

A03441LA
lbyllbyl

19 FEB 69
1002 AFS

URGENT

Pueblo Lead

By RICHARD E. MEYER

ASSOCIATED PRESS Writer

CORONADO, Calif. AP - Shaking with sobs and gasping for breath, the youngest officer on the USS Pueblo said today he wanted to kill himself in a North Korean prison, couldn't do it, and finally over a four-month period killed a plant his captors had given him instead.

Freckle-faced Lt. J.G. Timothy Harris, 23, had to leave a court of inquiry into the conduct of the Pueblo crew during its 11-month imprisonment because of his uncontrolled crying.

"I just want to apologize to the court for breaking down; that's all," Harris told the five admirals on the bench after he returned.

"No apology is required," said Vice Adm. Harold G. Bowen Jr.,

President of the court.

Harris broke down under questioning from another member of the court, Rear

Adm. Allan Bergner, who asked: "After

the initial phase of the captivity, what was your mental attitude?"

"Extreme hatred for the Koreans," Harris replied, his voice beginning to shake.

"At that time the only thing that I wished . . ."

He buried his head in his hands, looked down at the witness table, drummed his fingers, wiped his eyes and his mouth, folded his hands and gritted his teeth.

"Well . . ." he muttered.

"Could I rephrase my question?" Bergner said. "After the initial phase did you get stronger in your

resistance?"

"Yes sir . . ." Harris blurted, breaking into sobs, gasping, and burying his face in his hands again.

More

fh945aps Feb. 19

A127 LA

lbylee LA

CORONADO, Calif.—Pueblo Lead A122LA add: again.

"I withdraw the question," Bergner said.

"Let's wait a moment here," said Bowen.

Attorney E. Miles Harvey, representing the skipper of the Pueblo, rose and placed a hand on Harris' shoulder. The young lieutenant raised his head and the two walked outside the courtroom into drizzling rain.

They returned after about a minute. Harris sat down at the table and said: "I want to go back to the question . . . what I wanted to do was take my life. I couldn't do it."

He broke into more sobbing and drummed a pencil on the tabletop.

"I was hoping that eventually they would bomb us."

He gripped the pencil with both hands like a baseball bat, reached into his back pocket, pulled out a handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

"Was there a plant in the room?" Harvey asked.

"I killed it," Harris replied.

"I urinated on it. I had an extreme hatred for everything there and when they gave me this damn plant it took me four months but I finally killed it."

Ha

Harris and Lt. J.G. Frederick Schumacher testified Tuesday that in a long, dark room at a jail they called "the barn," the six officers of the Pueblo broke the U.S. Code of Conduct for prisoners the first day after their capture—and without being tortured.

The officers violated the code by revealing their sobs on the intelligence ship, Harris and Schumacher said. They included themselves as violators.

The two lieutenants said they later falsely confessed to spying and invading North Korean territorial waters—but only after beatings and death threats.

Their skipper: 5th graf A058

fh1002aps Feb. 19