TARO LEAF
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WHO, WHERE & WHEN

Nominate a friend for Membership

Wanna take a crack at it? On the Who, the Where, and the When, that is. Give it the old college try, won't you? And we'll sneak the answers in - elsewhere in this issue.

If you like what you have read so far, think about sending one of your stories in

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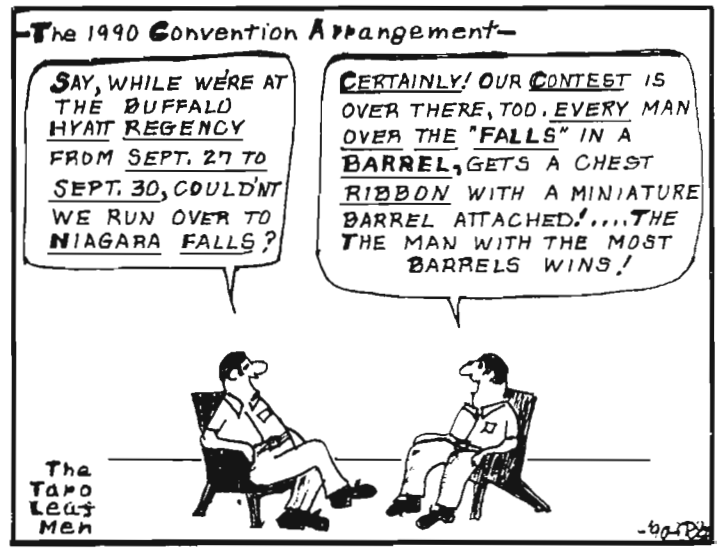
The publication "of, by and for those who served or now serve" the United States 24th Infantry Division, and published frequently by the 24th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION whose officers are:



The "Forgotten War" started on June 25, 1950 - 40 years ago. In three years of warfare, 54,246 Americans lost their lives. More than 100,000 were wounded, and 8,177 are still listed as missing in action. There is no monument in Washington yet honoring our Korean War dead. Official remembrance has been limited to a 1985 commemorative postage stamp. A sad commentary to those who gave their all.

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GOOD FRIENDS ARE FOR KEEPS!

KEEP IN TOUCH !!

Just moved: JESSE and Daisy FOSTER (E 19th '40-'43). They're now at 937 Mastline, in Annapolis MD. Don't s'pose Jess is itching to become a midshipman, do you? Wrote Jess: "Moving to Annapolis, MD and I just settled on my old house and paid off some nasty nagging bills. So now all I have is a 30 year mortgage which will be paid off when I'm 98. Whew! Am I glad its all over again. We haven't moved in 41 years (1949) and pack rat Daisy had to get rid of a few things and luckily I wasn't one of those things."

Please hold onto him, Daisy; he's a good one.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 1989-90 DUES?
WE DO NOT BILL SEPARATELY!
CONSIDER THIS YOUR INVOICE

KEITH HAGEN (I 21st '50-'51), of 3911 Ingersoll, Concrete, WA - watta name for a town! - is looking for EARL GOODNER, (L 21st 7/50) and ? ABSHER (57 recoilless gonner) of I 21st, same time frame. Have nothing on either one, Keith, and we've got a file of only 100,000 names - sorry, Keith.

Let the record show that this is the only publication issuing this month which doesn't feature Madonna. We've got our own problems.

Buffalo

The *Pueblo* Incident

Was the USS Pueblo sent into North Korean waters as the most tempting bait in espionage history - an electronic "Trojan Horse"? We offer up some compelling reading, on this sorry chapter in our history, from the Naval Institute's publication, "Proceedings":

The Skipper and His Ship

By Vice Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, U. S. Navy (Retired)
Commander Service Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, July 1965 to November 1967

On the recommendation of the Office of Naval Intelligence, a new class of ships was devised in the mid-1960s called environmental research ships (AGERs). Several small Army cargo vessels were converted for this purpose. We had a few of these cargo ships working the shallow waters around Vietnam at the time. They had a minimum of damage control compartmentation. Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, without a hitch, did the first conversion on what became the USS *Banner* (AGER-1). The *Banner* proved highly successful, and Washington decided to convert two more ships. They became the *Pueblo* (AGER-2) and the *Palm Beach* (AGER-3).

Commander Lloyd M. Bucher, the prospective commanding officer of the *Pueblo*, was given the fullest support by my staff. He recommended all kinds of changes, and had many complaints. Almost everything Bucher asked for was approved. My staff was quite impressed by him, but unfortunately the conversion didn't go as smoothly as was the case with the *Banner*. One request that was not granted was armor for the bridge. I originally favored it, but turned it down after being shown that the extra topside weight made the ship's stability—already marginal—worse.

Bucher also requested destruct devices for the sensitive machines on board. I agreed, and wrote an endorsement to give it more strength, but this was turned down by the office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Bucher was also concerned about a means of scuttling the ship—he made quite a point of this. The chief engineer of the *Pueblo* was taken down into the engine room and shown the sea valves that could readily be knocked off with a sledgehammer. These were single-compartment ships, so they would go down very rapidly. The engineer was also shown the recommended place for the sledgehammer to be mounted for emergency use.

After her commissioning in May 1967, the *Pueblo* went down to San Diego for training. She then made a brief stop at Pearl Harbor, where one of my service group commanders conducted the predeployment inspection. One discrepancy that the inspector reported, and directed be completed as soon as possible, was the lack of an emergency bill for the destruction of classified papers and publications. Bucher had looked into this before but hadn't followed it up. The *Banner* did have a destruct bill.

While he was in Pearl, Bucher called on me, and we talked for about an hour. When I found he still had no emergency destruct bill, I instructed him to get to work on it immediately, and to report back to me. The ship also had some minor steering difficulties which were given a quick fix; the final solution would be administered when she reached Yokosuka. After the ship left, I did get a message saying that the destruction bill had been completed.

Another item I discussed with Bucher was the need for him to get all the information he could from the *Banner*'s commanding officer about operations in the East China Sea, particularly about harassments the *Banner* had endured from the Soviets, the Chinese, and the North Koreans while at sea. I told him what little I knew. Bucher told me that the skipper involved in those operations had been relieved—which turned out to be correct—and that he had already gotten information in detail from this officer when he'd returned to the United States.

My impression of Bucher from this session was a highly favorable one, except for the fact that he hadn't gotten this destruction bill. He was hard-driving, enthusiastic, and seemed to be highly dedicated. I might have been less impressed had I known some of the wild things he did that he discussed in the book he wrote after he was freed.

After the *Pueblo* had arrived at Yokosuka, the decision was made to install .50-caliber machine guns. I sent Bucher a message ordering him to conduct intense training with these guns in the Yokosuka area before his first operation. I'm not sure that he did this.

One sidelight was that Naval Ordnance Facility, Yokosuka, which was one of my commands, had recommended that Commander Bucher procure destruction devices at the ordnance facility at Sasebo, which the ship was to visit. I don't know why, but the *Pueblo* never picked them up.

The Capture

By Admiral John J. Hyland, U. S. Navy (Retired)
Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, November 1967 to December 1970

I'll never forget it. We were having a small dinner party on Tuesday, 23 January 1968, when word came that the *Pueblo* had been captured and taken into Wonsan.

I knew a lot about these ships because we had copied the Soviet practice of using small electronic collecting vessels for a long time. I didn't know specifically about the *Pueblo* or her skipper, Commander Lloyd Bucher, though, until this incident.

My first thought was, "How the hell could this have happened?" because these ships had instructions to stay in international waters. I was absolutely sure that the *Pueblo* had been doing this. The North Koreans and the Chinese had a habit of harassing our ships—cutting across our bows, setting up a collision course and then hanging on until the last minute, things like that. I figured that all the people involved knew about these things. There was a general feeling that the Communists would not do anything if you were staunch and held on and if you had the right of way. We just never anticipated that anyone would actually board and capture a vessel out on the high seas.

The only thing I could think to do was to send a high priority message to Commander Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral William "Bush" Bringle, instructing him to get a destroyer up there to stand by off the North Korean coast. None of us knew what to do. If the incident was true as it had been related to me, the ship had already been captured and taken away. What could you do to make them give it back unless you wanted to start a war? I just knew we didn't want to do that. The next morning, Commander in Chief Pacific, Admiral U. S. Grant Sharp, called and said, "Look, I admire your intention to get a ship up there to take military action if it's feasible, but we're not going to do anything. It's already evolved. They're going to try to solve this thing by other means," so I pulled off the destroyer.

At the same time all of this was going on, the *Enterprise* (CVAN-65), which had been in Japan, was getting set to sail south to the Tonkin Gulf. Rear Admiral Horace H. Epes was the division commander riding the carrier. They began to receive messages of alarm from the *Pueblo* but didn't do anything. Spin Epes has been criticized for that. And the whole system of protecting this little ship received flak: "How could you let a defenseless ship like that go where it went and not be better prepared to do something for it if it got into trouble?" Well, I don't know what the hell the Soviets do about the trawler that's right off Norfolk or San Francisco this very instant. The *Pueblo* had an identical role working for us. There isn't any way that you can do anything for an intelligence-gathering ship unless you want to accompany it with a destroyer, which would defeat the purpose. Before the ship ever leaves port, the skipper knows he's on a mission that could aggravate somebody. He should think about that. He doesn't have to go if he doesn't want to. There are plenty of guys willing to take his place.

The commanding officer needs to prepare himself almost to the point of silliness, imagining what might go wrong and having firm thoughts ahead of time about what to do if various things happen. You can't wait until something goes wrong and then say, "Wow, I wonder what I can do now?"

I got as much information about Bucher as I could. He had been a submariner and had gone as far as executive officer in a submarine. The submarine force has always had a very effective kind of self-cleansing system. If you're not a good submarine officer, you don't ever become an executive officer. If you're not a good exec, you never get command of a sub. They manage this within their own hierarchy. When Bucher was an exec, I guess he was found wanting in some way. He was, however, on a list which the Navy keeps current of people who are eligible for command. Of course, the lower you are on this list, the less prestigious a ship you get. So Bucher got command of the *Pueblo*.

Commander Bucher allowed his ship to be taken without resistance. He'd been fired on and one of his sailors was seriously wounded. I guess Bucher looked around his ship and saw this man bleeding like hell, so he decided that the jig was up. He thought he was in a hopeless situation, so he surrendered. He never fired a shot. He never manned the guns. He didn't go to general quarters until he'd already been fired upon and sustained some casualties. He had all kinds of opportunities to observe what was a very threatening movement against his ship, but he must have assumed it was just another of these harassing movements. But I still can't believe that he didn't do anything. I remember a story about a Royal Navy ship in olden days. The captain called to the gunnery officer, "For god's

ke fire a gun, because I'm about to ·ike my colors." He wanted to have it ı the record that he had resisted before rrendering.

It's incomprehensible to me that ıcher could see a large, armed vessel me in close, embark a bunch of men th flak jackets and rifles into one of ·ee torpedo boats that had come out, d watch that boat come alongside, and ı nothing. It's difficult enough to bring ɔoat alongside when you *want* it to have cess; otherwise it is near to impossible.

The *Pueblo* had some .50-caliber ıchine guns. The press later empha-ɜed how pathetic they were to defend a ip. They don't know much about guns write that, because a .50-caliber ma-ine gun is a mighty tough weapon to ɜe if it's operated properly. It will kill ople left and right if you use it. The ip also had a bunch of pistols and rifles ailable, but Bucher didn't pass them t. He didn't do anything to avoid this ıg. Of course, it's all so clear in retro-ect. There's no one smarter than a onday morning quarterback. I guess we tend now to tell Bucher what he ould have done. But he sure as hell ɔuld have done many things he didn't, :luding resisting.

When the Navy gives a guy command a ship, they don't know ahead of time w he is going to act in an emergency or time of war. You give command to the ɜt people you have according to a lot of ·asuring sticks, and you expect that ·y'll perform when they are called ɔn. But many of the best skippers have ver had anything go wrong. They per-m very well and move right up in the vy to become flag officers, but they've ver had a combat situation. Still, when nething does happen, you measure an ficer's performance against the highest ndards, and Bucher got a completely ling grade.

he Lack of Air Support

Vice Admiral Kent L. Lee, U. S. Navy (Retired)
ımanding Officer, USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65), July 1967 to August 1969

ı January 1968 the *Enterprise* was in ·l Harbor getting ready for an opera-al readiness inspection. Within two ɜ after arrival we were told that the ection had been canceled, and that vere to set sail for Sasebo, Japan. The nese were very sensitive about nu-· ships visiting their ports, but they agreed to allow the *Enterprise* into bo. It was decided that this was po-ıtly very important. The dates for the visit had already been set, so we d off at best speed.

long the way we hit a terrible storm, ıl to some of the huge typhoons I had ·rienced during World War II. We ɜ forced to slow down to five or six s and to switch headings until the rode more smoothly. As a result, we ɜ 24 hours behind schedule in enter-Sasebo.

n our last day at sea, Alexis Johnson, U. S. ambassador to Japan, was n to the carrier to brief us. He was re of the nuances of our visit. We, in . spent a lot of time briefing the crew ·hat to expect in Sasebo, how impor-it was not to have an incident. I had a fine crew in the *Enterprise*, and I'm proud to say we didn't have a bit of trou-ble.

While we were in port, protesters came out by the thousands. The Japanese had beefed up the Sasebo police detachment in expectation of this. Each day was al-most a choreographed exercise. The pro-testers would do whatever it took to at-tract the notice of the television cameras, and the police would hold them in check, going out of their way not to injure any-one.

After five days in port, our orders were to leave Sasebo and to join up with Task Force 77 after a brief stop in Subic Bay. On 23 January, we were in the channel outbound when we intercepted a very strange message. Some vessel named "*Pueblo*" was saying, "I'm being at-tacked. Help, help!" Well, there were two aspects to this: we didn't know there was such a ship as the *Pueblo*, and we didn't know that she was in the Sea of Japan. We didn't know who, what, or where the *Pueblo* was.

We had Rear Admiral Horace H. "Spin" Epes, a Seventh Fleet task group commander, embarked. Epes's chief of staff was my friend, Captain Frank Ault, former commanding officer of the *Coral Sea* (CVA-43) and one of the ablest offi-cers in the Navy.

The *Enterprise*'s deck was not spotted for launch. We'd been in port, and planes were being worked on. The flight deck was filled with airplanes, and mainte-nance was going on in the hangar deck. Two F-4s on the catapult could have been launched on air patrol in a very short time, and we might have come up with two backups, but as far as A-6s or the like, we had none armed and ready for launch.

It has been suggested that Admiral Epes should have launched on receipt of that first confusing message, since you can always recall the planes. If we'd sent up the F-4s and vectored them toward the *Pueblo*, they probably could have made it. After launching, we could have headed the *Enterprise* toward the site at best speed. All that would have looked good. It's easy to say in hindsight what should have been done. But we waited for clarification of the message, and by the time we learned two or three hours later that the *Pueblo* was a U. S. Navy communications intelligence ship in the Sea of Japan, it was too late to launch.

