

pueblo

10 March 1969

513 AES

AO36

zyyyyx

Pueblo 240

CORONADO, Calif. AP - For the third time, Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher goes before a Navy court of inquiry today for questioning about the capture of his intelligence ship, the USS Pueblo, and imprisonment of his men in North Korea.

E. Miles Harvey, Bucher's attorney, also summoned Vice Adm. J. Victor Smith, who helped negotiate the release of Bucher and his 81 men just before Christmas. Smith was a U.N. negotiator on the Korean Armistice Commission.

The calling of witnesses by Bucher's attorney marked the last phase of the inquiry, in its eighth week.

Bucher took up the first week with a detailed narrative of his capture by North Korean gunboats in January 1968 off the coast of Wonsan. He also gave a tearful account of how the North Koreans tortured him.

He took the stand again after the court had finished questioning the crew on the capture. Bucher replied to queries about apparent contradictions between his account and testimony of the crew.

Harvey summoned Cmdr. Peter F. Block to testify Tuesday. Block was Bucher's commanding officer when he served on the submarine Ronquil.

The court plans to recall some of the crewmen. The first will be Hospitalman Herman Baldrige, 37, from Carthage, Mo. Baldrige treated Pueblo crewmen wounded during the capture, including Firemen Duane Hodges of Creswell, Ore., the only fatality.

The president of the court, Vice Adm. Harold G. Bowen Jr., and several members of the staff spent the weekend in Honolulu conferring with Adm. John J. Hyland, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet. Hyland ordered the inquiry. The Navy said they conferred about court procedures.

Eds: Court reconvenes Noon EST.

DD513aes Mar. 10