Next morning he was pushed into one of the three interrogation rooms and forced to squat down, balancing on the balls of his feet, with his hands raised high above his head. While the interrogator screamed questions and threats, two guards kicked Schumacher in the back and chest, kicked him upright each time he fell. After 20 minutes the officer released him, shouting after him as the guards dragged him to his room: "How long can you go without food?"

The following afternoon five North Korean officers came to Schumacher's room along with four guards. They repeated the kicking, but this time guards stood on the left and right of the squatting prisoner with cocked machineguns held inches from his head. At length Schumacher said, "Okay, okay, I'll tell you. Stop kicking me." They did, and he wrote down ten of the most fanciful fabrications he could dream up, all dealing with oceanographic research.

More Torture

Once, when they took Schumacher from his room at 4 a.m., he got a glimpse of Harry Iredale, the oceanographer, in another interrogation room in the same squatting position.

As the days passed, the torture became more frequent, more cruel.

After one severe beating they forced Gene Lacy to sit naked on a steaming radiator. During a session in which Ed Murphy lost consciousness six times, they stripped him to his shorts and kicked him until his shorts were soaked with blood. At times the guards placed a stick, a table leg with square corners, behind the prisoners' knees when they squatted so that soon their legs lost all feeling. At other times they bound the prisoners' upraised hands with wire, or forced them to hold a chair above their heads, squatting with the stick behind their knees, and whenever the chair fell they kicked them savagely. Often the guards stomped on the backs of their legs and ankles, and made them run on their knees on the rough floor until their legs were raw and bloody.

In the end all the officers wrote the required confessions. All had been shown the captured Pueblo documents. All were convinced their captors would eventually get from them what they wanted.

Security in The Barn was tight. At no time did word of the officers' treatment leak to the other end of the long, third-floor dormitory where the Pueblo's crewmen were quartered in 12 separate rooms. The men heard nothing, saw nothing, but tried in every way to communicate what little information they could ascertain about their predicament.

They were given chores. While Murray Kisler, a C.T., scrubbed the floor outside his room he put his ear to the baseboard to find out who was in which room—who, indeed, was in the building with him. Then he told his roommates. Men who could peek through keyholes kept careful track of who came and went to the head, tried to meet one another there to whisper information. Once a guard caught Chuck Law talking to the captain in the head, took the sailor out in the hallway and blackened his eye and bloodied his nose.

But the communications blackout was not total. Lee Roy Hayes, the radioman, was sent one day to clean the captain's room. While the two were together, with a guard hovering nearby, Bucher tapped out in Morse Code with his pencil: "Hodges dead." Hayes's trained ear picked up the message. And the idea.

He returned to his room, tapped a few code words on a radiator pipe. Charles Ayling, a C.T. in the next room, heard the tapping, and tapped back. The two exchanged test messages, convinced each other of their identities, and a network was born. That was how Ayling and his roommates learned of Hodges's death. At times Hayes suspected the North Koreans also joined the radiator network to eavesdrop, so the men were cautious with their messages.

At the opposite end of the building, in the room adjoining Super-C's large office, the three wounded crewmen lay in agony and filth—Woelk, Chicca, Crandell—and with them the soft-voiced ship's baker, Dale Rigby.

In Sick Bay

The room stank of rotten flesh, dried blood, pus and excrement. Each time the guard opened the door Rigby pleaded for medical help for his shipmates, but the guard said nothing. Or said "wait."

Rigby had learned first aid in the Boy Scouts, but it was of little use to him now. All he could do was help the men clean their infected wounds, help them to the head, except for Woelk, who couldn't move and it was days before they provided a bed pan, help them change position on their cots to ease the pain. Woelk moaned and often cried out. Rigby implored the guards, but they would only tell him to wait. He prayed.

Rigby was one of the lowest rated sailors on the Pueblo, a commissaryman third class. He knew nothing of the ship's true mission, nothing of the functioning of its fancy electronic gear, was not cleared to see material of even the least security classification.Thus it remains a mystery why, on the afternoon of the day the prisoners arrived in Pyongyang, a guard opened the door and beckoned Rigby to an interrogation room across the hall.

A North Korean officer wanted the young sailor to fill out a form. The questions included his present duty assignment, previous stations, family history and the like. Rigby filled in only his name, rank and serial number. The officer was insistent. He screamed at Rigby. Finally a guard put the stick behind Rigby's knees and made him squat and hold the chair over his head. Rigby held the chair for 45 minutes before it fell and the kicking began.

The Baker's Ordeal

So that the guard's heavy boot heels would strike exposed flesh, they stripped Rigby naked and repeated the torture. The sailor remained mute. The officer threatened to shoot Rigby and the guard pressed his gun to his head. Rigby was positive that in the next instant he would be dead, but he still would not go beyond name, rank, serial number. The gun clicked on an empty chamber.

Enraged, the officer told Rigby that his shipmate, Norman Spear, a fireman, had talked, and he should also if he knew what was good for him. No, Rigby replied, Spear would never talk.

Once more the guard jammed the stick behind Rigby's bleeding knees, but this time he was not content with kicking him when he dropped the chair; he beat him as well with a table leg and opened a gaping wound on Rigby's back.

This lasted four hours.

Finally the officer who was shouting an incessant stream of questions at Rigby began shouting the answers too. It began to dawn on Rigby's groggy mind that his torturers already had all the information they wanted him to put in the questionnaire.

"Rigby...baker! Rigby...baker!" the officer screamed.

"All right," Rigby murmured. "I'll tell you what you want to know."

For two hours the officer quizzed him. He asked about the meals served aboard the Pueblo, how much meat, how much milk, the cost of food per day. One of the most sophisticated intelligence ships afloat lay moored in the harbor at Wonsan—and for such information the North Koreans beat the ship's baker senseless.

Finally a Doctor

Then they returned Dale Rigby to the foul room with the wounded.

At every opportunity Rigby besought the guards to send help for Woelk and Chicca and Crandell, especially Woelk who was delirious with pain.

On the third night of captivity two guards came and took Woelk on his sodden stretcher to a room down the hall and put the stretcher on a table. A bare light bulb hung from the ceiling. In the dull yellow glow a doctor performed major surgery on the wounded seaman. He had no anesthesia.

