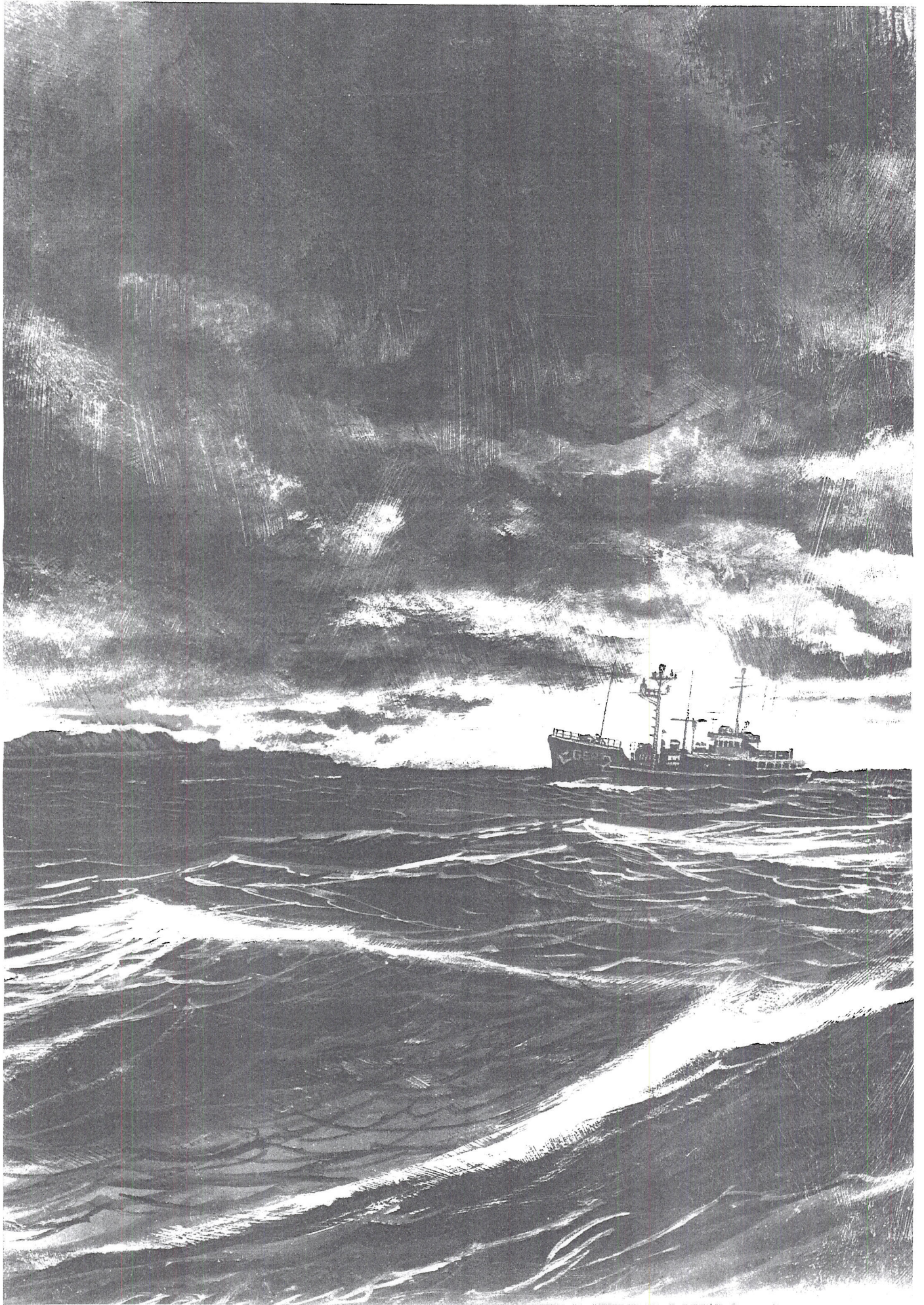


USS Pueblo:

The Ship That Went Out in the Cold



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AP NEWSFEATURES

USS Pueblo:

The Ship That Went Out in the Cold

By AP Writers Sid Moody, Jules Loh and Richard E. Meyer

☆☆

The USS Pueblo is gone. But she isn't.

Her case is closed. But it isn't.

It persists, and the Pueblo has joined that haunted fleet of ships whose ghosts remain long after they have vanished from the seas.

The Navy has spoken and would wish the waters stilled. But the Navy can only decide for the Navy. Others, too, must decide. For they were more than sailors aboard. They were, as well, men. It is their suffering as men, the bitterness of the decisions they made as men, about duty, courage, loyalty, that return and return and return to pluck at the conscience.

