

# Pueblo Crewman Says Faith in God Sustained Him

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

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CORONADO, Calif., Feb. 28 —Weeping convulsively, Comdr. Lloyd M. Bucher was led out of a Navy court of inquiry today while a 20-year-old sailor quietly testified that his faith in God had helped him survive the North Koreans' kicking and interrogating of the Pueblo crew.

The crewman, Storekeeper 3d Cl. Ramon Rosales, a Texan, spoke with a gentle smile during 40 poetically dramatic minutes of testimony at the Naval Amphibious Base here, where the court is investigating the capture of the intelligence ship by North Korea on Jan. 23, 1968.

"We had lectures with a guy we called 'Specs' on decaying American democracy and religion," Storekeeper Rosales said. "He'd always get mad at me. He'd always say there was no God and I would stand up and tell him there was a God.

"He asked me if I saw him. I told him I saw Him every day in the flowers and trees. I told him that God was life. He got kind of shook up."

## Cites Bucher's Decisions

As Storekeeper Rosales spoke, Commander Bucher's head sagged toward the felt-covered table before him. The skipper stared wide-eyed and unblinking at the table.

Moments later, Rear Adm. Richard R. Pratt, questioning the sailor about his captivity, asked, "What do you think was the main thing that got you through the 11 months?"

Storekeeper Rosales smiled. "I think it was my faith in God and my country and the decisions of my commanding officer," he replied.

At this point Commander Bucher's forehead touched the table and he began weeping. His civilian attorney, E. Miles Harvey, grasped his right arm and whispered to him. The 41-year-old skipper continued weeping for several minutes. Then he and Mr. Harvey rose and walked out.

Mr. Harvey, a business lawyer from San Diego, returned alone to the hearing room 30 minutes later.

## 'Too Many Memories'

"It's the cumulative effect that's gotten to him," Mr. Harvey said at the luncheon break. "He's listening to all these kids and it's bringing back too many memories. Rosales was one of those boys—always smiling—that everyone loved."

Storekeeper Rosales' testimony came on the last day of the inquiry's sixth week of testimony involving the seizure of the Pueblo and the imprisonment of her 82 survivors.

The emotional impact of the prison beatings and interrogation was clearly evident today as Storekeeper Rosales recalled the imprisonment in a shaky voice, as Commander Bucher wept and as a third crewman, Engineman Lawrence F. Strickland, trembled and vainly struggled to keep his composure.

"Those people were animals," Engineman Strickland, said biting his knuckle and quivering. "I didn't think they'd kill me, but they'd make me wish I was dead. We would pray America would hit them with a nuke bomb. We would pray to see the flash."

## Suspected of Spying

"Commander Bucher was willing to sacrifice himself and his career to see to it that we made it through the whole ordeal," the 21-year-old engineman told the court of five admirals.

Storekeeper Rosales, who has dark skin, testified that he had been interrogated four consecutive days, slapped, punched and kicked because the North Koreans believed he was either a South Korean or Filipino.

"They thought I was a South Korean spy," he said. "I told them I was an American. I guess they found it hard to believe. They asked me questions in Korean. They started beating me."

"Do you think you were subjected to unusual punishment because they thought you were Korean?" asked Capt. William R. Newsome, counsel for the court.

"Yes, sir," Storekeeper Rosales answered slowly. "I think they overdid it."

Because of the beatings, Storekeeper Rosales said, "I finally told them I could speak a few words in Spanish. I told them I was a Mexican-American."

"I think they were finally convinced. They used to call me 'Mexico'."

## Says Health's Better

During the 11 months of imprisonment, Storekeeper Rosales fell severely ill. "I couldn't move," he recalled. "Everything hurt me. The doctors here said there were symptoms of post-viral meningitis."

"How's your health today?" Captain Newsome asked.

"O.K., sir, except I've been nervous since I got back," he said, mopping his forehead with a handkerchief.

Later, Mr. Harvey said that the discussion of Storekeeper Rosales' health in North Korea was one of the reasons Commander Bucher broke down today. "Pete [Commander Bucher] demanded medical attention and he was laughed at," Mr. Harvey said. "This talk today affected Pete."

Storekeeper Rosales, who joined the Navy in 1966 after graduating from El Paso High School, was the second witness before the inquiry today. The first, Communications Technician 1st Cl. Don E. Bailey, aroused considerable interest among the five admirals.

Technician Bailey, a 39-year-



Associated Press

**Comdr. Lloyd M. Bucher**

old intelligence specialist who has served 16 years in the Navy and three years in the Army, said vehemently at the close of his testimony:

"All the beatings we took didn't hurt half as much as the fact that when we were pleading for help we got no assistance from the largest navy in the world. This hurt me more than any beating I took."

The testimony was received in silence by the admirals.

The admirals and the court counsel, however, questioned Technician Bailey closely as to his training in the Navy's SERE (survival, evasion, resistance and escape) program.

Technician Bailey, a former Indiana bus driver, was one of the few Pueblo crewmen to attend this special school, designed to train sailors for the situation in which the Pueblo crew found itself in North Korea.

The program is currently designed for Navy pilots and sailors who are ordered to Vietnam. It involves living a week in woods about 40 miles north of San Diego, with each man eating only what he can find for himself.

There are also harassment and some physical abuse by "captors," who seek to force "prisoners" to depart from the military code of conduct. The code advises captured American servicemen to disclose to their captors only name, rank, service number and date of birth.

#### **Signed Spying Confession**

Technician Bailey said that he had lost eight pounds in the school and 25 pounds in North Korea, but he observed that living conditions in prison had been better than in the school.

"I tried to get the men in my room to understand what I

learned in school," he told the court. "I tried to tell them that fear was the biggest thing, that not knowing what was going to happen was sometimes worse than knowing."

The thin, pale petty officer said he had signed an espionage confession because "there was no alternative."

"If you didn't, they would have beaten you with just enough life in you so you would have signed it," he said. "I was worried about my knowledge of classified material. I was afraid that they could attempt to get more information out of me than they already know."

#### **Sees Peril to Security**

Despite the beatings, and because he had signed the confession, Technician Bailey said he had not been forced to divulge information about himself or his job on the Pueblo.

"Did you possess so much classified information that, if they had obtained all of it, it would have been extremely detrimental to the security of the United States?" Mr. Harvey asked.

"Definitely," the witness replied. "Yes, sir."

#### **Air Force Vacuum Razor Gulps Astronaut Whiskers**

A vacuum razor has been developed to permit astronauts to shave without allowing whiskers to float in the gravity-free atmosphere of a spacecraft, the magazine *Aviation Week & Space Technology* reports.

The shaver operates when a vacuum pulls air and whiskers

into the cutting head, then through a whisker trap and an air-driven rotary motor. The cutter inside the device can be replaced by a massaging unit.

The inventor is Glenn L. Ainsworth, of the Weapons Development Laboratory of the United States Air Force at the Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico.