

Pueblo NL 470

By RICHARD E. MEYER

Associate Press Writer

CORONADO, Calif. AP - The USS Pueblo's six officers first broke the U.S. Code of Conduct for prisoners the day after their capture and without torture from the North Koreans, the ship's operations officer testified Tuesday.

Lt. J.g. Frederick Schumacher Jr., 25, told a Navy court of inquiry the code was broken when the officers revealed their jobs on the intelligence ship.

Schumacher said he later signed a fraudulent confession of spying after being beaten and threatened with death.

The ship's skipper, Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher, and second in command, Lt. Edward R. Murphy Jr., earlier said they signed false confessions after mental and physical torture and death threats.

Schumacher said he thought the code was first violated after the officers were taken in a group before a North Korean general, six to eight other Korean officers and six to eight guards in a long, dark room at a prison the men called "The Barn."

"There was a desk in one end," Schumacher said. "It was dark with the exception of the area of this desk. There were six chairs in front."

Schumacher said the North Korean general sat behind the desk.

"There was a chair at the right for his interpreter and down the wall were the six to eight other officers. The first question asked, 'Give your name and job!'"

"Each gave our name and job aboard ship."

"When you gave your job, wasn't it an immediate violation of the code of conduct?" asked Capt. William Newsome, counsel for the court.

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you violate the code?"

"At the time we were trying to protect ourselves with the story

we were an oceanographic ship."

"Had you been tortured?"

"No, sir."

"Did you give any other information other than your name and your job?"

"That we were captured on the high seas 15.8 miles from the nearest land."

"Did giving that information also violate the code of conduct in your estimation?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you have any idea why this was volunteered by the officers?"

"We felt we had to give some explanation since they had captured the ship and the 82 of us."

Schumacher said "the largest single influence I had" toward giving the confession was knowing that the North Koreans already knew what the crew would tell them.

The code of conduct, promulgated by former President Eisenhower after the Korean War, FORBIDS U.S. servicemen to tell their captors anything but name, rank, serial number and date of birth.

The Pueblo was captured off North Korea a little over a year ago. The crewmen were released just before last Christmas—after 11 months in North Korean prisons. The court began by investigating how the ship was seized and what secret material was lost and, on Monday, began its probe of the conduct of crewmen as prisoners.

Schumacher said his confession came after he was forced to squat in a semi-kneeling position with his hands over his head—surrounded by four North Korean guards.

"There was one on the left and one on the right," he said,

"both had cocked machine guns aimed at my head. We were two feet from where North Korean officers were sitting at a table . . .

"I got a backhand across the mouth a couple of times . . . two guards started kicking me in the ribs . . . they called in two

more guards.

"And then I saw, OK, I'll tell you, stop kicking me, I'll tell

you. Why

Asked why he capitulated, Schumacher said: "I didn't think

I could resist torture, and I didn't see any point in going through

it."

XM-T415pps Feb 18