Told His Captors Secrets, Downey Says

NEW BRITAIN, Conn., March 13 (AP) - CIA agent John T. Downey said today he was subjected to intensive questioning by his Communist captors and told them "about every bit of information I had."

Downey, 42, returned here Monday night after more than 20 years' imprisonment to be with his critically ill mother. He discussed some aspects of his captivity at a news conference but refused to reveal details of the mission that led to his capture.

When asked if he revealed any "secrets" during interro-sation by the Chinese, Downey said: "I would say I revealed about every bit of information had" during the first nine months in prison.

'I don't feel I would like to discuss" the type of information revealed to the Communists, he added.

Downey was asked by a newsman if he thought "what you were doing" was worthwhile. "I'd say no," he answered. "I'm not quite sure if I have gotten the ramifications of that, but as I say, I to "pretty intensive questions aid that Downey was carried ing" and threatened his well being, but never beat him. I don't see it benefited any-body."

It was not clear, however, whether Downey was questioning the worth of the 1952 at the bedside of his mother, mission that led to his cap-

jail. He did not elaborate. Speaking in a quiet, reserved manner, Downey said visited twice with her son. during the first 10 months after his plane was shot down ute news conference whether after he graduated from Yale over Manchuria in Novem- he would remain with the University in June 1951, said ber 1952, he was kept con-CIA. tinually in leg irons.



United Press International

CIA agent John T. Downey, freed after 20 years in a Chinese prison, tells of his experiences—good and bad.

The Chinese subjected him, [CIA officials in Washington in ideological "study periods." being, but never beat him, throughout his imprisonment he said,

ture or the time he spent in fered a severe stroke Wednes- ing and how much he now has to eat. day. She remained in critical but improved condition, and information was Downey's per-

Asked during the 45-min-

coming to him, claiming such sonal business.]

he said: "At present, I he never lost hope but felt some hitterness and discouragement during his imprisonment.

But he said the bitterness disappeared when he was told he would be released. He attributed his hopefulness in part to a belief that the Chinese will "sock it to you with a heavier sentence, then let you off with a lighter term."

Downey said the agreement for President Nixon to visit mainland China "caught me so much by surprise that I nearly fell off my chair." That visit, last year, and an earlier trip by U.S. ping pong players "broke the ice" that had prevented his release until then, he said.

He added that he didn't believe anything more could have been done by the United States to win him an earlier release.

Downey described his 20 years in prison as "a crashing bore."

His typical day, he said, began at 6 am and included required listening to political broadcasts and participation

He was permitted to leave his white washed cell for between 30 minutes and four hours of exercise in a 30-by and will get back pay, presum- 90-foot courtyard. Prisoners The slightly balding ably 20 years worth But the also were taken on supervised Downey was released to be officials refused to disclose wisits to farms, factories and at the hadride of his mather Mary V. Downey, 75, who sufthe Great Wall, he added, and

Visit His Mother

By LAWRENCE FELLOWS

Special to The New York Times

iospital here.

He was freed by China this morning and crossed the border the Hong Kong end of the into Hong Kong.

months after graduation from Yale. He had just started a career in the Central Intelligence Agency when, on Nov. 29, he was shot down over China, reportedly on an air-borne mission to drop supplies When him to anti-Communist forces there.

For the two decades since, Mr. Downey has been held at a prison in Peking. He is now 42.

His mother, who is 75, suffered a stroke last Wednesday night. President Nixon appealed to the Chinese to re-lease Mr. Downey and the Chinese agreed.

NEW BRITAIN, Conn., March, When Mr. Downey walked 12-After more than 20 years over the covered bridge at Lo as a prisoner in China, John Wu this morning he was Thomas Downey came home to-dressed in Chinese-style blue night to be at the bedside of pants and a blue shirt, and is critically ill mother, in a carried an overcoat and a black suitcase.

A British helicopter was at bridge to take Mr. Downey to a Mr. Downey had left the nearby British base, where he United States in 1951, a few boarded a United States Air Force Nightingale evacuation plane and was flown to Clark Air Base in the Philippines. His brother William, a Manhattan lawyer, had flown there to meet him, and to accompany

> When his plane refueled at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, John Downey set foot on American soil for the first time in more than two decades.

"Really great," he said, "real-

ly great."

