



A Publication of Rolling Thunder® Chapter 1 Florida

SERVING ALL OF BREVARD COUNTY FLORIDA

Volume V Issue I

January 2021

From The Editor: On January 23, 1968 I was sitting at my direction finding position in the Operations building on Eastern Island - one of the three islands that comprise Midway Island. I was providing routine geolocation bearings on selected high frequency radio signals as directed by our West Pacific Net Control Station at Kami Seya, Japan. This was my first direction-finding billet after graduating from training in Pensacola, Florida. As I was watching the teletype print out the next 'target', the machine suddenly stopped - then started again printing out a "CRITIC" message - the highest priority in the direction-finding network. I immediately tuned my radio receiver to the designated frequency and turned my oscilloscope to the direction of the incoming signal. There were several critical messages that followed - some were voice signals, and some were radio signals. There was nothing routine about this 'target' - all of the signals were from the USS Pueblo, reporting that she was under attack by North Korea.

This issue of The Mission newsletter is dedicated to the officers and crew of the Pueblo, and is presented here as part of our mission of educating the public about our prisoners-of-war, and those still missing-in-action.

The story begins on page 8.



U.S. Army Cargo Vessel FP-344 was later renamed FS-344. Transferred to the Navy in 1966, she became USS Pueblo (AGER-2)



USS Pueblo (AGER-2) - circa 1967

THE MAJOR FUNCTION OF ROLLING THUNDER ® INC. IS TO PUBLICIZE THE POW/MIA ISSUE: TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC THAT MANY AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR WERE LEFT BEHIND AFTER ALL PREVIOUS WARS, AND TO HELP CORRECT THE PAST AND TO PROTECT FUTURE VETERANS FROM BEING LEFT BEHIND SHOULD THEY BECOME PRISONERS OF WAR- MISSING IN ACTION. WE ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO HELPING AMERICAN VETERANS FROM ALL WARS.

POW * MIA - YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN



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A new year, a new look for 'The Mission' newsletter. We have added a couple of new topics and pages, and increased the readability of the type. Our sponsors now have a page (and hopefully more) of their own to highlight their products or services. If you have a need, please use our sponsors - they are the supporters of this publication, and without their help, we would not be able to continue to bring you the stories of our veterans service and sacrifices to this great country.

A Note From The President:

Happy New Year Rolling Thunder Fl Ch1 Family.

It looks like we made it through 2020. We took a beating, but on the bright side we still accomplished a lot of good work.

I hope we can get this terrible virus behind us and really do what we do best, and that is to take care of veterans, work toward full accountability for our POW/MIA'S and educate the public and publicize our cause.

I ask you please come to our meeting in January, and bring your dues if you haven't already paid. Please sell your motorcycle tickets!

Our 2021 project is to raise a POW/MIA flag at every school in Brevard County by this June.

Let's all make 2021 our best year ever....

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Do you have something you'd like to share with our world-wide readers? If so, just send a note to the editor (TheMissionEditor@cfl.rr.com) along with a picture or two, and we'll be happy to include it in an upcoming issue.

**Best wishes to the
following members who
have birthday's this month:**

Vickie Marshall	01/05
Joe Jeppi	01/08
Dave Phillips	01/10
Ken Hill	01/14
Mimi Smith	01/19
Beverly Puzzo	01/22

From the Chaplin:

Twenty-twenty is finally in the rear-view mirror. Never in the history of our country have we been through so much in so little time. A pandemic that is still with us, riots and unrest. Remember we are still in a declared war.

We may have a new President. Whether you agree or disagree with him, we must respect the office. It is very important that any changes you want or need must be done through legal and peaceful ways.

Remember to keep in contact with all of your Local, State and National leaders. (a lot), express your opinion through social media, letters to the editor in your newspaper, and other outlets.

Never forget that we are all Americans. Let us work to bring our great Nation back together as one Nation under God. ... as in the song 'Auld Lang Syne', which means latterly "times gone by".

Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind? Should old acquaintance be forgot, and auld lang syne?

Chorus: For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne, we'll take a cup of kindness yet, for auld lang syne.

And surely you'll buy your pint cup! and surely I'll buy mine! And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet, for auld lang syne.

Chorus

We two have run about the hills, and picked the daisies fine; But we've wandered many a weary foot, since auld lang syne.

Chorus

We two have paddled in the stream, from morning sun till dine; But seas between us broad have roared since auld lang syne.

Chorus

And there's a hand my trusty friend! And give me a hand o' thine! And we'll take a right good-will draught, for auld lang syne.

***Rolling Thunder®, Inc. Florida Chapter 1 is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (4) organization,
and everyone donates his or her time because they believe in the POW/MIA Issue.***

INSIDE THE CHAPTER *(Continued)*

From the Chaplin: *(continued)*

This song hits close to home.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Chaplain Chip Hanson

While the pandemic has certainly brought our fundraising efforts to a halt, the Chapter is still able to provide help and services to our local veterans and our community. During December we provided an Honor Guard to escort a veteran and his family to a grave-side funeral at Florida Memorial Gardens; We raised the POW*MIA Flag at the Brevard County Public Schools District Office; and we participated in the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery's Wreaths Across American ceremony ... albeit a limited number of members could attend due to VA restrictions.

