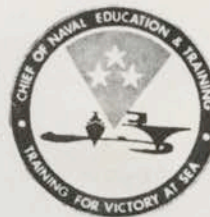


# CAMPUS

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page seven



page twelve



page eighteen

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## IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
At The Helm .....	1
SABET At Quantico .....	2
Financial Seminar .....	8
NEWTS Country .....	10
Naval Postgraduate School .....	12
Naval War College .....	16
Admiral Stockdale-Strength From The Classics .....	18
Chronicles of Naval Warfare .....	20
New Learning Center .....	22
Dialogue .....	24
Janie Taylor on Women's Status .....	30
People Pages .....	32
Around The Command .....	34

**On The Cover:** The waters of Monterey Bay provide oceanography students at the Naval Postgraduate School with a dynamic laboratory for their exploration and research.

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# Strength From The Classics

James Stockdale stood before the pilots of Air Wing 16 aboard the carrier USS *Oriskany* talking about honor, trying to convey to the men he commanded the kind of commitment a soldier must make in the kind of "limited war" the United States had been waging in Vietnam for nearly a year.

"What I am saying," said Stockdale, "is that national commitment and personal commitment are two different things. All is not relative.

"You can't avoid black-and-white choices when it comes to personal commitment," he said, paraphrasing Socrates. Sooner or later you come to a fork in the road. Don't equivocate. Don't rationalize the extent of your commitment with such considerations as 'Mr, Navy needs you for greater things,' or 'you must save the airplane for some great war of the future.'

"When that Fox Flag is two-blocked in the Gulf, you'll be an actor in a drama that you'll replay in your mind's eye for the rest of your life. Level with yourself now," Stockdale concluded. "Do your duty."

The date was April 29, 1965. The *Oriskany* was headed for the Gulf of Tonkin, where in a week it would be in the thick of combat. Thirteen of the 120 fliers listening to their commander that day would not return eight months later with the *Oriskany* to San Diego.

Eight would be dead. The rest would be missing. Four of the missing, including Stockdale, would eventually return home.

But between the moment they ejected from their crippled planes and the moment their feet touched American soil would stretch seven and a half years of brutality in Hanoi prisons — years of physical and mental torment, battles with pain, thirst and hunger and with perhaps more insidious enemies: depression, degradation, and hopelessness.

James Bond Stockdale today is a national hero, holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, a vice admiral, a commander still, but this time of some of the finest minds the Navy can boast, its future leaders.

As president of the Naval War College in Newport, he can influence how those leaders will handle tomorrow's crises.



Will they bring a moral commitment to their duties that puts the interests of the nation above those of their careers?

Will they be able to perceive through the myriad procedures of the military bureaucracy the consequences of their decisions?

Will they be thoughtful and imaginative enough to handle crises for which no prescribed formula exists?

Will they understand the principles of duty and honor well enough to be able to uphold them in situations where the rule book does not apply?

These are aspects of leadership Stockdale considers essential and hopes to incorporate into the traditional War College curriculum for senior students.

His vehicle is an electives program to supplement the college's three areas of study: strategy, management and naval operations. Students next fall will be able to choose electives for up to 20 per cent of their course work.

The topics range widely, some focusing on international relations, others on history and law. But by far the most radical is the one Stockdale will teach.

It is called foundations of moral obligation. The catalogue for the 1978-79 school year describes it as a discussion of "right, good, honor, duty, freedom, necessity, law, justice, happiness, insofar as these pertain to the human situation generally and to the military ethos in particular.

The reading list includes Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Sartre, Dostoyevsky, Conrad, Loestler, Kafka, Solzhenitsyn, Marx, Emerson, Lenin and the Old Testament.

"Everyone has a different idea of what I'm trying to do," laughs Stockdale, rising with surprising agility from his chair, his hands positioning his crippled leg on the floor in a fluid, almost imperceptible motion. The knee was broken twice by his captors, once just after he was shot down and again sev-

eral years later during an interrogation in Hanoi's Hoa Lo prison.

"The chaplains think I'm going to do one thing, the Navy hierarchy another. Some say it's going to be a leadership course.

"It's not going to be a leadership course. It's just going to be an excursion through some old-fashioned classics," he says modestly if a bit inaccurately. For as the interview progresses, Stockdale returns again and again to these classics, to the strength their teachings gave him in Hoa Lo when his interrogators mercilessly pressed him to turn traitor and when as senior officer in the prison he needed to set an example for others. If they did not give him the techniques of leadership, they certainly gave him the basics.

