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***"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."***

*A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker*

August 10, 2001




# Commentary

## Revisiting History

**W**hile reprising the Pueblo seizure for an upcoming FOX News telecast, I had the opportunity to re-read the hundreds of documents I had stored away in sealed boxes in the garage.

*The major revelations of the intrigue behind the scenes will await the free electronic publication of my book on my website, but one thing that struck me during my re-exam deserves comment: the quality and quantity of the supporters and detractors of the Pueblo's Commanding Officer, Commander Loyd Mark "Pete" Bucher.*

*His supporters include, first and foremost, 81 of the surviving 82 members of his crew upon their return. That alone is an astonishing number, because most enlisted men have a natural dislike for their Commanding Officer. You could not get 81 of 82 men anywhere to agree as to today's date, much less supporting the Commanding Officer who some think was responsible for their daily torture for a year! In fact, one local crewmember, Marine Sgt. Bob Chica, has made the rounds of San Diego service clubs supporting Pete for many years...and Chica is the holder of the Navy Cross, the Navy's highest medal and the medal second only to the Congressional Medal of Honor.*

*The current issue of Surface Warfare Magazine, an official Navy publication, includes the latest article on the seizure of the Pueblo. The article states: "While the debate continues about the Pueblo incident, the crew remains united behind their skipper and love to refer to themselves as 'Bucher's Bastards.'" *

*The article continues, "He is the greatest man I've ever known," said Fireman Larry E. Strickland. "The debt we owe him, well, how can we ever repay it? He got us out alive."*

*Pete's other public supporters included John and Pila Wayne, The Survivors of the Bataan Death March, Pat Boone, Johnny Grant, US American Legion, Dennis Crosby, Bob Hope, and Admiral Rosenberg who was assigned to greet the Pueblo crew across the Bridge of No Return...you get the picture. Pete's private supporters included Vice Adm. Bernie Roeder, the Commander of the US First Fleet, who expressed his support to me in private conversations many times aboard his First Fleet Flagship, the Cruiser USS Chicago.*

*Yes, there were detractors, including mostly unnamed retired military officers who thought Pete should have gone down with his ship, even if it was an auxiliary ship and not a "Ship of the Line." I served under Pete on submarine patrol when all hell was breaking loose. Pete may be a lot of things, but he is not a coward. Trust me. No man who ever served on submarines with Pete will ever be counted among those who call Pete a coward - we have lived through a lot with him. One of Pete's strongest supporters was the Chief of the Boat when we all served together on the USS Diodon (SS-396). The Submarine Force does not countenance cowards - they cost Submariners their lives.*

*There is only one person of local note who still publicly calls Pete a "coward" and that is Roger Hedgecock - a man who never served a day in the military. Imagine Roger calling a man who wears the Purple Heart, the POW medal, and who was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor, a coward!*

*Hmmmmm.*

*If you do not see the irony of this situation, perhaps I need to write more clearly. Roger has changed his mind before, and I hope he will do so again on this subject. When Roger was a County Supervisor he opposed Prop. 13 - and he later supported and voted for Ross Perot. Eventually Roger saw the light on these subjects and it is possible he will change his mind on the Pueblo and Pete Bucher.*

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**“We can evade reality, but we cannot evade the consequences of evading reality.”**

**Ayn Rand**

