Taking Stock

General Says Crucible of Command Tests Moral Courage
by MIDN Steven Gutierrez

General Joseph L. Votel, USA, former commander of Joint Special Operations Command and current Commanding General of U.S. Special Operations Command, urged the Class of 2018 in the annual Moral Courage Lecture to develop sound ethical standards here and carry them out to the fleet after graduation. The VADM Stockdale Center sponsored the lecture on 21 September 2015 in Alumni Hall Auditorium.

General Votel addressed midshipmen at the Moral Courage lecture

As a West Point graduate and infantry officer with vast combat command experience, General Votel argued that sound ethical behavior will not only be required of midshipmen as future officers, but moral courage will often be tested in the crucible of command. These tests are ever present in today’s rapidly changing world.

General Votel emphasized that the evolving dynamics of the world’s threat environment will invariably present future junior officers with situations that will require independent judgment calls. In a highly connected media environment, General Votel cautioned midshipmen that “a failure in judgment doesn’t just hurt the individual, but the nation as well.”

General Votel concluded the evening by answering midshipmen questions. His responses included his thoughts on the value of ethics classes at USNA: “I think ethics classes help you make better decisions down the line. They help you to think about situations beforehand, so that you’re prepared for ethically difficult scenarios.”

The Moral Courage Lecture is generously funded by the Naval Academy Class of 1964.
Midshipmen Win 2015 Ethics Essay Awards

Spring semester winner MIDN Wang with featured speaker Major General Beydler, Superintendent VADM Carter, and Stockdale Center Director Colonel Athens

The annual Vice Admiral William P. Lawrence Ethics Essay Awards Dinner honored midshipman authors of outstanding ethics essays on 9 September, 2015. The VADM Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership coordinates the event, which is hosted by the Superintendent, Vice Admiral Walter Carter, Jr. and sponsored by the USNA Class of 1981. Midshipmen wrote their winning essays for the 2014 fall and 2015 spring sections of the sophomore course “Ethics and Moral Reasoning for the Naval Leader” (NE203).

The fall semester winner was Midshipman Hannah Meadows for her essay “Justifying a Rebel: The Syrian Civil War Dilemma.” The spring semester winner was Midshipman Allen Wang for his essay “War Without Death: The Morality of Non-lethal Weapons in the Military.” MIDN Meadows is currently an exchange student at West Point. Both midshipmen received a copy of Admiral Lawrence’s biography Tennessee Patriot, a plaque commemorating the achievement, and a small stipend.

The finalists for the fall 2014 section of NE203 were the following 2/C midshipmen: Ross Gilchriest, Nicole Hadler, Ben Keegan, James Lieto, and Sara Tumbas. The spring 2015 finalists were Brian Cully, Jordan Figlioli, Thomas Gorman, Patrick Gough, and Erik Sutton.

The featured guest speaker was Major General William D. Beydler, USMC, Commanding General II MEF. General Beydler emphasized that the Academy is a school for leadership, and the Bachelor of Science is a byproduct. The goal is to develop leaders of character. “It's only good to be smart and well educated,” he said, “if it leads you to be a better leader.” General Beydler noted that ethical leadership requires hard work and constant vigilance. As part of that vigilance, he recommended that midshipmen look every day for ways to sacrifice a little more, make a stand, and be even more transparent.

General Beydler then used personal examples of ethical dilemmas to illustrate how to use the core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment in consistent and transparent moral decision making.

The evening also honored the winner of the newly created Admiral Charles R. Larson Ethical Leadership Excellence Award. The USNA Class of 1958 sponsors this award in honor of their classmate, Admiral Chuck Larson, who had a distinguished 40-year career that included command of all military forces in the Pacific, White House service, and two appointments as the Superintendent of the Naval Academy. This annual award goes to a civilian or military faculty member, athletic administrator, or coach who has contributed significantly to the Academy’s mission to graduate ethical leaders.

This year’s winner, head football coach Ken Niumatalolo, reminisced about his early days at the Academy with Admiral Larson. He told the audience, “I came here not knowing anything about leadership, but I’ve come to find out that leadership is really service. The great leaders serve.”

MIDN Woody Johnston contributed to this article.

Larson Award winner Ken Niumatalolo

Special Thanks to Our Partners and Friends

by Colonel Arthur J. Athens, USMCR (Ret.)

