

Pueblo Inquiry Is Told Officers Yielded Data Without Torture

Code of Conduct for U.S. War Prisoners Was Broken a Day After Capture, Ship's Operations Chief Testifies

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

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CORONADO, Calif., Feb. 18 —The Pueblo's officers broke the code of conduct for American prisoners the day after capture and without being tortured, a court of inquiry was told today.

Lieut. (j. g.) Frederick C. Schumacher, the intelligence ship's 25-year-old operations officer, said that the Pueblo's six officers were marched into a room on Jan. 24, 1968, and interrogated by a North Korean general.

"He asked us to stand up and give our name and job," Lieutenant Schumacher told the five admirals on the court of inquiry. "He started down the line from the commanding officer to [chief Warrent Officer Gene Howard] Lacy.

"Each of us stood up and gave our name and job."

Immediate Violation

At this point, Capt. William R. Newsome, the counsel for the court, asked Lieutenant Schumacher:

"Wasn't that an immediate violation of the code of conduct?"

"Yes sir," Lieutenant Schumacher said quietly.

"Why did you volunteer the information?" asked Captain Newsome.

"I think we were trying to protect ourselves with the story that we were an oceanographic research ship," the thin, tousle-haired officer replied.

"Had you been tortured or maltreated prior to this," said Captain Newsome, a sallow-skinned 45-year-old Navy attorney who attended Brooklyn College and New York University Law School.

Lieutenant Schumacher paused.

"I had not been tortured," he said.

During this interrogation, he recalled, the Pueblo officers had repeatedly told the North Koreans that the ship had not been within the 12-mile territorial waters of North Korea and had only been conducting oceanographic research.

"Did that violate the code of conduct?" asked Captain Newsome.

"Yes sir," Lieutenant Schumacher replied.

The code of conduct, which has emerged as the focus of the inquiry, was signed by President Eisenhower in 1955

after numerous American servicemen signed confessions in Korean War prison camps. It orders all servicemen to give only their name, rank, serial number and date of birth if captured.

'Whatever They Wanted'

"I knew whatever they wanted they probably would—and could—get out of me," Lieutenant Schumacher said slowly and intensely in discussing the false confession that he signed days after the capture.

"How long were you physically mistreated," asked Captain Newsome.

"Probably 20 minutes," Lieutenant Schumacher replied.

"But there were emotional pressures—fear, fear of the unknown, not knowing what to expect, wondering why we were still alive. You heard stories. You heard of torture. You heard of guys being tortured until they actually lost control of their minds."

Trembling as he spoke, Lieutenant Schumacher said moments later:

"I didn't think I could resist torture. But I knew I had to keep my mind active. I didn't want them to destroy my mind."

Early Interrogations

Lieutenant Schumacher, a 1965 graduate from Trinity College, said that during the early interrogations in Pyongyang the Pueblo's officers insisted that the intelligence ship was only conducting "oceanographic and electromagnetic research."

"They would pound on the table and say 'No, no, no, you're lying, you should be shot.' They kept saying, 'We will torture you, we will kill you.' I felt they would kill me."

Lieutenant Schumacher signed a prison confession one week after the Pueblo was captured in the Sea of Japan by North Korean submarine chasers and torpedo boats. The

signing followed intensive day and night interrogations and an earlier written statement from Lieutenant Schumacher that the North Koreans had found inadequate.

"I wrote down 10 of the biggest lies. I knew about oceanographic measurements [and the ship's mission]," Lieut-

enant Schumacher recalled.

Lieutenant Schumacher said he had then been called before a North Korean general.

"He had on his desk," Lieutenant Schumacher recalled, "eight or 10 documents [from the Pueblo] and his attitude was, 'We've read what you've written and do you take us as fools?'"

The officer continued:

Classified Documents

"He held up the documents which were classified, very highly classified. Amongst the documents was a multilith copy of the control report which described the mission of the ship, plus other documents which, if they took one or two looks, they'd have a pretty good idea what the ship was."

"The questions [he asked] were, 'Do you recognize them, did you use them?'"

"I said I recognized all of them and I used all of them," Lieutenant Schumacher said.

"That was the extent of my response. He said he would give me two hours to make a more honest confession or I'd be shot."

Captain Newsome leaned forward.

"Then you extended your original statement?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Lieutenant Schumacher.

"Did you make any disclosures to the North Koreans," Captain Newsome said.

"In extending the information," Lieutenant Schumacher said, "I only confirmed what they already had."

"Did they torture you, other than saying you'd be shot?" said Captain Newsome.

"No sir," said Lieutenant Schumacher, a three-year Navy veteran from St. Louis.

Captain Newsome then asked Lieutenant Schumacher to describe the first days of imprisonment in Pyongyang.

Lieutenant Schumacher paused and gulped a glass of water, then answered in half-phrases and half-sentences.

"For 40 days, lights on. Rooms smallish, 12 feet by 17 feet. Wood floors. Wood slat beds. A bucket in the corner for washing. The long corridor. The guard would check every half-hour and for the first two weeks the rifles were equipped with bayonets. The

doors were closed with cracks that the guards looked through.

"The guards flung open the door and stomped in every half-hour. No reading material. Nothing to do. You could hear and your imagination tended to think the worst. You could hear interrogations and sounds like someone getting beaten up. Interrogations at 4 in the morning. You had to go down the corridor and I saw Guys squatting down, hands over their head with a guard near them."

His voice trailed off.

Moments later, the president of the court, Vice Adm. Harold G. Bowen Jr., peered at Lieutenant Schumacher and asked:

"What was your primary reason for compliance?"

"The predominant reason in my case was I was absolutely convinced that they could or would do anything they wanted to get it."

Admiral Bowen asked, "Do you still believe in the code of conduct?"

Lieutenant Schumacher said slowly:

"I think in our situation — I think if I went through it again — I'd do it exactly the same. The code of conduct — I'm just not sure, not sure."

Inquiry in House

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18 (UPI) — Representative L. Mendel Rivers, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, created today a special subcommittee to investigate North Korea's capture of the Pueblo.

The South Carolina Democrat designated representative Otis G. Pike, Democrat of Suffolk County, L. I., as chairman of the nine-man panel.