The next two pages highlight just a few of the pictures that were taken by members and photojournalist Tim Shortt... whose boss sent a reporter to do a story which ultimately became a front page story in the Florida Today newspaper.

Despite the ups and downs of 2020, we as Americans have coped with unemployment; business failures; social distancing; rioting; stolen elections; and the wearing of masks - into of all places - a bank!

As we head into a new year, let us not dwell on the past - it's over, the candle has burned itself out - instead, pray for peace, prosperity, and wellness for all mankind... we're going to need it!



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INSIDE THE CHAPTER (continued)

January 2021

SpaceX rolls rocket to pad ahead of launch

Falcon 9 due to depart KSC at 9 this morning

Erica Kelly
Florida Today
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket was rolled out to its launch pad Wednesday morning, setting the stage for the launch of a national security satellite mission later this month.

Targets at pad 39A are targeting 9 a.m. Thursday, the opening of a three-hour window for launching the rocket's liftoff with a National Reconnaissance Office payload. Shortly after, the first stage will separate and return to Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, generating enough energy to land upright.

The Space Force is expecting weather conditions to be about 70% "go." Up-to-date information on whether the "percent go" were listed as a moderate risk.

Packed into Falcon 9's payload fairing is NG-10, a secretive payload the NRO will use to collect intelligence and gather data for the Department of Defense. The agency is responsible for building, launching, and operating the USA's fleet of intelligence satellites, which are known for high-resolution imagery.

'Dotti' Kunde, cook beloved by astronauts, dies at 95

John McCarthy
Florida Today
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

They are eating some out-of-the-world chocolate chip cookies in heaven now.

Dorothy "Dotti" Kunde, who spent more than two decades cooking for shuttle crews at Kennedy Space Center prior to their missions, died Monday.

Kunde was 95 and lived in Titusville. She was survived by her son-in-law, Tom Chodorenkow, who said she had been in failing health following a fall on Thanksgiving Day before she died. "She had been battling with dementia for many years," he told FLORIDA TODAY in 2005. "But I looked down and she was smiling from

The local chapter of national veterans group Rolling Thunder raised a flag honoring prisoners of war and the missing-in-action over the Brevard Public Schools facility in Viera on Tuesday morning.

The group has partnered with the schools to raise the iconic black flags above each of Brevard's 84 public schools and county facilities this spring.

"We're here today to raise the POW/MIA flag so that those who were taken prisoner or otherwise unaccounted for in various wars and conflicts throughout the history of our country will not be forgotten," Rolling Thunder Florida Chapter 1 President Jim Justice said. "The gathered crowd, we hope, includes many members of the Brevard County School Board and Superintendent Mark Mullins."

The long-running tradition was missed last school year due to the outbreak of the pandemic, Mullins said.

"COVID-19 got in the way, and I understand there were a lot of challenges in the way, for we're here now and we're no longer under that," Mullins said.

Beginning in 2001, Rolling Thunder plans to hold flag-raising ceremonies at every school in the district, Mullins said.

The event served as an "educational tool to recognize and honor the ongoing service and sacrifice," BPS spokesman Russell Bratton said.

"Everyone who serves or has served in the military is important," Mullins said.

Veterans group to fly POW/MIA flags above Brevard schools

Rolling Thunder's effort will reach dozens of campuses

Eric Rogers
Florida Today
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

"We will not let them be forgotten." Superintendent Mark Mullins

On the men and women ... who have dedicated their lives to our country ... that we are honored to enjoy many freedoms that are granted to us." Justice said the flags serve as a "constant reminder of the plight of over 89,000 missing service members and their families."

"We will not let them be forgotten," Mullins said.



Raiding the POW*MIA Flag at the County School Board District Office in Viera, Florida



Our 2021 goal is to raise a POW*MIA flag at every Brevard County School.
Pictured in the dark suit (R) is BPS Superintendent Dr. Mark Mullins

WELCOME HOME

When one American is not worth the effort to be found, we as Americans have lost.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced in late December that Army Sgt. Billy V. Rodgers, 19, of Panama, Oklahoma, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for.

In late 1950, Rodgers was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered.

On July 27, 2018, following the summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un in June 2018, North Korea turned over 55 boxes, purported to contain the remains of American service members killed during the Korean War. The remains arrived at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii on Aug. 1, 2018, and were subsequently accessioned into the DPAA laboratory for identification.

To identify Rodgers' remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and autosomal STR (auSTR) analysis.

Rodgers' name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Rodgers will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The date has yet to be determined.



OR text to 838255

January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag in America.