The anonymous, impersonal words of Naval Regulations can delimit what thou shalt and what thou shalt not. For sailors. But for men, caught in a human agony of mind and body, mankind itself is the ultimate judge. What men have done become the buoys men to come steer by or the shallows they hope to skirt. And so it is with the men of the Pueblo.

Those who came back brought with them not just the agony of a saga of the sea but depthless questions of men's relations to their fellows, to their nation, to themselves; questions that may transcend the power of a court of admirals—or anyone—to answer. Questions as old as man and as new as a world on the brink. Questions for mankind.

Because not just 83 men were aboard the Pueblo on her journey into the ages. We all were.

☆☆

EDITORS:

The story of the U.S.S. Pueblo presented a unique journalistic challenge.

It raised questions about men's duty to their country and to their fellow men, about the conduct of nations, about the conduct of individuals in captivity, about the state of America's preparedness, with a poignancy seldom if ever encountered.

From a newsman's point of view each incident in the story's long unfolding—the ship's seizure, the captivity of the crew, their release, the inquiries that followed—was a complex story in itself. Each raised hard questions, each demanded increasingly deeper investigation.

Every answer seemed only to raise another question, and another. Soon it became apparent that the journalistic responsibility to completeness required more than simply reporting each part of the story separately.

So interwoven are all the facets of the Pueblo story that to tell it at all requires telling it in full. It is one story.

That is what The Associated Press has done in this article.

We are well aware of the problems, of production and presentation, that such treatment presents; we are convinced, at the same time, that you will find the story compelling. It can be run serially or as a supplement.

The men who wrote the story have had wide experience in investigative reporting and feature writing. Jules Loh and Sid Moody

are staff writers for AP Newsfeatures. Richard E. Meyer, a newsman in the AP Los Angeles bureau, covered the return of the Pueblo crew and the Navy's Court of Inquiry.

That Court of Inquiry amassed 3,392 pages of testimony, yet it did not tell the entire story. Neither did the congressional investigation which produced vol-

umes of additional testimony.

Loh, Moody and Meyer interviewed Pueblo crewmen, historians, retired admirals, psychologists, congressmen, military specialists. Their investigation took three months of endless digging and writing, sifting and putting together. We think you will find the results worthwhile.

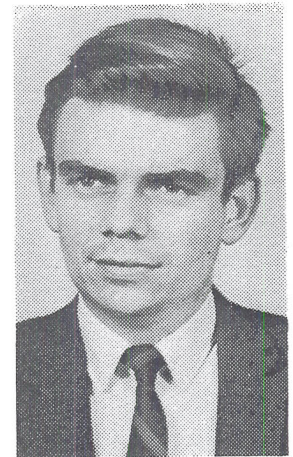
The AP



Sid Moody



Jules Loh



Richard Meyer

1. LAUNCH a bittersweet day in Kewaunee

Despite her grief, Mrs. Duvall thought only to swing and not miss.

She clutched the neck of the champagne bottle in both her white-gloved hands, shut her eyes and swung at the tubby gray prow towering above her.

The bottle burst in a shower of wine on the first try. The ship had been truly born.

By all the lore of the Seven Seas, ancient and modern, it must be done right, this launching of a ship. Mishap courts a sailor's curse.

The ship safely made her brief slide down the ways and then knew water for the first time. Bunting hung from her bow and a union jack flew at her stern head. She was no beauty. Her blunt lines bespoke her future: work, not war. She was an Army cargo ship destined for backwaters, not the adventure of the high seas. Too humble for a name, she bore only a number: FP 344.

But she was an object of pride to the 2,600 people of Kewaunee, Wisconsin. They had built her. She was their contribution to World War II, one of seven such vessels turned out by the Kewaunee Shipbuilding and Engineering Corp. She was 176 feet long, displaced 935 tons and could carry 340 tons of cargo—from toothbrushes to TNT.

The company's newspaper, "Splash", liked to boast it was "the biggest producing little shipyard" and maybe it was. In 1941, the site had been swampland. But a local businessman, C. G. Campbell, had envisioned a shipyard there and within three years the new firm was turning out better than a ship a week. Years later, when the company had turned to steel fabrication instead of boats, a drawing of an FP still adorned its letterhead.

Their Only Son

But that sunny Sunday afternoon, April 16, 1944, was a bittersweet day for Mrs. Duvall and her husband, Charles, Kewaunee's mayor.

