Court Hears Spying Chief Aboard Pueblo

CORONADO, Calif. (AP) — The question of how much authority Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher really had over intelligence operations on his ship seems to be getting a thorough airing before the court of inquiry into the capture of the USS Pueblo.

The question came into focus as Lt. Stephen R. Harris, in charge of the Pueblo's intelligence gathering mission, spent two hours in closed-door testimony yesterday and was ordered to return Monday.

The court went into a threeday recess for the weekend at a Navy doctor's recommendation to give Bucher a chance to rest. He testified nearly all of last week and has attended every session, open or closed. In addition, the court of five admirals said it wanted to catch up with administrative chores.

HARRIS was regarded as a key witness because Bucher testified early in his story of the capture that he had told the 30year-old lieutenant to destroy material which fell into the hands of the North Koreans.

Part of how Bucher operated the Pueblo was determined by a division of authority between himself and Harris.

"He did not directly report to me," Bucher said.

WHEN NORTH Koreans opened fire on the Pueblo, Bucher said, "my primary concern was . . . to actually destroy the classified materials." He said he went to Harris' intelligence compartments "and I noticed on the deck . . . at least three large naval mattress covers which apparently were full of documents . . . and I presumed they were all classified . . ."

When he returned to the bridge, Bucher said, he got a telephone call from Harris asking permission to message headquarters that he was not able to complete destruction of all the publications.

LATER, after North Koreans boarded the Pueblo, Bucher said he was ordered to tour the ship with his captors and when they arrived in Harris' compartment "I was rather surprised to still see a couple of mattress covers which were apparently full of classified materials."

"It did surprise me, because as I had testified before, I had seen this material there some 20 to 30 minutes before this and perhaps as much as 40, and I had no prior indication that the material had not been jettisoned or destroyed."