Tin, or Chai Charmne Harmnoeve, and Captain Stockdale relates, "I feel like a brother to Tin. We had lived together in the Mint long enough that we had a feel for one another although I had never spoken English with him." Tin would usually be tailed by a guard as he came each morning, but through his peephole Captain Stockdale would risk a wink. Tin in turn would give him a hand signal if there was a guard right behind him. Tin didn't realize that his warning gesture was unnecessary since Captain Stockdale could see the guard's legs as they approached. Though cautious, Tin was always ready to help. Captain Stockdale bootlegged a piece of whitewash back from one of his first bathing sessions and took the chance of inscribing on his dirty bucket a big "S" on both sides. This letter was the Captain's Alcatraz single letter call sign, and he was hoping that the bucket would be spotted as Tin carried it each day through Vegas court enroute to the Mint or Desert Inn dump area. If it was spotted and read correctly, it would at least provide the desired indication that Stockdale was in camp. Tin appeared to understand Captain Stockdale's marking and carried the bucket so that it could be most readily viewed.

At noon during the time of silence and the optimum time of day for communications, Captain Stockdale tried to get vocal communications over to Stardust, but it was just too far to be heard. He later learned that Stardust was too busy with their own communications during the noon hour to have heard even at shorter range. Captain Stockdale later kidded the Stardust gang about this period saying, "Why don't you guys keep quiet once in a while and listen because I was just about holding all the skin off my throat hacking and clearing my throat." But Calcutta was too far removed from Vegas to hear even the camp radios.

The "drill in Calcutta was the sweat box treatment." Fighting fire with fire, Captain Stockdale went on another of his fasts and wouldn't eat any more than was necessary to stay alive. He determined if the Vietnamese were trying to "sweat" him in sweltering Calcutta, he would sweat them out in return. The Vietnamese had him on stash, he believed, while "they tried to figure out what in the hell was going on back in camp." Meanwhile, in Vegas, the fast was over with the final fast meal exactly coinciding with Captain Stockdale's move over to the Mint. As he describes the Vietnamese's thoughts, "So again I never know what goes to their minds but if they made a normal deduction I can see why they were confused. They were talking to Jerry Denton, Jerry was doing all and maybe even admitting leadership of the fast, I am not sure, and yet when they moved me the fire stopped. So they were dealing with those mysterious Americans."

Captain Stockdale paced the little deck of Calcutta, waiting to see what would happen, not eating, and hoping that sooner or later things would turn to the better. He was called to quiz by Bug who more or less reiterated the old policy "You will do this. You will see the foreign delegation," and Captain Stockdale assured Bug there was no way that he would make an appearance. In a second quiz during this June 1970 stash period the X. O. presided. During quizzes with Bug, Captain Stockdale would be positioned standing in the corner of the quiz room as the general belligerency of Bug and the Captain's responses prevailed. But when the X. O. came in he said, "Sit down, sit down" in a notably different atmosphere.

#### AN ALCATRAZ GANG REUNION

The whole period "was not very satisfying to the Vietnamese." Captain Stockdale hadn't been eating and by early July was rather light. One day LCDR John McCain was caught in communications, and the Vietnamese had to put him somewhere for punishment. Captain Stockdale facetiously comments, "You soon find out that if you are stashed in one of these isolated places you have just to sit there until somebody else gets caught. You find yourself in the dubious position of morality of saying, 'I hope the hell somebody gets caught tomorrow.' I never really said that but that was what really happened." And so to make space for LCDR McCain, who had been caught in the act, one afternoon in early July Captain Stockdale was blindfolded, led through Calcutta court and through a gate. He turned right and "started to pray" because he "knew it couldn't be true." After a left turn he knew where he was, even before the blindfold came off he knew he "was locked in Stardust-4 and home again!" This was one of those few occasions during his confinement when in addition to thanking God, Captain Stockdale was so overwhelmed with joy that he cried because he was with the guys he "loved the most." The long months and years of isolation and blocked communications were over.

It was a most happy position report that went out in early June 1970, "Stockdale Stardust Four." It was a part of an Alcatraz reunion.

Stardust-2 had CDR Shumaker and CDR Tanner, Captain's Denton and Mulligan were in Stardust-3, Stardust-5 had Major Sam Johnson, Captain's Jenkins and Rutledge were in Stardust-7 and Stardust-8, respectively, and Stardust-6 had the three famous escapees - Major George McKnight, LT George Coker, and LCOL John Dramesi. One of the first acts of Captain Stockdale was to invite John Dramesi to be an official member of the Alcatraz gang, figuring his credentials were certainly high enough to warrant inclusion. Only Captain Ron Storz was missing.

An Alcatraz release pool had been formed back in about March 1968 whereby the winner in guessing the release month, considering the year irrelevant, would serve as host by choosing any spot in the continental United States for a Dutch treat weekend reunion of the Alcatraz gang. The arrangements were to be at the discretion of the host and the timing to be somewhere between 18 months and 30 months after the release of the man of middle seniority, Sam Johnson. Sam's release month was the key to winning. With the addition of the twelfth member to the gang, the death of poor Ron Storz was not then known, the Alcatraz release pool was updated with each man in inverse order of seniority selecting a month for release. Captain Stockdale's selection, February, won the honors as host when Sam Johnson boarded that C-141 at Gia Lam in February 1973.

Captain Stockdale believes that Major Sam Johnson may possibly have been held in solo "on ice" throughout 1970 as a sort of bait to get Captain Stockdale to go to public appearances. Cat never actually got around to pushing this but at one point early in 1970, Captain Stockdale was asked if he wanted to move back in with his old roommate, Sam Johnson, and Sam was held solo for most of 1970.

Captain Stockdale could see that Vegas was "operating at full steam with Jerry (Denton) in control and doing a great job." Captain Stockdale was not at all sure he was "off the hook" so he told Captain Denton to continue until further notice. The Desert Inn dining out business was still not completely resolved, but resolution soon came when Captain Chuck Gillespie got in there as senior ranking officer and refused to eat out unless all of Vegas ate out.

The Vietnamese had Stardust under heavy surveillance, but the residents were treated by the Vietnamese "as one man." People came back from quiz, and the Vietnamese would pass the word back with them that "that goes for all of your friends." Lookouts were posted to check for guards during communication periods, but if an observer could have sneaked up by the wall of Stardust at 1230 on any day "it probably would have sounded something like the Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith Office in Palo Alto with all the teletypes going. The program was in full swing." Captain Rutledge was tapping directly through the exposed area known as the Ping Pong Room into Desert Inn-5 to LCOL Jim Lamar and Captain Bill Franke. The note drop system was going out in the baths. All parts of Vegas were in the system. Some new arrivals came in from other camps,

CDR Dick Stratton from Plantation, COL Larry Guarino from the Zoo, and, as Captain Stockdale describes it, "We were accumulating a bunch of guys that had not been together for a long time. The camp was what I would call back on the rails."

At last Captain Stockdale could be brought up to date on the changes in the prison treatment regime. He was quickly updated on how Jerry Denton had found out Cat had not only lost his teeth but had also lost his job and had had to make a public self-criticism before the people in which he criticized himself for "misinterpreting and misimplementing the humane and lenient policy of the DRV toward the prisoners." A new era was upon them, and Captain Stockdale was unfortunately one of the last to get the word, but he was, of course, happy to know it, however late.

The Vietnamese ran a "cursory check" during this period asking Captain Stockdale to make a propaganda tape and he, naturally, refused. He now knew where their teeth were, and the refusal stuck.

During that Fall of 1970 in Stardust, Captain Stockdale passed the four years in solo mark. That was a very small club of only about half a dozen including Captain's Stockdale, Denton, and Rutledge, Major George McKnight and a few others.

#### THE END OF AN ERA

A "visiting" program had begun by the Fall of 1970 and this enabled Major Sam Johnson to come across the hall to visit Captain Stockdale for a couple of hours each day. At night all were separated and "still theoretically unable to talk." In general, this Stardust story can be more completely related by others since the rest of the gang had been stashed there when Alcatraz was closed in late 1969, and they had been well organized and active throughout 1970.

It was in early November that Captain Stockdale decided after the successful refusal to do that propaganda tape that he was definitely "off the hook" and could take command of Vegas from Captain Denton. They held a change of command of sorts, and Captain Stockdale put out a message to the camp which included one very unpopular statement among the prisoners. He said, "Pace yourself for a 1973 release." Popularity or not, he believed that "realism was the way to go on this term in prison," and he could see no easy solution or end to the war. While at Alcatraz he had revised his 1965 thought just prior to capture that it was going to be a five year war, and the revision he pessimistically made in Alcatraz in 1968 was that it would be five more years. So as he put out that policy message in Vegas in 1970 he held to his Alcatraz calculation. As he explains, "I put it out to that camp and maybe that wasn't the right thing to do, but I think that realism is a necessary part of a prisoner's life. All the tactics, all the things you do must be based on some idea of when you're getting out, because you have a finite amount of emotional stability, you have a finite amount of strength, and your programs must be

geared to the best estimate of the situation. You can't run escapes if people think they're going to be out in two months. You can't run programs that are short range programs on a long time frame."

Another instruction Captain Stockdale issued was aimed directly at the art museum trips and some clandestine camera work by the Vietnamese "that may or may not have taken place." This policy restated his 1967 stand on "no public appearances" regardless of garb.

A group of prisoners was moved into Vegas from the Zoo including LCOL Jim Lamar and LCOL Vern Ligon. This group had been sent over to the Zoo "as trial cases and came out as rejects" for they "obviously did not have the right attitude to be members of the Zoo of that time," but Captain Stockdale defers to others for details on that. Colonel Robbie Risner and LCOL Swede Larson had apparently spent the summer in Room 18 and they also returned to Vegas during the Fall of 1970.

Captain Stockdale had been in command of Vegas about a week in November when Colonel Risner and LCOL Ligon came back to Vegas. Shortly after LCOL Ligon arrived, Stardust received word that Ligon, who had been shot down in 1967, had a date of rank as LCOL of 1958, and, therefore, by the seniority system in use at that time he was senior and took command. Stardust still retained the master communications since only Stardust could communicate with all other parts of Vegas. CDR Shumaker volunteered for dishwashing so he was able to run notes out of bath 10, particularly to the guys in Desert Inn-5. Communication over the wall of the bath included Thunderbird and the Mint.

Captain Stockdale greatly enjoyed his visiting privileges with Sam Johnson. Sam was studying French and teaching it to Captain Stockdale. One day while Captain Stockdale was composing a note to help in memorizing French verbs, a guard caught him in the act and he was taken over to the quiz room. Bug stormed around saying, "There you are with another note!" Captain Stockdale's explanation that "It's French vocabulary" made no impression since Bug did not read French. Finally Bug said, "That's ridiculous" and left to get somebody to translate for him. Captain Stockdale remained there over the noon hour and was then put back in Stardust with his visiting privilege suspended for about three weeks.

After the suspension, Captain Stockdale had visiting privilege with CDR Shumaker, CDR Tanner, and Major Johnson. By this time the Vietnamese were serving something loosely described as breakfast. The foursome would meet from breakfast until just before noon and between noon and the evening meal. During the noon meal and in the evening they were alone, "but it was a good time." They had a lot of good conversation and so many things to make up for in terms of details of previous covert communications and what was meant and said. Christmas 1970 was a happy day as they made a small design on the wall and broke out their family pictures. Captain Stockdale had been given no mail, but Bug came to the door, Christmas afternoon, called him out in front and handed over two pictures

of a house. Captain Stockdale said, "Where's the letter," and Bug replied, "You do not deserve the letter." The photos were of a big house and on the bottom in Mrs. Stockdale's handwriting was an address on Western Avenue, Washington, D. C. He assumed that was where his family was living. That evening back in his cell after that "Merry Christmas 1970," about 1900 all doors to Stardust opened, and Captain Stockdale was blindfolded and taken out with only part of his personal gear. After a short walk he arrived in the new Camp Unity.

### CAMP UNITY

(Debriefing's Note: As he has done throughout his confinement chronology, Captain Stockdale defers to the professional memory bankers for sizes, shapes, dates, names and details on commonly shared experiences. One of the distinctive aspects of the Unity period, this period of profoundly changed prisoner treatment and confinement described by Captain Stockdale as "a piece of cake," was the greatly increased incidence of shared experiences. Thus Captain Stockdale's actions, thoughts and unique experiences are provided, but other debriefings should be consulted for various details.)

The massive, sudden move from Vegas to what later became known as Camp Unity was followed by a shakedown. Captain Stockdale found himself in Building Zero with an assemblage of senior officers from Vegas. Shortly after their arrival, the cell doors started to open in a swift and multiform manner, and they were hit with the most thorough inspection Captain Stockdale ever experienced during confinement. In his words, "I expressed the earlier opinion that their peasant morality precluded their fondling of a person's private parts, but this was a different group. They had no such peasant morality. We were stripped. They looked in our ears and they looked in our teeth. They looked up our asses. They felt of our crotches. They looked between our toes. They went through everything. These were "pro's" that conducted the search on Christmas 1970. This was the famous shakedown.

The next morning the Building Zero group found that the whole camp was crowded and had been filled, they have since concluded, as an aftermath of the Son Tay raid. They spent the 26th of December in cells. That night the doors again opened and all were led out into Unity court "where a smiling, if you will, Bug" addressed them. Bug stated that a new regime was in effect and that all prisoners were being moved into new rooms where they would meet other Americans and would obey the camp regulations.

Captain Stockdale and many others from Vegas found themselves residents of Building Seven. It was a memorable moment as Captain Stockdale describes it. "Few of us got any sleep that night as we embraced one another, shook hands and talked things over. I remember George Coker coming up, and I knew George Coker as well as I knew my son, yet I had never shaken his hand." It was with such "joyful occurrences" that the Camp Unity time frame began. A corner had been turned, and, in Captain Stockdale's words, "From that December day 1970 until the day we were released we lived in a world that was as different from that in which we had lived before as day and night. We still had guards. We still had communications problems. I spent a



few weeks in irons as did several others, and all that jazz. But it was really a different emotional and environmental situation. The Vietnamese were under the pressure of keeping us together, keeping us out of areas where they could make a snatch attempt of the Son Tay variety. They were under political pressure from home, and Cat had gone down the tubes. It was a piece of cake from here on out."

The first business at hand was establishing a communication link around that loop of buildings forming Unity. There was a gap of indefinite communications between Building Zero and Building One. Zero was populated with the Bulls, the senior USAF Colonel's Flynn, Winn, Gaddis, and Bean, the Pals, the Incas plus Max, and the Lulus, the Brace, Bedinger, Stischer and Long group from Laos. Building Nine had the group known as Pops, a crowd of about 20 former residents of the Zoo under the leadership of LCOL Pop Keirn. It was finally learned that Building Eight, later known as Blue, held a group first called "The Outer Seven" composed of CDR Gene Wilber, CDR Robert Schweitzer, LCOL Edison Miller, LT Mark Gartley, and three others. In Heartbreak were stashed CDR Ken Cameron, LT J. J. Connell, Major Bud Day, LCOL Ben Pollard, LCDR Jack Fellowes, and others. The latter three were soon moved over into Building Seven, while the former two were moved to another camp. In general, the communication lineup was quickly formed for most of Unity with Buildings One through Seven in regular communications. Marginal and sporadic communications existed between One and the Flynn group in Zero. and there were similar communication problems between Zero and the Pops group in Nine. The Outer Seven did not respond to communication initiatives and were, therefore, out of it.

With the communication links established one of the first committees to be formed was one which sorted out names held by all. Under Captain Rutledge's chairmanship this group sat down for days working to sort out the bad names and come up with a good hard name list.

Captain Stockdale spent considerable effort at various times throughout his confinement, including during this early period at Unity, accomplishing action on material of a higher classification than this report.

An overt organization was quickly discussed and established by the residents of Building Seven. That part of the camp in regular communications, Buildings One through Seven, officially became parts of this camp organization. Although shutdown date of rank became increasingly questionable as the years passed, it remained the formula for determination of seniority until 1972. This criteria made LCOL Vern Ligon the senior ranking officer, followed in order of seniority by Colonel Robinson Risner. selected as Colonel in March 1966 but not then known, Captain Stockdale, who knew he had been on the 1966 Captain's list, and Captain Denton. In the absence of regular communications with Building Zero, these "four wise men," as they were at times referred to, assumed leadership of Unity with LCOL Ligon as senior ranking officer; Colonel Risner, Deputy Operations; Captain Stockdale, Plans and Policy; and Captain Denton, Current

Operations. The current Ops Officer served as direct assistant to the Deputy Operations Officer for the day-to-day activities and current tactics. The rooms were split up into eating groups of seven or eight prisoners and these later became flights.