FP 344 was launched in honor of their only son, Clarence George. He had left the University of Wisconsin to enter the Air Corps. He feared the war would end before he could get in it. He was a first lieutenant commanding a bomber bound for England and battle when the plane crashed in Iowa during a snowstorm. It was March 6, 1944. Lt. Duvall was 23.

Rev. Leonard Spooner had conducted the burial services. Now, scarcely a month later, he read the invocation at the launching. A local band opened the program.

"America, the beautiful . . ." it began.

Then Hugh Brogan, yard manager and friend of the Duvall's, whose wife, Helen, had christened a sister ship, FP 343, spoke an introduction. Leo Bruemmer, another yard official and friend of the Duvall's, gave an address. Then, Mrs. Duvall.

"It was a sad day for us," she said. "But at that time all I could think of was that they told me not to miss."

She went home afterwards to change her champagne-doused clothes and go out for more champagne and dinner at the Brogan's. She gradually lost track of her ship.

A Faded Flower

After finishing touches, FP 344 was turned over to the Army in July. She stopped briefly in Chicago for a War Bond rally, then began her long trek to the sea and obscurity lugging Army freight



THE CHAMPAGNE FLOWED on launch day in 1944 when Mrs. Charles Duvall christened an Army cargo ship in honor of her son, a World War II pilot killed in a crash. Years later in Florida, Mrs. Duvall holds a photo of her son, with the remains of the broken wine bottle. The ship, originally christened FP-344, shows (below) her new number GER 2 after its conversion to an intelligence ship.

from island to island in the Philippines.

But Mrs. Duvall remembered. Among her mementoes of the launch day was a wooden box given her by the yard. Inside were the fragments of the broken champagne bottle, still cocooned in its wire mesh cover, along with the orchid she had worn on her lapel that day.

Years later, by then a widow living in Florida, she happened to open that box from so long ago. To her surprise, the flower had kept its form, although it crumbled to dust at her touch. She decided to throw the mouldered remains away.

That was just before Mrs. Brogan phoned in some excitement from Wisconsin. Did Mrs. Duvall know? FP 344 was no longer an Army ship. She had joined the Navy. And, at long last, she had been given a name: USS Pueblo.



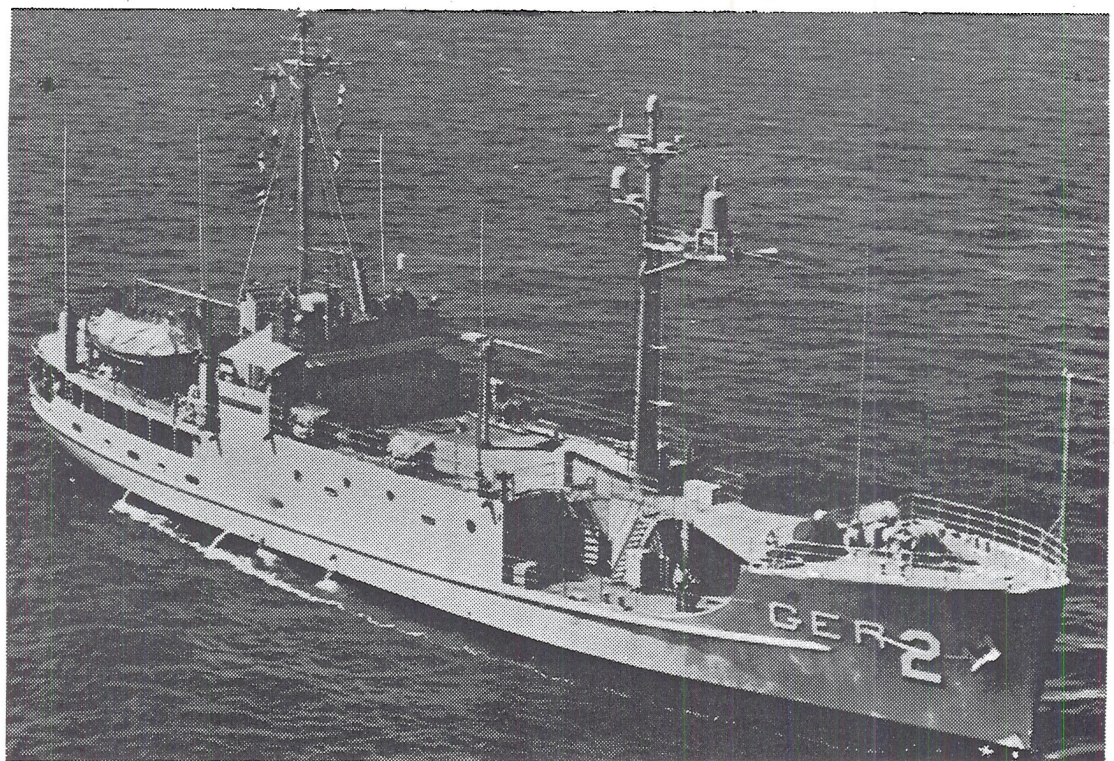
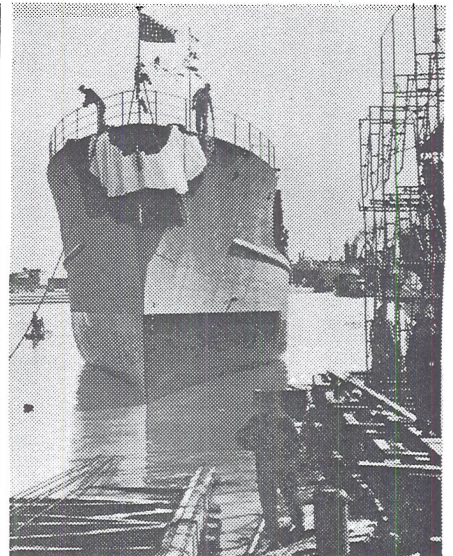
KEWAUNEE SHIPBUILDING & ENGINEERING CORP.
Kewaunee, Wisconsin