He telephoned the hospital in Connecticut, where his sis-

Continued on Page 11, Column 1

ter, Mrs. Joan Walsh, waited for word that he was on the last part of his trip before telling his ailing and weak mother that he was on his way home.

Mrs. Downey had lapsed into unconsciousness when she suffered the stroke. She has been in critical condition since, but has had periods of consciousness. Dr. Bliss B. Clark, executive director of the New Britain Hospital, issued a statement on her condition this afternoon, before she had been told of her son's release. "Mrs. Downey's condition has remained stable," the statement read. "She continues to communicate freely with her family and to take normal nourishment. Her vital signs are good.'

She last saw her son in November, 1971, during a twoweek visit to Peking, the last of five trips she had made to China since 1958.

Good Behavior Cited

A Peking broadcast said Mr.
Downey had been freed because of his good behavior and because "he confessed to his because crimes.

At a news conference on Jan. President Nixon acknowledged Mr. Downey's connection with the C.I.A. and officials said this helped speed his release.

The Chinese had called Mr. Downey the "arch criminal" of all American prisoners held in China, and had sentenced him to life imprisonment. Richard Fecteau of Lynn, Mass., who was aborad the plance with Mr.
Downey when it was shot
down, received a 20-year sentence.

Mr. Fecteau was released in in 1971 after having served 19 years at the same time Mr. Downey's sentence was commuted to five years more than he had already served.

Sentence Cut by 3 Years

His release yesterday cut three years off that sentence.

This afternoon a spokesman for the C.I.A said of Mr. Dow-ney, "He has been well taken care of." He would not elabo-rate. Presumably, money put away for Mr. Downey over the last two decades would make him fairly wealthy

At Bradley International Airport, near Hartford, the state police blocked public access to the area normally used for loading freight so that Mr.

Downey and his brother could leave their plane far from the passenger area and hurry to a car waiting to take them to New Britain. There Mayor Stanley J. Pac had asked for a tolling of all church bells in the city as soon as the Downeys reached the hospital.

Gov. Thomas J. Meskill asked that welcoming demonstrations be as discreet as possible, to

give the family some privacy.
Dr. Clark said Mr. Downey would stay at the hospital for an indefinite period of time.

2 Fliers Reported Well

CLARK AIR BASE, the Philippines, March 12 -Downey, who was pronounced in "fine health" when he landed here today, told American Red Cross officials he had recently seen the two American fliers whom China has promised to free and that they were also in good health.

They are Philip E. Smith, a 33-year-old Air Force man from Victorville, Calif., who was shot down near Hainan Island in the Gulf of Tonkin in September, 1965, and Lieut. Comdr. Robert J. Flynn, 35-year-old Navy man from Oak Harbor, Wash., who was shot down over Kwangsi Province, adjacent to North Vietnam, in August, 1967.

Red Cross officials here said the two fliers were the last Americans they knew of who were still being held in China.

AFTER 20 YEARS

By HENRY S. BRADSHER Star-News Staff Writer

HONG KONG - More than 20 years after being shot down while re-supplying Central Intelligence Agency spies in China, John Thomas Downey emerged from China today by act of clemency from Premier Chou En-Lai.

Downey, who is 42, has spent half his life in Chinese prisons. He was smiling and apparently in good health when he

lease Thursday the last two Americans known to be im-prisoned in China. They are military pilots shot down during the Vietnam war when they strayed over China.

Downey told Red Cross officials he lived for a while with the two fliers, U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Robert J. Flynn, 35, of Houston, Minn., and U.S. Air Force Maj. Philip Smith, 38, of Roodhouse. III Roodhouse, Ill.

"According to him (Downey), they were in excellent spirits and health," said James E. Bolling, a Red Cross regional director who they from Hong Kong to the

flew from Hong Kong to the Philippines with Downey.
The two pilots had always been expected to be released when North Vietnam returned and the property is the belt there. But the prisoners it held there. But the releasee of Downey was a special concession in a new at-mosphere of Sino-American friendship.

It was regarded by Chinawatchers here as more than simply a goodwill gesture, however. It marked the close of what China had considered a long period of U.S. provoca-tion and hostility—a mirrori mage of the American attitude during the 1950s and 1960s that China was hostile and provocative.

provocative.