### PLANS AND POLICIES

Captain Stockdale began work on prisoner policies, solidifying and issuing all the instructions which he and others had issued in the past. His goal was to get these policies out, particularly those involving conduct and release, before the Unity group became dispersed to other camps. With the concurrence of the senior ranking officer, he put out the bulk of what is now Plum Three on prisoner behavior with only refinements added later. Both Captain's Denton and Stockdale worked on Policy Four, with Captain Denton "the guiding light on that" instruction governing prisoner response. Policy Five was a troublesome thing, in the sense that it was hard to write a realistic release policy and, as Captain Stockdale put it out, it resembled the Alcatraz release policy and was, therefore, much more rigorous than the later (current) Plum. It precluded fink releases, that is anything other than bona fide release, in other words, no release for propaganda purposes. It included the necessity to obtain the senior ranking officer's permission to accept release and although Captain Stockdale now questions whether this "may have been an unrealistic viewpoint," he felt at that time that the Vietnamese would be in a posture of necessarily having to bow to the prisoner organization. Thus for the time being everyone was on orders not to accept a release until the senior ranking officer personally had approved it.

The new Unity organization was off to a solid start. Colonel Risner was a long time friend of Captain Stockdale's, while Captain Denton was almost a blood brother. LCOL Ligon was new to them, but he was a "fine man of great maturity who took the bull by the horns and established himself as a contact man with the Vietnamese." Some input was being received from the Bulls but this was sporadic because of communication difficulties. To Captain Stockdale's knowledge this was the first policy information that had ever come from that source. Communications were finally good enough with Zero to permit transmission of policies to the Bulls for approval. Some confusion resulted from crisscrossing thoughts, "The usual mix-up when you are trying to find out who was on first," but that didn't interfere with the basic alignment in camp and the formation of the unified operation.

Whether to hit the Vietnamese head on or to ease into position was one of the major philosophical points to establish in the Unity phase. As the Plans and Policy authority, Captain Stockdale received a query from Building Six one day asking what the prisoner "general posture" was going to be. In an informal catchphrase response that he felt seemed to say what he had been trying to get across, Captain Stockdale said, "Our basic posture will be one of oblique envelopment." The word came back immediately from Six, "Are you shitting me? Orson (Swindle) can't even spell it."

Those early Unity days were times of relative informality and gaiety, but it soon became obvious that some real problems had to be dealt with. A serious prisoner problem as Captain Stockdale psyched it out was going to be "one of emotionalism and instability" because of recurrent optimism which had always been both a blessing and a curse. There were prisoners of all emotional stripes, "Many of whom were bent on venting their spleen after years of abuse and misery." There were others who wanted only to enjoy prosperity. Captain Stockdale said at the time, "We can't stand prosperity," and it turned out to be pretty much the situation that developed. A related problem was that of prisoner self-expression in this "feel out environment," and the Vietnamese were very apprehensive about this. Bug seemed to be willing to talk to LCOL Ligon on a "relatively calm basis." Each building was separated from the others in assigned exercise areas so there were theoretically no communications throughout the camp. There were threats, and some prisoners "were arrested for losing their cool." Captain Lawrence, for one, was hauled out for an argument in the yard and put in Heartbreak for the usual punishment of a couple of weeks. LCOL Fred Crow was pinched and placed in Heartbreak.

#### IN THE COMPOUND

In spite of the problems presented by the new situation, Captain Stockdale verbally portrays Unity, "We realized we were all together. This was what we had been hearing about in survival school. We were in the compound. We were sitting around shooting the breeze, organizing and thinking of dirty tricks to play on the Vietnamese. Of course we had been doing that for years, but now it was face to face."

In early 1971 it soon developed that the prisoners had three programs going, one was the MT, a second was of a higher security classification, and the third was the church service issue. The letter moratorium, or MT, was bred, introduced and "spread like wildfire." Qualified by the fact that it is based on incomplete data and there may have been other authors, Captain Stockdale credits the origination of the MT to "an officer of great capability," LCDR John McCain. The vortex of the church problem was whether or not church services would be allowed. The Vietnamese policies provided that no one could address the room, prisoners were not to assemble or to get organized, and, of course, that was "patently ridiculous." Captain Stockdale believes that for some Vietnamese church was still as it had been back in his quizzes in 1965 or 1966. For these old hands, church was the American counterpart to their own propaganda indoctrination campaigns. So the prisoners decided to stand on the church issue, and since they were going to have it, it was just a matter of when the show-down would come and how it would be conducted. The Vietnamese had issued warnings, insisted on approving the text of what was to be said ahead of time, and decreed that only two or three prisoners could be in the choir. The negotiations had gone on until one Sunday afternoon in February 1971 the prisoners held a regular full blown service. In that service 7 Feb 71

Colonel Risner and Captain Rutledge recited one of the psalms, and LT Coker, who was, in fact, an encyclopedia of biblical quotations and big in the church services operation, also participated. During these services the Vietnamese came in, interrupted the church and "bodily removed Robbie, Howie and George." Pandemonium broke loose as everybody stood and "sang to their fullest" the Star Spangled Banner while the three were hauled off. In Captain Stockdale's words, "We were in a riot mode whether we liked it or not. One patriotic song led to another, and finally I can remember a chant being started, a chant I can recall from the Naval Academy that was used before football games. We used to have something like 'We are table 10. We are table 10. Table 11, where in the hell are you?' We used the same chant as we went in unison, 'We are Building 7, We are Building 7, Number 6 where in the hell are you?' And then came 'Number 6' and so it went around, five, four, three, two one, and I think Zero also entered. The bottom had dropped out of the bag! The Vietnamese were there in numbers, and they were there with guns. I think people in town could hear this thing, and I think that was what was worrying them. We decided to do I think one more songfest with the Vietnamese at the windows. The next day we decided not to take food."

#### A PIECE OF CAKE

During the early Unity period, a bridge tournament was held with several good bridge players, LCOL Jack Finley, CDR Pate Schoeffel, LCOL Jim Lamar, and COL Hervey Stockman, acting as judges. Shortly before either the morning or the day before one of the bridge tournament sessions, the Four Wise Men held a meeting to work on policies for the camp. The Vietnamese "were looking through every peephole possible" and before the noon meal, after the policies had been put aside and the bridge activities had begun, the Vietnamese removed not the Four Wise Men but the four bridge judges who were going from group to group. So there they were, arrested on the grounds that they were coordinators of covert activity when they actually were delivering the bridge scores from the previous games. The noon hour passed and then "the inevitable" happened. Colonel Risner was already out of it, he was over in Heartbreak on the church services rap. The Vietnamese came in "in one of the most formal arrangements" Captain Stockdale had seen during confinement. He describes the action, "Ligon was called forward. Ligon was led out into the yard, and right behind him Stockdale was called forward, and right behind him Denton. We were not all together within eyesight throughout this procedure, but we were taken out in intervals of maybe 50 yards spacing. We waited in the yard. As soon as we were taken out to the yard, we were faced with a platoon, or maybe two platoons, of soldiers with fixed bayonets standing in line and many, many officers in the yard. They had a stack of new rope there of a quarter inch diameter. They had enough there to tie up probably fifty people, and they certainly ruined a lot of rope on that. I could see Vern ahead being bound. They picked him up off his feet and tied his arms behind him. I was next, and they tied me. I was marched through this crowd of Vietnamese officers and men in a semimilitary fashion, a sort of being drummed out of the service type thing as we marched down to

Building Zero, one after another." About 1700 or 1800 that evening Captain Stockdale was delighted to find himself facing LCOL Ligon, and a little later Captain Denton came in. The Vietnamese put Captain Stockdale and LCOL Ligon in irons on the same bed sharing a single set of irons with Captain Stockdale's left leg and LCOL Ligon's right leg bound. Captain Denton had both legs bound in irons and that was the treatment regime.

Captain Stockdale describes this period of about 38 days in irons in Building Zero, "Vern (Ligon) and I had gotten to know each other pretty well. We were put on a bed that was maybe three feet wide. He's not very big, and we were side by side. Now the problem of defecation is a rather delicate one when you're in irons in a bunk, and especially when there are two of you. We somehow acquired not only a bucket but a bed pan they threw in there. Jerry (Denton) was sitting over there laughing at how gentlemenly we were as we would alternately, on probably a daily basis, defecate. Vern would say 'Excuse me' and I would delicately gaze in the other direction, and then he would go through the horrors of trying to take a crap with his legs tied down. Probably no matter how meticulous he was he would get a little bit on the blanket, and he would say 'I'm sorry about that!' We would rub it off and say 'Think nothing of it,' and I would go 'After you, Alforse.' We enjoyed each other's company, and in spite of the rather close quarters in those irons we had kind of a lot of fun in there, really! It was so much different, being in irons with other people in there that you can't imagine when I say 'a piece of cake' I mean it was 'a piece of cake.'"

During the 38 day punishment in irons in Building Zero, Captain Stockdale, Captain Denton and LCOL Ligon found that at last close contact with the seniors in COL Flynn's group, the Bulls, was a reality and several snarls that related to existing instructions could be straightened out as the main order of business. With the assistance of the Bulls, a way of communicating with the rest of Unity was developed through a port opening into Building One.

They found that the bridge coordinators were in Building Zero and also in irons. The Lulus had left, but the Incas were there, and the Bulls were down the hall separated by at least one cell. At some point in time Colonel Risner and Captain Rutledge were brought into Zero across the hall but not in irons. Only the bridge judges and the Stockdale cell group were in irons, and Captain Stockdale assesses the Vietnamese's order of priority by saying that Colonel Risner and Captain Rutledge "were guilty of worshipping God and that was a lesser offense than conduct prejudicial to the good order and discipline of the DRV." They were shortly joined by Captain Jenkins and Captain Mulligan who had been arrested after "a so-called riotous party" which had actually been CDR Shumaker's shutdown anniversary party on about 11 February 1971. This party had involved singing and since Captain Jenkins was the senior ranking officer, he and, for some reason, Captain Mulligan were accused, brought over to Zero and thrown in irons.

In March 1971 another "horde of people" were brought into Zero. These were principally the remaining O-5's from Building 7 who were moved as a part of the Vietnamese reaction after LCOL James Hughes shouted a phrase "that the Vietnamese found offensive." With the new influx, Zero was too crowded to keep large numbers in irons so a very compact arrangement from March to mid-Summer began, with rooms built for one and with two bunks in them, holding from two to four prisoners. In a Heartbreak-sized cell, cell 6, Captain's Stockdale, Denton, Jenkins, and Rutledge found themselves close roommates.

In spite of the crowded conditions, "this was kind of a big picnic of having everybody together." The camp organization was in full swing, and covert communications existed with the whole camp. The MT was officially sanctioned, and this was entered on a gradual basis with the so-called bad mouth program which was designed not around a refusal to write but a choice of words that would ensure the writing was unpalatable to the Vietnamese.

### A WING AND THE PLUMS

After considerable discussion Colonel Flynn made the decision to formalize the prisoner organization into a Wing with the leaders in each cell block designated as Squadron Commanding Officers with rights including reports, awards, and decorations. This act formalized the existing organization, duplicating as nearly as possible the military structure that people were used to at home. The Wing Commanding Officer was, of course, Colonel Flynn, and his principal assistant as Deputy Operations was Colonel Risner. Colonel Flynn had sighted Risner's name on a promotion list and thus he made Colonel Risner an exception to the shutdown date of rank policy. The word "Plum" came into being and the orders which Captain Stockdale had previously issued from Building 7 began coming out as Plums.

The first Plum had to do with the problem of command and control and command authority, and with only minor modifications it read about 90 percent the same as the day Captain Stockdale originally put it out. The other Plums, two through five, also more or less paralleled the policies earlier issued by Captain Stockdale from Building 7. Plum Two was the statement of grievances and goals, and Plum Three covered prisoner conduct and was much the same as when originally issued. Four was the defensive Plum that dealt with prisoner reaction to Vietnamese action, i.e., how to register a unified response. Plum Five, the release or "spring" policy, was considerably revised to account for incremental release. No longer was the requirement to see the senior ranking officer mandatory, the requirement was now that "you request to see the senior ranking officer." Plum Five also contained a catch phrase, "no deals," to provide for a series of "No's" - no dramatics, no early release, no amnesty, no luggage, and no suits.

In late May Colonel Flynn wrote a letter under his signature to the Camp Commander requesting better treatment. For his pains, he, Colonel Winn, and Colonel Gaddis were moved to a place Captain Stockdale later

learned was Room 18, where they were segregated but not tortured. About the same time a group of aggressive young prisoners, known as the Hell's Angels, was also moved out of Unity. The Incas were sent over to the Gym, a place which had previously been used as some sort of weight lifting, Karate practicing room for the guards. But, in general, the posture in late May 1971 as Colonel Flynn left, was that the Wing was in good order; it had been formed and the basic Plum structure was out. The Vietnamese had "cut their own throats" in placing the Bulls together with the other seniors for it afforded the opportunity to further refine the de facto prisoner organization and policies. And, this opportunity had not been wasted.

#### "A CIVIL GREETING"

In early June, shortly after the Bulls left Unity, the four residents of Building Zero cell 6 were out in Unity court enjoying their allotted daily 30 minutes of sun. Bug came up and began an altercation, in which he insisted that Captain Rutledge nod in a "civil greeting." Captain Rutledge did not care to accommodate Bug, and Captain Stockdale could see that Bug wanted more than a "civil greeting, he wanted a show of deference," and he told Bug so. Bug ordered Captain Rutledge to his room. Captain Stockdale countered by telling Bug that all four cell mates would go to the room, and this they did. For that act of defiance, Captain Stockdale was taken over to Heartbreak-1. On his own and in a move "typical of his conscience and morality," Captain Denton went to Bug and said in so many words "quit picking on him. You think he started that fast in Vegas. I started that fast." As a result of this conversation Bug was apparently convinced and thanks to this unsolicited showdown, Captain Stockdale was released after only about four days in Heartbreak and sent back to Zero.

#### DOW JONES IN ACTION

Thus in June 1971 the wing formed up in the absence of the Bulls with Colonel Risner as Acting Wing Commanding Officer and Captain Stockdale as Deputy Operations. The MT was in progress, and although it was a voluntary program there were only a few exceptions to it. A further liberalization in treatment by the Vietnamese was accomplished after the departure of the Bulls. The Vietnamese made "the benevolent switch" from four in some rooms to only two or three. Thus the headquarters group in Zero was shuffled in mid-Summer 1971 with Captain Stockdale, Captain Denton, and LCOL James Hughes in cell 5, Captain's Jenkins, Rutledge, and Mulligan in cell 6, and Colonel Risner, LCOL Lamar, and Colonel Stockman in cell 3.

That summer was absorbed in Wing business. The Vietnamese began a surveillance program of unprecedented proportions against prisoner communications. In an effort to determine the extent and scope of prisoner leadership, the Vietnamese established a special patrol outside Building Zero. This patrol of as many as three men worked in a listening mode from rat hole to rat hole in the alley behind Zero. The Wing countered this by

establishing a counterwatch. Ultimately the Vietnamese implemented a program of electronic bugging in the storeroom between Zero and Building Nine, and also in cell 2 within Zero. This cell 2, together with cell 13, were painted black and were maintained as voids by the Vietnamese consistent with their status as "ceremonial sacramental attributes to departed important Communists." Warnings of these buggings were received for in Captain Stockdale's words, "We saw the bugs go in. We saw them through the eyes of our compatriots, the Thai's." Simultaneous with the Vietnamese campaign of increased surveillance, the Wing had a cryptographic program under development, and the challenge was met "in a timely fashion as essential info was transmitted through bugged areas using the crypto system."

