

We Admired You, We Respected You, and We Loved You

I never return to this place without my heart thumping with a sense of history. I sense the great warriors that have gone before us behind every tree and pillar and feel a renewed obligation to be worthy of their company.

Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale

U.S. Naval Academy Class of '47

Former Prisoner of War

Lewis arrived an hour early for his meeting with Robbie and his family at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. The time allowed him to walk the stadium at his own pace. He was well beyond the need to relive his glory days on that field. He was more interested now in the stadium itself, the names of the battles emblazoned on the facades, the many plaques citing memorials to fallen shipmates and classmates, and the dedication plaque itself:

DEDICATION

**THIS STADIUM IS DEDICATED
TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED
AND WILL SERVE AS UPHOLDERS
OF THE TRADITIONS AND
RENOWN OF THE NAVY AND
MARINE CORPS OF THE UNITED**

STATES. MAY IT BE A PERPETUAL
REMINDER THAT THE NAVY AND
MARINE CORPS ARE
ORGANIZATIONS OF MEN
TRAINED TO LIVE NOBLY AND
SERVE COURAGEOUSLY: IN PEACE,
CHAMPIONS OF OUR INTEGRITY:
IN WAR, DEFENDERS OF OUR
FREEDOM.

As he walked, Lewis pondered the hundreds of athletes who had competed on that field and the many that had been lost in combat. Few days went by when he didn't think of his fallen comrades.

Robbie and his family arrived at 1:15.

"Well, are we all ready?" Lewis asked.

"We can't wait," replied Mrs. Jones.

"O.K. I know that in the last few months all of you, especially Robbie, have learned a great deal about the history of the game. I thought it would be good to get in touch with the Army-Navy game itself. Tonight is the 76th meeting in the storied rivalry. There is simply no bigger game for either of these two teams. It is going to be a treat, I'm sure. But before the game, I'd like to take you on a special tour. I'll explain as we go."

“Sounds great,” agreed John Jones.

“Since we’re already here, why don’t we start with the stadium?” Lewis proposed rhetorically. “Some people have called this facility a memorial that doubles as a stadium. I like to think of it that way myself. There are over 400 plaques placed all around this stadium and about 8,000 seats offered as tributes to people or military units. And you can see the battles commemorated on the facades.” He walked the family around the same loop he had just completed, offering details of the key points, the names of and a few facts about the battles.

“Would you mind taking a short ride?” Lewis asked the family.

“Not at all. Please,” said Mrs. Jones.

They drove from the stadium through downtown Annapolis onto the grounds of the academy and to the Lacrosse Office in MacDonough Hall. Coach Richie Meade was expecting their arrival.

“Coach, thanks for having us. Let me introduce Robbie, his sister Catherine, and their parents, John and Mary Jones.”

Coach Meade then introduced the family to his staff and a long-time supporter of the program, the *Grand Dame* of Navy Lacrosse, M.G. Buchanan who had happened by to wish the coach good luck. "It's great having you all here. Our players are very excited about the game tonight. I hope you are, too. I understand that Captain Lewis is going to escort you on a special tour this afternoon. I wish I could go with you, but we still need to finalize some things for the game. Where are you going?"

Lewis cut in on the answer, "I'm going to surprise them."

"Well, I'm sure you know how important Captain Lewis has been to the Naval Academy and to Navy Lacrosse."

Coach Meade pulled a framed magazine article off his wall and handed it to Robbie. It was an autographed picture of Lewis from a 1966 copy of the *Baltimore Sun Magazine*. The article was entitled, "The Greatest Lacrosse Man Ever." Coach Meade pointed out some of the other pictures on his wall. He was extremely proud of the program and took every opportunity to share his pride.

“These are our three players who have played for the United States team. He pointed to Jeff Long, Class of ’77, Glen Miles ’86, and Andy Ross ’97. We are very proud of all of them. While members of the USA team, each won the World Championship. I think each of these guys would tell you how great it was to play for Navy. But to have the additional honor of playing for their country was something they’ll never forget.” The coach pointed to another picture of two of his players from the Class of 2000 at the Graduation Week Prizes and Awards Ceremony.

“This is also one of my favorite pictures, Robbie. These two young men had outstanding careers here at Navy, but it wasn’t easy for either of them. This is Jon Brianas, who had to battle through cancer while he was here. He received the Vice Admiral Edward C. Waller Lacrosse Award, given annually to the ‘midshipman who has contributed most to the spirit, morale, and well-being of the lacrosse team.’ And this is Mickey Jarboe holding the Naval Academy Athletic Association Sword, awarded to ‘the most outstanding athlete of his class.’ Mickey’s story is amazing also—since he didn’t even start for his high school team. When he graduated from here, he had been

selected as the outstanding goalie in the country twice! These guys are what Navy Lacrosse is all about. We are very proud of them. I hope you'll see what I mean tonight."

Coach Meade shared more history with the family, citing seventeen National Championships, 331 All-Americans, and several Hall-of-Fame players and coaches during the program's ninety years. Lewis thanked Coach Meade for the visit. Meade presented Robbie and Catherine copies of the team's program and a ball autographed by all of his players and Lewis.