3:00 P. M.
APRIL 16, 1944

LAUNCHING U. S. A. Cargo Vessel FP-344

PROGRAM

America	.....	Kewaunee Shipbuilding & Engr. Corp. Band
Introduction	.....	H. C. Brogan, Vice President and General Manager
Invocation	.....	Rev. Leonard A. Spooner
Address	.....	L. W. Bruemmer, Secy.-Treas.
Comments	.....	C. G. Campbell, President
Introducing Sponsor	.....	Mrs. C. L. Duvall
The Star Spangled Banner	.....	Band



2. DE-MOTHBALLED: things were left undone



They met, for the first time, as 1966 ended. She, the tired, rusting tramp freighter salvaged from the military's attic; he, a trim, athletic officer fresh from the glamor of the Navy's submarine service.

There was no ceremony. No one piped him aboard at Pier 5 among the cranes and shipways of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton, Washington. Yet for all her scabby paint and streaks of rust, the man felt pride. This, for the aggressive lieutenant commander, 39, was his first command.

He would have preferred a submarine, but no matter. He was all Navy and knew well enough not to question orders. He would make the best of what the Navy gave him. It was the only way. And so did the names Pueblo and Lloyd Mark Bucher become inseparable for history.

After a decade of drudgery, the Army had mothballed the old FP 344 at Clatskanie, Oregon in 1954 and later at Rio Vista, California. Twelve years later, the Navy took her over, named her, and a stout old Navy tug called the Tatnuck towed her North to Bremerton to ready her for a new career as AGER-2 (Auxiliary General Environmental Research Vessel).

Improvements Sought

Had any one asked, Bucher would probably have admitted the ship showed her age. In fact, she was all but a wreck. Her insides had been ripped out. Workmen were sandblasting her hull. Bucher's first reaction was to ask the yard for more than 100 improvements.

One thing he wanted was to make the ship more liveable. So modular bunks, the newest in Navy sleeping, were installed in the forward berthing compartment. There was a separate cabinet for pea coats and other bulky gear, and another for dirty laundry. Bulkheads were painted clipper blue.

Brown curtains with a printed floral design went up over portholes all the way around the crew's mess deck. New tables were installed with gray Formica tops and swivel seats. Workmen wired up a surgical light, just in case.

Bucher's stateroom was cramped. About all it offered was privacy. T-beams, wires and pipes were exposed. Light switch boxes protruded from the bulkheads.

Across from the captain's bunk, the workers installed a bureau-secretary—a cabinet with a side that hinged down to make a

desk. Inside the cabinet was a gray safe. Nearby stood a file with a combination lock.

The wardroom, where Bucher and his five junior officers would eat, was dressed up a bit. It had curtains and, like the captain's stateroom, green carpeting. A small refrigerator held apples, oranges and sandwich makings.

Bucher discovered that antenna wires sprouting from the deck would block his view from the pilot house. So he decided to command the ship from the flying bridge. He designated this as his primary conning station, and workmen installed magnetic and gyro compasses, a rudder angle indicator and a voice tube to the pilot house below.

Bucher Briefed

As the work went on, Bucher asked for more sailors, most of them to staff his engineering watches. He also requested more equipment for his auxiliary engine room. He got what he wanted, and decided that with these additional allowances he could operate his ship safely.

On his way to Puget Sound, Bucher had been briefed in Washington, D.C., about his general mission. So he wasn't surprised when a shipyard crane hoisted an oblong prefabricated shack above the Pueblo's deck and set it down.

But the workmen who installed it didn't know exactly what it was. They called it the Sod Hut.

It had a steel door with a triple locking system. One of the locks was electric, the kind found on doors that hold the utmost of secrets. The locking arrangement was changed as often as weekly. Rather than learn it anew each time, Bucher eventually contented himself with knocking when he wanted to enter.

The shack was designed for elaborate, supersecret electronic gear, wired to the deck antennae. A shipyard worker tested tubes for it in the supply house, thousands of them, by the crate. He had no idea what the tubes were for, but he learned by the grapevine that they were for the Pueblo.

Code Books Stowed

Along with the secret shack came some of Bucher's biggest problems. Some of the work in the shack would be done in code. That meant code books. And since these were secret, they had to be kept in safes. But there was little room for the safes. Bucher put them in a broom closet.

Another problem was money. Eleven million dollars had been allocated for overhaul and conversion of the Pueblo and a simi-

lar ship, the Palm Beach, which had been hauled out of mothballs at Charleston, S.C., and was now tied up alongside the Pueblo.

The \$11 million had been divided evenly between the two ships. And now came a cutback: \$1 million from each. And the money didn't come out of the allotment for the secret shack. It came out of the ship's work.

Improvements were postponed; some denied. Commissioning was put off until May, 1967 and departure from Puget Sound delayed a month at a time. Modifications that would have taken six weeks were deferred, only to encounter more delay.

Frustrations mounted. Bucher and his crew discovered that water on the main deck would flood into the forward berthing compartment, engineering log room, supply room, ship's office and electronic storeroom. The captain asked for watertight hatches. They were denied. Navy brass, he would explain nearly two years later, had decided that they would cost too much and that there hadn't been enough time to install them. Come back for your next regular overhaul in 1969, his engineering officer said he was told, and we'll put them on.

Phones Delayed

Exasperated but determined, Bucher asked for a Navy-made shipboard communications system. At first, he said, the brass were unrelenting: he'd just have to be satisfied with the Army-made, single-circuit telephone system already on board. But it had too many outlets and several people using it during an emergency would clutter it with talk. So the Navy gave in a little. He could have another system. But the shipyard, which Kaiser engineers would praise less than a year later for having "a range of capabilities exceeding that of any other naval or private shipyard," was not to install it. Bucher's men would have to put it in themselves. They were still at it months later, when they would need the new system badly.

Bucher also wanted an outlet from the ship's loudspeaker system wired into the Sod Hut, so whoever was inside could hear general announcements—including his commands, like "general quarters" or "abandon ship." But the shipyard said it had no authority to install it.

The shipyard did rig an incinerator to burn the daily load of waste paper from the Sod Hut. It could also be used to destroy se-

cret files and publications in an emergency. Workmen lashed it to the Pueblo's stubby smokestack. It was four feet high and could destroy three to four pounds of paper at once. But it wasn't fuel fed. That meant somebody had to stand next to it and tear the publications apart page by page to keep them from smothering the fire.

It might help, Bucher thought, if he had some paper shredders. He received two of them, only to discover they would digest but one piece of paper at a time. It took each shredder 15 minutes to destroy an eight-inch stack of paper. And that could be painfully slow if speed were important.

Guns Put Aboard

So the shipyard made some weighted bags to put the papers in and sink them over the side. The bags were three feet long, 16 to 18 inches wide. They were riddled with holes, so they'd sink faster. And they cost more than \$50 apiece.

The captains of the Pueblo and the Palm Beach also received four carbines and seven .45 caliber pistols. Both rejected the allotments and asked, instead, for ten Thompson submachine guns, seven pistols, one carbine and 50 anti-swimmer concussion grenades. They got them.

Then one day some workmen trundled up two .50-caliber machine guns authorized for a cargo carrier. Only the Pueblo wasn't a cargo carrier anymore. The brass and Bucher sent them back.

Now other things began preying on his mind.

For one, workers were installing relatively light bunks below decks and hundreds of pounds of equipment topside. The Pueblo was getting top heavy. Three to six inches of ice on the weather decks and a 40-knot wind abeam would capsize her.

