

Bucher Is Assigned To Study Business At a Naval School

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 7 —

Comdr. Lloyd M. Bucher, skipper of the intelligence ship Pueblo, was assigned today to a one-year Navy postgraduate school.

The Navy announced that Commander Bucher, 41 years old, would study toward a master's degree in management at the Navy's school in Monterey, Calif. He is scheduled to report to Monterey in July after a leave.

The commander was said to have requested the assignment.

"Commander Bucher has indicated to the Bureau of Naval Personnel that he is very pleased with this assignment," the Pentagon said.

Only one of the 82 surviving members of the crew was assigned to sea duty. He was Signalman 2d Cl. W. G. Leach of Houston, who will serve aboard the destroyer Haynsworth.

Thirty-nine crew members have already left the Navy or are in the process of being

Continued on Page 10, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

mustered out. The others were assigned to shore duty.

Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee announced yesterday that he had set aside the recommendation of a naval court of inquiry that Commander Bucher and Lieut. Stephen R. Harris, the officer in charge of the Pueblo's intelligence section, be court-martialed.

The recommendation was made in connection with North Korea's seizure of the spy ship in January, 1968.

Lieutenant Harris is being assigned to the Naval Security Group headquarters here. Lieut. Edward R. Murphy, the ship's executive officer, who would have received a letter of admonition under the board of inquiry's recommendations, was assigned to the Fleet Anti-submarine Warfare School in San Diego.

A Navy spokesman said it was customary to rotate men between sea and shore duty.

A qualified Navy source said that several factors were considered in making Commander Bucher's assignment but that none of them was punishment.

Among the considerations, the source said, were the intense pressure experienced by the skipper during his 11-month confinement in North Korea and the subsequent board of inquiry proceedings, and the disruption to his family life over the last 15 months.

Commander Bucher definitely was not in line for another sea command, the source said. He indicated, however, that, if the commander is not given a ship in the next two or three years, it could be considered the Navy's form of administrative punishment.

In a normal career pattern, the assignment to graduate school was an advancement. Sources indicated that it was highly unlikely the Navy would send a man to school if it were trying to stymie his career.

Commander Bucher has frequently expressed a desire to captain another ship. But he indicated at a news conference recently that he did not expect his next assignment to be to sea duty.

Normally, an officer submits requests for several different duty assignments. The Navy would not say today what Commander Bucher's other requests had been.