

Testimony of Pueblo Crewmen Raises Questions and Conflicts

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CORONADO, Calif., Feb. 9—Conflicts, contradictions and complex questions have emerged in the testimony of the crewmen of the Pueblo as the Court of Inquiry into the seizure of the intelligence ship.

As the investigation moves into its fourth week tomorrow, the central conflict focuses on the two key figures on the Pueblo, Comdr. Lloyd M. Bucher and the intelligence officer, Lieut. Stephen R. Harris.

Beyond this conflict but in some ways related to it, are the numerous questions that have been raised and left unanswered about the gray afternoon on Jan. 23, 1968, when the 177-foot intelligence ship was captured in the Sea of Japan by North Korea submarine chasers and torpedo boats.

Questions Are Listed

How many secret documents were destroyed?

How intense were the salvos of the 57 mm cannon fire and machinegun bursts that smashed the Pueblo and prevented the burning and scuttling of documents?

How far was the Pueblo from the coast of North Korea and how accurate was the ship's navigation?

Were the covers on the Pueblo's two mounted machineguns iced-over or could they have been easily removed?

Did the North Koreans receive the Pueblo's signal "I am in international waters" moments before opening fire?

The two key officers on the Pueblo appear to be strikingly dissimilar men.

Commander Bucher was an orphan who lived at Boys Town, Neb., joined the Navy as an enlisted man and later worked his way slowly through the ranks until he received his first command, the Pueblo.

Fluent in 4 Languages

Lieutenant Harris, who headed the 28-man secret research detachment on the Pueblo, was commissioned in 1960 after attending naval officers training at Harvard University. He speaks Russian, French, Spanish and German fluently.

He is a bespectacled, sharp-faced officer who speaks adeptly and confidently.

Commander Bucher, who still appears physically drained, speaks slowly and with difficulty and remains a man of some enigma. He is an outgoing officer who enjoys parties and late hours.

He also writes poetry, reads both Shakespeare and Willa Cather regularly and can quote passages from some of his favorite books, including Law-



United Press Inter

Larry Marshall, a petty officer aboard the Pueblo bracing his mother in Austin, Ind. He is on a 21-day l

rence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet. He is, according to friends, quite conservative politically.

The chief difficulty between the two men was the over-all question of responsibility for the "research space," a cramped guarded area on the Pueblo's main deck where most of the ship's decoding, monitoring and intelligence gathering were conducted.

Question of Clearance

Commander Bucher has testified that Lieutenant Harris and the research detachment "did not directly report to me."

"I was not cleared for some of the materials they carried," he said.

Lieutenant Harris has only half agreed. Under intense questioning by E. Miles Harvey, Commander Bucher's civilian attorney, the 30-year-old intelligence officer said that "on technical matters" he reported to the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet and not Commander Bucher.

He indicated that the Pueblo skipper's basic link to the research detachment was on a "need-to-know basis."

"I told him there were projects involved in the future that were not necessary for his knowledge in order for him to perform his duties," said Lieutenant Harris.

Mr. Harvey asked quickly: "If he felt the responsibility to know, could he find out?"

"Absolutely," replied Lieuten-

ant Harris. "I felt that nothing the commanding officer should not know."

The question of responsibility for the intelligence of the ship is complex and pivotal. For Commander Bucher has repeated over and over that he had decided to render the Pueblo only thinking most of the ship's pounds of secret papers as decoding equipment had destroyed.

'I Was Very Surprised

After Commander Bucher's capture, however, two North Korean officers escorted back to the Pueblo for a portion of the ship. There were secret papers scattered throughout the research area. "I was very surprised," Commander Bucher said.

Lieutenant Harris, who at least ten bags of secret papers were left to the North Koreans, emphasized that the documents were not destroyed because the passageway outside the research space was suddenly blocked when fireman Duane Hodges, who was burning,



Korea. As a precaution, Commander Bucher said, the Navy ordered the Pueblo not to go closer than 13 miles.

"There were times when I was in half a mile to a mile and a half of the 13-mile limit," he observed. "[But] I was not