



## Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot: 431 (Hoover Institution Press Publication)

By James B. Stockdale

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Vice Admiral Stockdale was on active duty in the navy for thirty-seven years. As a fighter pilot operating from an aircraft carrier, he was shot down over North Vietnam in 1965. As the senior naval officer among the prisoners of war in Hanoi for seven and a half years, he was tortured fifteen times, put in leg irons for two years, and confined in solitary for four years. This experience was the crucible for his philosophical thought on issues of character, leadership, integrity, personal and public virtue, and ethics. Much of his philosophy is drawn from the stoic philosophers, especially Epictetus, whom he had read before his capture. The selections in this volume converge around the central theme of how man can rise with dignity to prevail in the face of adversity lessons just as valid for the challenges of present-day life as they were for the author's Vietnam experience.

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"No fair-minded reader can depart these pages without deep admirations for Stockdale and for the stoic philosophy he propounds...This is a book to be read, pondered, and cherished."

"It is difficult to do justice to this important, informative, and well-documented book. It is a monument to scholarship."

#### **About the Author**

Vice Admiral James Stockdale, a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, served in the navy from 1947 to 1979, beginning as a test pilot and instructor at Patuxent River, Maryland, and spending two years as a graduate student at Stanford University. He became a fighter pilot and was shot down on his second combat tour over North Vietnam, becoming a prisoner of war for eight years, four in solitary confinement. The highest-ranking naval officer held during the Vietnam War, he was tortured fifteen times and put in leg irons for two years. His books include *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot* (1995, Hoover Institution Press) and *In Love and War* (second revised and updated edition, 1990, U.S. Naval Institute Press), coauthored with his wife, Sybil. In early 1987, a dramatic presentation of *In Love and War* was viewed by more than 45 million viewers on NBC television.

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