As this escalation in communications sophistication occurred, the overall complexity of communications operations can best be portrayed by Captain Stockdale's words as he describes the mid-1971 period, "It was a rather riotous time in the Hall (Zero) with all the communication links we had working during the communication periods which were usually at noon and after the evening meal before dark. To name a few, there was the tap circuit between the room known as the Garbage Chute, Building Zero cell 8, in which Fred Crow and Al Brady lived. They were the main communication link with (Building) Nine through the bugged (store) room. Our signal was 'Dow Jones is up' or 'Dow Jones is down.' We knew the Hall was bugged. We would usually have what we called a special activities event going on which was as often as not a Spanish lesson by Verlyne Daniels. This was mostly for cover. The term 'Dow Jones is down' referred to whether or not they were in active contact between the Garbage Chute and Room Nine. Another innovation became necessary when the Vietnamese discovered that this port opening between Building One and Zero was a communications link. They ultimately sealed that link and our alternate was a tap that went from Building Zero Room One around to Building One. Whether or not that was in action was signified by 'The hall is green' or the 'Hall is not green.' If you knew the Hall was green and Dow Jones was up, then in the midst of this Spanish lesson, you knew there were tap communications, and usually crypto script going in both directions. There was a third communications link which was a flash link between Building Zero Room Eleven directly across to Building One. Of course, the courtyard at all times had to be cleared. There was somebody on watch making sure that there were no Vietnamese sneaking up on the blind side so to speak. This flash link was indicated when in action by saying 'The parrot is squawking,' and that would mean they were on again sometimes in plain language and sometimes in crypto depending on the subject matter."

An instruction on communications and communications security had been circulated throughout Unity. By this time there were message categories, Top Secret, Secret, Confidential, and a special category known as a Flag, "Eyes Only" message that could be used either for very sensitive command material or matters concerning the personal conduct or emotional stability of an individual. It was possible to have a Top Secret Flag message or a Confidential one since the Flag caveat had a personal sensitivity meaning while the classification was based on the usual military criteria for content.



The classifications were usually referred to as Alpha for Top Secret, Bravo for Secret, and Charlie for Confidential. An Alpha message was always encrypted, a Bravo message was encrypted with a less secure encryption system, and a Charlie message was normally sent unencrypted except for the natural protection afforded by the tap code itself.

The business at hand for Captain Stockdale as Deputy Operations was the consolidation and simplification of the Plums. This project was mainly handled by Captain Bill Franke who performed the task of rewording and simplifying the Plums and incorporating a variety of modifications which had been issued as addendums. Captain Stockdale had been the author of Plum One, and it had what he considered to be a flaw. This flaw involved the reinstatement of an officer who had previously been relieved from military command authority. As originally issued that reinstatement could only be made by the Wing Commanding Officer, and this was impractical in a multicamp prison system. Captain Stockdale felt the camp senior ranking officer should have the authority to both take away and reinstate command authority. The camp senior ranking officer should then report the details of either action to the Wing Commanding Officer when contact was next established. So, with Colonel Risner's concurrence, Plum One was modified.

#### THE MT

The big operation in mid-1971 was the MT, the letter moratorium which was designed to bring pressure on the Vietnamese to improve living conditions. It was believed that the Vietnamese valued the prisoner's outgoing mail and that one way all could participate in a program of resistance would be to not write. The program was labelled as voluntary although Captain Stockdale is "not sure that is the way to go about things like that." In practical terms the MT turned out to be almost universal except for a few selected men "who for good reasons of their own decided not to participate" plus Building Nine which had been exempted from the program to protect the marginal communications link between Zero and Nine. By about July, Colonel Risner made what Captain Stockdale believes was a good move for the camp, and that was his action as Wing Commanding Officer in putting everybody "on the line" for the MT. He didn't do it in terms of a mandatory requirement, but he made it clear that all were expected to join in. It was also decided that the MT would end in September 1971. Throughout the MT, the Vietnamese indicated "through all the devious means they could, first that they didn't give a damn," and, secondly, when they were asked, probably by Cora Weiss why there were no letters, the Vietnamese said, "That the prisoners were refusing to write."

#### UTAH AND BLUE. "AN EASY ERA"

By the end of September 1971, the Vietnamese may have responded to the MT by a liberalization, "at least the facts of the case are that there was a reshuffling of Unity." The area formerly occupied by the Outer Seven and now known as Utah became occupied by the seniors in camp with the exception of Colonel Risner who remained in Zero along with the other 0-5's

and O-6's who did not move to Utah. The big move on about 27 September took the seniors of the Alcatraz gang, Captain's Stockdale, Denton, Jenkins, Rutledge, and Mulligan to Utah. LCOL Hughes was also moved, and on arrival they "saw the smiling faces of new arrivals, Colonel's Flynn, Winn, and Gaddis." That was the nine-man line-up in Utah and so it remained for over a year.

The return of the Bulls to Unity in late September 1971 was a great relief to the Wing since their whereabouts had not been known since the sudden removal in early June. The fact that their return coincided with the end of the MT, Captain Stockdale finds "interesting but subject to individual interpretation." In any event, with the reunited senior group a staff operation was soon set up. Captain Stockdale determined that it was time for a new Blue and Gold shift, and so Captain Denton accepted the operations responsibility for Utah. Captain Stockdale remained a member of the staff and a member of the communications team whenever needed, but his efforts for an extended period were directed toward matters of a higher classification. Additionally, as the senior naval officer, he retained cognizance over all matters involving unique naval problems including discipline problems involving naval personnel. Captain Stockdale and Colonel Flynn had "hashed this out" before the Wing was formed, and the agreement reached provided that Captain Stockdale would always retain the additional duty as senior naval officer.

Just before Christmas of 1971, something called the toastmaster's purge occurred in Building 7. This was an event in which a group including Captain Rivers and CDR Schweitzer were moved to Charlie Victor as punishment on the grounds that they had been conducting black activities. As near as Captain Stockdale could ever learn the only evidence the Vietnamese had were the proceedings and transcripts from some of the actual toastmasters club meetings, but he defers to others for the details on that incident.

At some point in early 1972, the name Utah was lost because of a communication compromise, and the new name for Building Eight became "Blue."

Various moves occurred with only LCOL Miller and CDR Wilber of the Outer Seven group remaining at the Zoo. Other moves transpired to and from the Zoo, to and from Charlie Victor, to the Dog Patch, and, ultimately before release, to the Plantation. If these moves and the Vietnamese grouping methodology were closely examined, Captain Stockdale believes it would be possible to figure "what was in the Vietnamese's mind." In general, the problem of leadership in this "easy era" was to ensure the spreading of the Plums, particularly to the new guys who started to show up, and this the seniors in Blue heard was being done at the Zoo and elsewhere. It was "a great sense of relief" to realize that the Plum System and the military organization were proliferating.

## WHO'S ON FIRST

The determination of seniority between prisoners was a problem which began logically to be based at the beginning of the war on a man's date of rank at shootdown. As time progressed, and in the case of this war 7 to 8 years passed, the simplicity and logic of this system became involved and unsatisfactory. New guys were coming in shot down, as Commanders who had been Lieutenants in squadrons with old guys who had been shot down as Lieutenant Commanders, thus the old guys were now working for their previous wingmen. Captain Stockdale opens his remarks on this critical problem by saying, "If it seems odd to a person back in the U. S. that we should be preoccupied with a trivial matter like seniority, I would like to say that life in a prison camp has more emphasis and more need to delineate responsibility between ranks and between jobs and authority than is normally found in such places as type commanders headquarters." It wasn't just a matter of not having anything else to argue about. Captain Stockdale states, "Seniority is a damned important thing. For the next war somebody ought to remember that. It is important not just for morale and social prestige. It is important because as I have stressed throughout this narrative, you've got to know whether it's you who has got to come out of that hole and stick your neck on the line. If there's confusion, it is tough to make that decision anyway, and I do insist that the senior must identify himself and act, and if I do so insist then there can't be any doubt as to who he is since it is a somewhat unpopular move from the viewpoint of the man making that decision in certain cases."

This matter of seniority had assumed the proportions of seriousness. There were many viewpoints and a full discussion of the issue in Blue. (Debriefing Note: Captain Stockdale clarifies the use of the term "full discussion" of any problem or issue among the Wing staff to mean a full airing of the issue with Colonel's Gaddis, Winn, Captain's Stockdale, Denton, Jenkins, Rutledge, and Mulligan participating, and Colonel Flynn presiding. More precisely, 8 of the 9 residents of Utah or Blue were involved in these discussions.) As a result of these discussions, Colonel Flynn authored a new method of seniority determination, one which Captain Stockdale had supported throughout, and a method which was "first thought to be a controversial one" but the best system. This method "exploded in the Spring of 1972," and in Captain Stockdale's words went like this, "The way to determine the relative seniority of any two prisoners was to refer to their relative seniority on the date of the first of the two shot down. The best way to look at this is to take any two men, one shot down in July and one in April. The first step to decide who is senior is to examine the situation between them that existed in April. Then after that normal career progression is assumed. Normal career progression is a good term when you are working with one service, but with Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force it becomes a little bit nebulous." In spite of the seemingly "more predictable" Navy promotion system and the complexities of the Air Force system, "things really were not too much out of line between the services." If there was hard evidence to indicate that something other than normal career progression had transpired, then Colonel Flynn as Wing Commander would arbitrate. An example is LCOL Vern Ligon who was shot down

in October 1967 as a LCOL, having held that rank since 1958, and Captain Stockdale who was downed in September 1965 as a Commander with a date of rank of 1962. Under the old system LCOL Ligon ranked in spite of the fact that Captain Stockdale had hard evidence in the form of a personal sighting of Captain Stockdale's name on the 1966 Captain's list by an officer in communications with the senior ranking officer. Thus it was mathematically impossible for LCOL Ligon to be senior to Captain Stockdale, and under the new system this is the type situation upon which the Wing Commanding Officer would rule. There "had to be something more finite than a buddy, buddy system because there were undoubtedly great problems that were discussed in rooms of thirty men," problems which were usually only heard as rumbles up the chain, but problems which could really turn situations upside down.

#### LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

Captain Stockdale had "a particular interest" not only in Plum One but also in Plum Three. In that Plum on prisoner conduct, there was a term "No public appearances." Captain Stockdale states, "Like everything else we were really writing the law as a prisoner. We had the Code of Conduct but that is only basic guidance. It's not particular enough and though I don't recommend that they change it, I do want to point out that as senior prisoner over a long period of time, you are going to find yourself in the position of writing law." What was a public appearance? There was no easy answer, and certainly not one to cover all situations.

In the Fall of 1972 the Vietnamese began to take prisoners out from the cell blocks, load them on trucks and take them down for a walk through a war museum followed by propaganda movies about the horrors of the war. The whole affair was sort of "an introduction to what's wrong with the U.S.A." Plum Three ruled against public appearances and whether there were cameras present or hidden cameras present or whatever, Captain Stockdale believed that all could agree that the museum trip was a public appearance. But it's not enough to just say, "You will not attend this public appearance." Specifically, How do you oppose it? Certain buildings in Unity were getting selected people pulled out each week for these trips. Captain Stockdale suggested that when their turn came Blue's reaction should be to handle the matter by refusing this public appearance "in such a manner as to require continuous physical restraint." There were other good resistance techniques and delaying tactics used by other buildings to guard against camera coverage and to display noncooperation in front of the Vietnamese, but Captain Stockdale felt that in the Unity-type environment "the only really meaningful leadership was leadership by example." Thus in Blue it was determined that the Vietnamese would have to drag people out bodily. The riddle of the situation was how to avoid tipping off the fact that Blue had communications and how to be prepared for something they weren't supposed to even know about. A cover story was assembled simply to the effect that people had been heard walking out in the yard and the conclusion was drawn that a public appearance was suspected. That night Blue's moment came, and the Vietnamese had all of Blue on their list except

Captain Stockdale, Captain Jenkins and LCOL Hughes. The Vietnamese came prepared. Soon after the feel-out approach of the turnkey was made, about 50 guards turned out in the court to stand by for any contingency. The reluctant participants "did so behave as to require physical restraint," and the last of the six to be moved out of Blue was an undressed Captain Howie Rutledge. He was carried out and thrown into the courtyard. All were cuffed and manhandled by the guards. Captain Stockdale's participation was simply one of pushing guards from the doorway to Blue. He was later told that Captain Rutledge was finally dressed in the street in front of the museum, and that the group was taken through the museum in cuffs. It was a nonprofitable evening for the Vietnamese, and apparently the Blue tactic of requiring physical restraint prevailed since very few other prisoners, if any, were ever taken in spite of the fact that the Vietnamese had only methodically worked their way through about a third of Unity by that time. In any case the word was passed from Blue throughout Unity saying that a similar performance was expected from all, and then the Blue group sat back and prayed that similar action would not be necessary. It was not, for the Vietnamese may have taken a few individuals to save face, but "for all practical purposes that wiped out their museum trip program."

Throughout 1972, Blue always had continuous communications by one means or another, either through the Pals next door in the Gym or for a long time by working with a stick poked out a vent in the washroom which was read in an oblique angle by the residents of Building Seven. Some of the outgoing traffic was monitored by the Vietnamese, while at other times notes were intercepted. In one instance Captain Rutledge was caught with a sensitive, encrypted note and spent a month in isolation. He came back with "a clean slate, no compromise."

#### HOLD ON, BE ADAMANT

After the resumption of the bombing in North Vietnam, a primary objective was to reach the new shootdowns while they were in Heartbreak or in the small holding buildings in Unity and before "they made the chop." It seemed like the Vietnamese "were trying to analyze these guys and chop them either to Unity or to the Zoo." As Captain Stockdale explains, "It seemed to us that if we could get to them before they went to the Zoo, they could be made members of the Wing in spirit, could be let in on the Plums, and would have no further real troubles with propaganda harrassment. If they went the other direction, they didn't have the same organizational structure. It was to their advantage to stay with us."

A case in point was Navy Lieutenant Jack Enschede. Blue knew that a new, injured man was being held out around the Pagoda. With great initiative, LT Enschede passed a note to one of the Incas, and the Incas delivered it to Blue. This was unique and dangerous because the Incas were under surveillance by the Vietnamese, and a very high priority was placed on the safety of the Incas. In most cases voice communications were used through the residents of Seven to get to Heartbreak and to the new shootdowns, but in this case, certainly without fault, LT Enschede got a note out. He had cleverly camouflaged it in the form of a letter that could have been mailed

to his wife, but his message got across. In a reply also delivered by the Incas, Captain Stockdale sent the message that they were trying to get to all new guys, "To hold on, be adamant, just wait and you will soon end up in a room and life will be normal. That everything will be taken care of at home." Captain Stockdale later received a letter of appreciation from LT Ensich.

Thus, primarily through voice communications the effort was to establish contact and build as best they could the population of Unity. New prisoners were centralized down in Buildings Five and Six where the senior ranking officer, LCOL Joe Kittinger, did "a magnificent job of leadership." In fact it was so magnificent that just before release after a period of isolation, he was brought in to join Blue as the tenth member. A most welcomed member as Captain Stockdale indicates, "Therein came not only a good, new friend, but a great source of information about life in the United States. We enjoyed Joe's nightly stories of modern America and his many exciting experiences in the research and development area as a pioneer in space research."

#### RELEASE SIGNALS AND ACTIONS

There were several signals that release was near. Captain Stockdale and the others heard the broadcast of the October 1972 agreements and knew that "something was in the wind." One day Captain Stockdale was caught reading a note by "a conscientious little guy," Bucky Weaver. Bucky grabbed for the note, they "fought for it," but Captain Stockdale retained possession and said to Bucky, "You are going to stand there and watch me eat this note." Bucky didn't yell or scream, he simply walked away in disgust. Captain Stockdale concluded, "If they will stand for that, it can't be far off," and, sure enough, it wasn't!

Captain Jenkins had been serving as Wing Deputy Operations for three or four months during the Winter of 1972, and "doing a great job." Captain Stockdale's other business was about cleaned up, and as it became obvious that the release was near, he wanted "to get an official handle in the operational field again." A couple of weeks after Captain Stockdale took over operations, one Sunday night the Vietnamese took Colonel Flynn away to quiz. While he was gone, the Vietnamese moved Captain's Stockdale, Denton, Jenkins, Rutledge, and Mulligan over to Building Six. This was within about five days of release, and it began the sorting out of people by shutdown date. The senior officer in the early group was Colonel Robert Risner, and he took over command of Unity. The Vietnamese had divided the prisoners into two basic release segments with Colonel Flynn in the latter segment moved over to the Plantation, so they heard via the grapevine. Captain Stockdale remained Deputy Operations, and thus it was until the 12th of February.

