

18 Pueblo Crewmen to Get Medals

None for Bucher; Navy Acts After 4 Years

By George C. Wilson
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The Navy, after weighing the recommendations for four years, yesterday awarded medals for bravery to 18 crew members of the spy ship Pueblo. Capt. Lloyd M. Bucher, skipper of the ship and now retired, was not among those decorated.

The Pueblo was captured by North Korean gunboats off the port of Wonsan on Jan. 23, 1968, and 82 of the 83 crew members were held captive for 11 months.

Fireman Duane Hodges of Creswell, Ore., was killed by shellfire during the North Korean seizure of the Pueblo. He was one of two men on the Pueblo awarded the Silver Star for bravery.

The other is Lt. Frederick C. Schumacher Jr., formerly communications officer of the ship and now assistant vice president of his family's Hickey-Mitchell insurance firm in St. Louis.

A Pentagon press release said that Navy Secretary John W. Warner "personally reviewed" the record of the Pueblo capture before ruling on Bucher's recommendations for awards to his men.

The Navy is still weighing other recommendations for awards for the way the Pueblo men held up in captivity.

The citation that goes with Schumacher's Silver Star states that he led his men in the "destruction of all classified materials under his purview . . . Through his inspiring

leadership, courage and dedication in the face of hostile fire, he reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Reached in St. Louis, Schumacher said Bucher had submitted the recommendations for commendations in early 1969 and again in 1970. "The awards for other members of the Pueblo crew," he said, "were way overdue—particularly for their performance on the day of capture since those actions had no bearing on American prisoners in Vietnam."

Schumacher said many of the Pueblo crewmen have been weighed down by guilt since the ship's capture because the Navy, by failing to act on recommendations about their performance, kept them in limbo.

Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim said yesterday that the long delay in acting on the skipper's recommendations stemmed from the concern about jeopardizing Americans held captive in North Vietnam.

Every member of the Pueblo crew while in captivity signed propaganda statements under torture. So did many Americans held captive in Vietnam. Schumacher said these experiences dictate a review of the Code of Conduct for American servicemen, both its language and the way it is taught during training.

If Warner takes the next

step, and decorates Pueblo men for their actions in captivity despite their forced signing of propaganda statements, he will signal that the Code of Conduct guidelines are not regarded as iron rules by the top Navy leadership.

The psychological burden of the code was demonstrated during the Navy's Court of Inquiry in 1969 as crewman after crewman broke down on the witness stand when the admirals of the court asked them why they could not live up to the code.

Besides the silver stars awarded to Hodges and Schumacher, the Navy yesterday gave these other medals to the following Pueblo men:

Bronze star, Ensign Timothy L. Harris, Communications Technician Peter M. Langenberg and Signalman Wendell G. Leach; Navy commendation medal, Chief Gene H. Lacy, Hospitalman Herman P. Baldrige, Boatswain's Mate Ron-

ald L. Berens, Radiomen Charles H. Crandell and Lee R. Hayes, Fireman Steven E. Woelk; Navy achievement medal, Enginemen R. J. Blansett and Monroe O. Goldman, Quartermaster Charles B. Law, Jr., Photographer Lawrence W. Mack, Electronics Technician Clifford C. Nofke, Commissaryman Ralph E. Reed and Communications Technician Angelo S. Strano.