The operation eased Woelk's agony for a day, but the infection returned and the pain steadily increased. As before, he could not move without excruciating effort and gentle help from Rigby. The stench in the room worsened; one man opened the door and vomited. After a time they gave Rigby a bottle of disinfectant and, as best he could, five times a day, he disinfected the room. Worse than his own discomfort was Rigby's grief that he could not comfort the others. He gradually convinced the guards that Woelk might die. Ten days passed, then two men came in the night and threw a blanket over Woelk and took him on a jeep through the frozen darkness to a hospital.

When Rigby returned to the room after his torture, bloody and swollen, he told the wounded men it would be foolhardy to resist, as he had, giving information the North Koreans obviously already knew. But Chicca and Crandell did resist. Both endured the brutality for two hours and yielded only when shown two of their shipmates' service records and were sure they had their own.

sent, after beatings, to provide the information they contained.

Two men in the other large room, Don Bailey and David Ritter, a C.T., had undergone the Navy's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) school and tried to give their eight roommates a cram course in what to expect. For two hours the men endured the torture as a group—chairs, sticks, boot heels. At one point a guard stood Peter Langenberg in the corner and clicked a gun at his head. Then a guard came in and threw down Gene Lacy's and Alvin Plucker's service records. The men completed the questionnaires.

Norman Spear, Ramon Rosales and Frances Ginther refused to capitulate until they heard the captain's taped confession: Monroe Goldman, Ronald Berens and Harry Iredale held out for two hours before they would even acknowledge it was the captain's voice. Though they broke a chair over Steven Robin's back, he did not yield until he saw his own service record. Robin and Rich Arnold were beaten so severely they could not bend their legs for nearly three weeks. Victor Escamilla, an electrician, and Clifford Nolte were beaten in the hallway, so that others could hear. Hayes was forced to witness Hammond's beating; Wadley to witness Hayes's

And finally all the questionnaires were completed and signed. The North Koreans did not extract from the men any information they did not already have. What, then, did they extract? The crewmen's pride? Their self confidence? Their will to resist further questioning?

One night Charles Sterling and his roommates, Lawrence Strickland, an engineman, Michael Alexander and Michael O'Bannon, C.T.s, discussed the possibility of nuclear retaliation by the United States. Strickland prayed it would come. All knew they were at ground zero. But it would be worth it, they agreed, if they could see the flash.

Later interrogations were far less violent though occasionally the guards would beat someone savagely—to serve, the crew figured, as an example that terror was ever near.

their success was far less than total. One day a guard burst into Chuck Law's room and demanded to know who tore the blackout paper off the shower stall window. The fact was the paper had gotten wet and fallen off.

Law said he didn't know. The guard persisted, and when it appeared all the roommates would be beaten, Law said, "All right, I'll take the responsibility. I did it."

That didn't satisfy the guard. He made Law ask each roommate individually who tore the paper and when Law came to C.T. Victor Escamilla, Escamilla said, "Aw hell, if he needs somebody to beat tell him I did it." So the guard beat Escamilla for tearing the paper and beat Law for saying he had done it.

Thus life in The Barn at Pyongyang.

After 15 days the North Koreans, smugly mulling how best to exploit their propaganda coup, decided to give the 82 men of the Pueblo a treat. On February 8, in observance of the 20th anniversary of the Army of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they brought to each room huge trays of food instead of the usual bucket of turnip soup, and they gave each man a bottle of beer. One officer even brought Tim Harrris a potted plant.

North Korean radio broadcasts had been making hay for two weeks with the taped confessions of the Pueblo officers. Bucher was unaware of it but suspected as much. It disturbed him that when the Pueblo was captured he had not specifically said in any of his outgoing messages that they had never at any time intruded inside the 12-mile zone. He was apprehensive that Navy authorities might believe his confession, and as he paced his prison room, he tried to figure some way to get word out to the United States that the confession was a fraud. He was tossing the problem in his mind when Super-C came in to inform him that he was preparing a press conference for Bucher and his officers.

Bucher agreed to the idea. He knew they would beat him and eventually he woud comply, but he also figured it would let America know that some of the crew

"Don't tell them a goddam thing, Mack!"

The terror spread down the long hall of The Barn, and in room after room the North Koreans discovered the same stubborn refusal of the Pueblo crewman to divulge any information beyond the prescribed name, rank, serial number and date of birth.

A uniformed woman brought the personal history forms to the large room where Rushel Blansett was the senior petty officer and left them for the men to complete.

"We're still in the Navy, remember that," Blansett said. Yeoman Armando Canales studied the questions and told the men he had not destroyed their service records. Nonetheless they refused to complete the forms. Roy Maggard scribbled all over his and when the guard came to collect it, he told him to go to hell. Maggard had gotten a glimpse of Bob Hammond, the Marine, on a visit to the head but did not tell the others what he had seen. Hammond, insisting he was aboard the Pueblo only to operate its guns, had been beaten continuously for six hours and both his eyes were black, his mouth cut, his back and ankle badly sprained. Only when Blansett and his men were sure their captors had their records did they con-

They interrogated Rosales four days in succession, finally were convinced he was not a South Korean and gave him the nickname "Mexico." O'Bannon told them his job aboard ship was to make fresh water and enthralled his questioners with a cock and bull explanation of an evaporation system. They asked Jim Layton to diagram the ship, which he did, since the Pueblo was tied up at their dock. Oceanographer Tuck was grilled at length, suspected of being a CIA agent, but they did not abuse him. They beat photographer Mack, on the other hand, until he begged them to shoot him, and he finally verified the information on the captured photo data sheets they showed him.

Bucher's Defiance

Later they asked Mack other questions, and it worried him. One day he met Bucher on the way to the head and said, "Captain, they're trying to get me to tell them about carrier operations. What shall I do?"

Bucher shouted at the top of his lungs down the hall, "Don't tell them a goddam thing, Mack!" A guard struck both men.

If the North Koreans aimed to cow the men by their savagery,

were alive, and that it would give him a chance to inject idiomatic code words in the transcript, tipoff phrases that to an American ear would indicate his statements had no validity.