Both Colonel Flynn and Captain Stockdale had told the Camp Commandant that they "requested to be the last prisoner released" from their respective services "as a matter of service custom and propriety." He "noted this with apparent serious concern but said this was beyond his control."

When it became clear that the release sequence had been so carefully worked out name by name, list by list, both Colonel Flynn and Captain Stockdale concluded "that was too much of a flourish and decided to fall in ranks."

In Unity in the last few days, a primary effort was devoted to guarding against cameras. The Camp Commanding Officer was the Weasel, a non-English speaking Vietnamese "who was obviously there toward the end to butter the prisoners up." Weasel had assured Colonel Flynn that there would be no cameras in the camp, so it was with moderate surprise, Captain Stockdale relates, "when we saw troops coming in one day loaded with cameras. The word was spread by a prearranged signal for everyone to return to the cell blocks. By this time the Vietnamese realized our military organization was in a position to control. They came to the door of Building Six. Robbie (Risner) went to the door and said that no interviews would be granted. I think Robbie played this very well. The Vietnamese had a French photographer with them and all of the camp English speakers were there, seemingly as nervous as we, for fear of what would be said or not said. Robbie and I agreed they would be allowed to take one picture. That was the one of Robbie and myself in the door of Building Six that I have since seen in a news magazine. That was taken about two days before release. We answered only one question and that was that we had received word about the agreement about 1 February," since the Vietnamese seemed to want to document that.

The release Plum had undergone considerable modification in the six months period before release, and "it was a good one" with all sorts of conditions, including such matters as what to do if the prisoner found himself in the company of either those disqualified from command or those who had participated in propaganda activities. No contingency had been left untouched.

Captain Stockdale had handled the combat ineffective list since the term was first agreed upon back in early 1971. Captain Stockdale explains, "We had to be pretty careful for the psychological reason that no one wanted to be on it. Yet I felt it was our obligation for the senior prisoner in camp to know the general health of his crew. We had a combat ineffective list without it having the overt appearance of an early release list. When we heard that there was provision that sick and wounded would go first, I gave Colonel Flynn 73 names who were in our category of combat ineffective. Each one bore the certification of his squadron commander who had the privilege of putting men on or taking them off. Combat ineffective men were in two categories, either they needed extensive bone surgery or surgery with prolonged hospitalization, or they were chronically ill to such an extent that they required frequent attention." Although the criteria wording changed somewhat as it was mulled over, "finally everyone was satisfied that we had 73 guys, some of whom I now know are dead. That list was presented to the Camp Commander by Colonel Flynn at least two weeks before release." There was some indication that the Vietnamese tried to honor it in a few cases and there were some shifts, but "it was too late to reshuffle the whole thing."

## NO REPENTANT SINNERS

The only thing remaining was to wait. The night before release, the prisoners were taken down and given "so-called civilian clothes." The matter of what to wear during release had been discussed in great detail. The prisoners preferred to come out in prison clothes, the Vietnamese objecting to that. The prisoners refused to come out in civilian suits, and after extensive negotiations, a drab release uniform was arranged. Captain Stockdale believes that the garb finally provided was appropriate.

On the morning of the 12th of February, the first release segment was marshalled out and as Captain Stockdale describes, "We had one rare opportunity to stand on the sidewalk and wait in line in Hoa Lo Prison to be loaded in buses. We waited for transportation for about 20 minutes, and when it arrived we marched out in order of shutdown, got in the buses and were taken unblindfolded through Hanoi. There were many curious onlookers, but no incidents."

Colonel Flynn had insisted that the release not be propagandized in any way. Captain Stockdale states, "These things seem trivial now, but we worked them out in staff studies and tried to figure how we could thwart their attempts to propagandize the release ceremony. At one time Ho Chi Minh had said, 'When you leave you will be given bouquets of flowers' or some other darn thing. We said no gifts. You could take one pack of cigarettes the night before if the Vietnamese offered them. You were not authorized to take anything else that resembled a gift. We left everything on our bunks and took only the minimum equipment. The jacket was to be the external garment, the trousers were the lower garment, and the shoes. A man didn't have to take anything else. We wanted to present a drab, plain appearance. We feared we were going to have to go out of there as some we had seen go in pictures in the mode of what might have been construed repentant sinners. That was out. We were braced against it. Luckily they didn't twist our arms, I'm sure partially because of our prior warnings. We warned that anything of that nature would result in 'unfortunate incidents.' We had become as indirect as they by this time. 'Of course, we wouldn't want any unfortunate incidents, obscene gestures. You wouldn't want that.' The Vietnamese agreed to that. By a sort of difficult process we had become as skilled at extortion as they had."

## SIFTING THROUGH 2714 DAYS

In sifting through his 2714 days of confinement in North Vietnam, Captain Stockdale states, "In my seven and a half years, over four years were solo and about 18 months were isolation. Depending on your definition of torture, I qualified over ten times and can account for 18 plus months in leg irons. I don't believe that the propaganda that was extorted by the Vietnamese was useful, and I'm thanking the Almighty that the Tonkin Gulf incident never came up. I can positively state that they received no useful military information from me. I was extremely fortunate in the latter regard by virtue of the timing of my capture. The naivete of the



Vietnamese in 1965 was considerably greater than later on in the episode. The overall scenario seems to focus on a life of isolation, misery, degradation, pain, and so forth, for in my case about four years, and then the change in treatment that is usually pinpointed at late 1969.

"This change and what it meant," Captain Stockdale continues, "may be worth consideration. First of all, did it change? I think the answer is 'yes.' Yet, this tape is about myself, and I can only speak for myself. After 1969 I had over 30 days in irons as late as March 1971, and about two months or so including over one of those months in an intentionally unventilated cell in Calcutta. That was July of 1970 I left there. Until the week of our release, the seniors were never allowed company with the prisoners as a whole, and were held separately as late as in 1971 with as many as four in a cell that would have been small for two. The Vietnamese continued to apply physical restraint and beatings when they really needed, or thought they needed, your cooperation or information. The last I know of was the beating and painful cuffing of those residents of Blue in the Fall of 1972. So did it change? Yes, it changed, but not entirely so."

Captain Stockdale then asks and answers the logical question that follows, "Why did it change? Again it is probably best answered by the American public's reaction in their effect at Paris and on the diplomatic scene. But there are other things that might also bear on that. In the Fall of 1969, prisoners were dying or starting to die, and the deaths were piling up. I think Randy Ford, Norm Schmidt, Lance Sijan, and Ed Atterberry had already died. There were some who had suffered nervous breakdowns. In that minor incident as late as 11 September 1969, I had chopped myself up as I have mentioned. Storz, Cobell, Cameron, Connell were at death's door. The propaganda program that Cat had supervised I think on the whole was nonproductive. I think even the most ordinary of politicians would have detected that, and as we know Communist politicians are often more talented than the term ordinary might apply. Cat's demise occurred as well as I can tell in mid 1970 though his teeth had gone by late 1969. Another factor besides the deaths and nonproductivity was the change that was obvious to me in the DRV image of itself. Now when I say the DRV image of itself, I, of course, mean the propaganda line the Central Committee has put out to be the image. At first, and at least until 1969, and maybe later, the image of the man in the street was that he was seething with rage. That was the line. A transition took place until at the end the image, directed again by one means or another I am sure, was that as valiant victors who would tolerate and endure even B-52 bombings. This is from a man living in a prison cell and take it for what it's worth. I was not free to see the populace as they actually were. The torture regime of the earlier years was not compatible with the image or line that was to the best of my knowledge the line that was national policy late in the war. There was much more fire in the eyes of the DRV guards during the bombing of 1967 than there was in the bombing of 1972. Another factor that might have had an effect on this change was the death of Ho Chi Minh which happened in September 1969."

"A change took place, and it probably took place due to the interest and pressure applied by the American people. But there were many other factors that entered the puzzle, and I merely mention a few. We had a battle to fight, and we had come to a point by 1969 where something had to give. I think in a sense, we in prison had won a fight of our own too!"

APPENDIX I

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

While a comprehensive collection of prisoner terms and terminology would fill a small dictionary, the intent of this section is limited to but two objectives: To define several terms which demand precision, to preclude misunderstandings, terms such as "torture", "the ropes" and so on; to aid the reader in sorting out some of the many nicknames and call signs used throughout the confinement chronology; all else is a bonus.

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ALCATRAZ GANG

The eleven activist, incorrigible prisoners confined to the tiny prison "Alcatraz" from 1967 to 1969. The gang consisted of CAPT Stockdale, CAPT Denton, CAPT Jenkins, CAPT Rutledge, CAPT Mulligan, CDR Shumaker, CDR Tanner, MAJ Mc Knight, MAJ Johnson, CAPT Storzand, LT Coker.

BAO CAO

Vietnamese word meaning literally "report". Used by the prisoners to summon the guard.

BLACK ACTIVITIES

A Vietnamese expression for any prisoner conduct that violated the so-called camp regulations. This term applied to a wide variety of activities ranging from the trivial such as peeking out of cracks in doors to the significant such as covert prison organization. In particular, Black Activities, applied to communications, plots, schemes or anything pertaining to prisoner actions to thwart the Vietnamese policy of isolation and extortion.

BROOM TALKING

A variation of the tap code in which sweeps of the broom replaced taps. Used extensively by prisoners assigned to clean-up duties.

THE BULLS

Collective nickname for the senior USAF Colonels Flynn, Winn and Gaddis.

DAN

Vietnamese name assigned to CAPT James B. Stockdale

DRINKING CUP  
TELEPHONE

Among the many purposes served by the enameled iron drinking cup was its use as an amplifying receiver for quiet tapping. The cups were used by placing an open end on the wall and the ear on the cup bottom. Aluminum cups were unsatisfactory for this communication.

TERMMEANINGHEADSHED

The call sign for the senior officer cell block, known as "Blue", or building 8 at Camp Unity. From 27 September 1971 to 7 February 1973 this was the residence of seven of the nine senior U.S. P.O.W.'s including CAPT Stockdale.

INCAS

Collective term for Indochinese allies, the three Thai P.O.W.'s retained at Hoa Lo prison during much of CAPT Stockdale's confinement there. The Incas included special forces SGT Chai Charnne Harnnavee, RTAF M/SGT Praphan Sirion, and RTAF T/SGT Jam Bum-roonguom. (Name spellings were provided by CAPT H. Rutledge).

ISOLATION

Type of solo where the prisoner is separated physically so that even covert comms and sightings are not possible. In isolation, prisoner can't hear daily functions of other prisoners.

LOOSE ROPES

An outgrowth of the ropes but designed as a form of restraint rather than as a form of torture. Loose ropes are straps that are applied usually to the upper arms to restrain the prisoner so that the elbows are tightly bound against the trunk, but the hands are relatively free to move. They are an inconvenience with minor pain in some cases since blood circulation may be partially stopped, and the hands may be partially numb. Loose ropes are usually applied for a long period of time, e.g., overnight, all day or longer. "The Ropes" is intense, intentional torture and relatively short termed in relation to "Loose Ropes".

CAMP COMMANDER

A much used and misused term for the military commander of a camp such as Vegas. The Vietnamese often went out of their way to make it unclear exactly who the Camp Commander was although CAPT Stockdale was usually able to sort it out. For example, The Bug was thought by many prisoners to be the Vegas Commander back in 1969, but he was in fact in charge of the extortion and torture program and the party man in the camp but not the Camp Commander. The C.O. was usually a man like The Fox, or Mao, or Buddha, a military man, North Vietnamese Army functionary, providing the house-keeping, logistics and security services. CAPT Stockdale estimates that these Commanders received

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guidance and direction from Cat along the following lines: Mao would ask, "What do you want in Vegas at this time?" Cat would respond, "I don't want any comms. I want Jones put here, and I want Smith isolated. I want to ensure when Rabbit or I come in that we have immediate access to those people. I want you to conduct a general quiz program along these lines, but these specific criminals will be handled by my special guys", etc.

CHAIN MESSAGE

A message sent in parts by a series of prisoners with each adding a few letters or words to the overall message. In Alcatraz each prisoner dumped his honey bucket in succession every morning in a common head. As the bucket was dumped and the guard stood watching, the prisoner could sweep out his bucket using broom talk techniques to contribute a few letters.

CRIME

Vietnamese word for violation of some prison regulation or other similar action.

CUFFS

The Vietnamese used two basic kinds of handcuffs or cuffs. One type was the latch, or Dick Tracey variety, while the second was the handmade and more painful type of rigid cuffs dependent not on latches but on nuts on threads. These were designed to cramp the hands in a more rigid position, and were the inexpensive sort of product any blacksmith could make and may have been one of the items produced in the foundry or blacksmith shop located west of Thunderbird in Vegas.

LULUS

Collective nickname for the Laos P.O.W. group of Brace, Bedinger, Stischer and Long.

MAX

Call sign for VNAF 1/LT Nguyen Quoc Dat.

PALS

Collective call for the Incas and Max

PAPAYA

Nickname for RTAF M/SGT Praphan Sirion

PUKE BALLS

Small balls made by CAPT Stockdale from soap and cigarette butts and used to induce wrenching at critical moments. They were made by rolling small bits of soap about the taste of naphtha with cigarette butts left in the cell after interrogation sessions. Puke balls were used by CAPT Stockdale as an integral part of various hunger strikes. Rather than con-

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fronting the Vietnamese directly when he was on a hunger strike, he would claim to have stomach trouble. Whenever he saw them coming to convince him that he had to start eating, he would gulp down several puke balls to aid in making a good show of wrenching in their presence. At one point he had the Vietnamese convinced that he had a well known American disease "nervous stomach", to the point where they were seriously talking about giving him an operation to cure the nervous stomach.

QUIZ

Synonymous with interrogation.

RADIO

Prisoner term for the small, crude loudspeakers installed in cells and used to broadcast Hanoi Hannah and other propaganda material. Also known as Liar's Boxes and Squawk Boxes. Radios were installed in Vegas in 1967 and in the Zoo prior to June 1966.

THE "ROPES"

A term used by the prisoners for the specific torture process wherein a rope or cord was used to shut off the blood circulation while the limbs affected, usually the arms, were twisted or bent so as to cause pain. A manila hemp rope was normally used initially, but later a nylon strap or any other sort of cord was used. While there are variations, the term "took the ropes" means to CAPT Stockdale, that "you sat on the floor, had the ropes carefully bound about your upper arms in a pattern that was a matter of precision among the most expert (torturers) so that they could apply with a mechanical advantage tension to the rope and cause you pain through limb distortion and particularly through stoppage of blood circulation." Taking the ropes is receiving a form of administered intentional and controlled pain which was the stock and trade of the most expert torturers such as Pig Eye and Big Ugh. CAPT Stockdale has been in "The Ropes" at least ten times with the average rope job lasting about forty minutes, although many others can cite longer periods. In hindsight, he feels that the prisoner was probably better off with a professional torturer than with an amateur, because the amateur didn't really know how to get the strap in the right place and didn't know how to reach the pinnacle of pain and anxiety to produce the desired results. CAPT Stockdale knows of one case of an arm being broken in torture, that of LCDR Red McDaniels, whose arm was broken in some modification of the

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ropes at the Zoo after the Dramesi-Atterberry escape in the Spring of 1969. Normally, the ropes were applied over a shirt since the Vietnamese were conscious of the bad advertisement of burn marks. In spite of this, several prisoners sustained burn marks, usually on their upper arms just below the elbow. In practice the rope process was done amidst much excitement and emotional demonstration of Hatred by the Vietnamese, highlighted by the appearance, in some cases actual, abandon to a degree necessary to extract the behavior being sought. Ropes were applied with a flourish, with anger, with precision, and also in an atmosphere of rage and abandon. To a master torturer like Pig Eye, this was the bread and butter torture. The basic job consisted of Pig Eye lacing the ropes on CAPT Stockdale, standing on his back and applying pressure in jerks, pausing to let him think a while, and then coming back to cinch up some more. One of Pig Eye's more artistic weavings of rope involved several strands looping around the head, back of the neck and around the lower extremities so that CAPT Stockdale was bent over doubled. Cinched up, his head went down in sort of the position of a baby sucking its toe. This position gave a combination of numbness, pain and suffocation, a feeling of claustrophobia. All these elements were added to the general excitement and abandon of the process. Although Pig Eye knew very few English words, one pair he did know were "don't yell", and this he would whisper in CAPT Stockdale's ears just before he yanked. In conjunction with the ropes, sometime in mid 1966 or earlier, the Vietnamese began to use some form of strain on the legs. One device was an iron bar about 10 feet long weighing 50 or 60 pounds. On the bar were lugs which could be placed over the ankles with the bar either on top of the legs (the most painful position for CAPT Stockdale), or under the legs. On occasion the Vietnamese would jump on this bar and grind it down into the ankles. CAPT Stockdale last received the ropes in about February, 1969, and he knows of no prisoner receiving the ropes after 1969. His last torture sessions was in September, 1969 when he was with The Bug.