The *Pueblo* reported to Commander Naval Forces Japan, Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, who had operational control over her. And Johnson reported to Com-mander in Chief Pacific Fleet rather than Commander Seventh Fleet. So even though she was in the Sea of Japan, the *Pueblo* was not one of Seventh Fleet's ships. I don't know how much knowl-edge Seventh Fleet had about her. I do know that we had zero, which was unfor-tunate. Our intelligence people should have been informed of everything out there.

After the messages were all sorted out, we were ordered to head up through Tsu-shima Strait into the Sea of Japan. We started low-grade flight operations, exer-cising our pilots and planes.

In the meantime, Soviet ships were pouring into the area. We saw Russian ships almost every day. We steamed up north, perhaps as far as Wonsan.

In mid-February we received new or-ders. One evening I was on the bridge. At 1930 I was informed that I had a tele-phone call in the tactical plot area behind the navigation bridge. To my surprise, it was my "old friend," President Lyndon Johnson, on the line. I guess this would have been about 0730 Washington time. Johnson had visited the *Enterprise* off San Diego for Armed Forces weekend the previous November. He brought an en-tourage that included, among others, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas Moorer, and two women, one being Mrs. Johnson's staff director, Liz Carpenter. There were also 30 or more from the media.

The President brought his own cooks and his own food and liquor. That first night when we walked into the flag mess for dinner, I was a little taken aback to find cocktails being served, but I must confess I joined right in and had a drink, and wine with my dinner.

We thought it would be a good idea to have a few enlisted men join us for din-ner, so we selected four or five on the recommendation of their department heads. One fellow, a first class petty offi-cer who was a machinery repairman, turned out to be from President Johnson's hometown, Comfort, Texas. They hit it off just great. But an interesting item appeared in Drew Pearson's column the next week. The article said that Johnson insisted on having these enlisted men to dinner much to the chagrin of the Navy, and that he specifically insisted on this man from Comfort. None of which was true.

Anyway, during his call to the ship off North Korea, President Johnson wanted to know about those fellows from the north. Were they giving us a problem? I told him no, that we were doing very well, and that I didn't think there was any great danger. He told me then that he wanted us to turn south and head out of the Sea of Japan. The duty officer from one of the big commands was on the line, and after the President had hung up, he asked me if I understood what we were to do. I said yes, that we'd immediately turn the formation south and head toward Tsu-shima Strait. The watch officer said that an operational message would come in a few minutes to authenticate the Presi-dent's call. I turned the formation to head south.

With an admiral on board, I knew that I shouldn't make such a dramatic change without his approval. Admiral Epes liked to have his movie every night, and in-structions were firm that the admiral was not to be disturbed. I thought this mes-sage important enough, so I went down eight decks to the flag cabin and pulled aside the flag lieutenant. I told him what I needed, and he turned a little pale, but he agreed that the movie would be stopped. I told the admiral that the President had just called me and ordered us to head south out of the Sea of Japan. Admiral Epes was a bit startled that an order hav-ing to do with his task group came in this fashion. We continued on south toward Tsushima Strait.

Negotiating with the North Koreans

By Vice Admiral John V. Smith, U. S. Navy (Retired)
Senior member, Military Armistice Commission, United Nations Command, Korea, October 1967 to May 1968

One of the qualifications I found I needed whenever I negotiated with the North Koreans was a good bladder, because once a meeting started, no one was allowed to leave the room. I would drink nothing the night before, and no coffee or water the day of the meeting, and found that thus dehydrated, I could stand 11 hours. If I were to ever recommend that we adjourn for five minutes, the senior North Korean negotiator, my counterpart, would reply, "It's obvious that you're insincere about wanting to settle our disputes here at the table. You prefer to take a recess rather than work hard toward resolving the issues. I call the attention of the world to the fact that you care so little about peace in Korea that you prefer to recess." In fact, what we were doing was simply arguing for the benefit of the world press, exchanging insults and getting nowhere.

These proceedings were unbelievably tedious, because everything you said had to be translated into Korean and Chinese. The Chinese representative was no longer there, because when they abolished rank in the Chinese Army, they had no major generals left who could meet the qualifications for a representative. But even so, they still translated into the third language.

There was psychology used in the meetings that made it seem almost a game. For instance, their flag was two inches higher on the table because we had given up on that race. But I used to take advantage of the fact that I smoked cigars and they didn't have them. Their senior member, my opposite, smoked cigarettes constantly and I would blow cigar smoke in his face. If he was looking up at me, I would blow it past his ear. You couldn't go too far. If he looked down, then I'd blow it in his face. Everybody could see that I was blowing it in his face and that would make him very nervous. Several times he would light another cigarette while the first one was still of sizable length burning in the ashtray. Then he'd have to try to poke the old one back down in the hole in the ashtray, while I watched with feigned interest.

When he'd get really angry at me for something, he'd break out a dog-eared paper which had been stapled and restapled because it had been juggled around so much. It started out: "Kennedy is a putrid corpse, and Johnson is a living corpse, headed for the same fate as Kennedy, and so are you headed for the same fate as Kennedy if you don't watch out and behave yourself accordingly." This insult passed as diplomacy.

We had meetings about once every two weeks. They were not automatically scheduled, and we had little interest in them because, normally, nothing was accomplished. The other side used them only for propaganda purposes. They'd come in with a chart showing, for instance, our alleged incursions across their boundary, and it was pure fiction. You couldn't get any mileage by saying, "I'm telling the truth and you're lying," because he'd say, "Oh no. I'm telling the truth and *you're* lying." And if you talked for 20 minutes, a whole hour went by because of all this translating.

In January 1968 the North Koreans infiltrated the South with a 31-man team they had been training for five years with the intention of assassinating South Korean President Park Chung Hee. They planned to take off his head with a knife. If the plot had succeeded, the South Korean Army would have felt bound to make a punitive raid, and that would have brought on war. And the South would have been the aggressor this time, because, of course, the North planned to deny any involvement or knowledge of the assassination. The failed attempt took place on Sunday, 21 January. We managed to gather proof that the North Koreans had staged this attempt, and called a meeting for that Wednesday to present our evidence.

On Tuesday the 23rd, the day before this meeting, the *Pueblo* was captured and towed into Wonsan. The North Koreans knew that our ship had been operating off their coast, but they did nothing about it until it was obvious they weren't going to bring about war by their assassination attempt.

There was talk of a U. S. air strike to sink the ship to keep its valuable equipment out of North Korean hands. I'm convinced that the North wanted a war started by a South Korean or American attack. Fortunately, we didn't grant their wish. Had our side attacked, the United Nations Command would've been abandoned by the rest of the world. We would have stood before the world as the aggressors. It would've been a miserable situation, and the North Koreans would probably have been in Seoul in three days. The *Pueblo* seizure showed North Korea's willingness to risk war to obtain their own ends.

Before turning in Tuesday night, I sent a message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff asking that any specific guidance relative to the *Pueblo* seizure be received no later than 0800 Wednesday, so there was time to get it edited and translated. The reply, when it arrived, came at 0830 and said, in effect, that I should strongly protest this act and demand the return of the ship and her crew. It also gave me some warnings that I had to quote, but the rest of it had to be written, and time was running out. We quickly managed to get a pretty good translation and were just about to take off when we got a frantic message from the embassy telling us not to leave until we got a correction from Washington. Well, we went anyhow and told the embassy to telephone the corrections to Panmunjom, even though it meant the chance of interception. The correction turned out to be, "Delete 'three machine guns,' substitute 'two' as the armament of the *Pueblo*."

I was told to go up there and represent the President of the United States. I read the statement, but otherwise I was mostly on my own. Fortunately, having been privy to a lot of information through the Chief of Naval Operations's office, I was able to tell them that the Chinese and Soviets respect the 12-mile limit in international waters, and I suggested that the North Koreans had better check with them because they were coming across like barbarians. I said this as politely as possible, trying not to insult them. Their representative was polite most of the time at these meetings, but every now and then he'd try to browbeat me, and that made it a very ticklish situation.

I was then ordered into secret meetings with my opposite number in North Korea. The North made an informal offer through the neutral nations' supervisory commission to meet with me. We arranged to meet with no publicity or outside witnesses. They cheated to an extent by having an armed thug stand around to make sure we didn't pull a fast one and capture their guy. Such childish things! I was at considerable personal risk, but they had 83 hostages already.

From then on, we alternated between secret meetings where I could talk to them privately, quietly, in a rational atmosphere with politeness—and open meetings which continued as before. In the secret meetings I could say, "Would you repeat the last sentence?" And they'd say, "We'll repeat the whole paragraph." They had 83 hostages, and they wanted to see how much they could get out of it. We wanted the ship and crew back. So both sides wanted to meet.

The skipper of the *Pueblo*, Commander Lloyd Bucher, confessed to having been inside North Korean territorial waters within the preceding 24 hours while I was trying to make the point that, of course, he wasn't. In the past, every time a helicopter had gotten lost, or a boat had strayed and been captured, we always had to sign a confession that, yes, we had violated their waters, land, or air space, and that we apologized and promised not to do it again, and would punish those responsible. All this in order to get the people—or even the bodies—back. They have a museum near Panmunjom where they displayed these confessions for all the Communist world to see. So there were precedents for the signing of the *Pueblo* confession. The North Koreans had a grand time and got great publicity out of what Commander Bucher said.

At various times I was in instantaneous communications with Washington. I could see some of the words that came over were practically from the President himself. The message would be, "Demand another meeting; demand another meeting." That's Lyndon Johnson for you, around-the-clock bargaining. But that isn't the way you deal with Communists. There were times when I said things without knowing why I said them, and it turned out that what I said, with hindsight and in the light of subsequent events, was right. I attribute that to the Lord helping me in a very difficult spot, and I'm duly grateful.

One day after we had been meeting for a month or so, my deputy, Major General Liu, came to see me in Seoul. The South Koreans were worried that I might be told to sign a confession. He said, "I have been sent here by the minister of defense and the foreign minister to tell you that you can no longer use the soil of South Korea as a base for conducting these negotiations with the Communists."

I said, "General Liu, my ambassador tells your President everything that happens at these meetings. Perhaps you don't know that."

And he said, "I repeat my message: you can no longer use our country for these meetings."

We ignored that order, but they made trouble for us. They staged riots outside the embassy—once so that I couldn't get in to debrief a meeting which had to be reported to Washington. The South Koreans forced our Korean maid to report to their CIA whenever she thought I would miss lunch at home. So we always cooked for two to fool her. Occasionally she'd show up with bruises on her face—I believe from the Korean CIA. I never knew when we might find armed guards around my helicopter.

My relief, Major General Gilbert H. Woodward, U. S. Army, came out on time and took over in May 1968. Seven months later General Woodward was told to sign a confession, and that's how we finally got the crew of the *Pueblo* back.

Release of the Crew

By Vice Admiral George P. Steele II, U. S. Navy (Retired)
Commander Naval Component, United Nations Command, Commander U. S. Naval Forces Korea,
Chief, U. S. Naval Advisory Group, Korea, July 1968 to September 1970

The *Pueblo* crew had been taken before my watch, but in December 1968 when they were coming back, it was a big PR thing. The military had blood in its eye to try to get Commander Bucher and bring him to justice and find out what the hell happened. Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, Admiral John Hyland, appointed Rear Admiral Ed Rosenberg as his representative to meet the crew when they were released, and I was to be Ed's alternate, in case anything happened to him. I had known Ed when he was Secretary of the Navy William Franke's executive assistant and they rode in my submarine, the *Seadragon* (SSN-584). I was read into the voluminous background documents and classified message traffic concerning *Pueblo*, a set of files a foot thick, and sure enough, the night before the crew's release, he became violently ill in the air en route to Seoul. His plane had to make an emergency landing to get treatment for him. He was brought by ambulance to the U. S. Army hospital in Seoul that evening.

Ed had had cancer as a junior officer, and was placed on the retired list; but after many operations, he was apparently cured to the amazement of the medical profession. He then worked hard to be returned to active duty, and his gallant, successful fight against cancer was eventually rewarded by a special Act of Congress reinstating him on the active list of the Navy without loss of seniority or rank. I figured this latest illness was part of that. I went over to see him in the hospital. He had tubes coming out of his nose and his wrists, and he looked awful. I thought, "There's no way this man is going to be able to do this." So I gathered up the additional files that Ed had brought, and took charge. I sent a message saying that I was taking over the job, and I began getting myself horsed up. I had all the information; or I thought I had all the information. I knew there was a lot that Ed was carrying in his head, and I was a bit appalled because we had the full attention of the press, and every word weighed five pounds in a situation like this.

At about 0200—I was still up looking over all the stuff Ed had brought with him—I got word from the hospital that Ed had risen from the dead. He'd pulled out all the tubes and staggered from the hospital and someone had driven him over to the officers' quarters, where he'd turned in. He was going to make it. Sure enough, at 0700, here comes Ed, looking white as a sheet and shaky—I never saw a braver, more aggressive guy when he had a job to do.

Ed and I went to see General Charles Bonesteel, Commander in Chief United Nations Command. I had to assist Ed as we climbed the stairs to the general's office. I think that the general realized that it was a Navy show—Navy ship, Navy personnel—but he felt a little cut out of the pattern. He was supposed to provide only logistic support.

Then Ed flew up to Panmunjom and came back with the *Pueblo* crew to the advance camp where they initially brought them. I didn't see Ed greet them; I was at the camp.

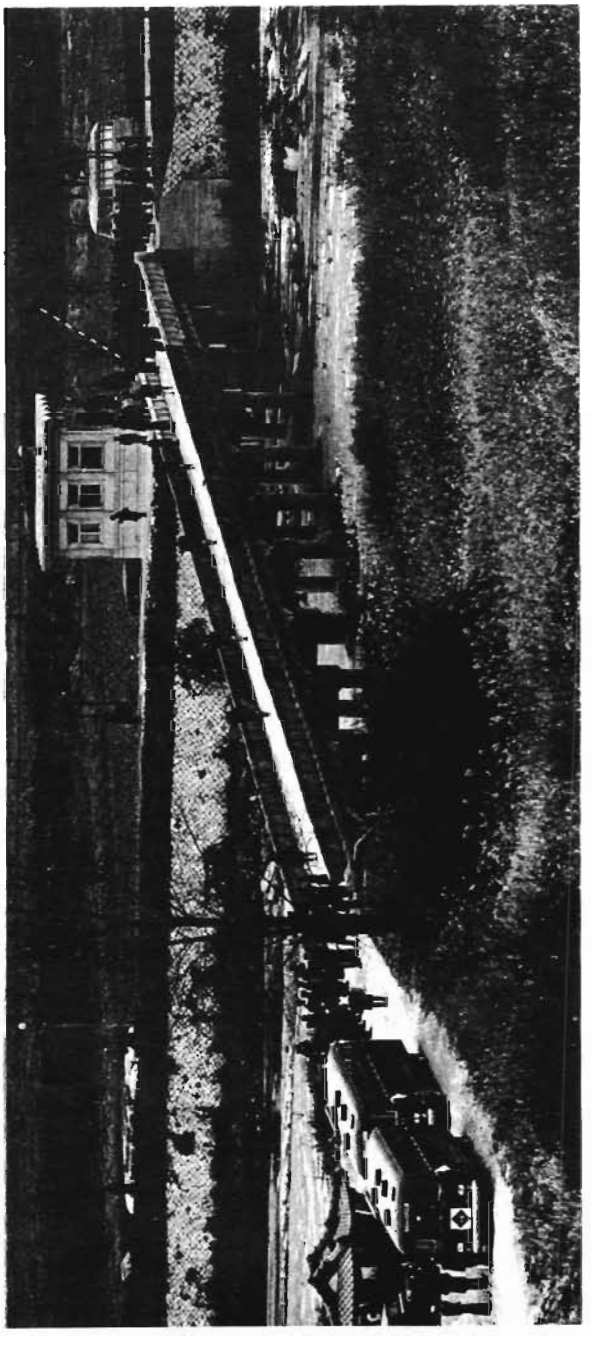
The crewmen were in fairly good condition. I had done an awful lot of preparation for them—clothes tailored to the right sizes, toilet kits, writing paper, newspapers and magazines, telephone circuits so they could call their families. We got them in and fed them a good meal. They were emotionally and physically exhausted by what they'd been through. They wanted to talk to their families. We let them alone for three or four hours, and then they were gone, and Ed Rosenberg with them.