During those years, while
Downey sat in prison the U.S.
government denied the finding
of his trial in China that he

crossed the border into Hong

Kong.
"I am so glad It's like a dream," Downey told an American Red Cross representative who met him, Eugene D. Guv.

American officials had a helicopter waiting to whisk Downey to Hong Kong's airport. Within 35 minutes of the time he walked across Lowu bridge from China in a blue Chinese shirt and trousers, a special U.S. Air Force medical evacuation plane was airborne, taking Downey to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

Operation Homecoming officials at Clark who are handling prisoners released from Vietnam sped Downey on to see his critically ill mother in New Britain, Conn.

Almost immediately after arriving at Clark, Downey boarded an Air Force C141 Starlifter transport which was to fly him via Anchorage,

Chinese trial of Downey, rec-teau and a number of Chinese Nationalists, Downey selected and trained Nationalists into

teams for espionage. A four-man team was para-chuted into Kirin Province in Northeast China adjoining Korea in July 1952. A larger team was parachuted into adjacent Liaoning Province in Septem-

Fecteau joined the CIA in 1952, according to the trial report. On the night of Nov. 29, 1952, he accompanied Downey on a DC3 twin-engine trans port plane to resupply the Kir-in agents and pickup one agent. The plane was shot down.

It was only two years later in announcing the trial—at which several of the Chinese agents were sentenced to agents were sentenced to death and others to long prison terms—that the Chinese revealed that Downey and Fecteau were still alive. Surprised, Washington put out a story of their being civilians on a lost army plane.

When U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold visited China in 1955, he obtained the release of 11 Americans from release of 11 Americans from a nother plane which the Chinese said had been shot down while dropping agents. It was a U.S. Air Force plane which Hammarskjold said was

Alaska, to Windsor Locks, Conn.

1. 1990年6月初日

Downey was met at Clark by his brother William, who said doctors who flew with John from Hong Kong reported he was in good shape.

"He certainly feels and looks good," William Downey said.

Downey spoke briefly to newsmen when he arrived at Clark, United Press International said.

"I just wanted to say how grateful I was for being re-leased. I appreciate the Chinese government for letting me go at this time and President Nixon for his efforts on my behalf and (presidential) adviser) Dr. Henry A. Kissinger," he said.

"I'm very pleased to be out," he said. "At the same time, I'm very anxious to get

home to see my mother."
"He had a firm handshake me nad a firm handshake and he was up to date, very well informed," one of the offi-cers on the flight from Hong Kong said. "We were very sur-prised. He's got no problems at all."

President Nixon asked Chou to release Downey after his mother suffered a stroke Wednesday. Within 48 hours the Chinese informed Washington they would.

Downey's mother, who suffered a stroke last Wednesday, was reported "vastly improved" to day. She will be

See DOWNEY, Page A-6 in the background of the operation.

One diplomat, a specialist on Chinese internal politics who is almost exactly Downey's age, Sherrod McCall, met Downey at the border and flew with him to the Philippines as

agents.

Fecteau was given a 20-year sentence and released in De-cember 1971 after serving 19 years. Downey's sentence was at that time reduced from life to five more years.

Those actions were taken as a sign of developing friend-ship. But Peking was not ready then to simply release Downey.

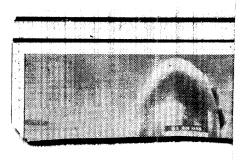
American officials quietly stopped insisting that Downey and Fecteau were civilians stopped insisting that Downey and Fecteau were civillans working for the U.S. Army, whose plane got lost on a flight from Japan to Korea during the Korean war. But they remained unwilling to admit the CIA connection. CIA connection.

Then recently, Nixon, by what seemed almost to have been a slip of the tongue, referred to Downey as a CIA agent. Whether this was finally a public admission which thine had sought remains un-China had sought remains un-

Downey emerged into a totally different world political situation.

China and the United States are now coming closer together, although somewhat warily, while China is in hostile confrontation with the Soviet Unfrontation with the Soviet Union. When Downey was shot down Americans saw China and the Soviet Union as partners in the Korean War against the Unital States of Foreign, and the Union of the UN command in Downey are deposited by the UN command in the U.S. Consulate was presupposed from the U.S. Consulate was presupposed from

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Downey arrives in Hong Keng wearing a Approved For Release 2005/06/06: CIA-RDP/4B00415R000406 (doctorse 3clothing.

