

AO15

wyyf

Pueblo Bjt 450, 2 takes, 560 total

Wirephoto GO1

By RICHARD E. MEYER

Associated Press Writer

CORONADO, Calif. AP — More intelligence crewmen were summoned to tell the Navy today how much of the USS Pueblo's classified material was destroyed before the ship was captured by North Koreans.

Their testimony was secret, the Navy said, "because of the sensitivity of much of what they're talking about" and because its disclosure could harm national defense.

The intelligence crewmen, called communications technicians, were summoned to a court of inquiry investigating the Pueblo's capture last year. Of the 83 aboard, 29 were communications technicians.

The head intelligence detachment was Lt. Stephen Harris, who told the court last week his staff didn't destroy all of the secret material because of North Korean gunfire, "a painfully slow" burning process, what he described as excessive amount of material and heavy smoke.

Today's testimony would be similar, the Navy said, to testimony Monday from the Pueblo's chief communications technician, Ralph D. Bouden, of Washington, D.C., and a member of his team, James Francis Kell, of Honolulu.

Bouden and Kell testified with "particular emphasis on what took place within the research intelligence spaces on the Pueblo when the ship was captured," the Navy said.

"We tried to ear up the publications," Harris has told the court. "We reduced them to confetti. There was paper all over the place. We were feverish.

"We tried to keep it as orderly as possible, but it actually resulted in a great deal of confusion."

When it was over the North Koreans boarded the Pueblo and there were some secret papers in his intelligence compartment, Harris said.

He didn't volunteer in open court how much classified material fell into North Korean hands. But Rear Adm. Edward Grimm, a member of the court, asked how many bags were jettisoned.

"At least one bag went overboard," Harris said.

"One of 12?"

"Yes, sir."

What about the secret electronic equipment on board?

"It was reduced virtually to powder."

Harris estimated it would have taken 10 to 12 hours to destroy all of the Pueblo's secret papers.

An engineman, Peter Bandera of Carson City, Nev., said some of the ship's classified papers were so soaked with blood that they wouldn't burn.

MORE

HP250aes Feb. 11

AO16

yyx

CORONADO, Take 2, Pueblo, AO15: burn.

The Navy says V8e Adm. Harold G. Bowen, president of the court, has directed that summaries of unclassified testimony during the closed sessions be made available periodically to newsmen.

The Pueblo's skipper, Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher, said he would take the stand again near the end of the court of inquiry to give further testimony about his imprisonment with his crew.

ADV for 1 p.m., EST

Sen. Roman L. Hruska, R-Neb., said today that if there is an attempt to make scapegoats out of Bucher and his crew it will "provoke a most vigorous reaction" in Congress.

His comment came in a speech prepared for a Republican gathering in Nebraska.

Hruska said "Several members of the Senate Armed Services Committee have indicated that the committee will proceed to look into the matter."

"What is causing so much concern is the fear that the result will be to make Commander Bucher and his crew the scapegoats of abysmally poor planning by higher authorities," he said.

"The courage and stamina they showed during their long imprisonment have earned them commendation and gratitude," he said, "certainly not disciplinary action."

End Embargoed matter.

HP254aes Feb. 11

11 FEB 69
254 AES