He had already, in his confession, used such malapropisms as to say the CIA had promised him "a lot of dollars" if his mission were successful, and asked that he be "forgiven leniently" for what he had done. He also added two extraneous digits to his serial number. The Pentagon immediately branded the confession a "contrived statement" to which "no credence should be given," but Bucher could not know that and welcomed the chance to try more ruses at Super-C's news conference. By the caliber of Wheezy and Max and the other translators he had met so far, he reckoned he could pull it off.

Super-C summoned all the officers as well as Tuck except, for some reason, Tim Harris, and he rehearsed Bucher in the questions he would be asked and the answers he would give. About six members of the North Korean press were there. The table was laden with fruit, cigarettes, candy and cookies, and some two dozen North Korean officers stood around in civilian clothes as props.

It was the first time since the day they arrived that Bucher had seen his officers, the first time he knew they were alive. During a 15-minute break, the six men furtively exchanged what information they had about the crew. Bucher learned that Hammond was almost beaten to death, learned of the personal history questionnaires and of the constant terror.

Murphy also told the captain about charts the North Koreans had made him prepare based on the Pueblo's erroneous loran log. Quartermaster Law had helped Murphy draw them up. When Law pointed out their obvious inaccuracy, even showing how one fix would require an impossible 25-knot speed for the Pueblo, the guards beat him in the head and threatened to kill him—and also played him Bucher's taped confession.

So the North Koreans also had phony charts to reinforce the phony confessions. Content at first with a general admission by Bucher of intrusion, they now specified six places where the Pueblo supposedly intruded: 9.8 miles from Kal Dan, north of Chongjin; 11.2 miles from Orang Dan; 10.75 miles and 11.3 miles from Ran Do, east of Songjin; 8.2 miles from Ansong Gap in the Mayang Do area; and the alleged point of capture, 7.6 miles from Yo Do in the Wonsan area.

The press conference was filmed and recorded. Bucher was unable, however, to slip in any strong counter-evidence as he had hoped, but at least he got news of his men. Super-C seemed entirely pleased. Bucher demanded once again that his wounded men receive treatment and Super-C told him seaman Woelk was in the hospital. Bucher didn't know whether to believe him or not.

Sign Our Petition

A few days later, at about 11 p.m., Super-C summoned the Pueblo's six officers and Tuck to his office, berated them about atrocities he said the Americans had committed during the Korean War, then told them they would be going home soon—provided they give him two documents. He wanted a petition from the crew to the President of the United States asking for an apology, and an apology from the crew to the North Korean government. Super-C had the petition with him, typewritten, and told the officers to check it over to see that the American vernacular was correct.

All read it and said it was just fine. Actually the English was stilted, crude, the obvious work of an unskilled translator.

Super-C said he wanted it rewritten. Bucher, Murphy and Steve Harris worked on it a full day. Then Tuck helped. Then the other officers. Then Bucher sent for Wayne Anderson and Peter Langenberg, two artful and articulate crewmen who might help inject code phrases (and pass along what they knew about the crew's condition). Eventually Super-C found the draft acceptable. Now he wanted it written in longhand. Bucher sent for Elton Wood, a seaman with especially fine penmanship. Wood copied the document laboriously, then copied it again because Super-C wanted two copies, and at last, after two weeks, it was ready for the crew's signatures.

Super-C decked out his office with an impressive display of all the captured Pueblo documents and the officers were called forward one at a time to sign the petition.

At 2 a.m. he summoned the men from their rooms in groups of 20 or 25. Bucher passed the word among the officers to look closely at each man, check his physical condition, count them, determine which if any were absent.

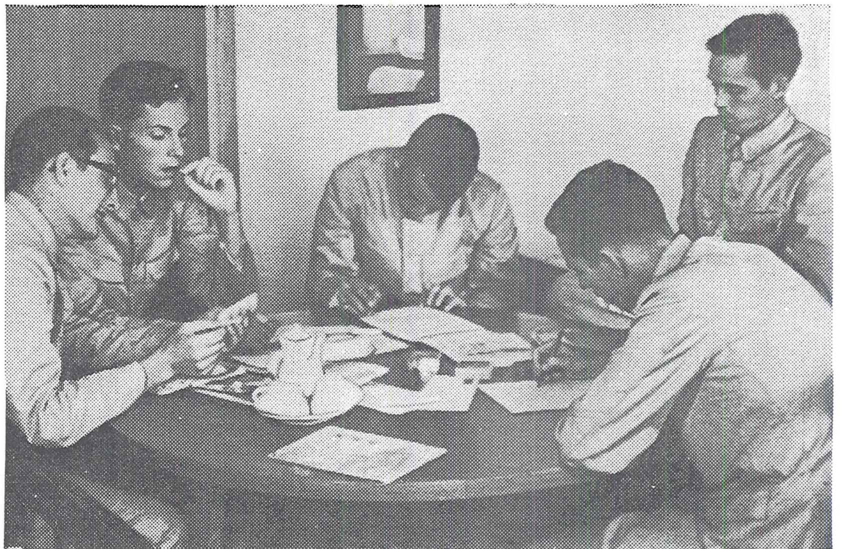
The Log Lied

When the crewmen entered and saw their captain for the first time in more than a month, they were shocked. To Don Bailey, Bucher looked as though he hadn't slept the entire time. Norbert Klepac thought he looked 20 or 30 years older. Escamilla observed "a dry look in the captain's face, a sucked-in look."

