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Pueblo Bjt Lead 200

By RICHARD E. MEYER

Associated Press Writer

CORONADO, Calif. AP

The captain of the USS Pueblo said today he never struck its colors and "I never thought I was surrendering per se."

Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher told a Navy court of inquiry he felt he was simply overwhelmed by the odds against outrunning North Korean gunboats and surviving an all-out attack on the open sea.

Bucher came under intensive questioning from Navy lawyers in the final days of the inquiry into the capture of the Pueblo last year and the 11-month imprisonment of its men.

He made these points:

-He was "given to understand" that it was not necessary for him to know about activities in two or three of the intelligence compartments in his ship.

-He was turned down at least twice in efforts to get explosives that could destroy classified equipment or scuttle the ship.

-He did not report to his operational or administrative commander his difficulty in aiming the vessel's machine guns.

-He doesn't remember making his decision to give up the Pueblo known to his crew.

On Monday Bucher choked back tears and commended "the overall conduct of my entire crew," then singled out 49 of the 81 surviving crewmen for special mention.

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Pueblo Bjt 380

By RICHARD E. MEYER

Associated Press Writer

CORONADO, Calif. AP - The captain of the USS Pueblo choked back tears and commended "the over-all conduct of my entire crew"-then singled out 49 of his 81 surviving crewmen for special mention.

Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher was testifying Monday at his own request on questions he felt hadn't been answered by the eight-week inquiry into the capture of the Pueblo last year and conduct of its men during 11 months in North Korean prison.

Bucher, 41, was summoned to take the stand again today to answer questions from Navy attorneys and from the five admirals on the Navy court of inquiry.

It was Bucher's third session on the stand. He opened the inquiry with a narrative of the capture and his own torture, then re-appeared a few weeks later to answer questions.

In commending his crew for "success . . . in ridicule and discredit of the North Koreans," and in describing how his men were tortured, Bucher app

ached tears five times.

The first was when he told about hearing "yells and screams of pain" while the North Koreans beat his crew.

He choked and blinked back tears as he told how North Koreans discovered vulgar gestures he and his men made in propaganda photos. "I figured we might be in for a fairly rough time," he said.

His voice broke as he told how he was threatened with death during "hell week," a time of intensive torture which Bucher said resulted from discovery of the derisive gestures.

"I was flattened out with a good blow right straight to the kisser," Bucher said. "They kicked me and pulled me to my feet and beat me into semi-consciousness . . . they reverted to the idea I was a CIA Central Intelligence Agency agent and now they were sure of it, and CIA agents don't live to tell about it when they get caught in Korea. I was prepared for the fact they were going to do me in."

Bucher's voice got high-pitched, and his civilian attorney, E. Miles Harvey, changed the line of questioning. Then Bucher started praising his crew.

"I consider that the over-all conduct of my crew was outstanding throughout the period of detention," he began. Then his voice broke. Harvey asked for a five-minute recess. In a few seconds, however, Bucher continued. His voice broke again before he finally finished reading his commendation of 49 of the men especially.

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