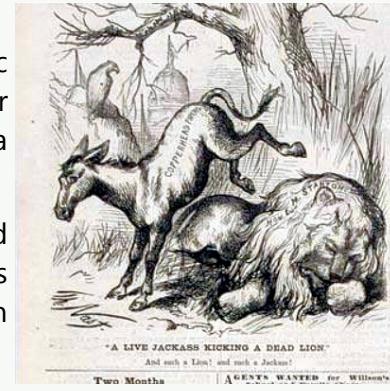
January 1, 1892 - Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened. Over 20 million new arrivals to America were processed until its closing in 1954.

January 1, 1959 - Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba after leading a revolution that drove out Dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro then established a Communist dictatorship.

January 3, 1959 - Alaska was admitted as the 49th U.S. state with a land mass almost one-fifth the size of the lower 48 states together.

January 8, 1815 - The Battle of New Orleans occurred as General Andrew Jackson and American troops defended themselves against a British attack, inflicting over 2,000 casualties. Both sides in this battle were unaware that peace had been declared two weeks earlier with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812.

January 15, 1870 - The first use of a donkey to symbolize the Democratic Party in America appeared in a cartoon in Harper's Weekly, criticizing former secretary of war Edwin Stanton with the caption, "A Live Jackass Kicking a Dead Lion."



January 16, 1991 - The war against Iraq began as Allied aircraft conducted a major raid against Iraqi air defenses. The air raid on Baghdad was broadcast live to a global audience by CNN correspondents as operation Desert Shield became Desert Storm.

January 17, 1966 - A Hydrogen bomb accident occurred over Palomares, Spain, as an American B-52 jet collided with its refueling plane. Eight crewmen were killed and the bomber then released its H-bomb into the Atlantic.

January 21, 1954 - First lady Mamie Eisenhower broke a bottle of champagne across the bow of the USS Nautilus, and launched it into the Thames River at Groton, Connecticut. Commissioned on September 30, 1954, it first ran under nuclear power on the morning of January 17, 1955.

January 22, 1973 - Abortion became legal in the U.S. as the Supreme Court announced its decision in the case of Roe vs. Wade striking down local state laws restricting abortions in the first six months of pregnancy. In more recent rulings (1989 and 1992) the Court upheld the power of individual states to impose some restrictions.

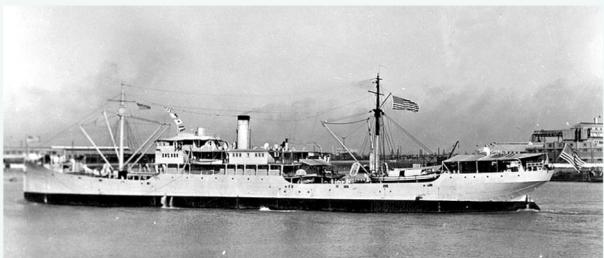
January 23, 1907 - Charles Curtis of Kansas became the first person of Native American ancestry to serve in the U.S Senate. He later served as vice president under President Herbert Hoover from 1929-1933.



January 27, 1973 - U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War ended as North Vietnamese and American representatives signed an agreement in Paris. The U.S. agreed to remove all remaining troops within 60 days thus ending the longest war in American history.

FEATURED STORY

An early version of what would become known as a "spy ship", the United States civilian cargo ship USS Gold Star (AK-12), made frequent voyages to Japan, China, and the Philippines with cargo and passengers during the 1920s and 1930s. Starting in 1933 as a station ship, she was assigned to monitor internal Japanese Fleet frequencies and direction finder azimuths. She had three intercept operators and one chief radioman supervised by an officer. Gold Star and ground stations provided significant intelligence before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.



USS Gold Star (AK-12) - Shanghai circa 1937

In 1961, the National Security Agency (NSA) commissioned its first Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) ship, the Private Jose F. Valdez, (T-AG-169), which cruised the coasts of Africa. In 1962, the Joseph E. Muller was converted and picked up the first signals regarding Soviet missiles in Cuba. These two ships were operated through the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS). This meant that they were staffed by civilians, which 'exempted' them from required liberty calls and allowing their home ports to be far from an American Naval Base.

Ed note: I was stationed aboard Valdez from December 1965 - December 1966, where our 'home port' was in Cape Town, Republic of South Africa.

Following the success of the Valdez and Muller, the Navy took on a larger role. The next five ships added to the program were operated by the Navy for the NSA. Called Auxiliary General Technical Research (AGTR) ships, they were much larger and faster converted Second World War LIBERTY and VICTORY class cargo-ships. These



*USNS Pvt Jose F Valdez (T-AG-169)
Cape Town, SA circa 1964*

'research' vessels carried equipment and personnel to conduct oceanographic experiments to create a valid cover for their covert activities. The first was the USS Oxford (AGTR-1), which joined the Muller near Cuba, and their intercepts lead to a U-2 flyover confirming the installation of Soviet missiles. In 1963, the NSA added the USS Georgetown (AGTR-2) and the USS Jamestown (AGTR-3), and in 1964 added the USS Belmont (AGTR-4) and the USS Liberty (AGTR-5). These seven ships worked almost exclusively for the NSA, and the Navy could rarely use them to collect naval intelligence.