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Since the torturers working for Bug, one named "Hawk" and the other "Chink", were not good rope men, his torture method was more long and tedious. His method was "Loose Ropes", with CAPT Stockdale sitting on one knee being slashed in the face with strips of auto fan belt. This process continued on and off for one full day.

SCENARIO DRAMA

During torture sessions it was necessary for the NVN to set the temper in the room to one of anger and rage so as to impress the prisoner with the inconsequentialness of the ultimate death of the prisoner they were working on.

SOLO

Term that describes living alone without the privilege of sighting other prisoners except by covert means. No communications were permitted by camp regulations; however, sight and comms with other prisoners are possible covertly.

TAPPING

Refers to transmission of sound through a wall to an immediate recipient in the vicinity, normally on the other side of the wall. Tapping is a light and usually rather rapid telegraphic signal.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A morale boosting creation of CAPT Jerry Denton's at Alcatraz. CAPT Denton was head cleaner, and this afforded an ideal pedestal for about a five minute "Broom Talk" each morning as he swept out the head. With his methodical coded sweep he put out a prayer, a joke, or a profound thought which was eagerly listened to by the other ten members of the Alcatraz gang.

THUMPING

Refers to use of the palm of the hand for long distance communications (Comms). Thumping has less security than tapping since it reverberates the whole wall but the disadvantage of being loud is modified by the confusion created in identifying the exact source. Thumping became one of the immediate answers to the "tap proof" cells built by the Vietnamese in Vegas to attempt to stop prisoner comms.

TIN

Nickname for Thai Special Forces SGT Chai Charnne Harnnovee

TORTURE

The intentional infliction of pain for the purpose of extracting military info, the details of P.O.W. covert activities, P.O.W. compliance with NVN demands for participation in propaganda activities, etc. The torture is administered systematically, over a well defined time interval, usually by special torture guards. A psuedo charge of violation of



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camp regulations, failure to obey NVN orders, etc., usually immediately precedes torture. If the immediate cause of the torture was an NVN desire for information, it was commonplace for them to demand propaganda participation by way of "apology" or threat of more torture, while the P.O.W. resistance is low during the immediate post torture period. Beyond this, specific degrees and types of torture must be defined on a case by case basis.

TRAVELLING IRONS

A piece of iron usually from three to ten feet long with sliding lugs to fit over the legs. Since these irons are free from the bunk the prisoner can normally waddle or inch along unless his ankles are too battered and raw from the strain.

VOCAL TAP CODE

An ingenious creation of CAPT Denton's during the Alcatraz days in which a combination of coughs, throat clearing and sneezes were used to vocally transmit the tap code characters.

APPENDIX II

A PERSONALIZED ROGUES' GALLERY

The North Vietnamese listed below and described in some detail in the following paragraphs are keyed by page and photograph number to the publication DI-367-14-72 North Vietnamese Personnel Associated With U. S. P.O.W.'s. Various other Vietnamese personalities not pictured in the DIA publication but who were associated with CAPT Stockdale's confinement are described in the narrative chronology.

Big Ugh  
Bucky Beaver  
Bug  
Cat  
Chihuahua  
Cig Stealer  
Drut  
Gen Giap  
Ichabod  
Jake  
No Name #1  
No Name #2  
Pig Eye  
Rabbit  
Rat  
Big Ugh - No photo available, but resembles (and is described with) Jake.

Page 11 - Possibly a guard known as "BUCKY BEAVER". CAPT Stockdale did not meet him until 1970, and he was only in CAPT Stockdale's presence during the "soft days" of the 1971-1972 era. Bucky Beaver was an English speaking guard, known as a loner who was occasionally given to frank expressions of his own views, sometimes seemingly honestly presented. He was never sympathetic with the American cause but he seemed to have a certain degree of compassion for the P.O.W.'s, although different people had a different experience with him. He was known as a trouble maker in Building Five in 1972 where he was more or less responsible for COL Joe Kittinger's removal for about one week of isolation and interrogation. CAPT Stockdale considered Bucky Beaver as a man who thinks for himself. About a month before his release, CAPT Stockdale was reaving a covert note on toilet paper in the company of COL John Flynn. Unknown to both men, Bucky had been watching this action. COL Flynn left and as CAPT Stockdale was hiding the note, Bucky rushed in to apprehend it. As a sort of test case, CAPT Stockdale physically held Bucky at arms length, took the note and calmly told Bucky that he was going to stand there watching CAPT Stockdale eat the note, and that there was nothing that Bucky could do about it. He ate the note and Bucky left in disgust without further action. This sort of thing, of course, would have been unheard of earlier, even with Bucky Beaver. His lack of reaction gave CAPT Stockdale the idea that the end was near.

Page 44, Photo 47 - The "BUG", a fat, infamous hatchet man who was probably the most unpopular man in the prison system'. Another Bug is

described in the narrative chronology and referred to throughout as the Literary Bug or LBug.

CAPT Stockdale has heard that the infamous Bug, the one depicted in photo 47, was out at the Briar Patch early in the war. His first personal contact with Bug was on the day CAPT Stockdale arrived in Vegas, 25 January 1967. Bug is a "fat little guy younger than Cat, but he's a man whose age is hard to determine." In early 1967, Bug appeared to be a junior officer who had the menial task of getting Vegas opened and settled down. He was clearly subservient to the Cat and Chihuahua "but to the average prisoner, the Bug was pretty much the nemesis of all evil." He was a fat little slob, but "he had a lot of poise."

CAPT Stockdale compares Rabbit and Bug by saying, "Rabbit also had a lot of poise, but a little bit false. Rabbit was a bit more intelligent perhaps, he lets his guard down at times. Rabbit is the sort of guy when he gets in a pinch, and you say to him "what you say is a bunch of crap" and "you're nothing but an extortionist", he is liable as not to say "you're right". But Bug would never do this. Bug was always the righteous executor of a benevolent and just policy. Bug probably had some smarts of his own but he was never my man. Rabbit was my man until 1969. CAPT Stockdale does not think that Bug was as effective as Rabbit in some ways.

Bug sort of ran Vegas during the 1968-1969 period although he had a senior who was the so-called Camp Commander, a man known as Buddha. But Bug was the hatchet man, although CAPT Stockdale had only sporadic contact with him. In the days of Camp Unity, Bug was the "bad news guy in the camp". He gained in stature among the Vietnamese although he got a slow start.

Page 65, Photo 73A - Probably the "CAT", or MAJ Bai. He was the operator, and probably the author, of the closed loop of treatment regime designed to produce products of propaganda.

CAPT Stockdale believes that the "Cat", or MAJ Bai, was the source of primary guidance on the isolation, pressure, punishment and torture that engulfed the prison system from late 1965 through 1969. CAPT Stockdale first observed Cat during two early quizzes in November - December 1965 when Cat appeared to be a sort of bystander. Cat would speak no English in those early days although CAPT Stockdale knew that he understood the language. In fact, until 1969 Cat was unwilling to show that he spoke English. This was entirely consistent with his intensely egotistical though shy nature; until he spoke fairly good English, he would speak no English. Quizzing at that point in heartbreak was somewhat tentative but bore evidence of the embryonic formation of the network of extortion that was to be the modus operandi of the prison authority for four to five years. CAPT Stockdale first realized Cat's importance at the end of a quiz he had undergone with Cat and Rabbit. CAPT Stockdale had read the riot act using a preplanned speech emphasizing demands for improved

medical, food and isolation treatment for the prisoners. Cat left the quiz room, and Rabbit proceeded to make clear that CAPT Stockdale had made a "grave error", that he had "insulted a man of great influence". This later became abundantly clear as even the other Vietnamese treated Cat with deference and caution. Cat wore the two bar, one star insignia of the rank Major, and described himself as a career officer and as a member of the "General Staff". He had been influential in some capacity in the treatment of the French P.O.W.'s after Dien Bien Phu and this seemed to form the basis of his credentials. He was physically small, egotistical with some poise, and seemed to sense that it was to his advantage to pose as a senior officer. Cat was ever careful never to be present when the actual torture process began, and although he tried to strike the pose of a sort of supervisor for all prisoner activities willing to see that "justice" was done, "this facade grew thinner and thinner as time and the torture regime wore on". In 1971, Max, VNAF LT Nguyen Quo Dat, told CAPT Stockdale that Cat's name was Bai, Major Bai. Others observed Cat as the man on the scene whenever public appearances were made downtown but despite his great effort he was never able to get CAPT Stockdale to make a public appearance. At one point in June 1967, CAPT Stockdale was hauled downtown into a room full of bright lights where he refused to bow at the door. As he stood in the middle of the room glowering, he soon heard Cat's voice saying, "Leave! Get him out!" In the winter of 1969 - 1970, CAPT Stockdale had his last session with Cat. By that time Cat had been dethroned and was describing himself "the Camp Commander" of Las Vegas. This was a big step down, and he had begun to look bad physically. In June 1970, CAPT Stockdale asked the Bug where the Staff Officer (Cat) was and received the reply, "you'll never see him again." Before his disappearance, Cat had confided to CAPT Denton that he (Cat) had misinterpreted the humane and lenient policy of the DRV toward American prisoners and that he had made a public self criticism of this error. In another candid moment, this time during his last quiz with CAPT Stockdale, Cat stated, "you know I formerly served with the General Staff." In CAPT Stockdale's opinion, Major Bai took the rap when the Vietnamese found out "that their extortion and torture program was a loser". As time dragged on, Ho died, and the American people applied pressure, the whole thing became a can of worms." As the operator and probable architect of that program, Cat met his demise in its failure.

In early February 1973, less than a week before release, CAPT Stockdale and several other seniors were called individually to quiz with Slick, also known as the Soft Soap Fairy. CAPT Stockdale had had little prior contact with Slick, the Vietnamese who was mainly concerned with early releases and had been at the Plantation in 1968. On this occasion, Slick addressed CAPT Stockdale, "I have a message from Mr. Bai. Do you know who I mean by Mr. Bai?" CAPT Stockdale stated, "I think I know who you mean." Slick said, "Mr. Bai advised you to be discrete at home in your discussions of treatment or you will regret it". CAPT Stockdale responded, "It seems to me that Mr. Bai is still attempting to employ his technique of blackmail. You tell Mr. Bai that everything that happened to me will be made clear to the United States Government. I think it is discreditable for an official of the DRV Government to make threats of blackmail even when baseless as in this case." Slick defensively said "Mr. Bai does not speak for the DRV Government."

Page 41, photo 42 - Positive identification as "CHIHUAHUA", a dangerous propagandist and public relations expert who always described himself to CAPT Stockdale as a Special Assistant to "The Staff Officer", the Cat. Photo 57b on Page 50 shows Chihuahua in a typical pose. As a prisoner was bombarded by questions, Chihuahua would sit on the sidelines making sure the right questions were asked and hopefully (for him) that the right answers were given. Just as Cat claimed to be a member of the General Staff, Chihuahua claimed to be a Special Assistant to Cat, and therefore close himself to the General Staff. CAPT Stockdale describes him as a Vietnamese Public Affairs Officer, a super propagandist, and a man "who knows how to write, and a man who knows news when he sees it." CAPT Stockdale states, "I never met an American (non-prisoner) over there, thank God, but they all know Chihuahua. He can accommodate to any society and could ingratiate himself in the eyes of the pacifists. But I know him from another angle. The only time I thought I beat the ropes, it was he who was standing over me. This was in 1969. I got up and said 'What in the hell are you trying to do. What kind of crap is this.' Chihuahua apparently told Pig Eye in Vietnamese to let it go at that." Cat was always very careful to remain aloof in actual torture sessions but in this case Chihuahua was right there when the ropes were applied.

CAPT Stockdale never saw Chihuahua in uniform and although several other prisoners have reported that Chihuahua wore the one bar four stars of an Army senior Captain, CAPT Stockdale believes he very likely was a civilian. Every occasion when CAPT Stockdale saw Chihuahua he was wearing civilian clothes and dressed in an above average manner. He had a rust colored Harris Tweed coat "that looked like it might have come from a Hong Kong tailor shop."

Chihuahua arrived at work each morning about the same time as Cat around 0630. Chihuahua went home for lunch and usually left in the evening about 1700 to 1800. He rode a bicycle like all the rest and parked it in the regular parking lot near the main entrance.

Cat and Chihuahua were "a pair of self-confident and cocky individuals." Chihuahua spoke good English "with the studied indirectness of the French Diplomat." He had a manner of staring off into space and speaking in the conditional, for example, he would say "it is recommended that you think before you act" and "it would be in your best interest to comply with the desires of the camp authority" and so on. CAPT Stockdale states "He was always delivering his message as a tip from on high as though he felt the man he was addressing would gather that his point was more important than himself, that he was merely an interpreter of the words of the Lord. The business of Chihuahua was public relations and propaganda. I doubt very seriously if he would know the difference between an F-4 and an A-4, but he knows the difference between good and bad press. I had first thought he was dramatic coach hired by the Cat to improve the quality of his public displays and that was the way I secretly knew him at first. He was effeminate, artistic as he waves his hands dramatically when he talks." Chihuahua had high cheek bones and broad shoulders and a dramatic manner, but in the two weeks CAPT Stockdale dealt with him in close range "he was neither a dramatist nor an aesthete, he was a deeply involved extortionist."

Chihuahua appeared to grow in prominence after the demise of Cat. One evening within two months of CAPT Stockdale's release the Headshed troupe was shown a propaganda movie in which American visitors were interviewed. CAPT Stockdale doesn't recall who they were, but he does remember "a rather obese American pacifist female". Chihuahua was in this film and even made some introductory remarks.

An additional photo of Chihuahua is shown on Page 53, photo 61A.

Page 47, Photo 52 - Probably a guard CAPT Stockdale knew at Alcatraz as "Cig Stealer". That name came from an incident at Alcatraz when this guard was young, a little unsure of himself and not completely honest. An indication of the security at Alcatraz was the fact that there were about 15 Vietnamese assigned to guard 11 prisoners held in leg irons within individual bolted cells. Another part of the security system was a full time patrol in the courtyard rotated among the guards. Between the cells housing CAPT Jim Mulligan and CAPT Stockdale was a room used to store supplies including soap, cigarettes, etc. This room was kept locked and the key was in the custody of a turnkey called Turd. One day during a noon hour watch, CAPT Stockdale observed Cig Stealer maneuvering a long bamboo pole into the storeroom and extracting packages of cigarettes. CAPT Stockdale was always alert for situations which might provide valuable information of this type for later use against NVN personnel, but he never again observed an act of theft of camp property by a guard.

Page 4 - Poor photo quality precludes positive identification, but it is possibly a guard known as "Drut" who was CAPT Stockdale's turnkey at Vegas in October 1967. He was a bad news guard given to spontaneous slugging. At this time, CAPT Stockdale was living solo in Riviera, blindfolded and cuffed except for meals, without blanket or mosquito net, and with a re-broken left leg cartilage that made it almost impossible for him to stand. CAPT Stockdale remembers Drut particularly for the fact that he was the guard who fed him the evening meal at about 1600 and applied the handcuffs that would be with him until morning. The cuff latch position determined whether or not he would be able to doze off during the sixteen hours between the second meal of the day and morning. In cinching up the cuffs for the night, Drut could be depended upon to squeeze them to where there would be bone pressure, precluding sleep, and so that by morning the wrists would be throbbing. CAPT Stockdale first met Drut in late July or early August 1967 when he was in the Mint. During most of September 1967, he was spared Drut's presence since CAPT Stockdale was taken over the nobby for nearly a month of torture to extract statements involving the camp organization established and administered by him. After that phase had been completed, he was put back in Vegas at Riveria under Drut's care for what appeared to be an indefinite period of time. On 25 October 1967, CAPT Stockdale was finally delivered from this period of great anxiety when he was taken to the special "reactionary" camp, Alcatraz, with a group primarily composed of his senior assistants in the organization of the P.O.W. camps. Drut reappeared in Hoalo in 1972 and was frequently seen during preparations for the P.O.W. final release.