It was during this rest period that Ed showed the signs of his illness. He was brought before the television cameras, and by this time, he was very emotional. But he was in trouble the minute he said that these guys were heroes. I knew that was not going to go over well. He was just so glad to see them, and he was so exhausted and still sick, that he just blurted it out. Of course, nobody knew that back home. All they saw were the cold words; they didn't realize what this man had been through.

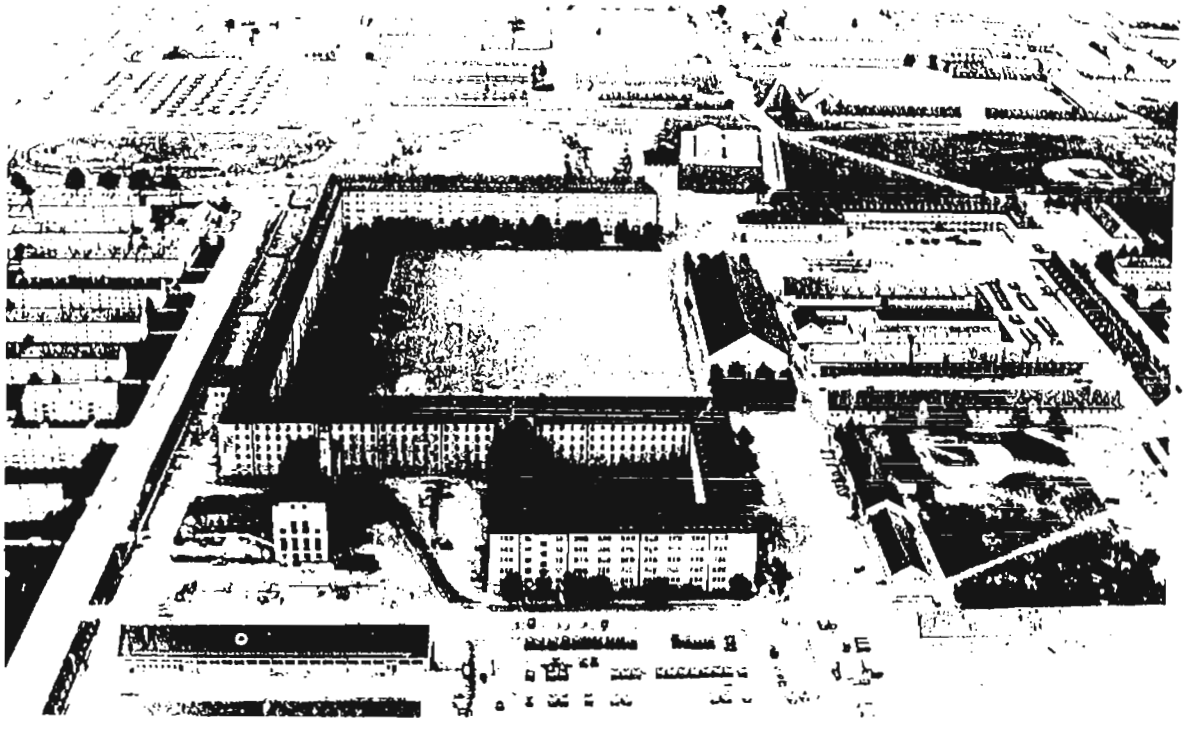
I knew that the crusty Navy hierarchy didn't think they were heroes at all. Or rather, some of the crew members might have been, but certainly not Commander Bucher. I spoke with Bucher at the camp, and he was very apprehensive. I was guarded in what I said to him, but tried to make sure everybody was comfortable. I had my own thoughts about Bucher, but at this point he hadn't been tried or convicted. I wasn't mad at him or anybody else. I didn't treat him like a returning hero; I treated him like a returning prisoner of war.

I don't know why the guy didn't go on until his ship was sunk. I know that the North Korean boats were faster, and that he couldn't have gotten away, but he should have let them sink the ship under him and destroy that gear. I was appalled when Secretary of the Navy John Chafee threw out the recommendation of a court-martial.

Pueblo crew members file across the "Bridge of No Return," separating North from South Korea, on 22 December 1968. Several days later, Commander Bucher and his wife, Rose, were welcomed to California by Governor Ronald Reagan.



The VICTORY DIVISION NEWS



KEN RATH (HHC I 21st '66-'68) of 500 Lyndale St., Phillipsburg NJ 08865 thoughtfully sent us this pen and ink sketch of Warner Kaserne. Sayeth he - correctly, we think, "This might be of interest for those who served in Division."

Ken tells us that many Taro Leafers lived in this single roofed structure, Bldg. 1701, with over 15 miles of hallways.

Construction on Warner Kaserne Munich started in 1934. For over two years some three thousand laborers worked around the clock in three shifts on the buildings within the kaserne, wrote Ken.

Originally the plans called for Hitler's private guard regiment to be housed in the Kaserne, but the initial plans were never fully realized.

In June of 1936, the project was completed and was dedicated with a colorful and elaborate ceremony.

The highlight was the arrival of "Der Fuehrer". After officially opening the main gate, Hitler turned to the architect and planners of the installation and registered his disapproval of the design and the general layout. He particularly objected to the high, ten story tower at the end of building 1701. His first remarks were to the effect that the building was not suitable for his guard. Within minutes after the Fuehrer left the area, the architect committed suicide.

Shortly after the kaserne was opened, the Nazis utilized the installation as a training station and replacement center for heavy artillery personnel. From 1943 until the later stages of WW II, the kaserne was almost empty with the exception of a small Wehrmacht detachment better known as the Home Guard.

The United States Army moved on the kaserne in 1950.

There are many rumors that there were numerous tunnels constructed under the Kaserne, but to date only a few have been located. There is one tunnel under building 1706 that was used as a small bore range by the 1st Bn, 21st Inf. Another exists under building 1705. A rifle range has been built under this building that runs the entire length of the building, 30 feet underground.

Thanx, Ken, for a great report.

The *Pueblo* Incident

Commander Bucher Replies

By Commander Lloyd M. Bucher, U. S. Navy (Retired)

How sad it is for our country that after 20 years our Navy cannot come to grips with the lessons of the *Pueblo* incident. I am particularly saddened by the firsthand recollections from five admirals, published in the fall 1988 *Naval History*. Their comments contain some inaccuracies and, in my view, unjust perceptions. I have never claimed to have been without fault in my command of the *Pueblo*. However, I *know* that the incident would never have come to pass as it did had the U. S. Navy done its job before, during, and after it occurred. Space considerations limit my response to the following.

The Skipper and the Ship: In November 1966, while I was assigned to the staff of Commander Submarine Flotilla Seven at Yokosuka, Japan, I received a letter from the submarine detailer at the Bureau of Naval Personnel. It reported that I would soon be getting orders as commanding officer of a Pacific Fleet diesel submarine. About ten days later another letter arrived with the sad news that I would not be getting a submarine command after all. Within a week or so, I had orders as prospective commanding officer of the *Pueblo* (AKL-44).

Months later I learned what had precipitated that change of fortune. This was a time of dwindling numbers of diesel submarines, and I was not qualified as a nuclear submariner. Sixty-nine officers, qualified for command of submarines, were available but only 23 diesel submarines. My marks over the years had placed me near the bottom of the group of 23 slated to get command. The type commander, Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet, had the prerogative of approving the list of those selected. I was removed to make way for one of his staff officers who had not made the cut.

The *Pueblo* would be part of the surface ship surveillance program. The USS *Banner* (AKL-25) was the program prototype and was operating out of Yokosuka, Japan. As part of my assignment on ComSubFlot Seven staff, I had been privy to all of the *Banner*'s operations and had sat in on the debriefs of her missions at Commander U. S. Naval Forces Japan (ComNavForJapan) headquarters. The *Banner* was equipped to operate more closely to targeted areas than ships such as the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5), which was much larger and carried four times the personnel. In general, the *Banner*'s mission was to surveil electronic emissions of higher frequency, which by their nature required operating closer to shore. The *Banner* was essentially unarmed, carrying only five .45-caliber pistols and three M-1 rifles.

Until then, the *Banner*'s operations had all been conducted in the vicinity of Far Eastern Soviet ports and coastline. Soviet naval ships had frequently harassed the *Banner* during operations, often generating near collisions and on occasion pulling alongside at ranges as close as 100 yards with all Soviet armament manned and pointed at the *Banner*. The Russians would fly international code of signals flags meaning, "Heave to or I will fire." During such confrontations, the *Banner's* crew was kept at collision stations below deck. The captain's orders in these instances were to see to the safety of the ship and crew, to follow the rules of the road scrupulously, and to demand the right of passage in international waters. Knowing all that, I had come to understand the necessity for the captain of such a ship to remain calm and unruffled during such harassments. Before leaving Yokosuka, I had a couple chats with the *Banner*'s commanding officer.

In compliance with my orders I proceeded to Washington, D. C., to receive briefings from the Naval Security Group, National Security Agency, OpNav, and the State Department. I learned that there would be just over $4 million available to make the conversion from a one-hold mothballed freighter to an electronic intelligence collection ship. Ships of the *Banner* type would operate unarmed and would thus mirror the Soviet program of the same nature which also used unarmed ships. The assumption had been that we could operate relatively safely on a sort of *quid pro quo* basis with the Soviets. The Navy assumed that the Soviets had sufficient control over North Korea for the *quid pro quo* to be operative for that nation as well; the assumption was obviously incorrect.

I asked several briefers what would happen if we were attacked. The reply was that, provided the *Pueblo* was operated in international waters, there was no likelihood of being attacked, the *quid pro quo* with the Soviets being operative. Further, I was assured, before any individual operation was approved it would be carefully scrutinized by the area commander, the fleet commander, the unified commander, the Naval Security Group, the National Security Agency, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Defense Department, and the State Department. If any unusual risk was discovered at any level, the mission would be canceled, or continuous

BEETLE BAILEY

L. M. BUCHER

The *Pueblo*, formerly an Army cargo vessel, still carried the Navy hull number AKL-44 when she went into commission at Bremerton in 1967.

protection would be provided by appropriate forces.

I spent a total of ten days attending briefings and then made my way to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Contrary to what was written in the fall issue of *Naval History*, the *Pueblo* was a three-compartment ship with no inter-compartment access below the main deck. The forward compartment, which had been the cargo hold, was being converted to bunk space and auxiliary engineering space. The ship was small, displacing fewer than 800 tons. She was powered by two six-cylinder diesel engines. The AKL design complement was 20 enlisted men and three officers. We would have five officers and 38 enlisted men in the ship's crew, and the security group detachment would consist of one officer and 37 enlisted men. Later, during operations, two civilian oceanographers would be on board to conduct valuable oceanographic research and to provide a cover story.

Although the shipyard commander, Rear Admiral William F. Petrovic, seemed sympathetic to my requests for improvements, he could not effect them without allocated funds. Midway through our commissioning preparations, our funds were cut by 25%. I had to fight hard for even the most reasonable consideration. About the time of her May 1967 commissioning, the *Pueblo* was redesignated as an environmental research ship, AGER-2; the *Banner* became AGER-1. Although very little publicity attended that event, what was released was that the *Pueblo* was an *unarmed* research ship. Following commissioning, the *Pueblo* was assigned to Commander Service Force Pacific (ServPac) for administrative purposes.

During sea trials in the Puget Sound area, I was concerned that a complete loss of power during some future operation was a real possibility. My concern was reinforced by personal letters from the commanding officer of the *Banner*, Lieutenant Commander Charles R. Clark, who apprised me that his ship had lost both engines during surveillance operations in the vicinity of Shanghai. He was unable to communicate for two days since a complete power loss also caused complete communications failure. Had the weather and sea conditions been against him, the ship might well have gone aground in China.

As a result, I requested that the *Pueblo*'s engines be overhauled. The request was disapproved due to lack of funds. I also prepared and sent a letter via the chain of command to the Chief of Naval Operations, pointing out in detail the dangers described above, and I requested that a modern emergency destruction system be devised and installed. This request was denied for lack of funds. No scuttling system was provided. I formally requested consideration of such an installation. Request denied—lack of funds.

No incinerator for use in destruction of classified documents was provided in the original design. When I saw the volume of materials the security detachment was bringing aboard, I requested funds for a fuel-fed incinerator. Request disapproved—lack of funds. Thereupon, I expended from the monies provided the commanding officer for crew comfort $1,300 of the $4,000 allowed, to procure a commercial incinerator. Naturally for that kind of money I did not get the more desirable fuel-fed type. But what we got was far superior to the cut-in-half 50-gallon oil drum the Navy was willing to provide. A 50-gallon drum was what the *Banner* had been depending on since her operations began. Here indeed was a key to many of the problems we had. If the *Banner* didn't have something, it wasn't necessary inasmuch as the *Banner* had been operating successfully without it.

Funds are normally provided to ships going into service to provide training for the crew. In the case of the *Pueblo* and her sister ship *Palm Beach* (AGER-3) there was no money. We relied on the good graces of the executive officer of the USS *Ranger* (CVA-61) to provide our crew with fire fighting training.

I wrote my assigned squadron commander, ComServRon One, detailing the problems. When he replied that he was not even aware of the *Pueblo*, I reminded him that the ship was on his monthly roster of assigned forces. I requested refresher training from our type commander and had to convince him that it was necessary. He was not cleared for our operations.

Fortunately, the choice of equipments to be included in the *Pueblo* had been given thought by someone. No identifiable Navy equipment was included when it could be procured commercially. Our radar was of a foreign commercial brand and thankfully a very good navigational radar. The "black boxes," so often referred to when discussing classified equipment lost on the *Pueblo*, did not have any Navy classification. In fact, only a few pieces of classified equipment were installed on board: the Mark 10 IFF transponder, two confidential tuners for electronic countermeasures equipment, and the various rotors used in crypto operations. All of that equipment, without exception, was thrown overboard or thoroughly smashed during the attack.