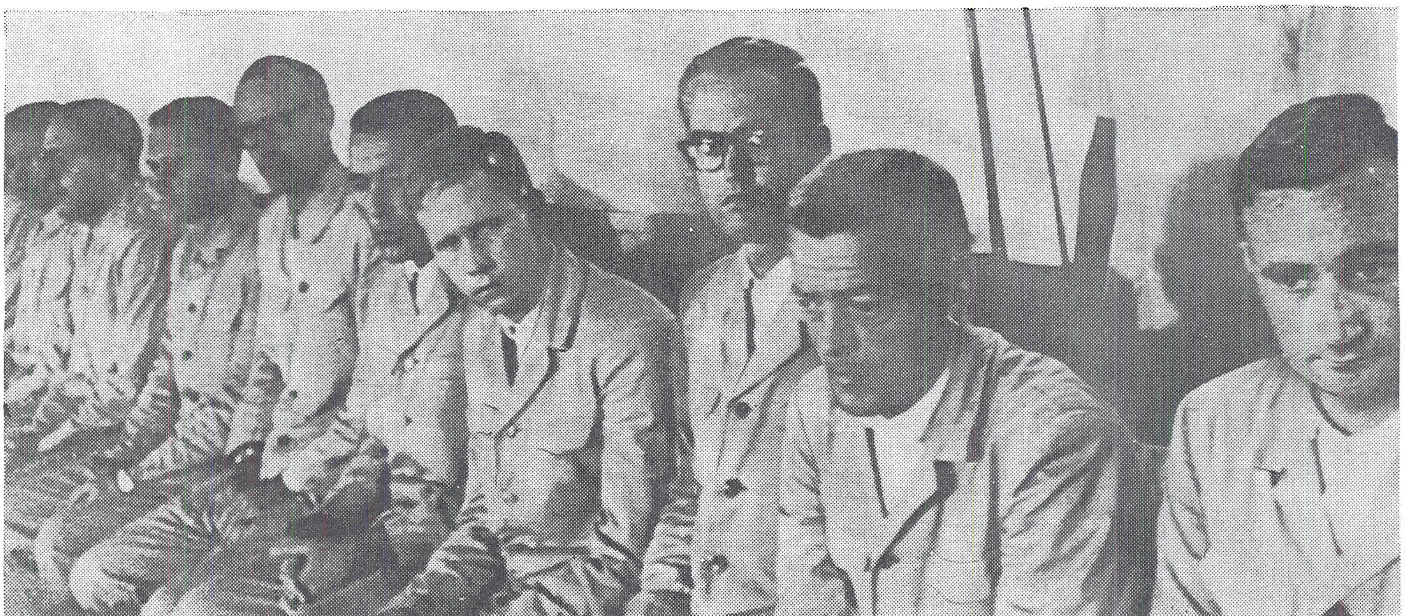
Bucher did not order his men to sign the document but told each group it would be in the best interest of all if they did so. None hesitated. The petition cited the six alleged points of intrusion, said the men had been treated humanely, that they would be released only when the United States admitted its hostile act, apologized, and assured North Korea it wouldn't happen again. "If they can force the captain, of all people, to do this," seaman John Shingleton thought to himself, "they can force anybody to do anything they want them to do."

The men returned to their rooms, the officers to theirs. In his room, Tim Harris performed the same ritual that he had every day since the North Korean officer presented him with the potted plant. He urinated on it.

AT THE FIRST news conference Steve Harris and Edward Murphy listen to the skipper document the faked intrusions.



THE FIRST PICTURES from North Korea: writing confessions, waiting for the press conference, in their prison-issue uniforms.



16. THE CODE: "...if they're tortured a little, fine"

Despite such acts of defiance, many of the Pueblo's men had courted dishonor. And many of them knew it. They had broken the military's Code of Conduct for prisoners. The six officers broke it, in fact, the day after they were captured.

When they told the North Korean general what positions they held aboard the Pueblo, they broke it technically, although they did so to try and maintain their cover as an oceanographic crew.

When Bucher signed his confession, he broke it.

When the other officers signed theirs, they broke it.

When Rigby and Rosales and Robin filled out questionnaires, they broke it.

When Mack identified photographic sheets, he broke it.

When the men signed a petition, they broke it.

All of them broke it. At least technically.

The Code was issued in 1955 as an executive order by President Eisenhower designed to give military prisoners a succession of fallback positions in defense against their captors. Article V of the six-point Code says:

"When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am bound to give only name, rank, service number and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause."

The Code goes on to forbid "oral or written confessions, true or false, questionnaires, personal history statements, propaganda recordings and broadcast appeals to other prisoners of war, signatures to peace or surrender appeals, self-criticisms or any other written communications on behalf of the enemy . . ."

On the face of it, then, guilty. But, as in the case with so much of the Pueblo affair, there was more to it. Much more.

Eisenhower's Order

For one, the men had varying degrees of familiarity with the Code, even though it was occasionally entered in the orders of the day aboard ship and had been permanently posted. In his original order, Eisenhower said all men "liable to capture" should be "provided with specific training and instruction" to counter any enemy efforts against him.

But Shingleton, a reservist, had never heard of the Code. Rogala, another reservist, had read it on the wall of a dentist's office while waiting to get his teeth fixed. But it had never been explained to him. Wood saw a movie on the Code in boot camp in 1964 narrated by Jack Webb. But he didn't think the movie covered anything like the situation he now was in. Baldridge, on the other hand, carried a copy of it in his wallet and had memorized parts of it. So had Barrett because a former CO once gave a 48-hour pass to any one who did. Tim Harris had had lectures on it in Officers' Candidate School.

But, as a group, these men—these spies of the atomic age—had been little briefed on what they could expect as prisoners. Again the fatal presumption: on the high seas they were safe.

Russell, long after The Barn had become a bitter memory, happened to read Gen. William Dean's account of his captivity in the Korean War. Had he even known that much he felt it would have helped him.

Bucher Didn't Know

The services each run schools to train men against the day they may become prisoners. Two of the Pueblo's crew, as mentioned, had gone through the Navy's SERE school. But Bucher had never even heard of it.

At SERE men are taught how to occupy their minds during isolation by doing math problems in their heads or designing something, anything. The Pueblo crew evolved this themselves. SERE men are roughed up and told how to withstand torture by counting: "1001, 1002, 1003—I'm sure I can go for two more seconds, then two more, then two more." The Pueblo's men learned that difficult tolerance the hard way. At SERE men are told to say nothing but the "apostles' creed" of the prisoner: name, rank, serial number, birth date. They are told they are blue chips for the enemy at the negotiating table and it is not in his interest to kill them. So don't believe death threats. Communists want live men as propaganda tools, not dead ones. The Pueblo men found this out themselves.

At the end of the SERE course, the "Star Spangled Banner" is suddenly played and the American flag run up. Many of the men break into tears.

Bailey, who hadn't broken during his SERE training, told his crewmates their worst enemy was fear. Which it was. By keeping the crew apart, the North Koreans played on their uncertainties. Were men talking in the next room? Had someone broken and compromised someone else? Were those footsteps in the hall coming for me?