However, in 1965, USS Banner was commissioned for the Navy, and then Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze contacted Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara for intelligence on 'the operating capabilities, tactical doctrine, procedures, and state of training of the Soviet Navy', which would require two additional vessels.



USS Banner (AGTR-1) circa 1967

These three ships, designated Auxiliary General Environmental Research (AGER) vessels – USS Banner (AGER-1), USS Pueblo (AGER-2), and USS Palm Beach (AGER-3) - were all former light cargo ships, approximately 180 feet long with a top speed of 13 knots. Commander, Naval Security Group (NAVSECGRU) would have control of the naval component of each ship, including personnel, and the NSA would be responsible for the SIGINT functions. Due to the small size of the AGER ships, each could only carry small amounts of SIGINT equipment and personnel. This limited the analytic capabilities of the platform, and ‘most intercepted communications were therefore forwarded to NSA for more detailed analysis’. This detail increased the danger of each mission through limiting the intelligence on board the vessels.

The USS Pueblo, was brought back into service under Operation ‘Clickbeetle’, a joint Naval Intelligence and National Security Agency (NSA) effort. The operation involved converting cargo ships to spy vessels outfitted with state-of-the art equipment to intercept signal communications. The repairs involved creating a metal room known as the SOD Hut, where technicians would operate the surveillance gear to intercept and gather sonar,



*Soviet Naval Auxiliary Intelligence Collector (AGI).
Guidrofon - 1967*

radar and other types of signals communications. “Clickbeetle” was actually inspired by Soviet surveillance operations dating back to the late 1950s.

The Navy, meanwhile wanted to ‘obtain details on the North Korean submarine fleet thought to be stationed near Mayong-do, as well as the hope of encountering one of a new class of Soviet submarines’ operating along the Korean coast. With a tighter focus on North Korea, the Navy created a new mission for USS Pueblo, code-named ICHTHYIC (PINK ROOT).

Pueblo was equipped with the latest and most sophisticated Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) collection equipment then in the U.S. inventory, with a capability to intercept and record North Korean voice and other communications particularly in the ultra high frequency (UHF) and very high frequency (VHF) spectrums. It had the standard WLR-1 electronic intelligence intercept receiver used throughout the fleet and had positions set aside to intercept Soviet telemetry.

Her very first mission was to intercept unidentified signals, unconfirmed signals, and land-based/shipborne/airborne radars emanating from North Korea. It was also to use its direction-finding capability to map North Korea’s electronic order of battle. Collection of more than seven emitters associated with anti-ship cruise missiles and KOMAR class-attack boats capable of carrying guided missiles was a high priority.

Aboard Pueblo, the Collection Branch had four men who were responsible for Morse intercept, high-frequency direction finding, and radiotelephone intercept that did not require languages other than English. The Interpretive Branch had five members with foreign-language skills to serve as radiotelephone operators and transcribers. The Technical Branch had twelve men who did the intercepting, recording, processing, and analyzing of all types of non-Morse systems.

On December 29, 1967, NSA wired the Pueblo’s operational orders to the director of Naval Security Group (DIRNAVSECGRU) through Operation Order 301-68 ... which is still heavily redacted.

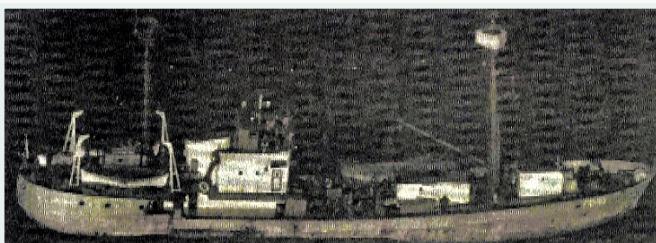
FEATURED STORY *(continued)*

Before departing from Sasebo, Japan for its mission, Pueblo's Captain, LCDR Lloyd "Pete" Bucher, received information from U.S. Naval Reconnaissance that one Soviet destroyer and one tanker were operating in the Tsushima Strait - so Pueblo cruised up the coast of Japan to avoid detection until it reached the top of its most northern area of concentration – just south of the North Korea – USSR border.

On January 16, 1968, Pueblo reached the 42nd parallel and turned toward North Korea, coming within 15 miles of the port of Chongjin. Throughout the mission, Pueblo remained outside of a 13-mile zone from North Korea to ensure that it remained in international waters. Off Chongjin, the crew observed North Korean merchant ships, but none approached the Pueblo, and little SIGINT material was collected.

After two days, Pueblo moved south to its next area of concentration near the port of Songjin (Kimchaek). Again, little was acquired there and Pueblo moved to the third area of concentration, to attempt to acquire SIGINT from Mayang-do.