He waves the reading list as if the books and essays listed there can better explain the course's objective.

Lenin, for example, in his essay, "What Is To Be Done?" shows the power that accrues to "charismatic people," he says. "Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* shows the 'moments of panic, moments of great joy, moments of sadness' that are part of the life of a prisoner."

'The Grand Inquisitor,' a deeply philosophical passage from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, sets up a confrontation between an old cardinal dedicated to the Church and Christ, whose miracle-working and insistence on man's freedom to choose between good and evil threatens the Church's authority. The cardinal's response, for the good of the church and the contentment of mankind, is to sentence Christ to death.

Stockdale's military application: "You can be so concerned about saving the ship that you forget you're in the war."

Seven and a half years in prison did not transform Stockdale from a lock-step militarist into a philosopher. He had a philosophical turn of mind long before 57-mm bullets from a North Vietnamese ground gun tore apart the controls of his Skyhawk jet during a "milk run" over Thanh Hoa on Sep 9, 1965. It was evident on the *Oriskany* the day he went beyond instructing his men about their duty and tried to explain why.

Prison clarified the influences and lessons of his life, he says. He found that a philosophy course he took at Stanford in 1961 gave him more tools to resist his tormentors than all of his military training.

He drew strength from Epictetus, a Roman philosopher who wrote, "It's better to die in hunger, exempt from guilt and fear, than to live in affluence and with perturbation." Perturbation was what Stockdale was living with.

For the searing, maddening question, "Why me, why must I endure this?," he found an answer in the Old Testament story of Job: Life is not fair.

At the same time he found the military's right code of conduct for POWs impossible to uphold under the torture inflicted on prisoners at Hoa Lo. His military training had not covered how an officer must behave when he is confined to a dank, vermin-infested cell, alone — except for brutal contacts with his captors — for years on end.

"In 1965, I was crippled and I was alone," Stockdale wrote in an essay published in the *Atlantic Monthly* last month. "I realized they had all the power. I couldn't see how I was ever going to get out with my honor and self-respect. The one thing I came to realize was that if you don't lose integrity you can't be had and you can't be hurt."

Integrity for Stockdale became resisting until the pain was unbearable, but never giving in before that point, showing his captors time and again that they could not break his spirit. It meant disfiguring himself so he could not be used in propaganda movies, and risking punishment to tap out encouragement to the man in the next cell.

Integrity isn't what Stockdale has set out to teach, but he hopes the course will lead his students in some thoughtful soul-searching.

by Irene Wielawski

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TITLE: EL 101 Foundations of Moral Obligation, VADM J. B. Stockdale

ELECTIVE DESCRIPTION: Since Socrates, moral philosophy has been taught both as a technical discipline and as a guide to life. Basic ideas to be discussed in this course include right, good, honor, duty, freedom, necessity, law, justice, happiness, insofar as these pertain to the human situation generally and to the military ethos in particular. Lecture topics, discussions and readings will be drawn from both classical and modern sources. The tentative reading list includes the following selections:

AUTHOR	TITLE
Aristotle	Nicomachean Ethics (selections)
Camus, A.	The Plague, The Myth of Sisyphus
Conrad, J.	"Typhoon"
Crane, S.	"The Open Boat"
Dostoyevsky, F.	"The Grand Inquisitor" from <u>The Brothers Karamazov</u>
	"Notes From the Underground"
Emerson, R. W.	"Self-Reliance" in <u>Essays and English Traits</u>
Epictetus	<u>Enchiridion</u>
Gray, G.	<u>The Warriors</u>
Hart, H. L. A.	<u>The Concept of Law</u>
Job	Book of Job (Old Testament)
Lenin, V. I.	"What is to be Done?"
Kant, I.	<u>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</u> (selections)
Koestler, A.	<u>Darkness at Noon</u>
Malcolm, N.	<u>Ludwig Wittgenstein: a Memoir</u>
Marx, K.	"Communist Manifesto"
Mill, J. S.	<u>Utilitarianism, On Liberty</u>
Monod, J.	<u>Chance and Necessity</u>
Plato	<u>Euthyphro, Crito, Apology, Phaedo</u>
Rawls, J.	"Justice As Fairness", <u>Theory of Justice</u>
Sartre, J-P	"Existentialism is a Humanism"
Sinsheimer, R. L.	"The Presumptions of Science"
Solzhenitsyn, A.	<u>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</u>
Stockdale, J. B.	<u>Selected Writings</u>
Walzer, M.	"Prisoners of War"
Watson, J.	<u>The Double Helix</u>