

USS *PUEBLO* – The Forgotten Historical Event of 1968

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SUMMARY OF EVENTS

On January 23, 1968, the *Pueblo*, with eighty-one crew members and two civilian oceanographers, was collecting intelligence and oceanographic information in international waters off the North Korean coastline. North Korean patrol boats attacked, boarded and seized control of the ship, then forced her into Wonsan harbor, killing one crew member and injuring several others, including Bucher, before placing the crew in confinement.^[1] The aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* and two others were about 800 nautical miles away, with more than 100 jets capable of reaching the *Pueblo* in less than an hour.^[3] Unfortunately, the *Enterprise* crew knew nothing of the *Pueblo*'s existence.^[4]

On December 23, 1968, after the U.S. signed a statement accepting responsibility for espionage, the North Koreans released the eighty-two survivors.^[2] These men returned home to mixed public opinions and a military inquiry about how they handled the attack and about their signing of false confessions.

While the crew and the Navy maintained that the *Pueblo* was miles outside North Korean territorial waters, Korea claimed that the vessel was well within North Korea's territory at the time of its capture. The mission statement allowed her to approach within a nautical mile of that limit. North Korea, however, claims a 50 nautical mile sea boundary even though international standards are 12 nautical miles.^[5]

Today, some thirty years after her capture, the USS *Pueblo* still remains in North Korea.

^[1] "How Communists Captured a U.S. Warship," U.S. News & World Report, 5 February 1968, 24-25.

^[2] U.S. Department of State, "North Korean Document Signed By U.S. at Panmunjom," Department of State Bulletin, vol. LX, no. 1541 (6 January 1969): 2-3.

^[3] "The War: In *Pueblo*'s Wake," Time, 2 February 1968, 12-17.

^[4] Kent L. Lee, "The *Pueblo* Incident: The Lack of Air Support," Naval History, Fall, 1988, 55-56.

^[5] American Society of International Law. Proceedings of the American Society of International Law: at its sixty-third annual meeting held at Washington, D.C. April 24-26, 1969. "Questions of international law raised by the seizure of the U.S.S. *Pueblo*."

NAME _____

SHOW ALL WORK

1. For how many days was the crew held captive? (Hint: include the day of capture and the day of release.)
2. How long is a statute mile in feet?
3. What is a nautical mile?
4. How long is a nautical mile in feet?
5. Convert 12 nautical miles to statute miles.
6. Convert 50 nautical miles to statute miles.
7. Convert 800 nautical miles to statute miles.
8. If the *Pueblo* was 12 nautical miles off the coast of North Korea, how far into North Korea's 'claimed' sea boundary was the ship?
9. How many latitudes away was the *Enterprise*? (Hint: assume the given info was its exact distance away.)
10. Calculate the speed of the jets (off the *Enterprise*) if they were sent to aid the American ship, assuming that the jets would have needed exactly one hour to reach the *Pueblo*, and using the hint from #6. Your answer should be in statute miles per hour, not nautical miles per hour, because only ships at sea use nautical miles.