For another, an elevator company had built the Pueblo's steering system, and then gone out of business after World War II. What if the system broke down? And what if it needed new parts?

Bucher wanted a collision alarm. He never got it. One of his junior officers wanted a copy of Jane's Fighting Ships to help identify foreign vessels. He was told a cargo carrier wasn't authorized one.

But when Bucher asked for nonessentials like a bookcase for the wardroom and magazine racks for the crew's mess, workmen installed them without question.

He started visiting the Sod Hut almost daily to get acquainted with its electronic equipment and classified publications showing what all the gear could do.

How to Destroy

A new worry interrupted his concern for getting all of that expensive equipment installed: how to destroy it.

"An explosive destruction means should be provided to the ship which will enable the commanding officer to thoroughly destroy all sensitive classified material quickly should the need arise," he wrote to the Naval Ship Systems Command.

A month later, on July 5, 1967, Adm. Thomas I. Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, asked the Chief of Naval Materiel to review the desirability of installing a destruct system.

Then came a letter from the Naval Ship Systems Command saying an explosive destruct system would be "highly desirable. However, accomplishment in the (already) installed equipment would provide doubtful effectiveness. . . . Experience has shown that charges added to existing equipment may provide only partial destruction."

In other words, request denied. In place of explosives, Bucher received a shipment of sledge hammers and fire axes.

"I was not given a free ticket to do as I wished," he would say later. Conversion was "a most difficult time, a very difficult time. . . . Word had not gotten out through the supply system to provide us with the type of support . . . (a ship like the Pueblo) needs."

Bucher Criticized

Although they would deny it later, the shipyard apparently wasn't entirely happy with Bucher's performance, either.

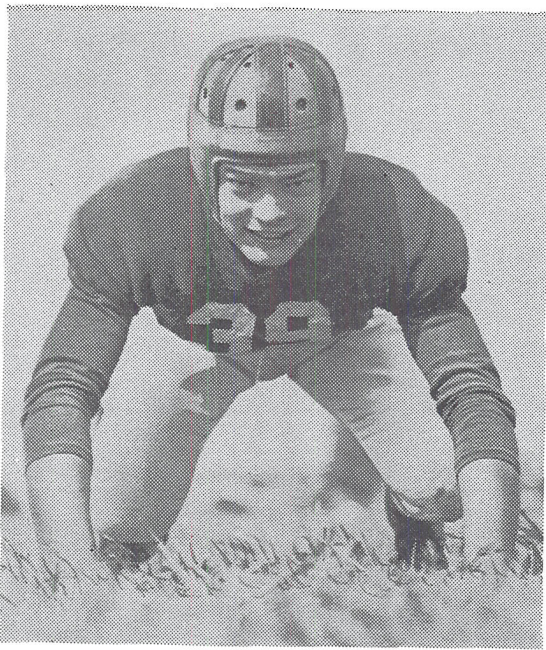
"At times, when dealing with the ship superintendent assigned to Pueblo he (Bucher) became overzealous in his requests for certain work that he wanted accomplished in Pueblo and overtaxed the patience of the shipyard workers whose cooperation and assistance he needed," wrote the commandant of the 13th Naval District in a report of Bucher's fitness as an officer.

"Oftentimes, there are things you don't get," a shipyard spokesman said, "I'm sure it happened. It's only normal. . . . They always ask for more things than they get."

But he went on to say that



ORPHANED TWICE by the time he was seven Pete Bucher found himself in the first of several foundling homes in which he grew up. Here, prophetically, he stands in a sailor suit in front of the nun in the center of the picture.



AT BOYS TOWN they remembered him as a rugged blocker.

Bucher's relationship with the shipyard was "cordial, business-like."

Even the commandant tried to smooth things over:

"He (Bucher) appears to have been motivated solely by a keen sense of loyalty to his unit, with the best interests of the Navy uppermost in his mind," he wrote in the fitness report.

Whatever the reason for any friction between Bucher and the shipyard, the commandant was right about two things: Bucher was loyal, one hundred per cent.

He also was one hundred per cent aggressive, one hundred per cent striving, "a hitter," as Maurice Palrang, his high school football coach, described him.

Twice an Orphan

Maybe it was to make up for things he had missed.

Bucher had been orphaned—twice. His mother, Mrs. Harold Baxter, died giving him birth on September 1, 1927, in Pocatello, Idaho. A year later, Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Bucher of Pocatello adopted him. And then his foster mother died.

When he was seven, he was placed in an old orphanage at Boise, the only baptized Catholic among Mormon children.

So a lady on the board of trustees had him transferred to St. Joseph's Mission, a Catholic orphanage at Culesac, in the rural, timber-covered Indian country of Northern Idaho.

He milked 11 cows a day. The nuns were kind. The education was good. He studied physiology and two years of Latin.

When he was 11, the movie "Boys Town," starring Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney, appeared at a theater in nearby Lewistown. He convinced the sisters to let him see it. Later, he asked them to help him go to Boys Town, a Catholic orphanage for boys in Nebraska. They wrote to its founder, Father Flanagan, and he was accepted in the summer of 1941. It did, however, take time to adjust. Twice he ran away from the institution to try to find out whom he really belonged to.

At Boys Town he fell in love with books: Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, Willa Cather and some Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon on the side.

Then he fell in love with football. He tried to play like Pete Pihos, a hero of his at Indiana University. He even started calling himself Pete, and it stuck. Later his wife would call him Andy Farkas, after a colorful pro player.

A Tough Player

"We were using the Chicago Bears' old T-formation then," said coach Palrang, "and one of our best plays was a sweep around right end. Bucher's assignment was to get the halfback while the end took care of the deep safety. We ran that play four times and four times Bucher knocked their halfback flat, and we went for long touchdowns. He was a kid who would do his assignment."

Bucher left Boys Town as a high school senior to enlist in the Navy. He was discharged in 1947 as a quartermaster second class, finished high school, returned to Idaho, then bounced back to Omaha, Neb., near Boys Town. Finally he enrolled in the University of Nebraska on a football scholarship.

He liked beer, bawdy jokes, Shakespeare, martinis and a farm girl named Rose Rohling from Jefferson, Mo., whom he had met on a blind date after a homecoming game between Missouri and Nebraska. He started dating her in his junior year—the same year he hurt his knee and had to give up football. Six months later, in a dentist's office while he waited for an appointment, he slipped an engagement ring into her hand.

Rose hesitated. She didn't know whether she was ready to get married. And, besides, her mother thought Boys Town was a home for delinquents. But when she brought her boyfriend home for Easter vacation, her father was impressed. So she accepted the ring and they were married that June.

Joining the Navy

Rose worked for the Bell Telephone Co. in Omaha while her new husband continued studying geology and took R.O.T.C. training at the University of Nebraska. He came home every weekend. In July, 1953, he graduated with an ensign's commission in the Naval Reserve and went to work for the railroad in Lincoln. In time, Rose bore him two sons, Michael and Mark. One summer their father took them to orphanages in Idaho to show them where he had grown up.

In January 1954, the Navy ordered Bucher into active service.

He reported for instruction at the Navy's Combat Information Center at Glenview, Ill., and went from there aboard the USS Mount McKinley, an amphibious force flagship, as a division officer.

He left the McKinley to take submarine training at New Lon-

don, Conn., and fell in love again—this time with submarines, even though it meant long stretches away from home and transfers from one part of the country to another.

Eventually Bucher longed to command one.

From New London he became torpedo and gunnery officer of the submarine Besugo, then operations officer on the submarine Caiman. Then long months as assistant plans and logistics officer for Commander Mine Force, Pacific Fleet.

A Good Officer

And then back to submarines. He became operations officer and later executive officer on the Ronquil. That made him the captain's right-hand man. And the captain, Cmdr. Peter F. Block, thought the way Bucher handled the boat was "extremely good, consistently good."

Bucher could be given minimal guidance, Block said. He was "cool and collected, a very good performer under strain." Moreover, he was an "exceptionally fine leader of men and had a unique way of getting everything possible from the men." In short, "an outstanding executive officer."

Bucher and the Ronquil's husky, talkative operations officer, Alan Hemphill, became good friends.

"Pete is a man of two speeds," said Hemphill. "They are all-ahead-full—and when he does that, I give up because I can't keep up with him—and all-stop, when he recharges his batteries."

All-ahead-full was Bucher at a party, puffing on a cigar, standing in front of the piano leading the singing; wearing out one group at midnight and heading for another; starting a dinner for four and ending up with 14 at his table; or telling jokes.

All-ahead-full was Bucher going to bat for his men, to court with them if necessary; defending them to outsiders, but flashing private anger at them when they were wrong; drinking beer with them; or buying six copies of a book so each of his junior officers could have one.

All-ahead-full was Bucher hunting, fishing, body surfing or camping in Idaho with his sons.