On January 20th, Pueblo was southwest of Mayang-do when a North Korean SO-1 class submarine chaser passed at about 4,000 yards but continued on in the direction of Wonsan. Two days later, Pueblo was off the coast of Wonsan, when two North Korean trawlers approached, Identified as Rice Paddy 1 and Rice Paddy 2, they were similar in design to Soviet Lentra-class intelligence trawlers. While no signals were exchanged, LCDR Bucher understood that his vessel was being observed and ordered a message sent to Rear Admiral Frank Johnson, Commander Naval Forces



*North Korean trawler similar to the
Soviet Lentra Class AGI*

Japan, stating that his vessel had been discovered. Throughout the trawlers' visual inspection, Pueblo flew the international flag for hydrographic operations. Around 4:00 PM, the trawlers left the area. That night, Pueblo's radar showed eighteen vessels operating in its vicinity. Despite a flare launched around 1:45 AM, none of the North Korean ships attempted to close on Pueblo.

Unknown to LCDR Bucher, but revealed by subsequent evaluation of data by the NSA, the North Koreans had been tracking Pueblo from two different radar facilities and it was also under surveillance from North Korean MiG-17s.

As a result, Bucher signaled Johnson that he no longer considered his ship under surveillance and would resume radio silence. As the morning of January 23rd progressed, Bucher became annoyed that Pueblo had drifted approximately twenty-five miles off the coast during the night and directed that the ship resume its station at thirteen miles.



Soviet Class SO-1 Sub Chaser

Reaching the desired position, Pueblo resumed operations. Just before noon, an SO-1-class sub chaser was spotted closing at high speed. Bucher ordered the hydrographic flag hoisted and directed his oceanographers to commence work on deck. The ship's position in international waters was also verified by radar.

Nearing to 1,000 yards, the sub chaser

demanded to know Pueblo's nationality. Responding, Bucher directed the American flag to be hoisted. Clearly not fooled by the oceanographic work, the sub chaser circled Pueblo and signaled "heave to or I will open fire." At this time, three P4 torpedo boats were spotted approaching the confrontation. As the situation developed, the ships were overflowed by two North Korean MiG-21 'Fishbed' fighters.

Confirming its position as being located nearly sixteen miles from the coast, Pueblo responded to the sub chasers challenge with "I am



North Korean P-4 Motor Torpedo Boat

in International Waters." The torpedo boats soon took up stations around Pueblo. Not wanting to escalate the situation, Bucher did not order general quarters and instead attempted to depart the area.

He also signaled Japan to apprise his superiors of the situation. Seeing one of the P-4s approaching with a contingent of armed men, Bucher accelerated and maneuvered to prevent them from boarding. Around this time, a fourth P-4 arrived on the scene. Though Bucher desired to steer for open sea, the North Korean vessels attempted to force him south towards land.

As the P-4s circled close to the ship, the sub chaser began closing at high speed. Recognizing an incoming attack, Bucher steered to present as small a target as possible. As the sub chaser opened fire with its 57 mm gun, the P4s began spraying Pueblo with machine gun fire. Aiming for the ship's superstructure, the North Koreans attempted to disable Pueblo rather than sink it.

Ordering modified general quarters (no crew on deck), Bucher initiated the process for

destroying the classified material aboard. The signals intelligence crew soon found that the incinerator and shredders were insufficient for the amount of material that needed to be destroyed. As a result, some material was thrown overboard, while equipment was destroyed with sledgehammers and axes.

Having moved into the protection of the pilot house, Bucher was inaccurately informed that the destruction was proceeding well. In constant contact with the Naval Support Group in Japan, Pueblo informed it of the situation. Though the carrier USS Enterprise (CV-65) was operating approximately 500 miles to the south, its patrolling F-4 Phantom IIs were not equipped for air-to-ground operations. As a result, it would be over ninety minutes until aircraft could arrive.

Although Pueblo was equipped with a couple of .50 cal. machine guns, they were covered in snow covered tarps and in exposed positions, plus the crew was largely untrained in their use.

Closing, the sub chaser began pummeling Pueblo at close range. With little choice, Bucher halted Pueblo. Seeing this, the sub chaser signaled "Follow me, I have a pilot aboard." Complying, Pueblo turned and began following while destruction of the classified material continued.

LCDR Bucher then went below, and seeing the amount of material still to be destroyed, he ordered an "all stop" to buy some time. Seeing

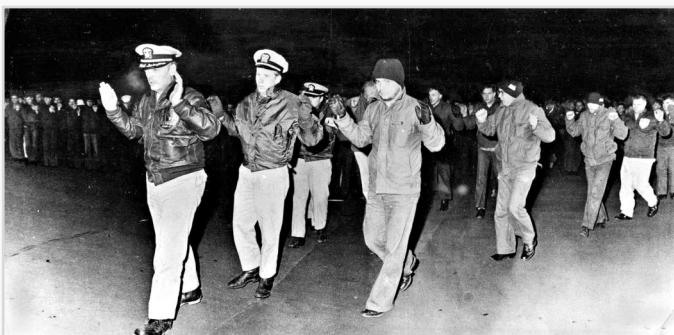


North Korean MiG-21

FEATURED STORY *(continued)*

Pueblo drift to a stop, the sub chaser turned and opened fire. Hitting the ship twice, one round killing Fireman Duane Hodges, and wounding 10 others, including Marine Staff Sergeant Bob Chicca, who was hit in the groin. In response, Bucher resumed following at one-third speed. Nearing the twelve-mile limit, the North Koreans closed and boarded Pueblo.