Perhaps the most relevant event that came about during the period of the *Pueblo*'s preparation for sea was the attack on the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) by air and sea forces of Israel in the June 1967 war between Egypt and Israel. Thirty-four American servicemen were killed and 177 were wounded. The *Liberty* survived. Three of the Ling-Temco-Vought personnel who were installing electronic equipment aboard the *Pueblo* were immediately sent to Valletta, Malta, where the stricken ship came for repair. When they returned, I questioned Mr. L. D. Turner about what he had seen and heard. He said the lid was on and he couldn't tell me anything.

Twelve years later, I read *Assault on the Liberty*, a book by a *Liberty* officer, Lieutenant James M. Ennes, Jr. From the book I learned that almost without exception the problems the *Pueblo* incurred with destruction of classified documents and communications were almost exact duplicates of what the *Liberty* experienced in early June, about six months before the *Pueblo* incident. I can state, unequivocally, that had the Navy or the National Security Agency applied the *Liberty* lessons to the *Pueblo*, the terrible consequences of the *Pueblo* incident would simply have never occurred.

Later that summer, in consequence of the attack on the *Liberty*, Admiral Horacio Rivero, Jr., the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO), issued an order that no Navy ship would operate

Buffalo

without adequate means of defending herself. Specifically, the VCNO staff ordered the shipyard commander to install a 3-inch/50 deck-mounted gun aboard the *Pueblo* with attendant ammunition stowage and service equipment. Together with my engineer officer, I worked out the weights and moments for the gun and discovered that putting that much weight aboard *Pueblo* on the main deck would either sink the ship or reduce her righting arm to approximately zero. My message detailing those consequences resulted in a cancellation of the VCNO order concerning the *Pueblo*. All of which led me to speculate about the amount of thought being given in Washington to just how big the *Pueblo* was.

Refresher training was completed in San Diego. I was told at the time that the *Pueblo* was the first ServPac ship in six months to pass all aspects of the training examinations on the first attempt. No battle problem was conducted, inasmuch as we were without armament.

The volume of ship's classified publications disturbed me. I requested of ComServPac permission to off-load more than 400 classified documents and publications during all future operations involving surveillance. Most of those publications contained information unlikely to be needed at sea. If in some cases portions were applicable, they could be extracted as required and the main document left behind in secure files. Permission was not granted.

At the headquarters of Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet (CinCPacFlt), I asked my briefing officer, Lieutenant Commander Ervin R. Easton, what would happen if we were attacked or went aground. I was taken to the assistant chief of staff for operations, Captain George L. Cassell, for the answer. Among other things, he reiterated what I had been told before. If the *Pueblo* was operated outside the North Korean claimed waters in accordance with the orders to be issued, there was no probability of *Pueblo* being attacked. However, in the unlikely event it did happen, I could rest assured that contingency plans existed for such an eventuality. Further, even though assistance might not arrive on time, full retaliation would be taken within 48 hours against the perpetrators. Later, during the court of inquiry held to investigate the *Pueblo* incident, George Cassell, by now a rear admiral, denied that he told me those things. Commander Easton, the only other person present at the briefing, was not allowed to verify either my own or Rear Admiral Cassell's testimony. As for the promised retaliation, we have waited a long time for it to begin.

Final Preparations: During our training, we had been frustrated when those with whom we worked weren't cleared about the ship's purpose. Following arrival in Yokosuka, the *Pueblo* finally had an operational commander who knew what the primary mission of the ship was. Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, ComNavForJapan, had operational control of both of the AGERs assigned to the Pacific. They were among the few surface ships west of 160° east longitude that were not assigned to the Seventh Fleet. That partly explains why Commander Seventh Fleet, when he received my distress signal about a month and a half later, could legitimately wonder what the *Pueblo* was.

We had lost steering an average of once a watch during the entire transit from the United States to Japan, a total of more than 200 times. I made several attempts to obtain block TNT with primer cord and fuses in order to sink the ship in the event mechanical breakdown caused us to lose control and we began drifting aground in North Korean waters. Unhappily, the explosives were not to be had. Thermite bombs were located, but regulations prohibited their being carried on board ship, and I reluctantly turned them down, much to my later regret. Despite claims to the contrary by Rear Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, no evidence was presented at the court of inquiry that ComServPac ever authorized me to obtain explosives in Sasebo.

In the absence of any instructions, I requested authority to reduce my cryptographic holdings to a hazardous duty allowance. CinCPacFlt approved this request.

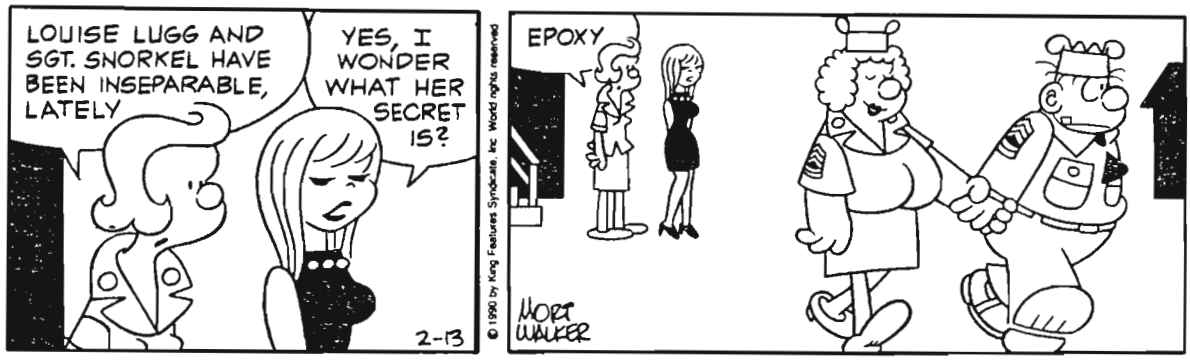
A few days prior to the *Pueblo*'s departure from Yokosuka, OpNav ordered Admiral Johnson to place two .50-caliber machine guns aboard the ship. The guns were flown from Vietnam. No person aboard the *Pueblo* was familiar with the weapons. Our only gunner's mate was a petty officer third class. I tried to get crew training for the guns and was finally able to get the commanding officer of the Marine barracks at Yokosuka to allow ten of my crew to fire five rounds each from a weapon of the same caliber. I hoped to bring enough ammunition aboard to give training while we were under way to our operating areas.

Admiral Johnson was *against* putting the guns aboard. He wanted them stowed below decks. I argued with him that such placement would be against the spirit of the orders from CNO. They should be available for use topside, if needed, I argued. He reluctantly agreed, but ordered that they be covered by tarps in such a way as to disguise what they were. Thinking to get the guns as far away from the bridge as possible, to reduce noise in that area if the guns were needed, I ordered them located on the bow and the stern, respectively. Service lockers that contained ammunition could not be located near the guns, and no protection could be afforded either weapon. Both would prove inaccessible in the coming attack by the North Koreans.


U.S. NAVY

Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, Commander Naval Forces Japan

Additional training for the crew in manning the .50s and firing them as I had planned and ordered proved impossible



due to continuous gale weather during our transit. Weather was so furious we were lucky not to capsize.

Later, during the court of inquiry, Admiral Johnson gave his rationale for thinking the guns should never have been put aboard this type ship in the first place. He reasoned that a ship whose basic role was to conduct "unarmed surveillance" should not be compromised with "ineffective peashooters." I am in complete agreement with his thinking in this matter. In my opinion he stood alone among the high-ranking officers who testified. The others chose to equivocate, telling less than they knew, or in some cases more than they knew.

Intelligence Problems: From my point of view *intelligence support for the* Pueblo *was perhaps the sorriest, poorest and most regrettable of all aspects of the entire incident.* A few of the debacles known to me are presented here for the reader's edification.

After proposal of the mission and review by the intelligence community in Washington, approval was required by each of the many echelons named previously. Final approval was withheld until the last possible moment in order, presumably, to take advantage of the very latest intelligence appraisals. The final approval for the *Pueblo*'s mission came to ComNavForJapan only the night before our scheduled departure from Yokosuka.

As I was to find out during the court of inquiry, the CinCPacFlt approval of the mission with its appraisal of "minimum risk" came over the objection of Lieutenant Commander Richard A. MacKinnon, assigned to the Korean intelligence desk. He had evaluated certain information available to him which, in his mind, made the mission risky indeed. His next senior on the staff disagreed with him. He reevaluated his available information and concluded again that the mission should not be conducted. This time he took his recommendation to the CinCPacFlt special assistant for Naval Security Group matters, Captain Everett B. Gladding. He was again rebuffed and later went to either the chief of staff or to CinCPacFlt, Admiral John J. Hyland, with his findings. He was again rebuffed in his attempt to have the mission canceled or postponed.

Later, following the seizure of the *Pueblo*, Lieutenant Commander MacKinnon was transferred to a new duty station at 12th Naval District headquarters, where his duties were below his training and ability. He requested permission to testify before the court of inquiry. He was denied permission. Fellow naval officers scored him a troublemaker. It was at this point that he came to me with his story. I went to Vice Admiral Harold G. Bowen, Jr., who was the senior member of the court of inquiry and requested that the officer be allowed to give testimony under oath. The testimony was taken behind closed doors. Although there was absolutely nothing classified about any of his testimony, it was embarrassing.

I feel certain MacKinnon's career was finished the minute he bucked the line. Some senior officers have suggested that I was completely wrong in not disobeying an ill-advised order to the effect that I should keep my gun covers on. Here was an example of an officer who tried to overcome an ill-advised order and paid a rather high price. It makes it difficult for a person to know which ill-advised orders to disobey.

It was common practice to provide the naval security detachment with one or more interpreters who knew the language of the country to be surveilled. They were on board primarily to listen to local plain language voice circuits and report if obvious trouble was brewing. Two Korean interpreters reported aboard the *Pueblo* in Sasebo the day before the ship departed on her final mission. The men were both Marines and, as with the rest of the detachment, they reported to the security detachment's officer in charge. The day of the attack on the *Pueblo* we were able to monitor much plain language talk between the North Korean naval ships and headquarters ashore.

I asked for an appraisal of what they were saying and was informed that the Marines couldn't understand the language. Later testimony indicated that both had attempted to dissuade their shore station division officer from sending them to the ship. They had argued that they did not know the language because they had not used it in years. They were ordered to go anyway under pain of possible punishment for failure to obey an order. Perhaps a timely interpretation of what was happening would have made a difference in the outcome.

A recommendation was made by the National Security Agency to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the *Pueblo* mission should be reevaluated or canceled. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not receive that message, nor have I ever learned if it was received by CinCPacFlt, to whom it was also addressed for information.

On 21 January 1968, 40 hours before the attack of the *Pueblo*, a most noteworthy event took place in South Korea. A raiding party of North Koreans was dispatched there to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung Hee and became popularly known as the "Blue House raid." The raiding party was killed, save one man who eventually gave the details of the raid. Now to most laymen this would have been a significant event; I found out later it had been headlined in most U. S. newspapers. The *Pueblo* was supposed to receive a daily intelligence summary from CinCPacFlt and ComNavForJapan. No mention of that raid was ever made to the *Pueblo*.

The Blue House raid, in my opinion, was the most significant harbinger available at the moment to intelligence experts. It should have signalled them to inform me immediately and to have ordered the ship away from the North Korean coast. It should have been obvious to anyone thinking about the event that the North Koreans would be extremely sensitive following the debacle of the raid. No higher echelon bothered to tell me that the raid had occurred. *I firmly believe that the Blue House raid was the trigger that caused the North Koreans to attack the* Pueblo.

It was only by sheer luck that I was able to make higher command aware that the *Pueblo* was under attack. My orders included maintaining radio silence at all times during my mission unless the ship was detected and/or harassed. The day before the attack, the weather finally broke and North Korean Government fishing vessels hove into view and passed us close aboard. One of them circled us at not more than 20 yards, taking pictures. In consequence of this incident, I released the first message of the mission. The message also contained the details of the incident and routine logistics information.

The two messages were released about 1630 on 22 January. Although we had a private frequency assigned that was guarded at all times by the naval communication facility at Kamiseya, Japan, we could not effect the sending of the messages. We were in a communications null, caused by atmospherics. The *Pueblo*'s operators and technicians worked without letup all night long and not until 1000 the morning of 23 January 1968, was a communication link established. It thus took almost 17 hours to send operational immediate traffic. Our own messages on the day of the attack would have likely never been received had the *Pueblo*'s circuits not remained open while clearing our first message when the attackers appeared on the scene.

The Attack and Seizure: The confrontation began about noon on 23 January with the rapid approach of three P-4 tor-

During crew training for her intelligence mission, the *Pueblo* by now sported hull number AGER-2 but still no guns topside, thus no battle problem for her men.

pedo boats and one SO-1 gunboat. All were at battle stations with their mounts trained on us. The temperature was below freezing. We were at the time lying to in order to conserve fuel. Since we were well outside the claimed 12-mile limit and since my orders required me to stay outside 13 nautical miles and to uphold the principle of freedom of the high seas, I decided to stay right where I was. As a gesture toward maintaining our assigned cover story, I ordered the civilian oceanographers to man their deck winch and commence operations.

The ships confronting the *Pueblo* were soon joined by a fourth P-4 and another SO-1 also at battle stations. It indeed seemed we were in for some heavy harassment, and I ordered a modified damage control condition set below decks. I also ordered that no one except the bridge watch come topside; I wanted the *Pueblo* to appear lightly manned. It may be fairly asked why the ship was not sent to general quarters. The P-4 torpedo boats took station less than 100 yards away. My orders included specific tasking to determine what response would be elicited by the presence of an *unarmed* surveillance ship operating in international waters adjacent to North Korea. I was additionally ordered not to be provocative or give the North Koreans an excuse for attacking. Such an attack might draw the United States into another war. To have ordered general quarters could have provided the provocation that we most certainly did not want.

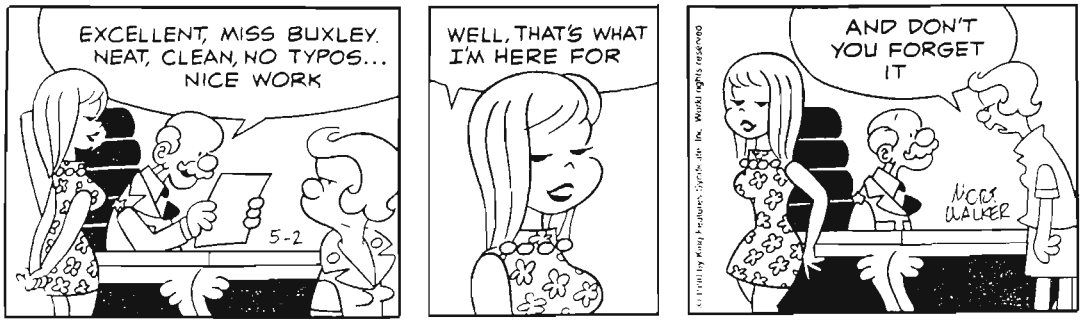
I released an operational immediate message that reported the events in progress. I was not overly worried, except for our watertight integrity. One of the SO-1 gunboats raised an international code of signals flag hoist which queried our nationality. I ordered the ensign raised. It was common practice not to fly the ensign on these missions, not wishing to advertise unnecessarily. We observed a flurry of activity on the bridge of the SO-1 when our ensign went up. Within five minutes a new signal was in the air from him, "Heave to or I will fire." I was already hove to. I was perplexed, primarily because of concern about giving the appearance of following his order. I sent a Critic message advising higher command of what was transpiring. Critic meant that our message would go to all higher commands including the White House.

