

# Pueblo Crew OK, Despite Some Marks of Beatings

Seoul

The 82 Pueblo crewmen were reported in good condition yesterday although their commander said some still bore black eyes and bruises from beatings by their North Korean captors with fists, clubs and boards.

The men received preliminary medical checkups at the 121st Evacuation Hospital at

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nearby Ascom City and prepared to leave for Christmas reunions with their families in San Diego.

Their skipper, Commander Lloyd M. Bucher, 41, unfolded at a news conference a tale of terror, beatings and harassment at the hands of the North Koreans who seized the ship on January 23.

Bucher said his men were beaten as recently as a week ago but he added that he had heard one man was beaten Sunday, the day before the North Koreans released the crew on the basis of an apology which the United States repudiated before it was officially delivered.

### TERROR

"I was beaten less than anyone else," Bucher said. "I was mostly terrified of possible beating and I was kept in solitary confinement during the entire 1 months and there were many occasions when I didn't think I was going to make it."

"I think that there are

many in my crew who are in very bad physical condition and not just from a nutritional point of view," Bucher went on. "The bruises and that sort of thing I think are going to heal up quickly."

A spokesman at the hospital said the men all seemed in "quite good shape" after preliminary medical examinations.

### BRIDGE

He noted that each had a small snack soon after the release across the "Bridge of No Return" from North Korea. Their first real meal was consumed at the hospital and it consisted of "steak and all the accompaniments," the spokesman reported.

At his news conference, Bucher denied that his ship ever was in North Korean waters and said he made false admissions of guilt to the North Koreans for broadcast "to save some people from some fairly serious misfortunes."

Fireman Duane H. Hodges, 22, Creswell, Ore., was fatally wounded during the sei-

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zure. His remains were returned with the 82 survivors.

### CREW

Bucher said the crew made an attempt to destroy everything of importance aboard the vessel but "truthfully, we did not complete it."

The skipper was asked about a picture that had reached the United States showing some of the crewmen making an obscene gesture with their finyars.

"Thea were trying to tell you that we'd been had," Bucher replied. "We continued that campaign throughout the time we were there whenever we had the opportunity to do so. We realized that if we wer discovered it was going to be 'Katie, bar the door,' but we felt that it was important that if we could in some way get that information out so that there would be absolutely no room for doubt in your minds, the American people's minds, that we'd been had."