North Korean troops quickly gathered the ship's crew, then placed them on deck blindfolded. Taking control of the ship, they steered for Wonsan and arrived around 7:00 PM. Upon disembarking on the mainland at gunpoint, the crew was paraded through the streets of Wonsan before



USS Pueblo crew, headed by LCDR Bucher and XO Lt Eddie Murphy after arriving in Wonsan

jeering, spitting mobs. The crew was transported by bus and train to Pyongyang.

Hours after the capture, a plane flew from Pyongyang to Moscow, carrying 790 lbs. of cargo believed to be from the Pueblo. In addition, the NSA intercepted a transmission from North Korea to the Soviet Union containing a cryptographic guidebook from the ship. The KW-7 encrypted code radio represented the greatest loss, because it was the most sophisticated piece of equipment on-board.

For the next 11 months, the Pueblo's enlisted men were imprisoned, eight to a room, on the second floor of deserted barracks outside Pyongyang. Sustained by turnips, stale bread and gummy, bug-infested rice, the crew lost considerable weight - one shipmate dropped from



57mm cannon hole (circled in red) from SO-1 subchaser

280 lbs. to 190. However, the officers, confined to solitary on the first floor, bore the brunt of most of the torture... they were beaten on a regular basis.

Over the course of their nearly yearlong incarceration, a number of sailors had subtly extended their middle fingers while posing for ostensibly innocuous propaganda photos. "Newsweek" and "Time" magazines caught on, and published the images to celebrate the Americans' act of defiance.

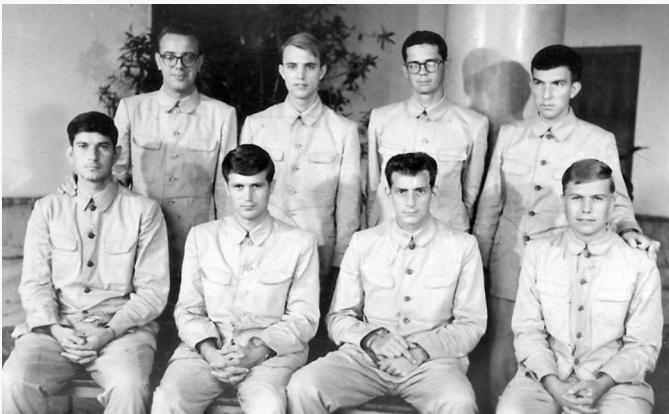
The North Korean's were furious! Following the middle-finger salute photos, which the prisoners had assured their captors was a "Hawaiian good luck sign," the entire crew paid the price. All were ordered to assume submissive poses in the beginning of what they would call Hell Week. Many of the POW's had been ordered to sit motionless on a chair at the foot of their bed, keeping their heads bowed, and stare at the floor in penitence for pulling a fast one on the communist regime.

With each passing month prospects for the release of the 82 POW's seemed increasingly remote. There had been at least two false alarms. More ominously, their captors issued periodic threats that the "imperialist aggressors" would be executed at dawn. Conversely, on another occasion, the malnourished sailors were marched, one by one, into a room stocked with fresh fruit, which they were free to consume if only they would defect to the Democratic People's Republic

FEATURED STORY (continued)

January 2021

Of Korea (DPRK).



One of several 'Hawaiian good luck' photos

Immediately upon his capture, Bucher, was beaten and tortured for his initial refusal to sign a phony confession that he'd strayed into North Korean waters. He relented however, after he was told by his captors, that his men would be shot one by one if he didn't confess. But Bucher also managed to insult the unsuspecting North Koreans by declaring, "my fervent desire to paean the Korean People's Army, Navy and their government."



USS Pueblo CO LCDR Bucher giving his apology - and to fervently 'pee-on' the DPRK

While the crew was tortured and humiliated, the Pueblo capture was almost completely forgotten against the 1968 backdrop of the Vietnam War, and civil rights assassinations. While there was initially outrage at the incident and calls for retribution, the anger and attention

dissipated. In September, North Korea demanded the U.S. sign a document known as the three A's: Admit wrongdoing, Apologize for it, Assure it will never happen again. Then in November, the US decides to sign the letter, but will have the North Koreans accept that the US will repudiate it beforehand. The Johnson administration concluded that renouncing the letter before signing might limit the political fallout.



