

## Skipper of Pueblo Gives Closed-Door Testimony

Describes Further Aspects of Captivity

By RICHARD E. MEYER

CORONADO, Calif. (AP) — The captain of the Pueblo, after four days of sometimes anguished public testimony, spent five hours behind closed doors Friday describing to a Navy court of inquiry further aspects of his ship's capture and the captivity of his crew.

Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher was excused at mid-afternoon from further appearances, subject to recall, and Capt. Thomas L. Dwyer took the stand. Dwyer was chief of staff for intelligence for the commander of U. S. Naval forces in Japan when the Pueblo was seized a year ago by North Koreans.

A Navy information officer, Capt. Vincent Thomas, held a briefing for newsmen after the day's session. He said everything in Dwyer's testimony and most of Bucher's was classified information, but outlined the nonsecret portion of Bucher's testimony.

### WON'T ELABORATE

Thomas declined to elaborate on the classified material, other than to say it concerned "the mission and operation of the Pueblo." The convening order of the court says secret sessions may be held only for matters which are classified, which the dictionary defines as requiring protection in the interest of national defense.

Others among Bucher's superiors were to testify behind closed doors into Tuesday. Their statements, the skipper's attorney told newsmen, would be crucial to his client.

The court told Bucher Wednesday he is suspected of violating Navy regulations in surrendering his intelligence ship to North Koreans without a fight.

The court of five admirals could recommend anything

from medals to courts martial. In response to a newsman's question, a Navy legal specialist said the severest sentence Bucher could receive from a court martial would be dismissal from the service and two years in prison.

### SIGNALS DISCOVERED

Thomas said the unclassified information discussed at the closed session included testimony by Bucher that North Koreans discovered "hundreds of signals sent home (by the crew) to tell the United States their spying confessions were phony."

"After publication of the now famous photo in a national magazine (in which the Pueblo crewmen gave a sign of vulgar contempt) the North Koreans went back and reviewed all of their propaganda materials," said Thomas.

He said Bucher testified that about this time—last Dec. 12—almost the entire crew received severe beatings.

"Bucher said the North Koreans tried specific hard line Communist indoctrination on them," Thomas said, and told the crew the United States has been committing aggressive acts against their country since the U.S.S. General Sherman was wrecked on their shores in 1866.

### AGAINST RELIGION

The North Koreans conducted three or four searches to determine whether any of the crewmen were practicing any religion, Thomas said Bucher testified, because they did not want their guards to see any religious activity.

Bucher also said some of his crewmen wrote books during their captivity including one book of rock'n'roll songs by one of the younger members of the crew and language textbooks from memory in Japanese, Russian, Spanish and German, Thomas said.

He said the books, including



—Photo by The Times-Picayune.

**MRS. MAY JONES ALBA** is the newly installed president of the Republican Women's Club of Jefferson. She succeeds Mrs. Charles Braugh.

the language texts by communications experts among the Pueblo crew, were confiscated.

Thomas said Bucher's civilian attorney, E. Miles Harvey, had been provided the security checks and clearances necessary to attend the closed session.

He said Harvey and Bucher's military counsel, Capt. James Keys, "had the opportunity to question the other witness and they utilized the opportunity."

When he came out at one point, during a recess, he said he was "much more relaxed" and that the session "went well."

### SERIOUS, SILENT

Bucher, who wept and broke down as he told Thursday of death threats to himself and his crew that preceded his confession of spying, was serious and silent as he entered the closed session.

When he came out at one point, during a recess, he said he was "much more relaxed" and that the session "went well."

Thomas said Dwyer would continue his testimony at 10 a.m. Saturday, and would be



followed on the stand by Capt. Forrest A. Pease and Rear Adm. Frank L. Johnson, commander of U. S. Naval forces in Japan and Bucher's superior at the time of the capture. Pease was Johnson's chief of staff.

It was to Johnson's headquarters that Bucher messaged urgent pleas for help, saying North Korean gunboats were firing at the Pueblo with 57 mm cannon and machine guns.

Bucher testified last Monday that before the Pueblo left Sasebo, Japan, on a mission to check on transmissions from Soviet ships and North Korean radar, "He (Johnson) said they (the Pueblo's two 50 caliber machine guns) were to be used in the event that all else failed in extricating ourselves from a harassment situation such as had not been experienced before."

Bucher added: "He was quite sure that they would never be needed and I was under the definite impression that everyone was not in concurrence at Commander Naval Forces Japan that guns should even be located on the ship."

#### **WOULD PROVOKE ATTACK**

"I received this impression from many officers up there, that they did not think that they (the guns) belonged on the ship and felt a definite — they felt uneasy about putting the guns on there, that we might in fact, by having the guns, draw the type of reaction from potential enemy forces that we did not want, which was an attack on the ship."

Bucher also said he did not receive heavier guns he requested

and was "hopelessly out-gunned" by the North Koreans.

In Washington, Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana forecast investigations of the seizure by the Senate Armed Services and the Foreign Relations committees after the court of inquiry ends.

In New Haven, Mayor Richard C. Lee wrote to the secretary of the Navy that "harrassment" of Bucher should be halted. He said Bucher is getting cruel treatment from "Navy brass who apparently have no concern except to fix the blame, somehow, on someone other than the establishment."

In Garden City, N.Y., the newspaper Newsday said in a copyrighted dispatch from Washington that the Air Force decided not to send planes to help the Pueblo when it was attacked because there were only a few available at the time, and hundreds of Communist MIGs were based within range. This decision, the story said, later was concurred in by the secretary of defense and President Johnson, depicted as "extremely relieved" that the Air Force had not "started throwing bombs around...that would have resulted in a worse situation than her capture."

#### **AUTHOR TO ADDRESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION**

Columnist and author Clayton Rand will be the principal speaker at the installation of officers and directors of the New Orleans Credit Men's Association on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel.