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URGENT

Pueblo Lead

By RICHARD E. MEYER

Associated Press Writer

CORONADO, Calif. AP - The Pueblo's senior quartermaster said today the intelligence ship's crew was not aware when it sailed what its mission would be and had no occasion to consider whether it was in hazardous duty.

Charles B. Law, backing up testimony of fellow crewmen, told a Navy court of inquiry that the Pueblo's skipper "did a hell of a good job."

Law said of Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher: "I considered it an honor to serve with him . . . I'd like to serve with him again."

Law was a witness before a court of five admirals investigating the capture of the Pueblo by North Koreans a year ago and the imprisonment of the crew.

Rear Adm. Edward Grimm asked: "Did the commanding officer ever brief the ship's company on the mission?"

Law: "No sir . . . the crew was told it was not illegal . . . We were just carrying out our duties."

Law, short and slightly heavy but jaunty in bearing, stared occasionally at the ceiling as he recalled his Pueblo experiences.

He said he first learned of the mission-to check on Soviet ships and North Korean radar facilities-when he had to plot the Pueblo's operating areas on a chart.

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*I personally: 3rd graf A020, deleting 9th graf

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Pueblo Bjt 500

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CORONADO, Calif. AP - Junior officers from the USS Pueblo facing five admirals on a court of inquiry have declared support for their skipper. One said. "I'd follow him anywhere."

The statement came with determination from 21-year-old, freckle-faced Lt. j.g. Timothy Harris, one of three officers who testified Wednesday. He called Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher

"an outstanding leader."

"I personally think Cmdr. Bucher is one of the finest officers I know-an outstanding skipper before and during the capture and certainly during detention," said Lt. Frederick Schumacher Jr.

"I don't think any of us could have made it through that eleven months in North Korean prison if it hadn't been for Cmdr. Bucher."

OWO Gene Howard Lacy said he agreed with Bucher's decision not to man the Pueblo's machine guns because "it would have been slaughter for anyone put out there."

"I am now going to ask you for your personal opinion," said Bucher's attorney, E. Miles Harvey. "Based on your experience and what you saw immediately prior to the time of capture, in your opinion did the commanding officer of the ship any longer have the power to resist the boarding and ultimate seizure?"

"No," said Lacy, 28, whose graying hair reflected his prison ordeal and an 11-year Navy career including duty in the Arctic. It contrasted sharply with Harris' boyish face and 25-year-old Schumacher's tow-headed mop.

Harris and Schumacher also supported the surrender decision.

CORONADO, Calif. sub for 9th graf Pueblo bjt A020: "surrender decision.

Law said the closest he could recall the Pueblo coming to North Korean shores was 12.8 miles, when the vessel was turned toward the sea to provide stability while crews were repairing an antenna on the mast.

"As soon as it was reported to the skipper, we moved right out," he said.

Counsel 10th graf
DB1027aps Feb. 6

Several members of the crew were summoned to testify today, including Quartermaster 1.C. Charles B. Law of Chehalis, Wash., who took some of the severest beatings during captivity.

Counsel for the court, Capt. William Newsome, said Capt. John Williams, an explosives expert from the office of the Chief of Naval Operations at the Pentagon, will testify Friday on methods of destroying classified material in the event of capture.

Schumacher and Harris told how they exposed themselves to cannon and submachine gun fire from North Korean patrol boats and a submarine chaser to destroy classified papers on the Pueblo.

Schumacher said he was assisted by Communications Technician 1.C. Michael Thomas Barrett and Communications Technician 3.C. Steven J. Robin.

"Were you strafed during the time you were outside to burn the publications," asked Newsome.

"Yes sir."

"Was anyone hit?"

"No sir."

Schumacher said Radioman 2.C. Lee Roy Hayes burned some classified papers.

"The rest he loaded into his laundry bag and tossed a tool box in on top and threw it over the side."

Schumacher said Fireman Duane Hodges, 21, of Creswell, Ore., was fatally wounded while he was feeding a fire in a wastebasket on the deck with secret papers and files.

Harris told how he ran out on the deck, grabbed a camera that was being used for surveillance photography and threw it over the side.

Then, he said, he grabbed classified publications from the radio shack and the chart house and made eight or nine trips with them to an incinerator on the deck.

"Were you exposed to North Korean ships?" asked Newsome.

"Yes sir," Harris said.

Sessions resume noon, EST
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