At that time all of the P-4s were within 20–50 yards of the *Pueblo*, stationed on both bows and quarters. One of them attempted to bring a boarding party to my starboard quarter. The harassment now seemed in earnest, but I still thought it was a bluff. I ordered the ship under way, departing at one-third speed to allow the oceanographers to retrieve their equipment. I ordered a course that would most quickly open the Korean coastline and ordered full speed ahead. Within five minutes or so we were at full speed, 12 knots, and the P-4s were running rings around us. They made runs as if to ram, then heeled over at the last moment. It seemed indeed that harassment would be continued but that would be all. One SO-1 remained about 3,000 yards behind. Then within a few minutes both of them got under way at high speed, perhaps 25-30 knots, paralleling our course. One of the SO-1s again raised the signal to heave to or they would fire. I ignored the signal and continued on.

A few minutes later the P-4s moved away from the ship to about 500 yards and one SO-1 commenced firing its cannon at us from about 3,000 yards. The first salvo carried away our HiCom antenna and wounded many on the flying bridge. I had taken the precaution to order that preparations be made to destroy classified material and now I ordered it done. The crew was at modified general quarters. Between salvos from the SO-1s, the P-6s darted in and raked the ship with machine gun fire. There was no possibility of manning our machine guns, or getting to the ammunition and preparing the guns to fire. The tarps were frozen and the gun positions were totally exposed. I radioed for immediate assistance and gave details of what was occurring.

Soon it became apparent that further flight was impossible, without a slaughter of the crew and the probable loss of *all* classified material. I thought to buy time by coming to a stop. During the firing the classified material destruction was not properly progressing. I hoped that this above all else could be accomplished before we were all killed or the ship was seized or whatever was to happen. I desperately hoped that U. S. forces would appear on the scene, and I had communications from Kamiseya indicating the "help was on the way." Two North Korean MiGs were now flying over us and firing rockets ineffectively. We had to depend on the promised help if the ship was to ever have a chance of breaking clear of the situation.

I conferred with my engineer officer about the possibility of scuttling. We



concluded the *Pueblo* might only founder, so I decided it was best to hold on so we could escape when the promised help arrived. Because we hadn't received an effective scuttling system, we were concerned that the ship would sink only partway. And if so, the first casualty would be our communications, inasmuch as the generators would flood first. Also if help arrived, I wanted to be able to move out of there as quickly as possible. I followed the North Koreans toward their coast for perhaps an hour at dead slow speed trying to give my men as much time as possible for classified material destruction, which was going very slowly due to the fantastic amount of material and the lack of adequate destruction facilities. Wastebaskets were pressed into use as incinerators, filling the passageways with smoke. The wounded were being cared for as best as our one corpsman could.

Following a quick inspection below decks, I decided that we would have to chance heading back to sea to gain more time, so I swung the ship once again to the east. Immediately we were taken under fire again, this time resulting in several more people being hit and one man mortally wounded. I swung the ship back slowly and wondered if the small amount of time my action bought had been worth it. By now more than two hours had passed since we had been taken under attack and had asked for assistance. (Events at the court of inquiry made it clear that the USS *Enterprise* [CVAN-65] and two other carriers were less than one hour's flight time from us when we first asked for assistance and told the world that we were under fire. U. S. forces in South Korea were even closer.) We were boarded about 1445, and it was well after 1900 when the ship was finally brought to dock in Wonsan.

Admiral Hyland in his published interview zeroed in on my complete lack of effort to defend the *Pueblo* against attack and boarding. He implies I surrendered the ship because of a bleeding crewman and what I perceived as a hopeless situation. I must point out that the bleeding and death going on around me were never the overriding consideration in the matter. Every one of my decisions was based on what I knew to be our capabilities and training. Moreover, I had been severely admonished by our operational commander, Rear Admiral Johnson, against involving our country in a conflict with North Korea.

Had my reasonable requests been provided for classified document destruction capability and for a scuttling system, some of us may have yet been captured, but I would have sent the ship and her contents to the bottom. The *Pueblo* was a decrepit ship, with antiquated engineering equipment, recommissioned strictly as an intelligence-gathering platform. She was purposely excluded from any fighting capability, *the better to perform her mission*. To have made any attempt at a fighting resistance would have required being at battle stations early on in the confrontation. That would have been against my orders. We could not have it both ways.

The *Pueblo* was boarded and seized by the North Koreans with our protest signals in the air. The ship's U. S. ensign was never struck by me and was in fact flying long after the boarding.

Admiral Hyland concluded his remarks by observing that, all things considered, "Bucher got a completely failing grade." That being the case, I wonder what grade is assigned to the naval and air forces, close at hand who did not respond to our plight? What grade can be given to the many commanders, such as himself, who were not prepared for our emergency? What grade for the intelligence community that performed so miserably? In my case I can only plead that I tried to do my best for our country and my crew, in a no-win situation.

The Captivity: The 80 Navy and Marine Corps personnel, together with our two civilian oceanographers, endured 11 months of brutal captivity. They managed from time to time to discredit our captors' attempts to use them for propaganda. Although this aspect of the *Pueblo* incident is not addressed in the oral histories published by *Naval History*, it was an integral part of the incident. Our country was served honorably and loyally by each man during that imprisonment. What grade can we assign that?

Release of the Crew: Vice Admiral George P. Steele II in his interview addressing our release from captivity, noted that the military couldn't wait to get its hands on Bucher; that he met me the day of release and thought that I was evasive and no hero; further, that he could not believe that the Secretary of the Navy had disallowed the recommended courts-martial. He also wondered why I had not run the ship until the Koreans sank it.

It was never my intention to be evasive. I would have expected that Admiral Steele would have taken into account that I was a nervous, emotional wreck from the ordeal of the captivity. I never styled myself a hero, nor have I implied such. Rear Admiral Edwin M. Rosenberg, following our return and after talking with the officers and men of the *Pueblo*, generously recommended me for the Medal of Honor. Needless to say, that recommendation was quietly and quickly put into the burn bag at CinCPacFlt headquarters. The Secretary of the Navy could never have approved a court-martial for me since no such recommendation reached his desk. SecNav did disallow a

UPI/BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS

At the court of inquiry in Coronado, California, in January 1969, Commander Bucher is flanked by his attorneys, E. Miles Harvey and Captain James Keys.

letter of reprimand for me. A court-martial would have perhaps cleared the air, and I wished later I had been awarded one. As it was, the contrived method that was used to announce the results of the court of inquiry resulted in many believing to this day that I was convicted by court-martial.

Court of Inquiry: The court of inquiry, which began two weeks after our return to the United States, should have been delayed until I had a chance to regain stability, strength, and get control of my emotions. I requested such a delay, but I was told the crew would not be allowed leave or in some cases discharge until the inquiry was completed.

Following the court of inquiry, just before the findings were announced, Commander William E. Clemons of the Judge Advocate General's Corps, senior assistant to the court's attorney, came to me unsolicited and announced that he would like to represent me if I were court-martialed. Would he have so volunteered had I been revealed during the court of inquiry as the person portrayed by the admirals in their oral history statements in *Naval History*?

During hundreds of hours of debriefings, and an interminable court of inquiry, I never failed to or hesitated in giving a full answer to any question. I never equivocated, never took the Fifth Amendment, never even asked to confer with my attorney. My actions and inactions have been the subject of scores of books and articles and a great deal of TV commentary. Every person alive then and now seems to have ruminated about what he would have done or not done, yet only I was there, only I was responsible, and only my crew was being attacked, killed, and wounded.

The story of the *Pueblo* in a nutshell is one of a naval officer, his crew, and his ship, sent to do a job; things went bad, and the Navy abandoned them. Our country and our Navy were served honorably and loyally by all the officers and men of the *Pueblo*—and, if I may say so, one hell of a sight better than they were in turn served.

Aftermath: Following a clean bill of health from a medical board, my career as a naval officer resumed in July 1971. I requested and was granted an interview with the Chief of Naval Operations to determine my future assignment. I was offered a choice of three chief staff officer billets. I took such a billet at Mine Flotilla One in the Western Pacific. In 1972 and 1973, I was involved in planning for the mining of the periphery of North Vietnam and thereafter with the minesweeping of Haiphong Harbor.

MIAMI NEWS (CHARLES TRAINOR)

Commander Bucher, shown at top at the time of the *Pueblo* court of inquiry, finished his active career with a fleet assignment, bottom.

Questions Remain: Now I have some questions. The admirals find the reasoning for my actions faulty. They have reasons and excuses for not assisting the *Pueblo*. Why should anyone accept their reasoning?

If the confessions we signed under brutal conditions were bad, how much worse was the confession the United States Government signed to get us released?

Was the United States warned in advance of the potential for seizure of the *Pueblo*, and, if so, why was the *Pueblo* not warned? President Lyndon Johnson remarked in a press conference on 18 April 1968, ". . . in the case of the *Pueblo*, the North Koreans had warned and threatened the *Pueblo* for a period of several weeks before they seized her." If there was a threat or some intelligence from North Korea of an expected reaction to the Blue House raid, why were we on the *Pueblo* not notified in any way, shape, manner, fashion, or form?

Who was responsible for the message from NSA to JCS, CinCPac, CinCPacFlt, ComNavForJapan, and CNO requesting upgrading of the assignment of "minimal risk" to the *Pueblo* mission, and what instigated that message? Why was that message never answered or acted upon by any of the commands to whom it was addressed? If there was advance warning, why was not air and/or surface support assigned to the *Pueblo*, as there had been to the *Banner* during at least three previous assignments?

Recently, the Defense Department again slighted the crew members of the *Pueblo* by refusing them POW medals, insisting that since we were not at war with North Korea, the *Pueblo* crew could not be "prisoners of war." Those medals were awarded, and deservedly so, to the prisoners of North Vietnam, with which we were *also not at war*. These slights to the crew of the *Pueblo* infuriate me. Regardless of what the Navy Department thinks of me, why doesn't it give consideration to a crew that acted heroically?

Many other questions occur, too many for this article. It is time that others get interrogated about their actions and inactions. I have answered all the questions put to me, fully and interminably, for 20 years. I wish some of the senior officers, especially those quoted in *Naval History*, would do so in a forum in which I can ask some questions of them. An excellent forum could be achieved at the Naval Academy in front of the brigade of midshipmen. I am ready!

Commander Bucher enlisted in the Navy in 1945 at the age of 17 and served as a quartermaster until his release from active duty. While attending the University of Nebraska, he transferred to active Naval Reserve status and obtained a commission through the Reserve Officer Candidate program. After his graduation, he was recalled to active duty in 1953 and later applied for and was awarded a regular Navy commission. He served in a surface ship, submarines, and on fleet staffs prior to his assignment to command the *Pueblo*. From 1969 to 1971 he was at the Naval Postgraduate School, then served until his retirement in 1973 as chief staff officer to Commander Mine Flotilla One. His autobiography *Bucher: My Story* was published by Doubleday in 1970. He has donated his papers concerning the *Pueblo* incident to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University so that they may be available for study by historians and other scholars. Commander Bucher now lives in California with his wife Rose; he works as an artist and speaker.

EXTRA

1990 REUNION SCHEDULE

Buffalo, New York

Wed., Sept. 26

9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. - Registration

10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. - Hospitality Room

Dress - very informal - anything goes

Thurs., Sept. 27

9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. - Registration - Little Early Arrivals

10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. - Hospitality Room

3:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Niagara Falls Tour including dinner by reservation only

Dress - whatever pleases you

Anytime - Naval Park Tour #
Harbor Tour on the fire boat *

Fri., Sept. 28

9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Registration

10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. - Hospitality Room

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. - Niagara Falls Tour including lunch by reservation only

Anytime - Naval Park Tour #
Harbor Tour on the fire boat *

Hawaiian Night Sit Down Dinner

6:00 p.m.- Cocktails

7:00 p.m.- Dinner

Dress - Hawaiian - the louder, the better

Host: Buffalo's Mayor, James D. Griffin (E tth RCT '53)

Entertainment

Sat., Sept. 29

9:00 - Registration - Saturday arrivals - we'll We'll get you checked in somehow.

10:00 - Fashion Show for Ladies within walking distance
Adam, Meldrum & Anderson Dept. Store

10:00 a.m. - Annual Business Meeting

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Hospitality Room

Anytime - Naval Park Tour #
Harbor Tour on the fire boat *

Memorial Service and Banquet

5:00 p.m. - Cocktails

6:00 p.m. - Memorial Service and Banquet followed by a few words, then music.

Dress - evening wear - coats, shirts, ties, etc., etc.

Sun., Sept. 30

7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. - Continental Breakfast - with compliments
Alohas

* Harbor Tours on the city's fire boat are being arranged by courtesy of Mayor Griffin at times to suit your and the Mayor's convenience. Times will be announced.

Naval Park Tours. It's a free trolley car ride to the harbor at the end of the line - about a mile. Times for tours will be announced.

A story going the rounds here last month involved a hotel desk clerk who kept getting calls from a guest one morning. The calls went something like this:

"Hello, hotel desk? Can you tell me what time your bar opens?"

"Eleven o'clock, sir."

Half an hour later, "He-e-llo, is that the hotel deshk? What time'sh the bar open?"

"Eleven o'clock, sir. Didn't you just call me to ask that?"

"Oh yes, so I did. Shorry bout that, I forgot."

Fifteen minutes later a similar dialogue took place with the clerk adding coldly, "The bar always opens at eleven and has been doing so for years."

At ten-fifteen, "He-e-e-llo, hotel desk? What time did you shay-hic-your bar opensh?"

"Sir, I have told you three times. The bar opens at eleven. Now please don't bother me again."

Just then the hotel manager arrived and the harassed clerk told him of the repeated calls. "If he calls again, let me handle him," said the manager. Sure enough at ten-forty-five the guest called again. "Shay-hic-hotel deshk? What time'sh this bar-hic-going to open anyway?"

The manager took the phone, saying sternly, "Is this the same man who has been calling all morning?"

"Yeah-hic-thish is me."

"Well, my dear sir, the bar will open at eleven, but from the sound of you, you're in no condition to be admitted. In fact, I shall be on hand to see personally that you *don't* get in."

"In!" protested an aggrieved voice, "I want *out*!"

Too young for the nursing home, too old to be a rock star...