From MacDonough Hall the group took a short walk to Lejeune Hall, home of Navy's Olympic-sized swimming pool as well as the Navy Athletic Hall-of-Fame. Lewis walked his guests slowly past an assortment of memorabilia, including a football from the 1963 Cotton Bowl.

Lewis grudgingly obliged a request to point out items that honored him, so he waved at a couple of pictures, then the huge plaque recording the recipients of the Naval Academy Athletic Association Sword. Lewis's name was listed in the Class of '66, immediately below Heisman Trophy winner and NFL Hall-of-

Famer Roger Staubach for the Class of '65, Tom Lynch '64, who had recently completed a tour as Superintendent, and the late Donald C. McLaughlin '63, who had been a "firstie" (senior) when Lewis was a plebe, and who had died in Vietnam. The recipient for the Class of '61 was Navy's other Heisman Trophy recipient, Joe Bellino. Understanding the stature of Bellino and Staubach Mr. Jones was the most impressed of the group. The family scanned the plaque beginning with the honoree of 1893, C.S. Bookwater of football and crew, all the way to the Class of 2000, Mickey Jarboe.

Lewis hurried the group past his Hall-of-Fame plaque. This visit wasn't about him. The true purpose was to show his guests the plaque dedicated to his late coach:

WILLIS P. (Bildy) BILDERBACK

NAVY LACROSSE COACH

1959-1972

Record 117-18-1

NINE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

1960-67, 70

EIGHT CONSECUTIVE (1960-1967)

FIVE UNDEFEATED SEASONS 1960, 62,
64, 65, 66

92 ALL-AMERICAS

LACROSSE COACH OF THE YEAR 1960

MEMBER LACROSSE HALL OF FAME

BILDY SAID, "THE GREATEST
EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE HAS BEEN
COACHING MIDSHIPMEN."

BILDY, WE ARE THE FORTUNATE
ONES. WE CAN'T THANK YOU
ENOUGH FOR BEING OUR COACH
AND FRIEND. YOU WERE AN
EXCEPTIONAL TACTICIAN, TEACHER,
AND MOTIVATOR. YOU GAVE US SO
MUCH AND INSTILLED IN US A
SPECIAL LOVE FOR THE GAME. YOU
MADE US WINNERS ON THE FIELD
AND IN LIFE, AND MADE US DIG DEEP
WITHIN OURSELVES TO DO OUR BEST.
WE ADMIRED YOU, WE RESPECTED
YOU AND WE LOVED YOU.

THE TEAM

DONATED BY THE NAVAL ACADEMY
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Lewis allowed the family to read the inscription on the plaque. “He was a great coach. I think at the time we all knew it—but it means so much more to us now.”

Next Lewis drove the family to the State of Maryland World War II Memorial located just across the Severn River from the Yard. Upon arriving at the Memorial, Lewis allowed the family a few minutes to peruse the magnificent circular formation of granite and marble. The flags of Maryland and the United States hung heavily from their supports, about thirty feet above the central icon. The Memorial was offered as a tribute to the natives of Maryland who lost their lives while serving in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Army Air Corps of World War II.

Lewis stood in front of the inscription of Jack Turnbull’s name carved into the black granite. In the polished rock he could see his own reflection. Lewis stared at his image superimposed on Jack’s name and pondered what his life would have been like without the stick. It was too daunting a thought to elicit a coherent response. Lewis almost unconsciously began tracing the inscription of Jack’s name.

His guests slowly gathered and simply stared at the name. No words were necessary.

The next stop was in nearby Davidsonville and All Hallows' Episcopal Church. Lewis drove past the sign announcing the establishment of the church in 1692 and proceeded up a slight incline on a gravel road. They were greeted by a timid and solitary rabbit who ambled away as they opened the car doors. All of them saw the cemetery located adjacent to and behind the beautiful old brick building. Lewis walked the family around the side of the church to the graveyard.

"This is where Jack Turnbull and his parents are buried," Lewis said respectfully. He escorted the group to the general area and allowed them to review the stones without further comment, letting the tranquility of the yard to say what needed to be said. Occasional birds added their voices to the gathering.

As Robbie scanned the graveyard, his eyes were captured by many large, ornate stones. He automatically surveyed those, the stones having achieved their purpose of gathering attention, but he scanned the names to no avail. Then he noticed a small American flag hanging limply on its stick, placed next to

a gravestone. It was a rather nondescript, baseless stone, about two feet high, with a cross inscribed above the name. The stone was grayed by time and partially covered with moss on the top. He read the inscription:

JOHN
IGLEHART
TURNBULL
MARYLAND
LIEUTENANT COLONEL AIR CORPS
WORLD WAR II
JUNE 30, 1910
OCTOBER 18, 1944

Robbie felt a chill as he realized that the body of Jack Turnbull was located only several feet below his own. He gently stepped back not to offend the great pilot. His family had seen Robbie freeze in his tracks and, taking the cue, joined him.

“A group of veterans comes by on several occasions a year and places these flags on the graves of our countrymen lost in battle.”

Lewis offered just above a whisper. They looked around the rest of the cemetery and noticed only a few other flags among hundreds of other stones.