His Quiet Side

All-stop was Bucher holed up with his record albums; reading for hours on end; toying with his coin collection; or painting seascapes, a quiet sailboat near a pier with a mountain behind, in soft blues, off-whites and browns. No raging waves, no lightning, no windtorn sails.

All-stop was Bucher immersed in Shakespeare or the Alexandrian Quartet, which he devoured in

two nights; charging up his batteries with a book by Ayn Rand, or paging through William Buckley and his National Review.

All-stop was getting tied up in a poem, almost to the point of tears.

For his loyalty, Bucher demanded loyalty in return. Most of the time he got it, from his men and from his family. What would hurt was when somebody showed disloyalty. Bucher wouldn't get angry. He would just shake his head.

He left the submarine Ronquil in 1964 to become assistant operations officer on the staff of Commander Submarine Flotilla Seven, no longer at sea but still with the ships he loved.

Then, at last, in December 1966, came command. He was ordered to report to the 13th Naval District in Seattle as the prospective commanding officer of the Pueblo.

Across Puget Sound to the shipyard and onto the Pueblo he carried his childhood and his submarine breeding, blended now into a sort of paternalism. He would know his men, teach them, protect them; eventually choose them over his ship; and then suffer with them, and suffer the more because they were suffering. He would feel a responsibility for them that few others had ever felt for him.

More than half of his men were already at the shipyard when Bucher arrived.

Among them was Richard Arnold, a 20-year-old guitar player from Santa Rosa, Calif., who had stopped off in San Francisco and run into another guitar player, Duane Hodges of Creswell, Ore. Both were headed for the Pueblo and both would serve below decks, Hodges as a fireman and Arnold as an engineman.

Hodges, who was 21, drove from Puget Sound all the way back to Creswell every weekend, past the high school where he had won a trophy for wrestling, near the fields where he had picked beans as a boy of seven, along the road where he had helped a neighbor pour concrete for a floor, and up to the house his father had built before Duane was born.

The Navy Cared

It was the only house Duane had ever lived in. He would give his mother a hug and wile away the weekend riding his motorcycle or taking out a girlfriend. Then he'd drive back through the lush green of the Pacific Northwest to the shipyard and his ship. Boot camp in San Diego and now this assignment on the Pueblo were Duane's first times away from home. His parents thought about this occasionally, but they figured he was well cared for in

the Navy.

As he got acquainted with the rest of his shipmates, Hodges discovered that Steven Woelk, a shipfitter from Alta Vista, Kan., was a guitar player, too. Woelk wore his hair in a blond that almost down to his eyebrows and played country and western music. Arnold played rock 'n' roll. The trio practiced together in the bosun's locker or in the engineering office when it wasn't busy, or on the deck in good weather. They worked out a kind of soft jazz all their own.

A black-haired engineering officer with a square jaw and bushy eyebrows, CWO Gene Howard Lacy, was already on board when Hodges and his three engine room buddies reported for duty.

Lacy was from Omak, Wash. He was 35, had three children and was a veteran of sea duty in the Arctic and Antarctic. He arrived at Puget Sound three weeks before Bucher. When he got his first look at the Pueblo it was tied up alongside the Palm Beach. They were so small he mistook them for one ship.

More Problems

Lacy ran squarely into the problems Bucher would encounter and share with him in the months ahead. He had trouble getting supplies. He telephoned the Bureau of Ships persistently, but to no avail. The main problem, he found, was the secret nature of the ship. How could he, or anyone else, talk on an unclassified telephone about classified things for a ship shrouded in secrecy?

Lacy also discovered that:—Nobody had drawn up any advance plans for the conversion. —The Pueblo and the Palm Beach were different sizes. What fitted one wouldn't fit the other. And nobody knew this until the parts arrived.

—Very little damage control had been built into the Pueblo's original design. Nonetheless, the Navy thought the ship didn't need a damage control book or damage control plates. Lacy thought it did. He asked for them repeatedly. But he got turned down each time. Finally, he ordered the crew to make its own plates.

Although the main concern at the time was keeping the Pueblo afloat, Lacy needed to know how to scuttle it to prevent capture. He learned that he would have to open two 15-inch sea valves and flood the engine room. The process would cost the ship its power and take 2½ hours.

No One Talked

Should the need arise, Chief Engineman Monroe O. Goldman, a stocky, crew-cut veteran of more than 18 years in the Navy, would be the man to open the



SIGNING UP. The future skipper left Boys Town to join the Navy. Clad in a ski sweater, he takes the oath.