How'd you do on our Who, Where and When feature? Here are the answers. The When, first: June 28, 1963. The Where: Officer's Club, Ft.Devens, MA. The Why: BILL VERBECK, the CG of XIII Corps and Ft.Devens was retiring two days hence and we had gathered together to do honor to our beloved friend. The Who: l.to r. seated: FRANK FULTON, the Big Boy himself, ED HENRY and BILL MULDOON (Never could figure out how Muldoon got the chair position) and l. to r. standing -- LAFE COCHRAN, WILFRED O'COIN, VIC BACKER, CHRIS BERLO, PAT CIANGI, BILL KEYES, behind Pat, the Editor, ERNIE VIENNEAU, CLIFF "C.G." HANLIN, JAMES "Spike" O'DONNELL, BILL SANDERSON and WALLY BENNETT.

Elderly American, Joseph Barber, 72, a longtime resident of Palo was killed on June 1 in his home. All we know is that Barber "was married to a Filipino." He is the 7th American killed this year in the Philippines. Wonder if anyone of our gang knew him.

Another "HAM" - HANEY PACK (3rd Eng. 1/53-12/53), over at 1408 W.Walnut, in Lompoc CA 93436 is WA6BXF.

"Run it up th' mountain agin, Joe. It ain't hot enough."

It was a dark and stormy night.

We are aware of the destructive consequences of a deepening lack of respect for practically everything: authority, institutions, people, property.

What to do about it?

The family as an institution has been shot to ----.

The churches and synagogues no longer plan any role in inculcating moral or ethical standards.

Part of what is at fault may be ascribed to the lack of a sense of service, obligation.

Ah, that's it - military conscription.

The experience teaches discipline and respect. Sometimes it has improved character.

People from all levels of society can be thrown together - to learn from each other.

It worked in WW II - and to a lesser degree in the K.W. Vietnam scuttled that; war became something to be borne by the underclasses. The rich and the middle class demurred.

Then came Nixon's All-Volunteer Army - eliminating the draft, and with it, any pretense that responsibility for the nation's defense should be shared democratically by everyone physically and mentally able to serve.

This should be changed. We need the draft - for all young men and women between 17 and say 25 to serve for 18 to 24 months.

And the benefits to the young people could be considerable. They might learn, compassion. They might learn something about themselves and even perhaps acquire a set of values not preceded by a dollar sign.

If you're going on a cruise ship this summer, try to get a cabin above the water line. It'll be a lot easier opening the portholes that way.

Let us get this straight: The networks won't give gavel-to-gavel coverage of political conventions because they're too dull, but fight for the privilege of broadcasting all laps of the Indianapolis 500?

When is the last time you checked the tire pressure on your spare?

We have given you the comments of a few "Naval people" concerning the Pueblo Incident. And simple fairness dictated that we allowed Commander Bucher to have his say too. Then in a succeeding issue were published a couple of interesting letters. We think you'll want to read these too. And these too. And then, further, we're gonna ask you for an opinion.

Crew of Ship Seized Off Korea In '68 Is Awarded War Medals

SAN DIEGO, May 6 (AP) — Twenty-two years after their capture by North Korea and two years after being snubbed by their own Government, the crew of the intelligence-gathering ship Pueblo has received prisoner of war medals.

Sixty-four of the 82 crewmen gathered beside San Diego Bay Saturday to be recognized as prisoners of war for enduring 11 months in captivity.

The sailors, including a few still on active duty, received the awards in a ceremony conducted by an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Barbara Pope. She read a statement from President Bush commending the crew for its "unfailing resolve."

The Pueblo was captured in international waters on Jan. 23, 1968, after North Korean vessels fired on her. Despite torture and public humiliation, the crewmen resisted the Koreans' efforts to use them for propaganda purposes. They were released in December.

'Needed to Be Done'

Lloyd M. Bucher, the Navy commander who was the skipper of the Pueblo, said of the ceremony: "This is what needed to be done when we got home. They needed to tell these guys that they had served well. What they got was a very military function called a board of inquiry, and then bye-bye. They did receive some awards later on, but it was done more or less in private. I wanted these guys recognized in public."

When the prisoner of war medal was authorized by Congress in 1988, the crew of the Pueblo was excluded from eligibility. The Pentagon ruled that the crew members were detained, not held as prisoners of war.

Mr. Bucher, who retired in 1973, and other Pueblo officers were recommended for courts-martial at the time of the inquiry. But the Navy never tried them.

Mr. Bucher declined to speak at the ceremony and said later it was because he had been too emotional. In the past, Mr. Bucher has accused the Navy of putting the ship in dangerous position without adequate support.

F. C. Schumacher Jr. acknowledged the honor on behalf of the crew at the ceremony, attended by about 500 people, including some crew members' families.

"The P.O.W. medal is to honor those people who served and served honorably," Mr. Schumacher said, "and I'm here to tell you today that this crew did serve honorably."

"Commander Bucher Responds"

(*See* L. M. Bucher, pp. 44–50, Winter 1989; F. C. Schumacher, C. T. Durgin, and H. Iredale, pp. 2–6, Spring 1989 *Naval History*)

Paul A. Cavallo—I much enjoyed the firsthand accounts about the *Pueblo* (AGER-2) incident. At the time, I was in the Air Force and home on leave and couldn't believe that we allowed the *Pueblo* to fall so easily into North Korean hands. Having read much about it over the years, I believe now that Commander Bucher and his crew were truly men faced with no exit. Perhaps another commanding officer would have turned left instead of right or fired off a couple of rounds, but the result would have been the same. Our men and equipment would have been seized regardless of who stood on the *Pueblo*'s bridge that cold January morning.

There are several things, however, that trouble me about your series.

First, I find Admiral Hyland's residual animosity toward Commander Bucher unbecoming, but probably in character for a senior military officer. (One might expect that after 20 years and finally having had the time to see the *Pueblo* seizure in the context of a never-ending game of international cat and mouse, Admiral Hyland's feelings would have changed.) Simply because Bucher did not fall gallantly on his sword as the high command apparently expected him to do does not mean that he is any less a leader. But it does indicate to me, at least, that if there are truly any guilty individuals involved, it is senior staff. For how was it that they knowingly allowed an electronic reconnaissance ship to operate off the coast of one of our most unpredictable and barbaric adversaries without Mach 2 protection ready around the clock? It's one thing to send an SR-71 (Mach 4) over enemy territory and tell the pilot to avoid contact with the enemy, but quite another to float a 12-knot tug 20 miles off the coast of North Korea unprotected.

Second, why were there no firsthand accounts by Air Force officers? It would seem that had Admiral Lee been half the officer Admiral Hyland implies Bucher wasn't, he would have contacted local Air Force Tactical Air Command, which would have notified within seconds the closest U. S. Air Force air support, which stands ready 24 hours and does not need to have decks cleared to launch.

Third, perhaps Navy intelligence and the lack of proper high-priority interservice communication procedures had more to do with what happened to Bucher than any reluctance on Bucher's part to fire his weapons or maneuver the *Pueblo* away from incoming Korean torpedo boats.

Finally, one wonders that even now at his advanced age and wisdom, does Admiral Hyland still believe those men and officers who were on board the *Pueblo* should have sacrificed themselves so that Navy staff could save face and careers? Does Hyland really believe that a reconnaissance ship tumid with top secret electronic equipment is "a less prestigious" assignment? What does that say about naval leadership and hierarchy? What does that say about the self-esteem of officers who command something less than a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier? Because a man commands a carrier, does this mean *ipso facto* he is a better leader than a man who commands a reefer? Lee's lack of decisive action certainly seems to prove the contrary.

Perhaps, as Hyland tells us, Bucher does deserve "a completely failing grade." But, I ask, if that's true, what do Hyland and his staff deserve? No better, or all of the sea lore and tradition and qualities of leadership espoused by the instructors at Newport's Officer Candidate School was nothing more than a flight of vain fantasy.

Lieutenant Commander Lee F. Bellar, U. S. Coast Guard (Retired)—The articles concerning the *Pueblo* (AGER-2) incident aroused a feeling within me that I must express. I, along with millions of other Americans, had almost forgotten the *Pueblo* incident, for which we should be ashamed.

During and after the *Pueblo* incident, I was the operations officer on the USCGC *Venturous* (WMEC-625), homeported in San Diego. All of the officers and most of the enlisted men kept aware of the *Pueblo* situation as best we could, if only through the news media. Discussions in the wardroom were frequent concerning all known aspects of the incident. Upon conclusion of the court of inquiry, we all agreed that Commander Bucher was administratively keel-hauled without benefit of a court martial. These last two issues of *Naval History* reaffirm my belief.

Many senior ranking officers feel that Commander Bucher's most serious error was that he did not fire a shot in defense of his command. Others state that had he done so, the act may have plunged the country into another very serious situation during a time when we were already committed in Vietnam. The vessel from the beginning was not intended as one capable of defending against any armed vessels. One burst from the *Pueblo*'s .50-caliber weapon would have surely meant the loss of all hands but not necessarily the classified material and equipment, which was being destroyed as fast as possible. I believe Commander Bucher exercised excellent judgment in not creating the possibility of another conflict. In my opinion, his most serious errors before and during the incident were his lack of preparation of a usable destruction of classified material bill and his hesitance to scuttle his ship. But we were not on scene, were we?

I believe that the entire project as visualized by the Office of Naval Intelligence was doomed from the start. This was caused in part by five major factors: the lack of funding and planning for the proper operation for the concept; the selection of a less-than-suitable vessel to accomplish the desired mission; the lack of knowledge of those force commanders involved of the mere existence of the *Pueblo*, much less her operational mission; the less-than-desirable and necessary logistical-administrative support ashore; and the inadequate crew training. Most of the above should be placed with the project officer in Washington, D. C., where the buck starts and where it stops.

I believe that Commander Bucher and his entire crew acted admirably during their internment and we should not abandon them. They indeed deserved the Prisoner-of-War Medals that were approved in late June.

Years ago, we ran a much-abridged version of Alexander Wollcott's delightful story titled "Entrance Fee". We thought then, and we continue to think, that it is a must for inclusion into any anthology of military writing. It is a story much told in the smoky barracks of French army posts. We feel like telling it anew.

It is the lovely story of Mlle. Cosette and the little cadets of Saint-Cyr Military Academy.

At the turn of the century, the talk, in France, was sure to turn, sooner or later, to Mlle. Cosette, regarded by common consent as the most desirable woman in all of France, and available too, if one would but meet her price.

Her photographs, usually showing her sitting piquantly at a cafe table, were cut from L'Illustration and pinned up in every barracks, certainly in every footlocker.

She lived in St.Cloud, in a tiny, vine-hung villa surrounded by a high garden wall. And even those for whom that wall was hopelessly high took morbid pride in a persistent detail of the legend which said that no man was ever a guest there for the night who could not bring 5000 francs with him.

The story of Cosette filled the cadets at Saint-Cyr with a gentle melancholy. In their twilight hours of relaxation, they talked it over, and all thought it a sorrowful thing that, so wretched is the soldier's pittance, not one of those who must some day walk into battle would even carry with him a memory of the fairest woman in all of France. For what cadet could hope to raise 5000 francs? Very sad. And yet, cried one of their number, there were a thousand students at Saint-Cyr, and not one among them so lacking in resource that he could not, given time, manage to raise at least 5 francs.

And thus the Cosette Sweepstake had its genesis. There followed the varied efforts to raise the money, and by the appointed time, the last man had his 5 francs.

The 5000 francs were piled high in one of the company dayrooms.

A drawing of the lucky number of some bright-eyed cadet was the next order of business.

The drawing was well underway when a perplexed instructor stumbled on the proceedings. He, at once, reported his discovery to the Commandant who was so profoundly moved that he was keen to cooperate. He laughed at the thought of one of his starry-eyed youngsters arriving at Saint-Cloud with only his youth and his entrance fee.

The innocent budget had made no provision for the trip to Paris, none for a carriage, a bouquet, perhaps even a supper party. The Commandant vowed as to how he would wish to meet this margin of contingency from his own fatherly pocket. No cadet should leave Saint-Cyr for Paris on such an errand without being completely prepared.

Finally, the big day for the chosen cadet arrived. Very trim in his red breeches, blue tunic, white gloves, and jaunty white cockage, he was off to Paris. The Commandant stood at his window, moist-eyed and chuckling, to watch until the white cockade disappeared down the avenue of poplars.

The sunlight was making a gay pattern on Cosette's carpet the next morning, when she sat up and meditated on the day ahead. Her little cadet was cradled in a sweet, dreamless sleep. It touched her rather to see how preposterously young he was. As she gazed upon him, he awoke.

"Good morning, my old one," she said, "and now that you're awake, I must ask you how a cadet at Saint-Cyr ever got hold of 5000 francs?"

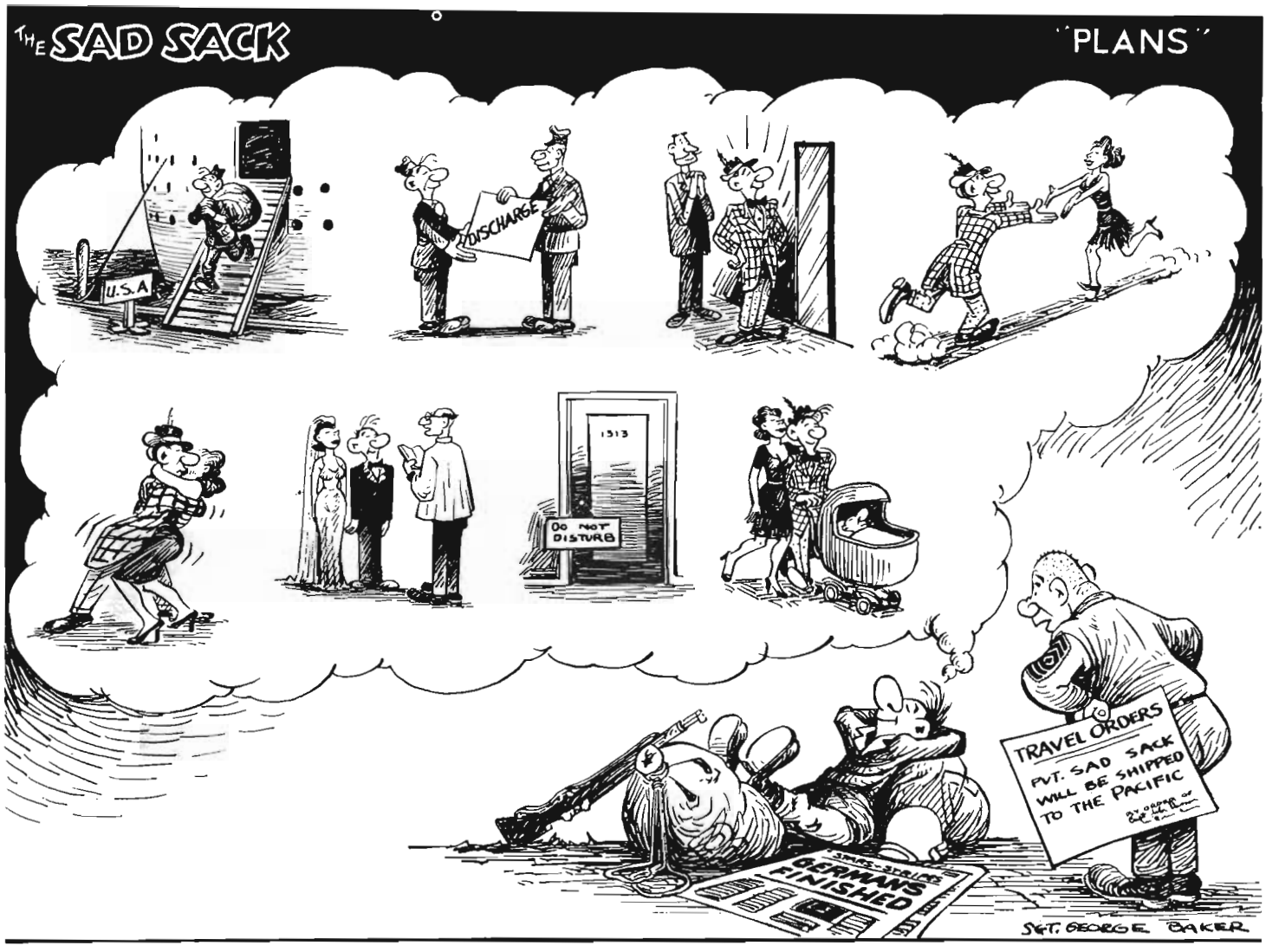
Thus abruptly questioned, he lost his head and blurted out the tale of the sweepstake. Perhaps he felt it could do no harm now. Anyway, she listened so avidly, with such flattering little gasps of surprise and such sunny ripples of laughter, that he quite warmed to his story. When he told her of the Commandant's part in the story, she rose and strode up and down, tears in her violet eyes.