Page 71, photo 77B - Probably GEN Giap, although CAPT Stockdale has only seen photos of Giap. Additionally, at Alcatraz, CAPT Stockdale once observed a man in a trench coat resembling pictures of Pham Van Dong.

Page 62, Photo 70 - Probably an English speaking guard named "Ichabod" who first appeared in Stardust in 1970. CAPT Stockdale found him a fairly unique, bright person, interested in christianity, reasonably sensitive and kind although he hardened as time went on. CAPT Stockdale considered him miscast as a guard.

Page 25 - The guard talking to Dick Stratton looks like one of the first of the enlisted guards to be taught to speak English. Photo probably in the yard at the Plantation, the guard's name is not known, but he resembles one of those who underwent English instruction while CAPT Stockdale was at Alcatraz (1967 - 1969). This guard was officious, egotistical and no friend of the prisoners. Although CAPT Stockdale never had any physical relationship with him, he believes he was one of the bright young guards, went through the English program early and became a minor functionary in camp organization later. In the last year or so he was seen around Unity as kind of a troubleshooter. While Pig Eye for reasons of self-convenience overlooked minor discrepancies in prisoner behavior, this guard would have reported exactly what he was immediately. He was a man 150 percent on the Communist side in every way.

Page 40, photo 41 - CAPT Stockdale recognized this man as a Hoa Lo Guard in the post 1970 period, name unknown, he was not prominent in CAPT Stockdale's life, but he was a guard who performed menial tasks, occasionally acting as a turnkey and general security guard.

Page 18 - Resembles an assistant torture guard named "Jake", although the collar insignia shown on page 18 is not the one he later wore. He did not have the crossed field pieces on his collar. CAPT Stockdale knew Jake on three occasions, at the Zoo in 1966 when Jake was a "boot", occasionally at Alcatraz in 1968 where Jake once reported him for suspected wall tapping, and during the 1971 era as a turnkey in the building zero cell block at Hoa Lo where seniors were held following the "Church Riot" of February 1971. Thereafter, Jake remained at Unity where he always seemed to be the spearhead of the shock force when the camp expected trouble, as when six of the nine senior officers kept in the high surveillance cell block called "Blue" were cuffed and manhandled for a trip to the downtown war museum in the Fall of 1972. Jake is large for a Vietnamese, strong, quick and emotionally involved in hating the prisoners. Jake is similar in size, build, and motivation, to one of his 'boot' classmates at the Zoo in 1966. This classmate was a rather pudgy faced guard first known as "Moon" but later known as "Ace", and finally, as "Big Ugh" at Hoa Lo. CAPT Stockdale saw Moon at Hoa Lo in the Summer of 1967, where he was generally known as "Ace". He was at that time one of the two primary torture guards for new shootdowns held in Heartbreak. Ace had matured, grown in size, and his face had thinned.

In describing this big Vietnamese, CAPT Stockdale states: "He had tremendous animalistic instincts. He had great eyesight. He is strong. He's quick. He is a tough competitor." An incident revealing Ace's abilities occurred when CAPT Stockdale was being held in a room that was almost dark at all times. This room had a window pane where other guards could come and peer through, but no matter what CAPT Stockdale was doing in the room, they couldn't focus on him because of the darkness. One day Ace came up as CAPT Stockdale was in the process of folding a note. Ace glanced through the pane, had the key out of his pocket, the door open and was on top of him in an instant. CAPT Stockdale learned then and there that Ace was a different breed of cat. Ace applied the ropes to CAPT Stockdale three times, but he was not as notorious as the other torture guard, "Pig Eye".

Page 19 - Positive identification of COL Robby Risner with "Pig Eye" marching right behind him. CAPT Stockdale and COL Risner probably know this "master of torture" better than anyone else, having been closely associated with him through much of their periods of confinement in excess of seven years. CAPT Stockdale relates that "Pig Eye and I have been through so many experiences that we almost wound up at a mutual understanding as would two prize fighters. He knew my tolerance for pain, and I knew his skill." Pig Eye never did learn to speak English. Although "many would like to kill him", CAPT Stockdale felt that if Pig Eye had spoken English, he could have safely made an honest offer at a bribe. Pig Eye was an older man than most of the other guards with a receding hair line and an expressionless face. He had been seen studying Chinese language manuscripts and doodling with electrical circuit diagrams. He was the Cat's number one man, and there was immense trust between Cat and Pig Eye. More than once CAPT Stockdale was called in to see Cat to receive the warning that he must do as Cat would think correct or "this man (Pig Eye) will take care of you, and you know what that means." From November 1969 until the Spring of 1970, Cat assigned Pig Eye as the personal turnkey for the Thunderbird and Golden Nugget cell block in which CAPT Stockdale was confined. Cat informed CAPT Stockdale of this plan and explained that it was a safeguard against CAPT Stockdale's communications. Pig Eye remained the trusted agent assigned to CAPT Stockdale until Cat's demise in the Spring of 1970. Pig Eye first arrived at Heartbreak in October or November 1965 and was last seen by CAPT Stockdale in Camp Unity in January 1973. Although his background was not known, he was a highly skilled, professional torturer, probably previously trained as a physical culturist or even a masseur. His whole methodology was precise and quick, and he never got more emotionally involved than the scenario drama required. He would go along with the game, but he was by nature a cold fish. A perfect candidate for murder incorporated. Or, the perfect companion for a joint escape effort if he could have been made to understand that he would not be double-crossed and that a payoff waited at the other end. As an example of their association during the Unity period in 1972, CAPT Stockdale cites a situation where Pig Eye handed his key ring with all the prison keys to CAPT Stockdale, singled out the door key, and asked that he unlock the cell door. This presented a long awaited opportunity, and he took



advantage of the geometry of Pig Eye's vision and the fact that he had a bar of soap to make an imprint of the key. In that split second, he imprinted the key and wiped it off without Pig Eye's knowledge even though Pig Eye was watching his back. Since this incident in mid 1972, COL Dave Winn and the other senior residents at Ha Lo have had at their disposal the means to open their own cell block door which gave them access to the Unity courtyard, the rooftops and the wall. Several escape plans have been made along with several near executions based on this freedom of movement. The duplicate keys are still buried two feet below the sod in the Blue Room at Unity. This incident reveals three of Pig Eye's traits. First, while he probably didn't trust CAPT Stockdale, he approached trust in the key caper. And second, he tends to be a bit lazy and careless as in this instance. At times he seemed not to want to be bothered with details, that it was only serious matters to which he addressed himself. And third, Pig Eye approached events with the caution of a professional in that he would not enter an open cell with six Americans unless it was truly necessary. After the Cat had been "defrocked", Pig Eye seemed to feel that he also had been degraded as if his past associations with the top men had been terminated. During the last couple of years Pig Eye acted sort of cast adrift from the others, a little older and a little removed from them. The Cat had trusted both CAPT Stockdale and COL Risner to Pig Eye's care as both torturer and turnkey. CAPT Stockdale can account for 8 or 9 times that Pig Eye gave him the ropes and states that you can't go into the ring that many times with a man and not know pretty well how to evaluate him. Additional photos of Pig Eye Page 45, Photo 49 - Pig Eye with COL Risner. Page 46, Photo 50 - Pig Eye.

Page 36 - Hayden Lockhart is being addressed by a man whose profile view resembles the "Rabbit", a Vietnamese who had a unique ability to grasp the elements and basis of extortion and blackmail. Rabbit was a man who knew how to work for the purchase of a person in a way expected of an experienced confidence man, or extortionist in Western society. He was rather bright but a man, as the Communists would say, with some inner contradictions. He never seemed to get promoted, always wearing the simple one star, although CAPT Stockdale was told that he finally did receive a promotion. Rabbit was more or less Cat's right hand man, an interrogator and manipulator assigned for an extended period to work on CAPT Stockdale. During one dramatic showdown in January 1969, CAPT Stockdale was jerked out of Alcatraz for initiating a hunger strike. Broken out his cell before daylight, bound in wire and blindfolded, he was thrown into the back of a truck and hauled back to a place he recognized by the smell - Hoa Lo prison. Placed in Room 18 in New Guy Village, the blindfold was removed and Rabbit and Pig Eye entered. Rabbit's directness and complete deviation from NVN policy of requiring a moral justification of some fabricated source before proceeding with the gentle art of torture is shown in his actions. He walked up to CAPT Stockdale and said, "I don't want to go into the details of what happened at that other camp. I have only one question. Are you going to be my slave, or not?" Rabbit knew the program, he was a master of extortion, and he knew

that CAPT Stockdale knew the program -- there was nothing sacred between them. In early 1969, Rabbit was assigned with Chihuahua to a special job, that is through a combination of devious means and force to get CAPT Stockdale to make a film to advise the prisoners as one of their leaders that with the advent of the Nixon administration the chances of peace appeared to be hopeful, that a very delicate situation existed in camp during this period, and that all caution must be exercised to do exactly as the camp authority said. In this vicious campaign, CAPT Stockdale won a significant victory by starving himself, by cutting up his hair and head, and by beating his face up. All these extreme measures were designed to make himself unuseable as a propaganda instrument, and in this he was successful as the NVN got no photography and couldn't even force him to read the message on tape in an acceptable, useable fashion.

Rabbit's ability for candor was revealed one day during the blackmail phase of this special campaign of 1969. In one of the quizzes, CAPT Stockdale accused Rabbit and the Vietnamese in general of trying to blackmail him. The next quiz Rabbit entered saying, "you're right. I have looked in a dictionary and it is blackmail." Rabbit had failed completely in this special job, and CAPT Stockdale was so thankful he cried for joy. Several days later, Rabbit came up with, what to him must have been a face saving gesture, a letter to CAPT Stockdale's wife. This letter represents Rabbit's last attempt to manipulate CAPT Stockdale and this attempt also proved an abject failure for the NVN. They had one final session in which Rabbit said something to the effect that "I hate your guts." Even in all of this environment of extortion and deception, most NVN took pains to retain their position by a screen of pseudo legitimacy and pseudo honesty. But by that time there was nothing sacred between them. CAPT Stockdale called him "Rabbit", "Extortionist", "S.O.B.", etc. Rabbit never again faced him even though they both remained around Hoa Lo. Rabbit was Cat's interpreter in Hoa Lo in 1965 and had early been assigned to CAPT Stockdale. Even when CAPT Stockdale was assigned to other camps in those early years, he would not be dealt with by the camp personnel except in a perfunctory manner. Rabbit was always there to interrogate him. One guard once said to CAPT Stockdale, "there is a man in charge of you who will talk to you," and that man was Rabbit. CAPT Stockdale believes that Rabbit was the wrong man on the job and that Cat later realized this.

An additional photo of Rabbit is shown on Page 48, Photo 54 (with CDR Bob Shumaker).

Page 46, Photo 51 - Probably "The Rat" talking to COL Robbie Risner. Although there are at least two Rats, CAPT Stockdale recognized this man as the Rat he knew well, an officer and simple minded functionary seen around Vegas in 1967. The Rat was at times gullible and rather inept, and his basic disadvantage in CAPT Stockdale's estimation was that he had a human conscience. Whereas Cat, Rabbit and Bug couldn't "be had", the Rat could "be had", in the sense that you could count on him

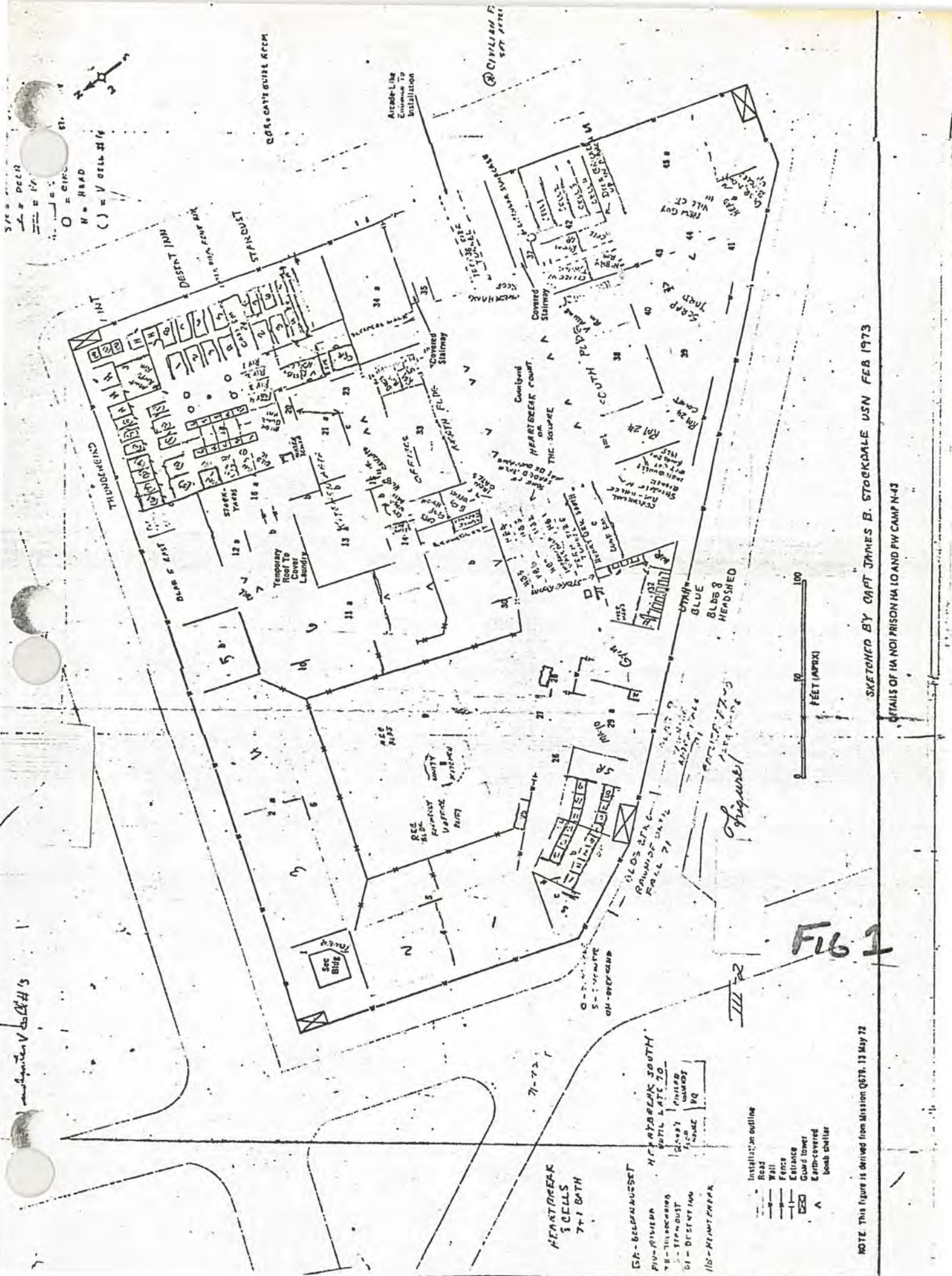
for an honest appraisal of the situation. Rat was the immediate boss of the Alcatraz Gang of 11 P.O.W.'s with their 14-15 guards. He was what might be called a department head under the Camp Commander, Slopehead. As a sort of den mother at Alcatraz, he called in each prisoner individually every two or three months to discuss the war. Rat knew English fairly well but only gradually learned profanity. This was a point learned by CAPT Stockdale during a 1968 session in which the Rat began discussing the Tet offensive of 1968, saying the Vietnamese had been victorious, the people were rising up and the American army had been defeated. CAPT Stockdale responded with the observation that this was nonsense. In one of Rat's rare moments of anger, he jumped up, pointed his finger at CAPT Stockdale, and exclaimed that as a criminal he had no right to speak that way. Knowing the Rat and the extent of his power, CAPT Stockdale responded with "I'm sorry. What I should have said was 'that's bullshit.'" With a relieved expression, Rat said, "that's more like it!" !