The crew of Pueblo walk across the bridge at Panmunjom

On December 17, 1968 the offer was accepted. U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Gilbert Woodward, the top U.S. negotiator, made clear before signing the letter that it had been drafted by North Korea. "I will sign the document," he declared, "to free the crew and only to free the crew." On the 23rd the parties sat down to sign. Hours later, the crew was released - exactly 11 months after the Pueblo's capture.

The POW's were taken by buses to the demilitarized zone (DMZ) border with South Korea and ordered to walk south across the "Bridge of No Return". Exactly 11 months after being taken prisoner, LCDR Bucher led the long line of crewmen, followed at the end by the executive officer, Lieutenant Ed Murphy, the last man across the bridge. The U.S. then verbally retracted the ransom admission, apology, and assurance. Meanwhile, the North Koreans blanked out the

FEATURED STORY (*continued*)

the paragraph above the signature, which read: "and this hereby receipts for 82 crewmen and one dead body" (Fireman Duane Hodges). Upon release, several members of the crew were crippled and nearly blind as a result of the brutality and malnourishment. After treatment and evaluations from the 121st Medivac Hospital in South Korea, the crew was flown to a Christmas Eve heroes' homecoming in San Diego.



Crew members being transported to the 121st Medivac hospital in South Korea



Near the end of one of the darkest years in recent American history, flag-waving, Vietnam War-weary crowds lined up eight to 10 deep to cheer the Pueblo crew as they were bused from the San Diego airport to the Navy Medical Center for evaluation.

Following his release, Bucher was subjected to a court of inquiry by the Navy. A court martial was recommended. However, the Secretary of the Navy, John H. Chafee, intervened on Bucher's

behalf and no action was taken against him. Bucher followed his orders to not start any international incidents, and he felt that while a ship could be replaced, lives could not. Bucher was not found guilty of any indiscretions and continued his Navy career until he retired at the rank of Commander.



USS Pueblo today at its mooring in the capital city of P'yongyang, North Korea

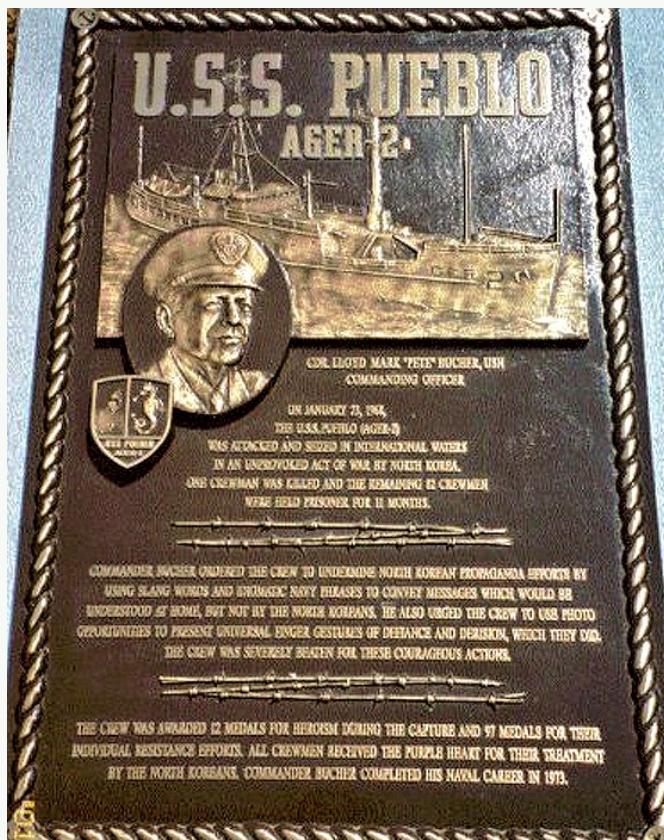
No American military operations have been attempted to retrieve the USS Pueblo. The ship is still officially carried as in commission in the United States Navy's Naval Vessel Register. It remains in North Korea as a tourist attraction and today visitors are shown a video featuring a narrator who triumphantly proclaims, "The U.S. imperialists went down on their knees again before the independent army and people of Korea, and signed the instrument of surrender."



Interior of SOD hut today

But wait - this is not the end of the story!

The Pueblo crew wasn't officially granted POW status until 1990. The ensuing material benefit to veterans was full access to military health care, including presumptive service-connected compensation for health issues, such as his post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis.



*Andersonville Georgia
National Prisoner of War Museum*

*USS PUEBLO plaque dedication
April 25, 2001*

Then, in 2016, The Ride Home organization hosted a reunion of three dozen Pueblo survivors in Andersonville. According to the ship's website, 63 of its original 83 crewmen were alive at that time. Jim Moyer (Moe as he's commonly known as) is chairman of the board of The Ride Home, which is a non-profit that honors POWs each year at the National Prisoners of War Museum in Andersonville, Georgia. For perspective, he offers a

reminder that since 1941, roughly 140,000 Americans have been imprisoned by enemy forces. Of that number, less than 20,000 are living today, he says. Furthermore, 82,000 Americans are still classified as Missing In Action and "deserve to be buried on American soil."