"Saint-Cyr has paid me the prettiest compliment I have ever known", she said, "and I am the proudest woman in France this day.. But surely I must do my part. When you are an old, old man in the Vandée, you shall tell your grandchildren that, once in your youth, you knew the dearest favors in France, and they cost you not a sou. Not a sou."

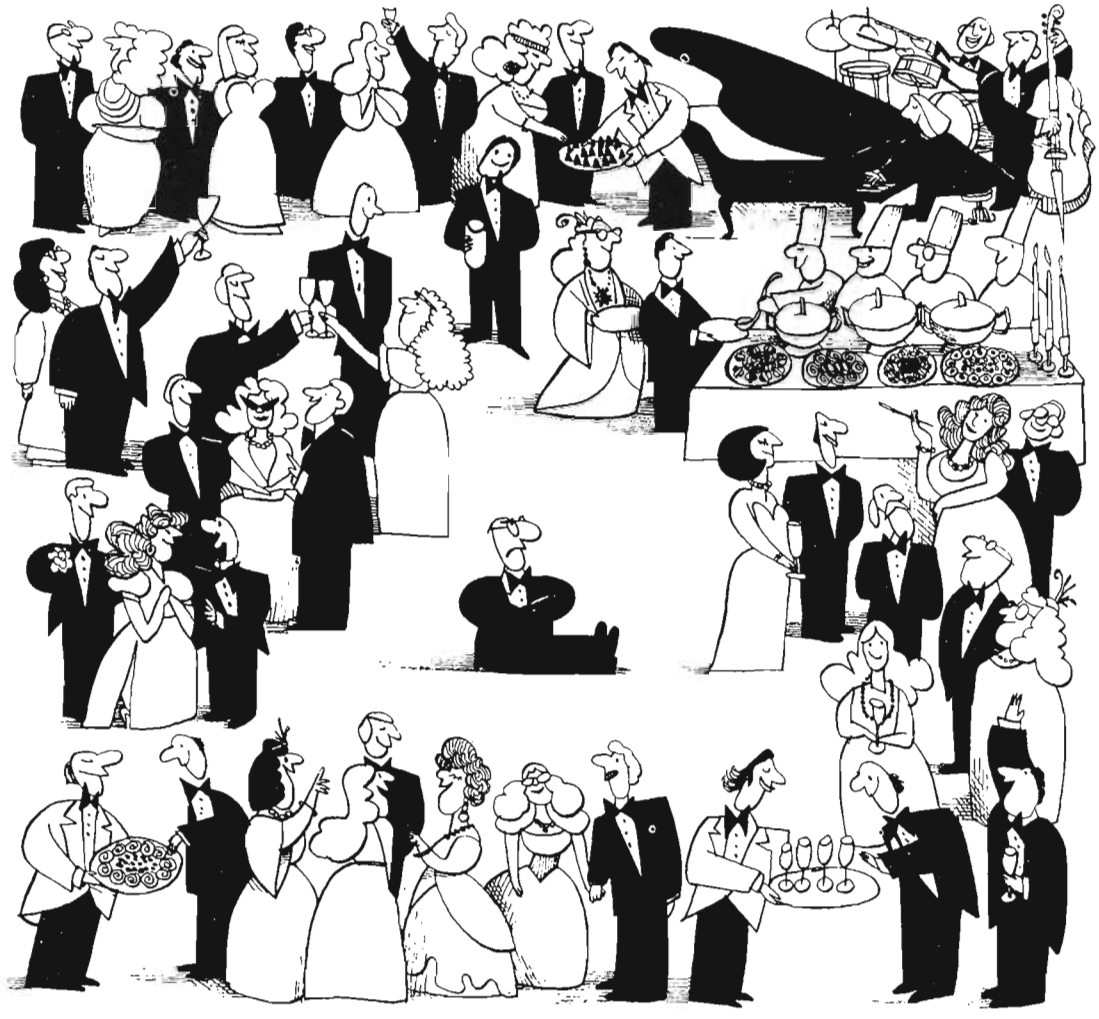
At that she hauled open the little drawer where he had seen her lock up the lottery receipts the night before.

"Here", she said, with a lovely gesture. "I give you back your money".

And she handed him his 5 francs.



HYATT REGENCY BUFFALO



Mail this Room Reservation Form directly to The Hotel

NAME OF GROUP **24th INFANTRY DIVISION** CONV CODE **I6**

DATES OF FUNCTION **SEPTEMBER 26-29, 1990**

FULL NAME: LAST FIRST MIDDLE

COMPANY

STREET PHONE

CITY, STATE & ZIP CODE **HYATT GOLD PASSPORT #**

ROOMMATE'S NAME (OTHER THAN SPOUSE) DATE OF ARRIVAL DATE OF DEPARTURE

ARRIVAL DATE: DEPARTURE DATE:

TIME OF ARRIVAL

GUARANTEED RESERVATIONS*
INDICATE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

(A) ASSURED RESERVATION
CREDIT CARD NAME
CREDIT CARD NUMBER
EXPIRATION DATE

(B) FIRST NIGHT DEPOSIT ENCLOSED ☐
AMOUNT ENCLOSED $

PLEASE CIRCLE RATE DESIRED		REGENCY CLUB LEVEL		SUITE TYPE	PARLOR & ONE BEDROOM	PARLOR & TWO BEDROOM
SINGLE 1 Person, 1 Bed	$67.00	REGENCY CLUB LEVEL (Upon Availability)		HURON	(280 sq ft parlor) $165.00	$240.00
DOUBLE 2 People, 1 Bed	$67.00	SGL $115.00	DBL $125.00	GENESEE	(264 sq ft parlor, includes wet bar) $165.00	$240.00
DOUBLE/DOUBLE 2 People, 2 Beds	$67.00			NOTE SUITES ARE BASED UPON AVAILABILITY		
TRIPLE:	$67.00					
QUAD:	$67.00					

SIGNATURE DATE

FOR GUARANTEED RESERVATIONS

*I understand that I am liable for one night's room and tax which will be deducted from my deposit or billed through my credit card in the event that I do not cancel or arrive on the date indicated.

SPECIFIC ROOM REQUESTS WILL BE HANDLED TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY, BUT CANNOT BE GUARANTEED.

Spotted in "The Retired Officer": Eight-by-twenty inch autographed picture of the 13th FA officers taken in Hawaii in May 1938 is available. Write J.W. Phillips, 7737 Terra Manor, Boerne TX 78006.

It's becoming more and more obvious that it's prudent to plan reunions not one year in advance but two, or three, or four years in advance.

For those who think a rabbit's foot is lucky, consider please what happened to the rabbit.

PLANTER M. & Loretta R. WILSON
Hv.Mort & L 21st '49-'51

A BILL ROSEBORO quote, in paying his dues: "I've been remiss, lax, negligent and stupid. Now that I think of it, that's exactly what my 1st Sgt. used to tell me." Bill's at 605 Marlboro, Hamlet NC in Buffalo, case you write.

This Ad Requires Audience Participation.

Well, we can't really call it an ad; it's a ballot, that's what it is. We're asking for your opinion. We're hoping for a 75% response from our 3200 members - and we're going to publish the results in our next issue. So please mail your vote in right away

24...24...24...24...24...24...24...24...24

OPINION POLL

Editor, Taro Leaf
24th Infantry Division Association
120 Maple St., Room 207
Springfield MA 01103

Having read the Pueblo material I give you my opinion:

_____ Yes, the USN acted properly

_____ No, the USN acted improperly.

Comment (if you are to)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
(Name - please print)

24...24...24...24...24...24...24...24...24

"MINE'S PLANT FOOD. WHAT'S YOURS?"

The VICTORY DIVISION NEWS

BILL SHOWEN (21st & 24th Recon '41-'44) of 1911 Francis, Waukesha WI, keeps us up to date on the activities of the Burlington Liar's Club. He tells us that they awarded first place this year to a girl who wrote that her mother gave her a slow cooker. It cooks so slow that the bean soup sprouts. Another girl of Pensacola, FL wrote that the last hurricane blew so hard that bark came off trees and out of dogs. A fellow from Comstock WI said a small town in the north purchased a new fire engine and decided to keep the old one on standby for false alarms only." It all makes sense to us, Bill.

Oldest veteran has died. A Louella Luhrman, a WW I Army nurse, died Jan.25th at age 108. She became the oldest veteran in 1987 when Jasper Garrison, a Spanish-American war vet died at age 107.

The new homeowner, Mrs. Adler, was buying fertilizer for her lawn. She asked the salesman, "Is that the only scent it comes in?"

A bit of healthy philosphy from comedian Buddy Hackett: "I've had a few arguments with people. But I never carry a grudge. You know why? While you're carrying a grudge, they're out dancing!"

QUELQUES JOURS AVEC NOUS.

A few days with us. That's what we ask you to do - spend a few days with us in Buffalo.

From CECIL LAW (Hq. 1st Bn.19th '44-45) over at 26 Fairfax in Cinnaminson NJ comes this melancholic memo: "I will never make a convention. I had a triple by-pass 3 years ago. I felt fine after the operation but I have to take it easy. So I just drive around town. I can't complain. I'll be 82 next month."

Don't give up the fight, Cecil. Never surrender!!

Meet us in Buffalo and we'll take you over to see that infamous Love Canal.

From high fashion to discount bargains, best sellers to faded jeans, vintage clothing to designer wear - Buffalo's shopping scene has it all. You'll find flagship department stores...exquisite boutiques...discount outlets...and everything in between. In downtown Buffalo, Buffalo Place, along Main Street is a charming mix of department stores, specialty shops and boutiques. Delaware Avenue is a haven for high-fashion specialty gift shops and clothing boutiques. Neighboring Elmwood Avenue features university district shopping with an array of quaint shops, bookstores, cafes and trendy bars. Clarence is also well known for its variety of antique dealers. And if you're looking for treasures from the past, you'll find Allentown - an Historic Preservation District.

Berets may be in, but umbrellas are out.

That's the latest word from Pentagon sources who say senior Army leaders are having second thoughts about the decade-old uniform policy that restricts the wearing of berets to Special Forces, Ranger and airborne soldiers.

Army leaders, officials said, will meet later this winter to decide if berets should be authorized for all soldiers.

The proposal, if approved, would replace the garrison cap with a beret, possibly brown or black in color. Special Forces, Ranger and airborne soldiers will continue to wear their distinctive headgear and flashes, regardless of the decision.

In another uniform issue, Pentagon insiders said service leaders have decided the Army's longstanding policy prohibiting male soldiers from carrying umbrellas while in uniform will not change.

Policy permits women soldiers to carry umbrellas while in uniform, but male soldiers may not do so. The Martine Corps has the same policy, while the Navy and Air Force permit all their members to carry umbrellas.

VELLA, FENTNER, LEW & WILCZAK. No, it's not a law firm. It's a bunch of people who are going to make you glad you Buffalo'd it. We left out two or three more names, but to include everyone would have spoiled the gag. Yeah, "the gag".

Are Your Current 1989-90 Dues Paid?
Subscription /Membership Year
August 1, 1989 - July 31, 1990

Check your card TODAY!!!
It will cost your association time and money to bill you.
Please pay dues promptly!

We were about to go to press when we spotted this news item:

2 million victims of Stalin cleared

MOSCOW – A Kremlin commission set up to review the cases of some of those imprisoned or executed during dictator Josef Stalin's purges has cleared 2 million people, the government daily Izvestia said yesterday. Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev, who heads the commission, said the rehabilitations have almost been completed, the paper reported. (Reuters)

A little late, isn't it, for those who were executed?

GOOD FRIENDS ARE FOR KEEPS!
KEEP IN TOUCH !!!

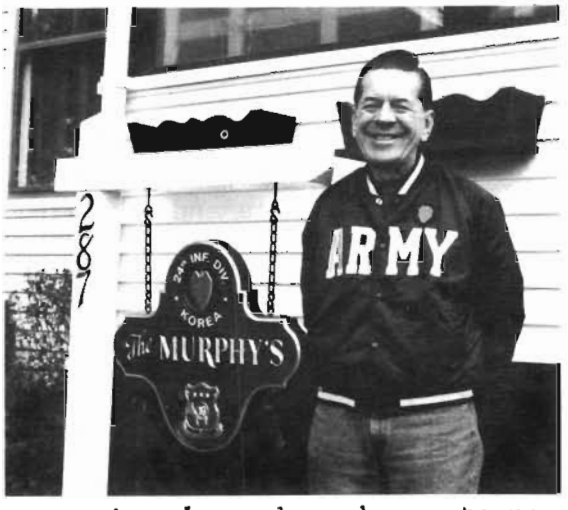
There is nothing more perfect than a perfect bunt.

Never order anything from a menu that has a tassled cord.

Back on our rolls, we happily report, is JOHN E. ANDERSON, (Hq. 1st Bn. 34th '42-'44), of Box 367, East Brady PA. Reporting on his family - Johnny is a widower - he enters the delightful line: "One loveable daughter, age 41, with 4 grandchildren - amen to that, brother." We loved it, Johnny. He adds, "My old brain may skip a beat or two - thank God my heart's still young." Terrific, Johnny, please make it to Buffalo; we need that precious spirit.

Is your kitchen floor clean enough to eat off of? And if it were, would you?

It must be a conspiracy: All mothers throw out their kids' baseball card collections. And the kids complain about it for the rest of their lives.