There were other reasons than fear for yielding. Murphy could not see fighting the whole war singlehandedly when others had fallen. Ginther, on the other hand, tried to placate the North Koreans by giving them some trivial information and thus safeguarding the really classified information he had. It worked. Schumacher signed his confession thinking that no one outside would believe it.

They All Obeyed

But for all the fear, the beatings, the for-keeps struggle against their tormentors, no one broke Article IV of the Code:

"If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me, and will back them up in every way."

They remained, to each other, loyal.

That was their strength: they were a crew captured with morale and command structure intact. And that was their weakness: when the captain broke, they were likely to follow.

Bailey signed the petition because Bucher asked him to. "He didn't order me. But in my kind of Navy, when the captain requests something, it's the same as a command."

Ironically, it was those same cold, merciless hills beyond their prison where the Code of Conduct was born, where unpleasant questions that came to surround the men of the Pueblo had first been heard.

For all the fear, the beatings, the men remained, to each other, loyal.

To its shock, in the Korean War, a nation weaned on Nathan Hale and John Paul Jones and Pickett's charge and Bastogne witnessed its captured fighting men confessing to false germ warfare charges, meekly enduring Communist indoctrination lectures, betraying — even killing — comrades. As the prisoners came home and their stories unfolded, the nation wondered if somewhere in all its riches it had not lost a truer coin of bravery and patriotism.

A Tenth Informed

Of 78 captured Air Force men, 38 had signed germ warfare confessions. A sergeant was accused of forcing a fellow prisoner out into the snow to die; an officer of hoarding food and saying: "The more men who die here, the more food for the rest of us."

A study at George Washington University, for the Army, said 70 per cent of its returning soldiers contributed in some degree to the Communists' psychological war. Ten per cent informed. Only five per cent were classified as resisters.

At first this seeming breakdown was laid to the irresistibility of Communist brainwashing, to torture, to threats of execution. True, the North Koreans had committed many atrocities immediately after capture and in death marches to prison camps. But when the Chinese took over the POW camps later in the war's first year, there were no more executions. Nor did they have any diabolic method of brainwashing—actually to change a person's personality. They did not do so. What they did, said Dr. Henry Segal, a psychiatrist who interviewed returning prisoners, was a "masterpiece" of playing on the fears and prejudices of the Americans.

They broke down discipline by putting enlisted men in charge of officers, by dividing resisters from collaborators. They sought out Negroes and sons of the poor and continuously lectured them about the undeniable shortcomings of American society. Knowing the American heritage of free speech, they asked their prisoners only to listen to their side and talk it over. The more the prisoners talked, the more deeply they became involved.

The GWU report said only one per cent of the Army POWs became strong converts to Communism. But many more at least tolerated the interminable indoctrination lectures.

Why They Talked

Hugh Milton, assistant secretary of the Army in 1955, was quoted as saying: "The Communists rarely used physical torture, and the Army has found not a single verifiable case in which they used it for the specific purpose of forcing a man to collaborate . . ."

The GWU report found, on the contrary, the resisters were the ones who felt pressure from their captors. The collaborators acted not from pressure but out of a hope to avoid pain and earn rewards such as more food and less work.

The Chinese technique was not force but repetition, harassment and humiliation: isolation of the individual thereby forcing him to look to a system for dependence—their system.

Yet the whole experience left Americans wondering whether the Communists were fiendishly clever or the American soldier flabby, craven. Some new element, it seemed, had entered warfare. But it hadn't. Little that happened in Korea was new.

Torture, or threat of torture, is as old as war. And the decline of American civilization was detected as early as the Civil War when the inability of Yankee POWs to survive the inhospitality of Southern prison camps was blamed on the moral and physical decay of the young produced by city living.

In modern times, the propaganda potential of POWs was well realized by the Soviets. A study of World War II German prisoners said 35 to 40 per cent of the officers and 75 per cent of the enlisted men identified themselves with collaborative organizations established by their Russian captors.

They Told All

The cost of loose talk had also long been known before Korea. Hanns Joachim Scharff, a German interrogator in the second World War, claimed to have obtained all he wanted through friendly talks with almost every American pilot he interviewed. The Germans had amassed reams of hometown papers, high school annuals and whatever. When a downed pilot was brought in, Scharff would offer him the latest copy of Stars and Stripes, an American cigarette and then start asking him how his fiance was—by name—or whether his father still worked at XYZ factory or any personal item the Germans had on file. Caught off guard, the prisoner usually could be led into telling Scharff what he asked.

Since the North Koreans had the Pueblo personnel files, they were just that much further ahead than Scharff.

It has long been assumed that every man has his breaking point under torture. "The wondrous thing, however, is to know where to draw the line," said Dr. Segal. "What constitutes pain to the individual? Some cry out from a headache. Others are stoic with a brain tumor."

One Air Force lieutenant during the Korean War was threatened with death eight times if he didn't confess to war crimes. He was made to stand at attention five hours, beaten, stood at attention 22 hours, interrogated three hours with a spotlight six inches from his face, ordered to confess with a pistol at his neck, put before a firing squad, left under a drainspout all night during a storm and hanged by his feet. When he still refused to confess, the Communists left him alone.

Breaking A Pilot

Another pilot refused to sign a germ warfare confession at his first interrogation, then was served food—fish head soup—and thereupon confessed. "To him," said Dr. Segal, "that was torture. Anyone who would serve fish head soup, he thought, would be capable of anything."

Where draw the line?

As further study was made of the Korean POWs, some analysts saw their behavior in a more favorable light. Some thought the public, not the POWs, had been brainwashed by its gullibility to believe the worst. Yes, there had been collaboration, but often by men who had been resisters first until given more punishment than they could tolerate. POWs had made broadcasts, but some did so to contact the outside world. Some read Marxist literature out of boredom. Some collaborated to keep tabs on turncoats, to communicate names of other POWs to the outside, to steal rations. Yes, they wrote apologies. One went: "I promise never again to call Wong that no good son-of-a-bitch."

Where draw the line?

Of the 4,428 U.S. POWs, 192 were found chargeable with serious offenses. The Pentagon threw out any case where torture or duress was involved. Eleven men were eventually convicted among Army personnel.