APPENDIX III

Figure 1 - Sketch of Hoa Lo Prison

Figure 2 - Sketch of Alcatraz

Figure 3 - Sketch of The Zoo



3/4" = DEER  
 1/2" = HEAD  
 O = CIRC  
 H = HEAD  
 ( ) = V CELL #16

1-10-72  
 71-72

100  
50  
0  
FEET (APPR)

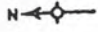
Fig 1

Installation outline  
 Road  
 Wall  
 Fence  
 Entrance  
 Guard tower  
 Earth-covered bomb shelter

NOTE: This figure is derived from Mission 0578, 12 May 72

SKETCHED BY CAPT JAMES B. STOKDALE USN FEB 1973

DETAILS OF IA NOI PRISON HA 10 AND PW CAMP N-43



TO BE FILLED IN BY DEBRIEFER

NAME OF RETURNEE \_\_\_\_\_

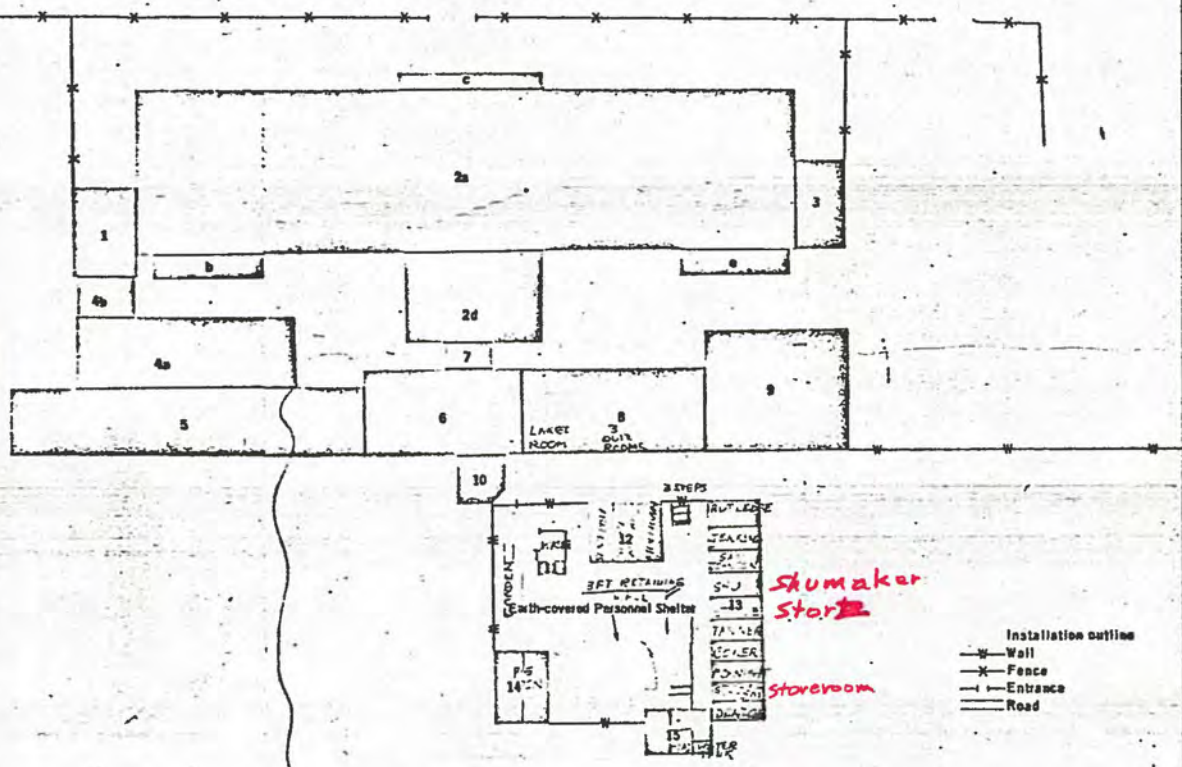
DATE OF INFORMATION \_\_\_\_\_

TAPE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF DEBRIEFING \_\_\_\_\_

### HA NOI PW CAMP ALCATRAZ

THIS SCHEMATIC, TAKEN FROM DOCUMENT RDA-10/5003/73, IS TO BE USED FOR THE DEBRIEFING OF REPATRIATED U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR. RETURNEE AND DEBRIEFER MAY ANNOTATE DRAWING AS APPROPRIATE.



III-3

*Figure 2*

**FIG 2**

NOTE: This figure is derived from Missions Q 517, 29 May 70 & Q 578, 13 May 72

ALCATRAZ  
SKETCHED BY CAPT JAMES B. STOCKDALE USN FEB 1973

Route 6

Weapon  
Emplacement

- Installation outline
- Functional area
- Wall
- Entrance
- Road
- Whitewash
- Baseball court
- Guard track
- Earth-covered bomb shelter

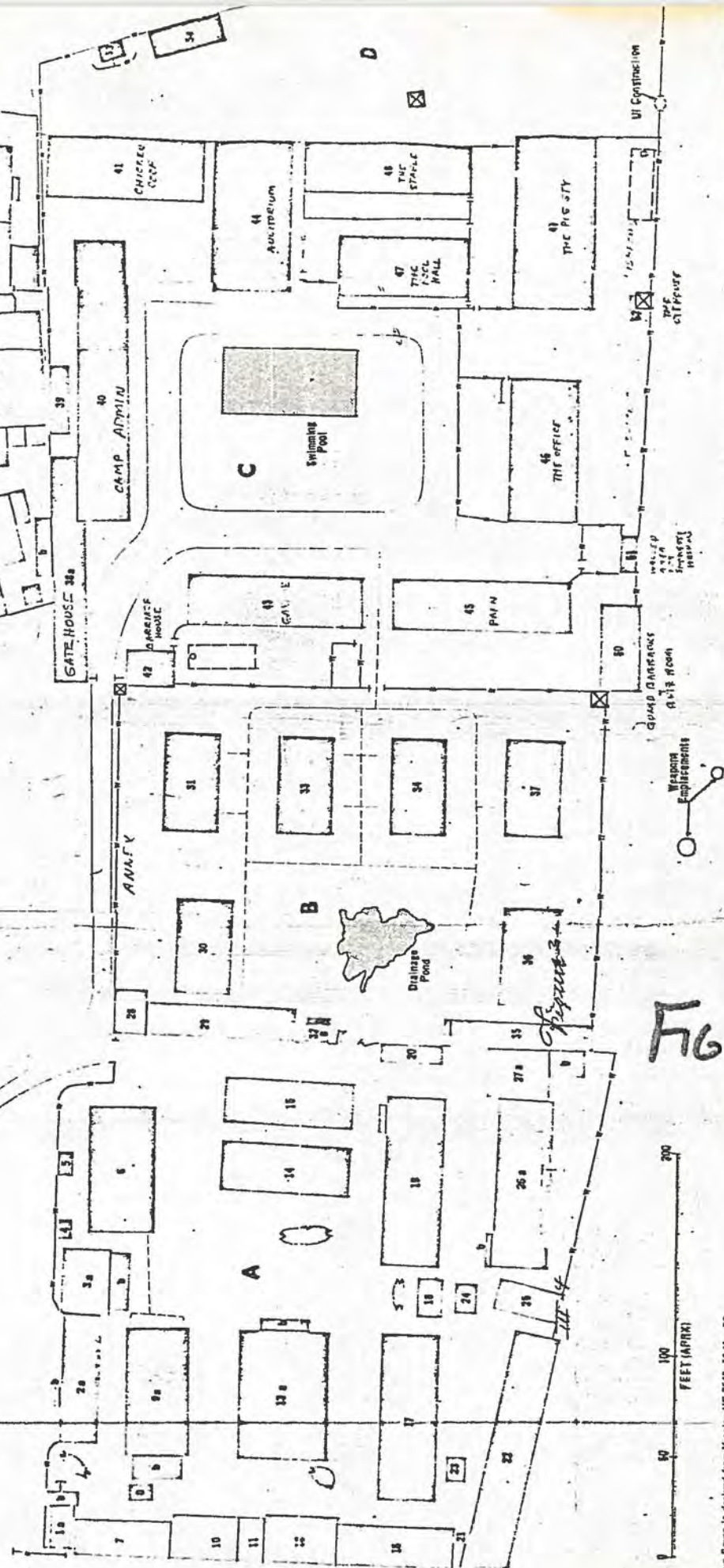


FIG 3

This figure is derived from Mission UE 7643, 18 May 78

DETAILS OF HANOI PW DETENTION INSTALLATION  
THE 200

APPENDIX IV

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT

After a brief review of the Code of Conduct, CAPT Stockdale offers several philosophical questions which have arisen as a result of confinement in North Vietnam and which may bear investigation and discussion. "On this side of the fence before the next group of Americans find themselves discussing them on the other." (Debriefing's note: For each of the four points, the phrase from the Code of Conduct is given followed by CAPT Stockdale's comments.)

If I am senior I will take command - obviously for the senior in isolation with no overt or covert communications active leadership functions cannot be performed. But how is that to be interpreted for a senior who is in solo or solitary confinement where covert communications means are either known to him or could be reasonably improvised. And, how is this to be weighed against the other side of the coin when he does so on pain of exposure to torture for propaganda or military information.

I will make every effort to escape and to aid others to escape - there are some details to be discussed in due course not with regard to this debriefing but in the relationship of the covert to the overt organization and the overriding authorities. Who has the authority to override the covert? Certainly the Commander, maybe others, but exactly who? Is reprisal or the threat of reprisal an adequate justification for cancellation of the threat of escape?

I will accept neither parole, etc., - A check of CAPT Stockdale's home copy of Webster's Third International Dictionary Unabridged, dated 1964, yielded the first definition of parole as "plighted fate, especially the promise of a prisoner of war who fulfills stated conditions in consideration of special privileges, usually release from captivity." How does that Webster definition jibe with release of prisoners to peace organizations? This issue was discussed for hundreds of hours by CAPT Stockdale and others. CAPT Stockdale states, "Our conclusions are clear in this debrief, but perhaps they could be clarified to others before the next war. We may be correct. We may not be. That's not for me to decide."

I will make no oral or written statement disloyal to my country and its allies, or harmful to their cause - CAPT Stockdale states, "we all know that tortured and extorted propaganda has a legal defense and a moral defense, but I was rather shocked to hear a broadcast of a taped conversation of a former Attorney General of the United States, Ramsey Clark, with prisoners living at another camp in which he addressed the

← Psycho



question asked from the floor, "Do you think we'll be in trouble when we get home?", and this former Attorney General said, words to the effect - "I don't know, but I'll tell you if what you said came from your own mind and was said with complete sincerity as part of your own feelings, and he of course excluded military information, "Then if you need an attorney to defend yourself against such a thing I volunteer to do so." This was alarming to us, and I don't think it says the same thing that I read in the Code of Conduct. I know that in fact I'm a champion of the idea of freedom of thought but in the military organization I am no champion of freedom of behavior. Thought and behavior are different things. And behavior has got to be guided within the confines of military law under the Commander. I don't think conscience is the controlling issue here so much as military behavior."

APPENDIX V

SUMMARY OF INCIDENTS OF INJURY AND TORTURE

DURING CAPT JAMES B. STOCKDALE'S CONFINEMENT 9 SEPTEMBER 1965-12 FEBRUARY 1973

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACT</u>
9 Sep 65	Bone broken in back at point where left shoulder joins - occurred either during eject from A-4 or during capture man-handling.
9 Sep 65	Gang tackled during capture - left leg broken after being bent 60 to 90 degrees out of natural position.
9 Sep 65	Suffered shallow flesh wound on left ankle from two shots fired at point blank range several hours after capture.
8 Jan 66	Hoa Lo Prison New Guy Village - Room 18. Introduced to the ropes by Pig Eye - left hand numb for several years.
Mar 66	Room 18. The ropes
Jun 67	Hoa Lo Prison Vegas - Bath-10. Arms latch cuffed too tight - circulation seriously impaired. Interrogator, Bug, took them off when he saw them saying "I might have saved your arms."
Early	
Sep 67	New Guy Village - Nobby Room. The ropes - comm policy purge- Big Ugh
Sep 67	Nobby Room. The ropes "trial" - Pig Eye
Mid	
Sep 67	Nobby Room. The Ropes. In the heat of battle PigEye grabbed CAPT Stockdale's left leg as fulcrum and <u>broke left knee cartilage</u> .
Summer	
18	Alcatraz. Whole night on the wall with double leg irons - Legs badly swollen by strain and rampaging mosquitos.
25 Jan 69	Hoa Lo Prison New Guy Village - Room 18. The ropes - Pig Eye
26-	
30 Jan 69	Room 18. <u>Four</u> more sessions in the ropes
About	
31 Jan 69	Heartbreak wash area - CAPT Stockdale used counter-extortion tactics of cutting head and hair to make himself unrepresentable for photos.

About

- 31 Jan 69 Room 18. CAPT Stockdale used self-defacement to avoid photos - Battered face and eyes with heavy stool.
- 10 Sep 69 A one day session of loose ropes and being slashed across the face by a piece of auto fan belt.
- 11 Sep 69 Slashed wrists in calculated move to stop current purge.

1. The foregoing list of injuries and incidents clearly meeting the definition of physical torture are only the most serious incidents. Countless other acts which do not meet the torture definition were also suffered by CAPT Stockdale. These included: slappings, sluggings, arm locks, arm twisting, periods on the wall, periods in tight cuffs, loose ropes, extended periods of being blindfolded (once for a 23 day period) and the mind boggling totals of over four years in solo, over 18 months in isolation, over 18 months in leg irons.

2. Lest these "minor" acts appear inconsequential the following sampling is provided:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACT</u>
30 Dec 65- 02 Jan 66	Four days in irons and bound day and night. Received only half rations. Hoa Lo New Guy Village Cell 3.
Early Sep 67	Vietnamese guard, "Jap", jerked and dragged CAPT Stockdale blindfolded and bound around Vegas court over mounds of dirt. Jap then administered four sharp blows in the kidneys.
Early Sep 67	"Trial" in Nobby Room, Pig Eye slugged CAPT Stockdale twice, then administered the ropes, and then maintained the pressure through extended arm twists.
Early Sep 67	Greasy and Literary Bug conducted quiz in Nobby Room with CAPT Stockdale on the floor. Greasy would circle and kick the bad left leg numerous times.
Oct 67	Cuffed, ironed. For one night sat up all night with 50 pound iron on legs.
Spring 68	10 Days around the clock irons, 15 months irons for 15 hours a day.
Spring 68	10 Days around the clock in irons, plus many 1-2 punches in jaw from guard named "Turd".

TIME

ACT

Jan -

Feb 69

Vietnamese withheld food for several days then CAPT Stockdale went on a hunger strike for close to two weeks. Many sessions of arm locks, sluggings, loose ropes.

Jun

Jul 70

Over one month in Calcutta in what Bug described as a "hot cell". Ventilation intentionally shut off as part of the prescribed punishment.

3. Physical ailments caused by the extremely bad treatment and denial of access to basic hygienic conditions have not been detailed but include Yellow Jaundice and a severe and extended crotch rash.

APPENDIX VI

SPECIAL COMMENTS

TAB A            A BRIEF TRIBUTE TO MAX

TAB B            A COMMENT ON BRAINWASHING AND DRV GOALS

TAB C            COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP

TAB D            ENGLISH SPEAKING GUARDS

TAB E            COMMENTS ON PHOTOS OF CAPT STOCKDALE

TAB F            A PLACE FOR BURYING AMERICANS?