This is a special time of year when we reflect on our faith, prepare to gather and celebrate with friends and family, and communicate our gratitude for others through words and gifts. This is a very appropriate season for the Stockdale Center to express its deep appreciation to the individuals, families, Naval Academy Classes, and corporations who have aligned with the Stockdale Center mission and given generously in 2015. Throughout this year, you have enabled us “to empower leaders to make courageous ethical decisions” and contribute to the nation’s present and future security, prosperity, and well-being.

The Center annually expends approximately $1 million in private gift funds to support personnel, midshipman events and programs, and research and innovation. This biannual newsletter provides a small sampling of the work made possible by these private funds. The midshipmen, Marines, Sailors, and other national and international leaders who benefit from the Center’s efforts only obtain this benefit because of those who believe in the Center’s work and contribute their resources in a selfless and sacrificial manner. John Bunyan, the author of the classic Pilgrim’s Progress, once said, “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” You have given much to the Stockdale Center and we can never adequately repay you, but you can be confident, as we begin a new year, you are making a significant difference in the lives of emerging and experienced leaders here at the Academy, across our nation, and around the world.
The Stockdale Center Welcomes New Arrivals

The Stockdale Center welcomes a new Distinguished Chair in Ethics, a new Associate Director, and this year’s fellows.

Professor Milton C. Regan, MA, JD, assumes the USNA Class of 1984 Distinguished Chair in Ethics. Regan serves as McDevitt Professor of Jurisprudence and Co-Director of the Center for the Study of the Legal Profession at Georgetown University Law Center. His work focuses on organizational, cultural, and psychological aspects of ethical issues in business, law practice, and the national security and military settings. He is the author of Eat What You Kill: The Fall of a Wall Street Lawyer and co-author of Confidence Games: Lawyers, Accountants, and the Tax Shelter Industry and Legal Ethics in Corporate Practice.

The Center’s new Associate Director, LCDR Misty Wynett Odom, has served as a Division Officer onboard USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (DDG 80), fleeting up as the Assistant Chief Engineer at the start of her second Division Officer tour. She served as a Company Officer at USNA and the Brigade’s Sexual Assault Victim Intervention Liaison. She reported onboard USS NICHOLAS (FFG 47) as the Combat Systems Officer and later served as the Operations Officer, Coastal Riverine Squadron TWO and as the Assistant Officer-in-Charge, Coastal Riverine Group TWO, Detachment Bahrain, where she led more than 300 Sailors executing a combat mission in three Areas of Responsibility.

The Center also welcomes this year’s Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center Fellows: Jeffrey Black, Michael Skerker, and Michael Robillard.

Dr. Black, PhD, teaches at St. John’s College in Annapolis. He has been a member of faculty study groups on neuroscience, Heidegger, and Quantum Field Theory. He is the author of Rousseau’s Critique of Science: A Commentary on the Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts and has written about Rousseau for Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century. He is writing a book on human enhancement, and on the understanding of human nature and human perfection in modern political thought, with chapters on Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Nietzsche.

Author speaks about public corruption

by MIDN Marieme Gueye

Sarah Chayes was the featured speaker on 28 October for the Stockdale Center’s seminar series, the Honor, Courage, and Commitment Luncheon. Chayes is a Senior Associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In December 2001, National Public Radio had sent Chayes to Afghanistan to cover the fall of the Taliban. As she reported on the country’s instability and the war, she decided to stay in Afghanistan for the next 10 years to help rebuild the country. She grew to understand Afghan tribal cultures. Gradually, she recognized that political corruption had created much of the unrest and extremism in Afghanistan. Chayes gave this striking example: “Afghanistan has a lot of stones, yet when we were rebuilding houses, we didn’t have enough stone because the government claimed it, hoarded it, and was selling it to the Americans to make money.” When people don’t have access to a country’s resources, they feel angry, humiliated, and vengeful. Chayes used her knowledge to advise the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen.


During her talk, Chayes emphasized the importance of keeping one’s personal integrity. Focusing on the Naval Academy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment, she noted that compromising one’s integrity for short-term goals never yields positive results in the long term. She pointed to Admiral Stockdale as someone who had maintained consistent leadership, honor, and personal integrity in a hazardous and morally challenging situation.