Said then assistant Army secretary Milton: ". . . every man whose court martial was authorized by the Army began his record of misconduct by talking too much."

The Basic Premise

To unify the various services' regulations governing POWs, the Pentagon drew up the Code. There was some dissent. Adm. Daniel Gallery thought POWs should be allowed to sign anything. The Air Force was somewhat permissive, too. It preferred to trust its men's judgments. And a dead or maimed prisoner was no use to his country any more as a flier. Compromising the American regard for truth, giving up without a fight—these were closer to the Navy's and Army's harder line.

Just as with the Pueblo's mission, however, the Code had a basic presumption: the capturing power would abide by the rules, the International Geneva Convention of 1949. North Korea was a signatory.

Because the Convention covers "armed conflicts" as well as wars, it was argued North Korea was bound by it regarding the Pueblo crew, even though the Communist bloc has reserved the right to prosecute POWs for what it considers war crimes committed before capture. Anyway Pyongyang said the Pueblo's men were spies, not prisoners.

Did the Code of Conduct, itself, apply? Gene Lacy had some doubt. Its wording referred to prisoners of war, not prisoners of non-war non-peace.

The Pueblo had sailed into another gray sea, and the Code became something more than a document secured to her bulkhead. It, as well as the crew, was being put to the test.

Another Korea

Hardliners—there didn't seem too many of them—saw the

Pueblo confessions as confirmation of the national illness they felt had been diagnosed in the Korean War.

Others, including the retired admiral himself, revived Gallery's argument.

"It's hard to see what value confessions have as propaganda," said a State Department officer. "The American people—and people everywhere as far as we can tell—have learned to discount POW confessions, especially in the case of prisoners held by Asian Communists. These statements are of such little value, is it right to ask a man to sacrifice his life or sanity to refuse to make them?"

Had Nathan Hale died along with John Paul Jones, victims of a new age's New Morality? Mom, Apple Pie: all dead?

A retired Army colonel seemed to dissent. "The military shouldn't say the lid's off. Indoctrinate the men to the Code, and if they don't not tortured, fine. Or if they're tortured only a little, fine."

But . . .

"If they're beaten every day, just try and not tell anything important. It's just physically impossible to stick to it under beating."

He knew. In Burma in World War II the Japanese had jammed bamboo slivers under his nails, had threatened him with beheading, had hung him from a tree by one hand, had bound his hands so tightly they turned "gray as a West Point blanket."

"Certainly you try to get away with name, rank, et cetera. But I don't think an Oriental is going to let you. Nor a Communist. Occasionally people resist in the movies. But I never heard of anyone in my whole 18 months as a prisoner who gave just that."

Code Defended

One of the few men left in the Pentagon who had helped draft the Code looked back over what had been wrought:

"From the outset the Code was thought of as a creed, like the Ten Commandments. They were inspired by the good Lord, the Code by human beings, so possibly it can be improved. But does anyone scrap the Ten Commandments because they are violated?

"Sure, everyone has his breaking point. Does that still lead to the point of abandoning what the military forces have inculcated since their founding? If you take that step, where do you stop? Either you have a standard or you do not. If you relax the rules, the individual would be put in a very difficult position. Psychologically and physically the POW is in pretty bad shape. To ask a man to decide as to what he can or cannot say is putting an awesome burden on him.

"If you have a creed and think it's the right creed, shouldn't the focus be on enforcing the Geneva Convention on these barbarians, the North Koreans, who haven't abided by it?"

The State Department concedes, however, that in practice the Convention has not proved very enforceable, no more than has the Code. The Code itself is not a part of the Uniform Code of Military Justice—the law of the military—although signing confessions could be construed as giving aid to the enemy. Its imperatives touch matters other than laws; reach toward the philosophical base of the country.

Article VI: "I will never forget that I am an American fighting man, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and the United States of America."

Survive by Silence

Nice words. But in The Barn, with the footfalls in the night coming to the door . . .? In an age when institutions are no longer taken for granted but are under growing attack . . .? At a time when giving up a ship may be argued as discreet valor in the world's behalf rather than betrayal of national honor . . .?

Dr. Segal, the psychiatrist, pondered bravery in a new world, pondered perhaps more darkly than many.

"The Code is a great idea, but not as a code. Codes of loyalty—my country right or wrong—are dead. Nothing is sacred any more. They ought to cut down on the Code's moralizing aspects and teach it as a matter of survival."

Why?

"For psychological survival. To escape guilt from talking and what it can lead to. It's silly to say you can't talk, period. But if you explain that you don't talk because of the guilt that ensues, that a prisoner is choosing between two hells, one physical and one psychological, then the Code is something else. It's like teaching a soldier to crawl and keep his tail down. He's safest that way.

"The men in Korea who informed and stole food were marked for murder. I think some would have been better off if they had been. I wonder what the pilot thinks about fish head soup now? Think of the guilt these men have lived with these 15 years. Even the ones who were decorated felt guilt. They'd say 'but I almost did this' or 'I almost did that.'

"I don't think the country's honor is as important as I did in 1955, but the survival of individual life is important. We need the Code of Conduct because we value human lives."

Dr. Segal saw no way to teach men to withstand pain, but the Code could help them maintain their own self esteem.

