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 Pueblo NL-With Washington 300
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CORONADO, Calif. AP — A boyish-faced Pueblo crewman, severely wounded when the ship was seized, said Tuesday he languished three days in a filth-ridden room, then underwent surgery on a prison table without anesthesia.

A young crewman who cared for him with Boy Scout-learned first aid said the wounded man spent eight or nine days after the operation in a room that "smelled of decaying flesh," and moaned and cried in pain before North Koreans hospitalized him.

The wounded man, Electricians Mate 2.C. Steven Woelk, 20, of Grand Rapids, Mich., and his buddy, Commissaryman 3.C. Eale E. Rigby, 21, of Ogden, Utah, testified at a Navy court of inquiry into the capture of the Pueblo last year and the imprisonment of its crew.

Woelk was hit by shrapnel in the upper right thigh and right buttock when the Pueblo was struck by a cannon shell from a North Korean gunboat.

He said he got first aid from the ship's medic, was placed on a stretcher, and when Koreans boarded, they carried him off the vessel.

"I was kicked and hit and dragged on the ground most of the time," Woelk said, "and everytime I moaned I was kicked or hit by hand."

Woelk and two other wounded crewmen were placed in a room with Rigby, who said he pleaded unsuccessfully for care for the three.

"Woelk's pain became very severe," Rigby said, "and three days later he cried out for help . . . they came and took him out of there."

Woelk said the surgery "was in a regular room. There were no beds . . . I was laid on a table, on a stretcher . . . they brought in everyone they needed to operate . . . there was no special lighting. It was barely adequate."

"Did they use an anaesthetic?" asked Navy counsel.

"No sir."

"Was it painful?"

"Very painful."

Rigby said that when Woelk was brought back to the room with the other wounded, "I was unable to do hardly anything for him. During his movements when he was sleeping, his bandages came off and his wounds were opened . . . After he came back, he was better for one day and the pain started increasing. The infection seemed to get much worse."

"They came in the middle of the night and told me to prepare him for movement to take him to the hospital."

Woelk said he spent 44 days in a hospital where he was treated "very well."

But he said the North Koreans used his treatment for propaganda purposes — to the point of making a movie of a fake operation they performed on him weeks later.

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