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Pueblo Bjt 350, two takes total 600

By RICHARD E. MEYER

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CORONADO, Calif. AP - Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher began a long wait "with some apprehension" today for a Navy court of inquiry to decide his fate following its hearings on the capture of the USS Pueblo.

The court ended its eight-week inquiry Thursday after hearing Bucher declare again, "We did not have the power to resist" seizure by North Koreans. The five admirals on the court, who earlier had warned Bucher he could be recommended for court-martial for surrendering while he still had power to resist, began 10 days of deliberation.

In his summation, Bucher's attorney, E. Miles Harvey, pleaded that the 41-year-old skipper "be returned to full duty and to occupy his rightful position in a normal career pattern."

A Navy spokesman said that under normal rotation patterns "a man with as much sea duty as Bucher just completed would get a shore assignment."

Bucher has said he wants to command another ship.

The court, which could recommend anything from courts-martial to medals, will deliver "findings of fact, opinion and recommendations" to Adm. John J. Hyland, commander of the Pacific Fleet. Hyland probably will take about two weeks to review the findings, the spokesman said, and then send them to Washington, D.C. for a review "by higher authority" before they are made public.

Bucher, who made his closing statement to the court in a businesslike, unemotional way, said afterward he would "await with some apprehension" the court's report.

"I'm very pleased it's all over," said his wife, Rose, who cried with him through earlier agonizing testimony of his torture during 11 months in a North Korean prison last year.

The court raised two major questions about Bucher and his 81 surviving crewmen.

1. Should they have violated the Navy's watchword, "Don't give up the ship?"

2. Should they have violated the U.S. Code of Conduct for prisoners against giving captors more than name, rank, serial number and date of birth?

The admirals questioned Bucher more sharply about the first, indicating it to be the pivotal question.

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To Bucher, it was:

-A question of violating his orders "not to start a war out there."
 "I really felt strongly about my orders not to provoke an international incident," he said. "I think this, more than anything else, guided my actions."

-A question of saving his ship or his men.

"We were completely and hopelessly outgunned. To man our .50-caliber guns would have been to send a man up to that gun and that would have been certain death."

-A question of whether he gave up or was captured.

"I prefer to feel . . . I never did actually surrender the ship," he said. "We were seized. The Koreans hauled my colors down."

The admirals questioned Bucher and virtually every one of his crewmen about the Code of Conduct. Court counsel said this was partly to test the modern applicability of its provisions.

Almost to a man the crewmen said they violated the letter of the code in giving personal histories, writing letters home and making false confessions to spying.

But the Pueblo case was unique, they said, in that the North Koreans captured the ship with its entire crew and many of its records intact. The men said they provided little information the North Koreans didn't already have.

"It is my considered opinion that articles . . . of the Code of Conduct should be reviewed in that they are difficult to reconcile when the lives of your shipmates are involved," Bucher said.

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