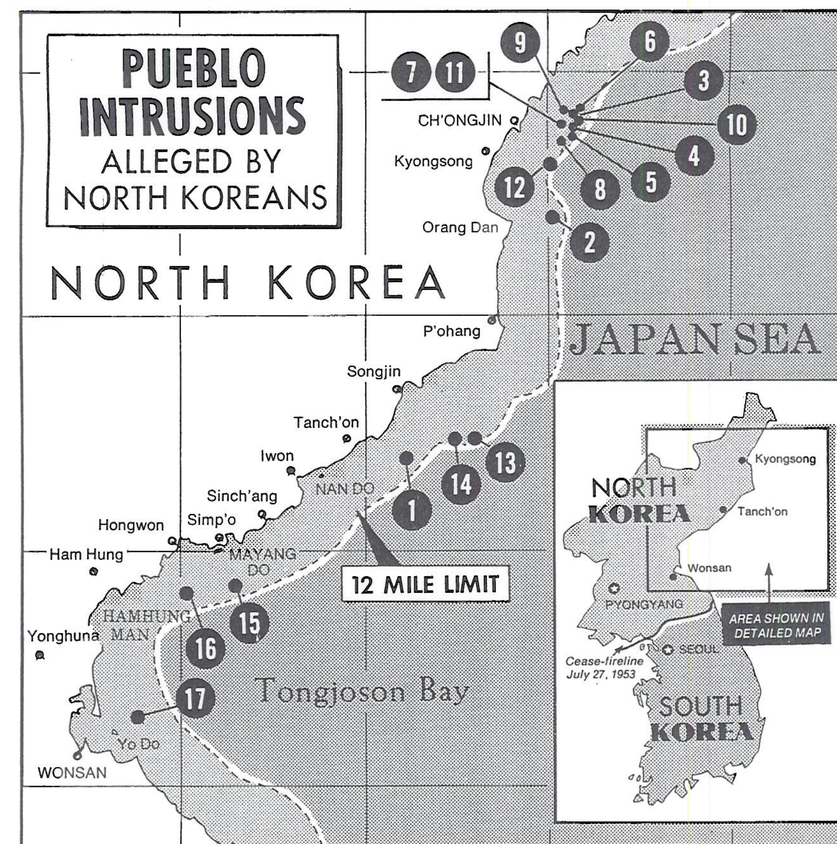
Such knowledge came too late for the men of the Pueblo. They had talked and signed an untruth and yielded to an enemy. They had done so for a variety of reasons. But they had done it, and this would be with them all the years of their lives.

17.PANMUNJOM: for God's sake put it in writing

From the beginning, apologizing to North Korea was one thing the United States was not going to do, regardless of what Lloyd Bucher had signed. If any one apologized, Americans thought it should be the Communists.

The meeting of East and West had long been a misalliance as regards part of the Korean peninsula and the United States.

In 1866 the General Sherman, an American schooner trying to establish trade relations with Korea, had the misfortune to run aground on a sand bar and her men the misfortune of being massacred as they waded ashore. Five years later an American expeditionary force retaliated by storming several Korean forts. But the Koreans commemorated the General Sherman by erecting a monument in the center of Seoul as a reminder of the proper way to have relations with the West.



In the days following the Pueblo's seizure, there was a similar lack of detente, complicated by the fact that except for the little hut astraddle the DMZ at Panmunjom, North Korea and the U.S. had no relations.

The State Department asked a number of nations, including Russia, to act as middle man to get the ship and crew back. Then, in late January, word trickled back via the international grape vine that if private talks were held between Adm. Smith and Gen. Pak, some progress might be possible. So the talking began.

"Whom do you represent, the United States or the United Nations?" Pak kept asking. They haggled over that, the North Koreans stalling, the Americans felt, while they worked to learn what they could from the Pueblo and her men. The U.S. position was never to admit the ship had intruded Korean waters but to leave the matter vague.

"Top levels wanted this to be ambiguous so we could leave the bridge open to North Korea," said a State Department officer. "Another thing, these guys had confessed they were on a spy mission and they were, so there was some credibility to the North Korean charges."

Washington's View

Adm. Smith said the American position was that the North Koreans could not board even if the Pueblo were inside the U.S. recognized three-mile limit. They could only accost the ship and escort it out to sea.

"After a couple of weeks, when we saw our position was not getting anywhere," said James Leonard, the country officer for Korea, "we moved to a conditional apology: if we intruded, we'd take appropriate actions such as bringing in a third party. They said no, it was strictly between us."

The International Red Cross offered to intercede. The Koreans' only response was to send a copy of the Pyongyang Times to Geneva.

While the American side had little doubt the Pueblo was innocent, there was some uncertainty due to the confessions. "Those of us who were paying attention, thought from the very first they were working on Bucher," said Leonard, "but it wasn't clear if they were working on the crew as well."

As the Americans listened to Pyongyang broadcasts of the confessions, they began to pick up some strange noises. In one, Steve Harris curiously cited the definition of rape from the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice: "Any penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete the offense." And anyone checking the accuracy of Harris's memory would have found the law manual goes on to say: "Rape is a most detestable crime . . . but it must be remembered that it is an accusation easy to be made, hard to prove, but harder to be defended by the party accused, though innocent."

On February 16 the North Koreans further strengthened U.S. certainty when they presented Adm. Smith with their evidence of the intrusion, including the Pueblo's log. The Navy analyzed it all over the weekend and on Monday showed charts reconstructed from the alleged evidence. "The North Koreans' positions were so bad that it was obvious the ship had not intruded," said Leonard. "We were quite confident then, if anyone had not been before, that there was not any basis for their charges. Confident? Well, not quite 100 per cent but damn confident."

Beginning in March the United States was willing to acknowledge the Pueblo was on an intelligence mission but not that it was actually engaged in espionage. That could have opened the crew to spy charges, the punishment for which was death.

As the talking wore on, Pak kept saying "you're only trying to trick us with words."

Exasperated, the U.S. finally said, "for God's sake, put in writing what you want."

On May 8 they finally did, the same three A's: acknowledgement, apology and assurances. The document was scarcely to change in the months ahead. But nowhere did it mention the return of the crew.

The U.S. team did not ask Pak if he would release the crew if they signed the North Korean document. "You just don't do that in diplomacy," Leonard said. "You don't commit yourself to what you're not prepared to do. It would have been going 80 per cent of the way to saying we would sign their document."

So the impasse continued, the Americans unwilling to say what they would sign and Pak unwilling to say he would release the crew if they signed his document.

The deathly heat of summer came to the arid hills around Panmunjom, but the 82 men 100 miles to the north seemed no closer to home.

18. SUMMER: the skipper provided the inspiration

On the evening of March 5, the day after their joint petition to the President was broadcast in North Korea and published in America, the 82 men of the Pueblo were loaded aboard buses and taken about seven miles to a new place of confinement on the outskirts of Pyongyang.

It was a relatively new building, nicer by far than The Barn. The windows were not covered, and from his room Lloyd Bucher could see the countryside: cooperative farms, military installations here and there, tanks and army trucks on distant roads. He could also hear the faint laughter of little girls and children singing marching songs. He thought he recognized the place as a military school complex he had read about in a magazine Super-C gave him.