The purpose of the Honor, Courage, and Commitment Luncheon series is to provide a unique and valuable professional development opportunity for Naval Academy midshipmen, staff, faculty, and coaches.

The Honor, Courage, and Commitment Luncheon is generously funded by Dr. and Mrs. Ernst Volgenau and the USNA Class of 1975.
When the Stockdale Center premiered the Smithsonian Channel's documentary, *Spy in the Hanoi Hilton*, earlier this year, we saw many heroes from the prison camp in North Vietnam depicted on the screen. There was one heroine in the film, however, who stood out for her courage and fidelity.

That remarkable heroine died in October of this year and was interred next to her husband in the Naval Academy cemetery.

I first met that heroine, Sybil Stockdale, in 1987 at a White House Fellows gathering in which Admiral Jim Stockdale presided. I remember distinctly the sparkle in Mrs. Stockdale's eyes, her delightful sense of humor, and obvious deep affection and admiration for Admiral Stockdale. I would also perceive Mrs. Stockdale's strength of character and unwavering commitment to service. I would see her on a few other occasions over the years and my impression was always the same.

Recently, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Richardson, began to discuss the core attributes of the Navy...integrity, accountability, initiative and toughness... and as he did, Mrs. Stockdale immediately came to mind. Sometimes words can be very abstract, but they come alive when associated with an individual and his or her story. These four attributes are ones Mrs. Stockdale exemplified throughout her life and were particularly highlighted after Admiral Stockdale became a Prisoner of War on 9 September 1965. For the next seven and a half years, Mrs. Stockdale would need to demonstrate these attributes to lead her family at home, support her husband and his fellow prisoners, and facilitate the clandestine exchange of critical intelligence information between Admiral Stockdale and the Office of Naval Intelligence. Mrs. Stockdale would form the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, confront North Vietnamese leaders at the 1972 Paris Peace Talks, and present her case to senators, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States. One of Mrs. Stockdale's most treasured letters from her husband was one written on 17 January 1967 when Admiral Stockdale ended the letter with the words, "I love you and am proud of you. You're doing a swell job!" Mrs. Stockdale's "swell job" was only possible because she embodied those core attributes.

Upon Admiral Stockdale's return from captivity, he would receive the Medal of Honor and Mrs. Stockdale would become the only wife of an active duty officer to ever receive the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award. They would continue to serve our nation in many ways and celebrate 58 years of marriage before Admiral Stockdale's death in 2005.

On 20 October 2015, William McGurn wrote an opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal* entitled "That Other Stockdale Naval Hero." Mr. McGurn's editorial eloquently captured Mrs. Stockdale's extraordinary qualities. He concluded the article by saying, "Now Sybil Bailey Stockdale has stepped into eternity. And a good woman takes her final resting place beside the husband she loved and among men and women whose courage illuminates what we mean by 'the finest traditions of the naval service...’ And to that I say, AMEN!

### About the Stockdale Center

For over a century and a half, the U.S. Naval Academy has served as a beacon of moral and ethical leadership to the nation and to the world—producing leaders of uncompromising character, who have fought our wars with honor and have gone on to serve as positive role models on a global stage.

In response to an ever-changing world and the cry to enhance the development of ethical leaders, the Secretary of the Navy established the Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1998. Building on the Academy's track record of developing some of the nation's finest leaders, the Navy chartered the Center to reach out not only the Naval Academy, but also to the wider audience of the Navy, Marine Corps, and the nation at large. Over the years, the vision has expanded to transforming ethical leadership development worldwide. In 2006, the Center was given a new name: The Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership. The Center has continued to refocus and refine its mission, which is to empower leaders to make courageous ethical decisions.

VADM Stockdale—a member of the Class of 1947, a prisoner of war for 7½ years (4 of which were in solitary confinement), a recipient of the Medal of Honor, and a life-long student of leadership, philosophy, and ethics—embodied the selfless and courageous leadership sought in midshipmen, officers, and national leaders.

An officer and a gentleman in every sense, VADM Stockdale's accomplishments are well documented. A man of introspection as well as action, VADM Stockdale reflected on Vietnam and military service, distilling from his experiences hard-won ideas about truth and honor. The author of countless articles and books, VADM Stockdale wrote a column for the *Naval War College Review* while he was the president there. His column, appropriately enough, was called, “Taking Stock.”