Now here's a chap who wants no misunderstanding. It's TOM MURPHY, Our Lifer 803. He's standing in the entrance-way to 287 Everett, down in Allston MA. Tom writes, "Thought you might like to see my Father's Day present." We see the Division patch and the 19th crest! Tom was Med.Co. 19th in '54-'55. Ooops, almost missed the patch on Tom's jacket. Great spirit, Tom. In Buffalo, we'll drink a toast to all of this. Be sure to bring Terry.

It's a street sign in Houston, TX. The little fellow looks a little perplexed by this confusing array. Can you blame him, CHARLEY CARD, down there in Houston, can you give us a clue?

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Why we hang in there - it's because of letters such as this one from MANUEL P. HERNANDEZ (Sv.19th '49), of 12208 Pineville, El Monte CA:

"Just these few lines to let you know that I made a very wise decision when I joined the Association. If nothing else comes out of this, I am glad that I got my first newsletter. I saw the name OTTO KRONE. I took a chance and wrote him, asking if he was the same Otto Krone who I knew back in '49 at Division School Center at Kokura.

"It was he! Since then, he and I have been writing to each other. I hope to do so for a long time. I am also including a newspaper article about an old Taro Leafer in the local newspaper. I thought you might be interested.

"Again I want to thank you. You have reintroduced me to a friend."

And with the letter came this clipping from Manny's local paper. DOMINGO VASQUEZ - he likes "Mingo" incidentally, is also one of our members. Hail, hail, the gang's all here! Mingo was L 21st '42-'45.

Memories of war for a hero ease

Kept bravery medals secret for many years

By JANICE LUDER
Staff writer

DUARTE — When Domingo Vasquez cruises down the freeway in his Pontiac, strangers sometimes pass, honk and salute. They're paying homage to the message on Vasquez's license plate — a drawing of a Purple Heart medal and the words "combat wounded."

For the 69-year-old Duarte resident, placing that bold message on his bumper — one of the newest personalized plates issued — contradicts the past 45 years he has spent keeping his World War II memories locked inside.

A three-year veteran of fighting in the South Pacific, Vasquez has tried to deny the horrors he witnessed, he said. It was a hopeless cause.

His wife, Angie, told him, "You can't live in hate."

His sister, Margaret Viramontez, told him, "Talk about it."

She knew her gentle and timid brother had learned to swear and kill overseas, she said, but when he asked him, "What was it like, Bud?" he answered, 'Oh, it was just a war."

His family knew he had received the Purple Heart medal for his combat wounds, but Vasquez kept his other six medals — including two Bronze Stars for bravery — a secret. "I would have to explain how I earned the medals," he said.

"My mother wanted to know how I was promoted so fast from private to sergeant. I told her the Army just didn't know what they were doing," Vasquez said.

A few years ago, encouraged by his family and his friends at the American Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 113 in Irwindale, he began to talk about the experiences that play daily in his brain.

It still makes him a little nervous, he said, but he believes now it's the only way to find some release. "When I went into the Army, I was a nice Latin boy. I played the guitar," he said softly.

He still grieves for the innocence the Army stripped from him and his comrades. "I saw things you couldn't believe. I did things I never thought I would. I'm glad I'm talking about it now," he said.

In 1986, Vasquez wrote to the Army and asked for a list of medals he had earned. That year the Army sent him his list and a Bronze Star. The bravery medal was awarded for Vasquez's refusal to leave a sick comrade by the side of a New Guinea road, albeit with a medic, while he and his patrol dashed for boats to escape enemy fire.

Vasquez and a few other soldiers returned and rescued the soldier. "I knew what the Japanese did to their prisoners of war," he said.

It was that incident, Vasquez said, that earned him his promotion to sergeant.

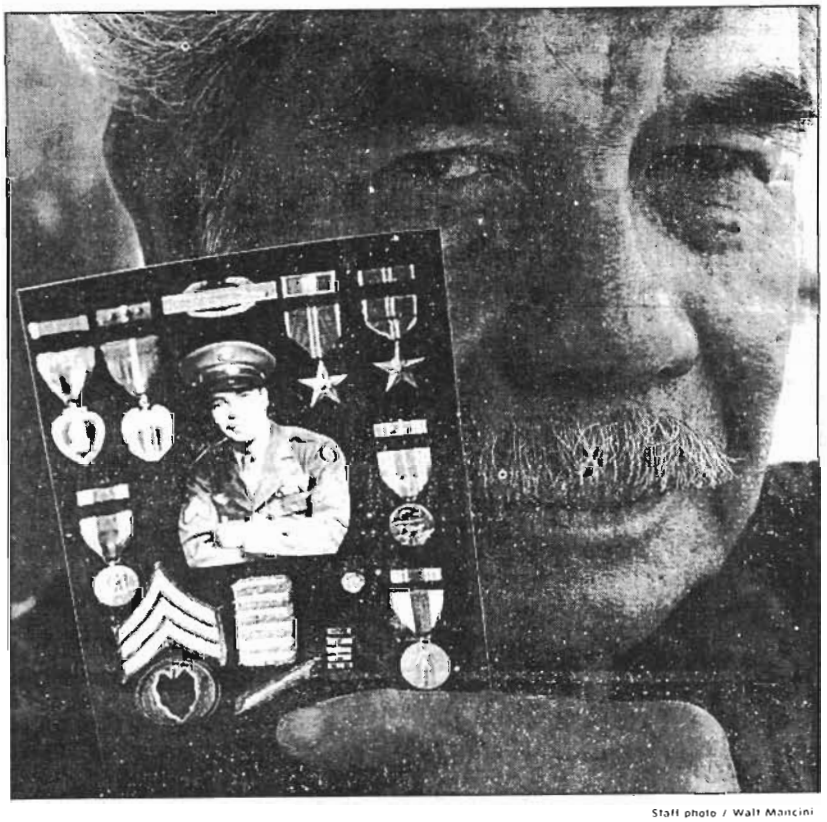
But when a second Bronze Star arrived last year, he pretended he didn't know why. Last week, he admitted it was for his bravery in getting a wounded buddy to a first-aid station while under attack in the Philippines. The buddy was like a brother, he said, and half his head was blown off with a hand grenade. "I held him in my arms and I knew . . ." Vasquez recalled quietly, as his hand fluttered to a tiny jeweled flag on his cap. "But I had to get him to help."

Today, Vasquez takes the Valium first prescribed by Army doctors in 1945. "Some times my whole body itches, and I have to get up at 3 a.m. and take a shower," he said.

He still grapples with the malaria he contracted in the steamy Philippine jungles and with the pain from a gunshot wound in his back ("I learned from that mistake to always make sure the enemy was dead before I walked away"). But he's learning to open up, to go to church, to help himself, he said. He even took a trip to Japan to try to reconcile his bitterness and to find some answers.

"Every Veterans Day when the flags go up, my heart aches because my mother never knew about any of this," he said.

Viramontez agreed. "Our mother would have been so proud to know he had earned all those medals."



Staff photo / Walt Mancini

Domingo Vasquez holds a photo of himself at age 20, as well as the 7 medals he earned.

> "I saw things you couldn't believe. I did things I never thought I would. I'm glad I'm talking about it now."
>
> — DOMINGO VASQUEZ
> recalling the horrors of war

Beetle gets a salute from Army

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beetle Bailey, the lazy but lovable GI who has stumbled through comic pages for the past 40 years, finally won an admiring salute Thursday from the U.S. Army.

In a Flag Day ceremony at the Pentagon, cartoonist Mort Walker received a framed "certificate of appreciation for patriotic civilian service" from Brig. Gen. Bill McClain, who declared an armistice in the Army's decades-old hostilities against the slovenly buck private.

"Through it all, you have entertained us, although sometimes we haven't always liked it," said McClain, the Army's public affairs chief. He observed: "If you can't laugh at yourself, something is intrinsically wrong with you."

Tongue in cheek, Walker replied that it was always "the dream of Gen. Halftrack and mine to hear from the Pentagon," and it took 40 years to get the call.

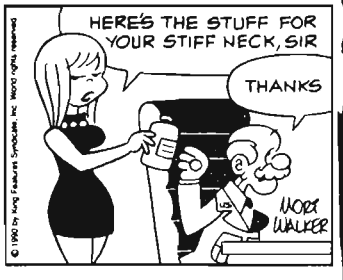
"I can't believe I'm actually here," Walker said. "As hard as it is to find anything in the Pentagon, they finally found a sense of humor."

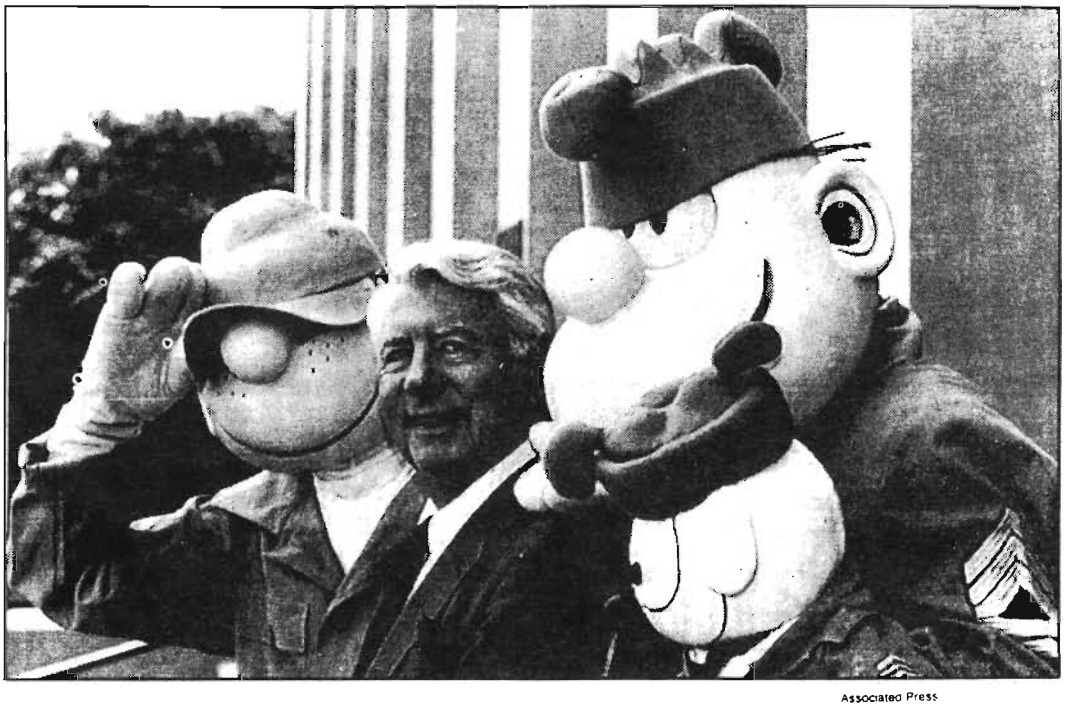
Since Walker created the comic strip in 1950, based on his experiences as an Army draftee in World War II, Beetle Bailey and his cartoon friends have annoyed some Pentagon brass, who complained they presented an unflattering image of Army life.

In 1954, the Tokyo edition of the Stars and Stripes military newspaper drummed Beetle off its pages because the strip poked fun at officers. The official explanation was that "Beetle Bailey had a low interest value," but the move was denounced in newspaper editorials as silly.

Stars and Stripes banned the strip again in 1970, as did some Southern newspapers, when Walker introduced Lt. Flap, a feisty black character. Miss Buxley, the bosomy secretary to Gen. Halftrack, drew protests from feminists.

Putting the controversy behind, the Army heaped praise on Walker in its citation Thursday.





Associated Press

■ **Cartoonist Mort Walker, center, is flanked by Beetle Bailey, Sarge and his dog Otto at a Pentagon ceremony honoring the comic strip Thursday. The military has not always found the strip funny.**

REUNION MEMORIES

Letters - and we mean the plural of "letter" - from DICK STUBEN over in Omaha, NE (3560 Jackson) are always a delight to receive. Allow us, if you will, to give you a smattering from his file:

"I noticed the too brief 'epitaph in print' for BOB LAVENDER in the last issue which failed to mention his stint as a Captain with Hqs. 1st Bn., 19th.

"I chuckle when I think of Christmas 1950 - dinner was brought up to the Imjin River Front where it was dished out on metal trays no less. Bob, never at a loss for words himself, decided to read a short 'thank you for your blessings' speech. The speech, which must have lasted all of 2 or 3 minutes at the most, but seemed like an eternity, was just long enough to allow part of the food to freeze to the metal trays.

"Another thread in the tapestry of Division History.

* * * * *

"Hear that you are getting static from some members. As with any service group, if someone isn't bitching, there IS something wrong.

* * * * *

"A final comment on 'The Forgotten War' by Clay Blair...As with any historical enterprise of this nature, the words sometimes create an illusion where in reality the truth is in the 'eye of the doer'...

"On page 385, he states that on Nov. 4 (1950) 'C' Company, 19th, (a hard luck outfit) was cut off and forced to surrender. One is immediately hit with a mental picture of a 180-200 man company surrendering without a fight.

"I was there and can report that such was not the case. "C" Company, 19th, understrengthed (even with attached ROKs) was surprised and partially surrounded by a small 'hoard' of Chinese, and despite the untenability of the situation, some of its members made what I thought was a graceful, fighting withdrawal. This, by the way, was the same fracas where Bob Dumas' brother, Roger Dumas, became a POW as did our then CO, Lt.Rockwerk (now Major and an Association member), after some trying happenstances caused by the withdrawal of 'A' and 'B' Companies on our left flank. Another member, John L.M. Sullivan was also with our group that got out...

"Blair, who seems to be picking on some of the officers, also missed another good story of a bridge on the Naktong which was blown prematurely by the 3rd Eng. (C) Bn. and its CO, Lt.Col. Mathew V.Pothier (a good soldier and West Pointer who liked a drink now and then) who was subsequently relieved of command because a whole division of ROKs was still retreating toward the bridge and they had to leave most of their vehicles on the wrong side of the river!"

Keep those letters coming, Dick, we love 'em.

Spotted an interesting question and answer in a recent Army publication. It was news to us. Oh go ahead, say you knew it all the time. It had to do with the order of precedence. Here goes:

Q. I am responsible for planning the activities for my chapter's July Fourth celebration. Can you clarify the order of precedence of uniformed services attendees?

A. Service order for flags, marching units, etc., is: U.S. Army, U.S.Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.

Tell us. Did you ever see the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association in a parade?

Here's an item in memory of ALLAN KIVLEMAN, a 34th corporal in Hq.Co. who was listed MIA in August of '50 and was confirmed as deceased while a POW in Nov. of '50. For this information, we are exceedingly grateful to ED GRYGIER (Hv.Mort. 19th 9/49-8/51) of 136 Central Av., Staten Island NY 10301. Ed is President of the Korean War Veterans of Staten Island and he advises that his chapter is now known as the Corporal Allan Kivleman Chapter. Eddie, you are a wonderfully compassionate man.

The travelling FARMERS, ED and Carolyn, postcarded us from Australia with this message: "Really grown since '43. Traveled from north to south. Beautiful country. See ya in Buffalo."