The men were quartered on the second and third floors, eight to a room except for one with four men; the officers had separate rooms. Not only were the accommodations much improved but also the treatment.

The crew ate in a mess hall instead of their rooms. They were issued toothbrushes, allowed to bathe every week or so, get a haircut every two weeks. The mattresses and pillows were still stuffed with rice husks but the linen was changed from time to time. There were regular periods for recreation and exercise, and there were chess boards, playing cards and ping-pong tables in a room the men called "The Crub." The guards gave each man a half pack of cigarettes a day. They also gave the officers candy but quit when they discovered them passing it on to the crew. They issued a volleyball, which the men used as a football, but made them give up football when they found out they were discussin_ other matters than plays in the huddle. So they played soccer.

Korea's Code

Life was certainly more tolerable, but they were still prisoners and never allowed to forget it. Posted on the door of each room, in their captors' English phraseology, were:

"The Rules of Life

"1. The daily schedule will be strictly observed.

"2. You will always display courtesy to the duty personnel when they enter your room to deal with you.

"3. You must not talk loudly or sing in your room.

"4. You must not sit or lie on the floor or bed except on Sundays and during prescribed hours but should sit on the chair.

"5. You must wear your clothes at all times except while washing your face and in bed.

"6. You must take care of the room, furniture and all expendables issued to you.

"7. You will keep your room and corridors clean at all times.

"8. You must keep in good order while engaging in collective activities in the mess hall, etc.

"9. You will entertain yourself only with the culture provided.

"10. If you have something to do, ask permission from the guards, who will escort you to the appropriate."

Beneath was a list of major offenses:

"You will be punished severely and unconditionally if you commit one of the following:

"1. In case you make false statements or refuse questioning or hint to others to do so.

"2. In case you attempt to signal other rooms by this or that means.

"3. In case you make unauthorized writing.

"4. In case you show disrespect or disrespect to any of the duty personnel.

"5. In case you make any other offense."

After the men had been there a month the guards added another requirement—that they speak in Korean if they wished to visit the bathroom. Few if any of the men mastered the phrase precisely, or tried to. It sounded something like the one Skip Schumacher would stick his head out the door and holler: "banjo Kalamazoo Michigan!"

The catalog of culpable crimes only served to inspire the men.

Breaking Rules

They did make false statements. Whenever interrogated, they divulged no secret information the North Koreans did not already have and came to believe their captors never fully appreciated what a prize they had in the Pueblo because of their unsophisticated questions involving technical matters.

They did try to signal other rooms by this or that means. In fact, their communications system was so effective that, according to Schumacher, "the captain made every major decision." John Mitchell, an electricians mate assigned to clean Bucher's room twice daily, repeated the captain's orders to Chuck Law who whispered the word to his shipmates on the athletic field, in the head, in the mess hall. Conversely, Law passed back to Bucher such information as who had been interrogated, what questions were asked, who was ill.

They did make unauthorized writing. Harry Iredale wrote math textbooks on cigarette wrappers and taught the men in his room trigonometry and algebra. Peppard sewed a piece of cleaning cloth in his sleeve as a pocket and hid a diary there. Tim Harris composed math problems, wrote them on toilet paper and circulated them to the crew. Skip Schumacher wrote poetry and constructed crossword puzzles—until the guards found the puzzles and suspected they contained secret messages.

They did show disrespect to the duty personnel. They did so in minor ways, such as assigning them derisive nicknames, and in major ways, such as in time would bring down upon the crew a week of hell on earth.

They did make other offenses, frequent and varied. For example, to discourage the guards from pilfering while the men were out of their rooms, Ramon Rosales loaded his cigarettes with match heads. Charles Sterling and the fellows in his room went one better. They marinated an apple in urine. The guard who snitched it didn't show up on duty for three days.

Despite the relatively good treatment, as contrasted to life in The Barn, there was always present an aura of terror.

A guard, for no apparent reason, once kicked Bucher down a flight of stairs. (All the guards were adept at kicking; they practiced karate each morning and could kick a tall man in the face.) At times they would call men out of their rooms and beat them, again for no apparent reason, going from room to room with a list. In one room the guard, on entering, would smash the nearest man in the face; the men took turns occupying the "suicide seat." One guard enjoyed pressing a machinegun between a man's eyes and fiddling with the safety. Or the guards would contrive reasons to beat the men. While the men in Sterling's room were out at exercise, the guards set fire to a cot, blamed the men and punished them. There would always be someone badly bruised, visible to the rest of the crew.

The beatings were not just for Americans. Bucher observed that if a guard administered an unauthorized beating, such as just before a propaganda photograph, the guard would show up the next day with welts on his own face. One guard beat Schumacher because a coat button was undone. Bucher complained to Super-C and the guard disappeared from the camp.

PUEBLO CREWMEN at the prison camp's chess table. Life was better than at "The Barn," but never so carefree as in the propaganda photos.

Insincere POWs

Bucher also noticed a cyclic repetition of good and bad treatment. For 55-60 days the men would be treated well, for the next 55-60 days badly. One officer, nicknamed the Habitability Colonel, would praise the men for being "sincere" and, say, distribute fingernail clippers. Then, predictably and on schedule, he would take the clippers away. That word, "sincere," was repeated daily. It meant doing what you were told and not causing trouble.

The men were anything but sincere. Hammond, the Marine, was so recalcitrant the North Koreans dismissed him as the crewman in charge of the third floor and assigned someone else. Charles Crandell steadfastly refused to shine a guard's shoes even after the guard gave him the machinegun - between - the - eyes treatment. When a guard kicked Michael O'Bannon while he was on his knees scrubbing the floor, O'Bannon shook his finger at the guard and cursed him. The guard kicked him again. Chuck Law was assigned as petty officer in charge of the crew and often accepted punishment for a shipmate's "brazen-faced insincerity," as the guards called it, especially if the shipmate was in poor physical condition.

Every Friday night the men attended propaganda movies. Sample dialogue:

"Little boy, what do you want to do when you grow up?"

"I want to kill an American."

Or the movie would depict the life story of a good socialist, a

RECREATION at the Pyongyang prison included football—until the North Koreans objected to the men getting in a huddle for fear they would pass information. This picture was posed after a press conference.