Ed Note: "Moe" was the original Chairman of the Board of Florida Chapter 1.

Epilog:

Throughout the 1960's Soviet intelligence collection ships trailed the United States Navy's fleet. They inserted themselves into US fleet exercises and operated in the open just outside US territorial waters attempting to intercept electronic signals and emissions. Ignoring US Coast Guard warnings to leave the immediate area due to the danger of a missile being destroyed in its first moments of flight, the Soviet AGIs became a permanent fixture at all US missile launches from the Kennedy Space Center. AGIs were clearly visible to tourists at the Cocoa Beach, Florida viewing area but remaining outside the US three mile limit. The Soviet intelligence trawler ships became permanently stationed in international waters off Puget Sound, Washington, San Francisco, California, Norfolk, Virginia and Groton, Connecticut. All home ports to US nuclear powered submarines and aircraft carriers. The Soviet AGI intelligence collection trawler would report a departure from one of the US bases to a waiting Soviet submarine which would begin a trail of that US ship or submarine.

Auxiliary General Environmental Research (AGER) ships were conceived as small unarmed or lightly armed intelligence vessels. Manned by US Navy crews, communications technicians (CT) from the Naval Security Group and civilian oceanographers from the U. S. Naval Oceanographic Office, they would provide an equivalent capability to Soviet trawlers

NSA histories and assessment documents however, provide stunning detail about the extent

FEATURED STORY *(continued)*

of compromise gained from exploiting the ship's vast holding of SIGINT material, and brutal, informed interrogation of crewmen with cryptologic expertise. NSA concluded that the majority of material aboard Pueblo, perhaps as much as 80 percent of document holdings and 95 percent of cryptologic equipment - survived the ship's hurried, chaotic emergency destruction efforts. The ship had carried more than 500 documents or pieces of equipment, including 58 technical SIGINT instructions, 37 technical manuals, 33 COMINT technical reports and 126 collection requirements.

Pueblo had copied about 8,000 messages containing SIGINT data transmitted over the fleet operational intelligence broadcast. The broadcast carried large amounts of information on Southeast Asia and China and thus collectively revealed the effectiveness of US collection efforts. Additionally, Pueblo also used four cryptographic systems, associated keying materials, maintenance manuals, operating instructions, and the general communications-security publications necessary to support a cryptographic operation. NSA also reported that highly competent North Korean electronics experts intensively interrogated communications technicians (CTs) among the crew, focusing on technical principles of the cryptographic equipment, equipment operating procedures, and the relationship of the associated keying material to the equipment. The North Koreans interrogated some of the CTs as many as 20 times in sessions lasting hours. Some of the CTs explained in detail how to change codes for and operate KW-7 encrypted teletypes and drew schematics of the KWR-37 gear used to copy the enciphered fleet broadcast. The assistance saved the DPRK three to six months of technical diagnostic analysis, according to NSA's conclusion.

NSA judged that the compromise revealed "the full extent of US SIGINT information on North Korean armed forces communications activities and US successes in the techniques of collection,

exploitation, and reporting applied to this target." The material detailed the full extent of the American SIGINT attack on North Korean communications, including call-sign system recoveries, net and communications system reconstruction and diagrams, and the association of communications systems with platforms and transmission systems.

North Korean leaders probably began considering a plan to seize a US surveillance ship after the USS Banner briefly patrolled off the North Korean coast in 1967. A North Korean officer interrogating Pueblo crew-members told them he was familiar with the Banner and that the DPRK had been waiting for the chance to seize it. North Korean communications at the time of the Pueblo seizure reveal confusion among NK Naval units when they reported the ship's hull number, probably because they were expecting to see Banner's hull number, AGER-1 rather than Pueblo's AGER-2.

Eventually, all of the crew were authorized the Prisoner of War medal and all military crew members were authorized the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Combat Action Ribbon.

USS Banner was decommissioned in 1969; USNS Valdez stricken from the Naval Registry in 1976. All the other vessels in the Technical Research Fleet were inactive by 1970.



CDR 'Pete' Bucher died on January 28, 2004, at the age of 76. He is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California.

THE END

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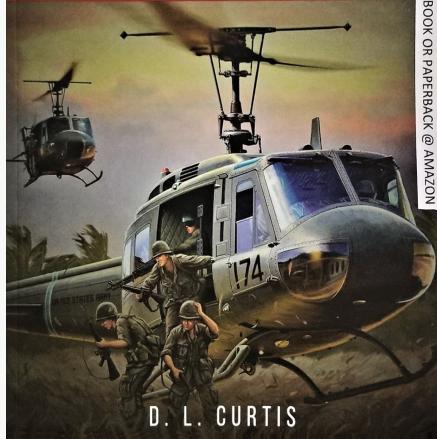
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