They also saw the markers of Jack's grandparents adjacent to his and then the dual stone of his parents just beyond those. Robbie immediately connected with "Mum" as he studied her stone:

TURNBULL

DOUGLAS CLAYLAND ELIZABETH B.
IGLEHART

JULY 23, 1874

APRIL 12, 1875

MARCH 1, 1941

JULY 13, 1957

THEIR FAITH, THEIR STRENGTH

The boy's mind rewound to the scene Red Hawk had provided when Mum received the news of Jack's death and then the scene of her presenting the first Turnbull Award to Stewart McLean.

After allowing another fifteen or twenty minutes for the family to take in the sights and sounds of the cemetery, Lewis quietly led his group back to the car for the continuation of the day. Lewis drove his guests back to

Annapolis for an early dinner at the Wharf and fielded more questions as they ate.

“I’d like to get to the game a little early if we can. There is someone I’d like you to meet.”

Again, Lewis hit his target time exactly and found Tommy Adams at a pre-game reception in his honor at the stadium pavilion. Upon sighting Lewis, Tommy broke off his conversation and came to greet him. The old friends embraced. “Thanks for coming, Jim.”

“Glad I could make it. Let me introduce you to some special guests. This is Robbie and his family. John, Mary, and Catherine Jones.”

Tommy and his wife Joyce greeted them warmly and asked how they knew Captain Lewis.

Lewis said simply, “We’ve become friends over the last few months through, let’s just say, a mutual friend named Red Hawk.”

Tommy’s face beamed, and he smiled at Lewis. He knew. He knew that Robbie was now the custodian of the special stick. Tommy thought it would be useful for Robbie to hear the unique circumstances of how Captain

Lewis would select his sticks during the years he played at Navy.

“Robbie, do you know how good Captain Lewis was when he was here? Well, when our yearly shipments of five hundred sticks came in, Coach Bilderback instructed me to call Jim first and have him select ten sticks for the upcoming season. *Then* I would call the seniors. I don’t think the others guys knew that Jim got first crack. I suppose that even if they did, they didn’t mind much. Jim would spend hours looking for a stick that matched his special stick—the one Mr. Turnbull had given him. He never was able to find one quite like it, but he picked out the ten best. The deal I struck with Jim for letting him choose first was that as he pondered his selections, he would let me study his special stick. I became intimately attuned to the marvelous balance and harmony of the wood, gut, and leather. For decades I always used the characteristics of that stick as the basis for how I strung and balanced Navy lacrosse sticks. It was the seed from which all of the other sticks grew. None of the other guys knew about that, either—or even Coach Bilderback—just Jim and me.”

“Robbie,” Lewis said, “Tommy is being honored at half-time tonight for his service to

the Naval Academy. You see, he has been the lacrosse team's equipment manager for *forty* years. Tommy is the single greatest expert on lacrosse sticks in the world today. We call him the Stick Doctor. Many of the innovations that have come about over the years in regard to equipment improvement began with Tommy. I can't tell you how much he's meant to me personally when I was playing and to the hundreds of other midshipmen over the years."

It was an uncommonly warm evening in Annapolis as play began. Lewis let the play speak for itself. Robbie was struck by the pace, intensity, and physicality of the game. Each ground ball, each one-on-one, was hotly contested.

Navy took a 7-3 lead into half-time.

Shortly after the teams went to their locker rooms, Director of Athletics Jack Lengyel presided over a group heading to the center of the field. With Lengyel were Mike Gottlieb '70, Carl Tamulevich '68, currently Assistant Director of Athletics and a National Lacrosse Hall-of-Famer, and Tommy.

A public address announcer regaled the crowd of over 6,000 with Tommy's many achievements during his forty years. After the remarks, the announcer then directed attention to Mike Gottleib, general manager of the "Navy Old Goats"—a team of former Navy players who compete annually in the Vail Shootout—and graphic designer to present Tommy with an original watercolor depicting his tenure. Tommy's face graced the main body of the work, and in each corner stood vignettes of key points; Jim Lewis, the Old Goats, Willis Bilderback, and Jeff Long.

Navy played another solid half, earning a 10-4 victory and their fourth straight win over Army, a remarkable achievement, only performed a handful of times in the history of the 80-year rivalry. All-America Adam Borcz scored four goals that night, ending his career as the all-time leading scorer among Navy midfielders.

"Robbie, you know when we talk about getting on the wall and working on your skills? I sat quietly in the bleachers last night and watched Adam take 100 shots with both hands after practice before he left. Coach Meade tells me that he does it all the time. Also with all of the work he's put into lacrosse he's not

allowed his grades to slip. He's been selected for the Navy's nuclear power program, which requires strong academic work. It's no surprise that he has achieved what he has. He's a special player."

Lewis brought the family down to the field to congratulate the staff, players, and Tommy, and to meet his former teammate, Carl Tamulevich. Robbie noted the elation on the faces of the Navy players and the utter dejection of their Army counterparts—just like the 1964 game. It hadn't changed much, he thought.

"So, what did you think of the day, Robbie?" Tommy asked.

"Best day of my life," Robbie beamed.