TAB A

A BRIEF TRIBUTE TO MAX

While in Heartbreak cell one in May 1966, CAPT Stockdale saw the Main Gate to Hoa Lo open revealing a crowd of Vietnamese. One man emerged from the group and ran into New Guy Village. CAPT Stockdale later learned that this had marked the arrival of the remarkable friend and ally to U.S. prisoners, VNAF I/LT Nguyen Quoc Dat, commonly known as "MAX". Max was a VNAF pilot who had been captured after being shot down in an A-1. He remained near the U. S. P.O.W.'s and shared the same prison regime as everyone else. CAPT Stockdale doesn't believe that the Vietnamese had the cunning to "plant" Max. He feels the Vietnamese just didn't know what else to do with him. This feeling was reaffirmed continually throughout the years as Max proved his loyalty to and friendship for the Americans. He was bright, spoke fluent English and French, learned the tap code, and was an excellent source of information such as the name of the prison (Hoa Lo), Cat's name (Major Bai), etc. Max had been raised in Hanoi, apparently in a family of high social status. He was ingenious in devising useful tools such as pencils out of bread dough, crayons, known as "rat turds", out of a charcoal and soap mixture. Max lived at various times in Heartbreak, Golden Nugget, and Unity and at times moved with surprising mobility such as the time shortly after the "church riot" in the Spring of 1971 when CAPTS Stockdale and Denton were in Cell 6 Building Zero at Unity when one morning Max popped their door open, came in, shook their hands and introduced himself. CAPT Stockdale's confidence in Max is indicated by the fact that in 1971, he offered Max (and the Incas) the option of extending a 50,000 dollar bribe in CAPT Stockdale's name to any guard deemed trustworthy to help get CAPT Stockdale out. He later raised that budget to 100,000 dollars guaranteed payment.

TAB B

A COMMENT ON BRAINWASHING AND DRV GOALS

CAPT Stockdale had conducted extensive study in Marxist thought and in the Korean War brainwashing process during graduate studies at Stanford. In 1965 he believed that the North Vietnamese would try to make Communists out of the U. S. P.O.W.'s, particularly the younger prisoners. Much to his relief, the Vietnamese were a step too sophisticated for that since they were afraid of the brainwashing label. What they were attempting was to affiliate the P.O.W.'s with what CAPT Stockdale believes to be the center to Left Wing elements of the American peace movement. The Vietnamese goal specifically was initially to make "Dave Dellingers" out of them. And when they realized that was too high a goal, the Vietnamese were willing to settle for about any type of anti-war stance. The goal became not one of obtaining way out statements but statements that might at least in part be in agreement with some of the selected remarks of the anti-war <sup>Pro Hanoi</sup> elements in the U. S. Since the Vietnamese objective differed from what CAPT Stockdale had expected, he had to modify his tactics as he went along, both personal and leadership tactics.

Super  
Fink  
Draft  
dodger  
WWII

TAB C

COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP

During discussions with Rabbit, his personal interrogator, CAPT Stockdale was surprised at Rabbit's simplicity of thought on the subject of Communism. He knew both Rabbit and Cat were Communist Party members, and he once asked Rabbit what the qualifications for membership in the Communist Party were. Rabbit, in a rare moment of candid frankness was baited into replying that there were only four. First, you must be about 17 years of age. <sup>2</sup>Second, you must have the intellectual capability to understand the theory and concept, although not necessarily from formal education. You had to have the ability to understand intangible concepts. <sup>3</sup>Third, you must be selfless, willing to work without individual compensation. <sup>4</sup>Fourth, you must be a man who naturally influences others, a person to "emulate".



TAB D

ENGLISH SPEAKING GUARDS

CAPT Stockdale had never heard, or even considered, that guards could speak English until he went to Alcatraz 25 October 1967. At Alcatraz the eleven P.O.W.'s were handled with great care and put into individual, tiny, windowless, cells. The turnkey was a small, bucktooth, alert guard known as BB Brain. One day in November 1967 CAPT Stockdale returned to his cell prematurely from the wash area in company with a guard. He was shocked to find BB Brain at the back of his cell leafing through and reading the few letters he had received from home. As the weeks went on, CAPT Stockdale realized that Alcatraz was located near a governmental institution which was among other things, a school. Groups of young men and young soldiers would be brought in from time to time and taken from cell to cell where they would talk a little English with the P.O.W.'s. The kids talked with the Alcatraz Gang just as any student of language would with phrases such as: How old are you? Do you have children? It is warm today, etc. CAPT Stockdale later learned that this was not an OCS program as they believed at the time, but was probably a guard English school. It was apparently established in 1967, and during 1968. They saw at least two groups of students. In later moves from camp to camp, more and more English speaking guards were present.

TAB E

COMMENTS ON PHOTOS OF CAPT STOCKDALE

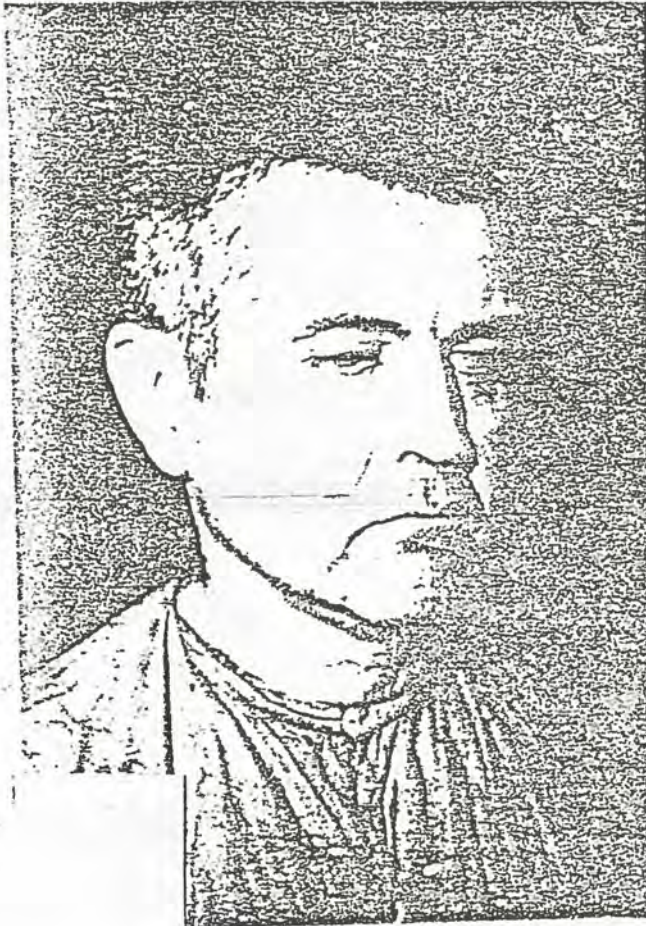
CAPT Stockdale requested that COMNAVINTCOM provide a copy of all "propaganda" photos of him held in Washington area files. In response Mr. Bob Boroughs, NIC-35, provided five photos, four of which were of CAPT Stockdale. The following comments are offered by CAPT Stockdale relating to these photos.

a. The mug shot labeled #2 - This is one of possibly two or three mug shots taken of CAPT Stockdale during his confinement. He is unable to date the one provided.

b. The color shot of MAJ R. E. Smith (#1B) - This was taken from a staircase probably leading to the second floor of a large building about four or five blocks from Hoa Lo where CAPT Stockdale met Dr. Vien, a Vietnamese propagandist and "intellectual", in early 1966.

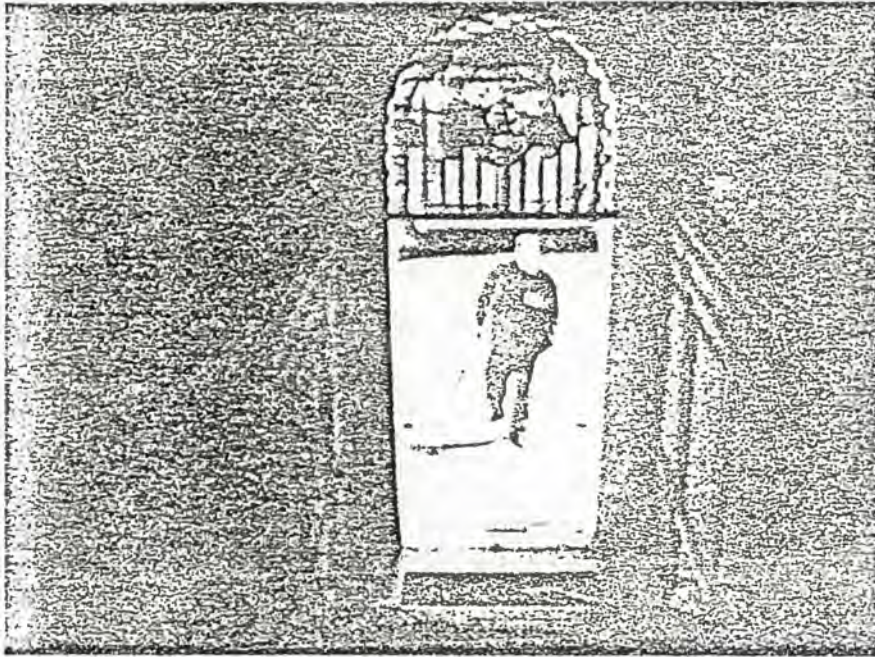
c. The three color shots of CAPT Stockdale (#9B, 10B and 11B) - These photos were taken in that same building in early November 1967. Soon after his move to Alcatraz, CAPT Stockdale was taken to quiz where he was addressed by the Alcatraz Camp Commander, The Rat. There was another man at that quiz, the Vietnamese propagandist called Chihuahua, who seemed to think CAPT Stockdale should know him because he was "the Assistant Staff Officer" (Cat's assistant as it later developed). Chihuahua told CAPT Stockdale that he would be taken on a trip, that he must stay calm and behave. There would be no propaganda. Chihuahua seemed apprehensive and was "obviously reading out Cat's assessment" of CAPT Stockdale's "possible instability in clutch situations that had been credibly established back at Hoa Lo in the Spring of 1967." Chihuahua seemed only interested in CAPT Stockdale's "not going haywire". Some red pajamas were brought out which CAPT Stockdale believes came from CAPT Ron Storz since he later saw that they were returned to Storz' cell. CAPT Stockdale never was issued a pair of this type of red pajamas, which he first observed at the Zoo in early Fall 1966. In any event, he was blindfolded and taken by jeep to a large office building. He was unblindfolded at the foot of the stairway and glancing up, he spotted Cat at the top of the stairway. Cat appeared preoccupied by a lot of other activity; CAPT Stockdale believes there was a press conference in session in that building at the time he was there. He never did understand exactly why he was there because he said not one word nor was he spoken to by anyone during the whole operation. Cat had a battery of photographers with him at the top of the staircase, and CAPT Stockdale limped slowly up the stairs fearing that Cat was waiting for him. Cat waved his hand, apparently telling the photographers to shut off the cameras, and by the time CAPT Stockdale reached the top, Cat was gone. CAPT Stockdale was led, not down the hallway to the room on the right where he had met Dr. Vien in 1966, but straight ahead past a

big room on the left where out of the corner of his eye, CAPT Stockdale could see what appeared to be a crowd assembled and possibly "the grin of a red prisoner suit." He concluded that a press conference was either in session or being prepared. Straight ahead, he was taken into the room shown in the photos where he was told to stand in the corner. He was told to turn around and photographs were taken. He heard the whine of a movie camera, and he employed what he calls "the Denton technique of eyelash morse code signal." CAPT Stockdale relates, "I stood there without them saying anything and without my saying anything. I blinked the word 'torture', and maybe another embarrassing word. After that I was unexplainably taken to the jeep and right back. The date of those pictures where I'm shown in a red suit had to be early November 1967. The whole incident was inexplicable to me. In hindsight, it could have been a feelout pass since they had an operation going on down there. Cat was capable of just seeing how I would react in a public situation. By public, I mean, no prisoners, a few photographers and no coversation. In years to come we would become so educated, refined and united as to preclude that type appearance.

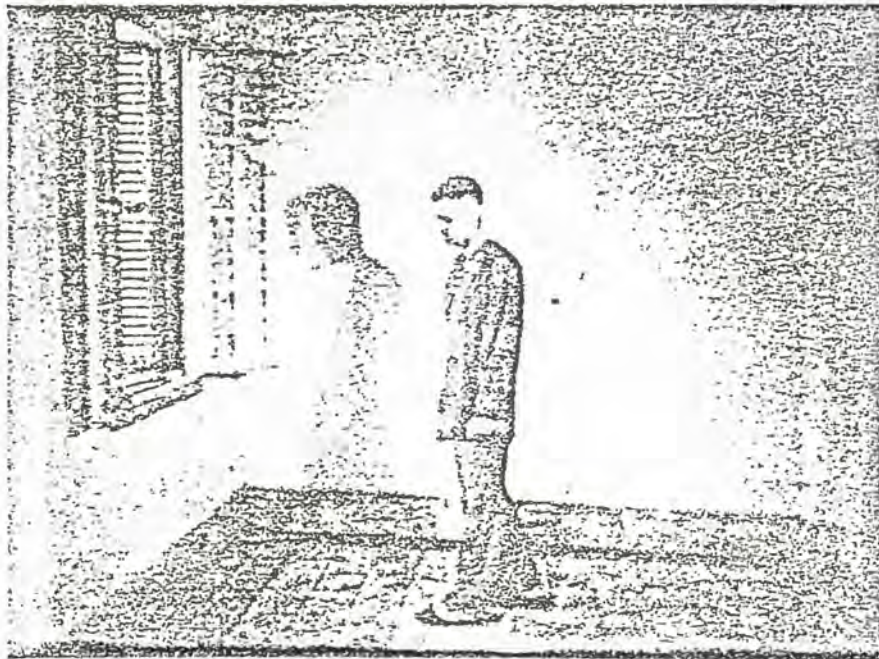


NORTH VIETNAM

James B. Stockdale USN pilot captured  
9 Sept. 1965, 1966.

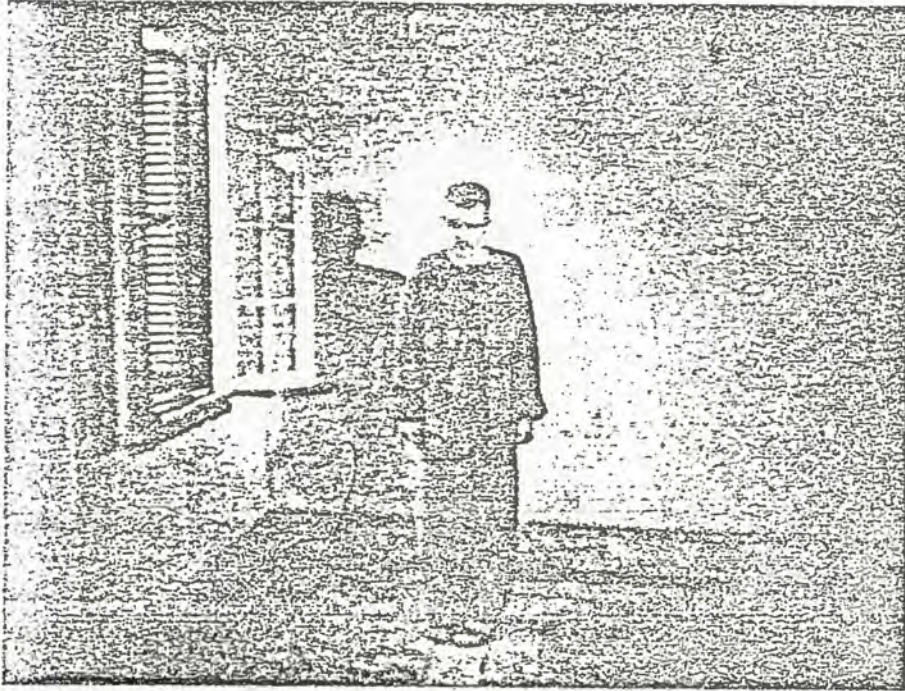


#1B



#9B

27924DALS



#10B

27924DALS



#11B

TAB F

A PLACE FOR BURYING AMERICANS?

CAPT Stockdale recalls a single incident relating to a "Place for Burying Americans." This incident was related to CAPT Stockdale by CDR Byron Fuller and concerns an experience COL Fred Crow had in Vegas in 1968 or 1969. COL Crow, a man with a fine sense of humor, was taken one day for a brief "attitude check" quiz with the "Bug", one of the worst hatchel men interrogators at Vegas. At the end of the quiz, Bug asked COL Crow if he had any special requests. COL Crow facetiously responded that when he died he wanted to be buried under the tree in the Vegas courtyard. Bug, who did not possess any semblance of a Western sense of humor, reeled back in his chair and said "very unsanitary", and went on to say "we have a special place for burying you Americans".

No further information is held by CAPT Stockdale on this incident, nor does he recall any other reference to a special cemetery for Americans.