

PRAYING IN CAPTIVITY

The *USS Pueblo* – named after Pueblo County, Colo. – is an American technical research ship (Navy intelligence) that was boarded and captured by North Korean forces on Jan. 23, 1968. North Korea claimed it strayed into their territorial waters, but the United States maintains that the vessel was in international waters at the time of the incident.

Pueblo is still held by North Korea, moored on the Taedong River in Pyongyang and used as a museum ship. After 11 months in captivity, the 82 crew members – starved and regularly tortured in North Korean custody – were released.

Adm. James Kelly, the Navy's chief of chaplains, tells how crew members began to pray more and more frequently as the weary months of their imprisonment dragged on.



At mealtimes, the men would bow their heads slightly and thank God for the food before them. If Communist guards spotted them, however, the guards would scream, “This is not a church! This food is a gift from the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea!”

At night, the men dared not kneel beside their bunks, so they prayed as they were lying on their backs. Instead of praying to the Lord by name, they referred to Him as *Commworldflit*, which stood for Commander of the world’s fleets. These sailors felt they were making contact with the Supreme Commander of all things, and they stood firm in their belief that they were under His protection and care.

Regardless of our circumstances, even when we cannot pray openly, God looks at our hearts. Whatever language we may use, whatever words are spoken, He hears us when our hearts are praying.

– Beecher Hunter