

# Class of 1947

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James Bond Stockdale entered the U.S. Naval Academy Class of 1947, undecided whether to choose service in submarines or aviation. He honed his leadership skills at the Academy, excelling at both academics and the social scene.

When it came to athletics, Jim's hard work on the gridiron earned the praise and admiration of classmates. His *Lucky Bag* prophecy profoundly observed that it would be a lucky man who found himself deployed with "Stock."

After graduation, Jim married Sybil Bailey. He then served as an officer aboard minesweepers and destroyers before starting his training as a Navy fighter pilot in 1950. After successful assignments in flight squadrons, Jim landed at the Patuxent Naval Air Station where he tested the Navy's latest jets and served as an instructor.

In between assignments, flying the F8 Crusader, Jim earned a master's degree from Stanford. When the Vietnam War escalated in 1964, Jim was there, leading the defense of the Destroyer Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin. Jim was in his second combat tour in Vietnam when, on September 9, 1965, he was shot down and captured by the North Vietnamese.

Seven and a half years of imprisonment followed—over half of it in solitary confinement. Much of the time, he endured brutal torture at the hands of his captors. As the senior officer and resistance leader among the POWs, Jim was singled out for especially harsh torture. His stubborn refusal to break inspired his comrades, discouraged his captors and resulted in the end of POW torture. It remains his proudest achievement, earning him the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor and the gratitude of his fellow POWs including Bill Butler who quotes from the poem "*Invictus*" when he describes Jim.

"In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced nor cried aloud. Under the bludgeonings of chance, My head is bloody, but unbowed."

As a civilian, Jim has been a college president, a teacher, a Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, and the 1992 Reform Party Vice Presidential Candidate.

Jim and Sybil, who wrote a best selling book together, enjoy spending time with their four sons and their families.

Jim Stockdale—whose honor, courage and commitment inspired his friends—and his country.