NEW YORK TIMES

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China to Free Downey of the C.I.A. Monday

Mother Critically Ill —2 Pilots Also Are Due for Release

By United Press International

WASHINGTON, March 9-The White House announced today that the last three Americans held prisoner in China would he set free next week, one of them at the personal request of President Nixon to Premier Chou En-lai.

The press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, said Mr. Chou had agreed to commute the sen-tence of John T. Downey of the United States Central Intelligence Agency and allow him to leave China on Monday. Mr. Nixon had sent word that Mr. Downey's mother was critically ill in New Britain, Conn.

Gov. Thomas J. Meskill of Connecticut had asked Mr. Nixon to intercede on Mr. Downey's behalf.

The White House also announced that two American pilots, Maj. Philip E. Smith of the Air Force and Lieut. Comdr. Robert J. Flynn, would be freed Thursday. They were captured in 1965 and 1967 when they strayed over China during raids on North Vietnam,

Mr. Downey, 42 years old, has been imprisoned by the Chinese since 1952. His mother is hospitalized with a stroke at New Britain, Conn., near he Continued on Page 10, Column 6

by Chinese authorities Monday Hartford home.

Mr. Downey will be set free at the Hong Kong border.
Richard Fecteau of Lynn, Mass., captured along with Mr. Downey in 1952, was sentenced to 20 years in prison and re-leased last Dec. 12 after having served most of his sentence.

In his announcement, Mr.

Ziegler said: "The White House learned on Wednesday evening of the illness of John Downey's mother, and the President asked that this be communicated to Prime Minister Choules to bis behalf calling to En-lai on his behalf, calling to the attention of the Prime Minister the facts of Mr. Downey's received until China announced

ister the facts of Mr. Downey's mother's illness.

"The Government of the People's Republic of China has informed the President that it has decided to commute John Downey's term and release him on March the 12th.

"The Government of the Downey's term and release him on March the 12th.

"The Government of the People's Republic of China will release Mr. Downey, following the decision to commute his term, at the border between at the Mr. Downey had been sentenced to Downey had b

release Mr. Downey, following the decision to commute his term, at the border between the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong, as I said, on March the 12th.

"At the same time, the Government of the People's Republic of China, and in the same communication, has informed the President and the United States that they will release Lieut. Comdr. Robert J. Flynn of the U. S. Navy and Maj. Philip E. Smith of the U. S. Air Force, who have been held in the People's Republic of China over the past years, on the T5th of March.

"As you recall, Dr. Henry Kissinger mentioned to you in his briefing here following his return from the People's Republic of China that they will release the two flyers.

"As you recall, Dr. Henry his prefing here following his return from the People's Republic of China that they shot down on Aug. 21, 1967.

Towney said Mr. Nixon said Mr. At a news conference on Jan. At a news confer

his return from the People's Commander Flynn, 35, was tember and the Moslems defied shot down on Aug. 21, 1967, a firearms ban. and Mr. Smith would be re-leased during the 60-day period of the Indochina agreement.

President Nixon wants to express his personal appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for this action."

Mr. Downey and Mr. Fecteau disappeared on a plane in 1952 during the Korean war.

No word of the fate of the plane or its passengers was

Peking's C.I.A. Prisoner John Thomas Downey

By LAWRENCE FELLOWS

Special to The New York Times

NEW BRITAIN, Conn., March 9—When John Thomas Downey moved to New Britain as a young boy, one of his closest friends was Thomas J. Meskill now the Governor of Connecticut.

Jack Downey had only started a career in the Cen-

started a career in the Central Intelligence Agency when he was shot down in 1952 over China, allegedly on a mission to drop supplies to anti-

Communist forces there. Now 42 years old, he has been imprisoned in China ever since, more than half his life.

more than half his life.

When his 75-year-old mother, Mary Downey, suffered a stroke Wednesday night and lapsed into unconsciousness, Governor Meskill urged the White House to seek Mr. Downey's quick release.

After a personal plea by President Nixon to Premier Chou En-lai, it was announced that Mr. Downey would be released on Mon-

day.

For Governor Meskill there was no question of waiting to take credit for the effort. By the time the news broke today, he was away on vacation.

"We were real good friends," he said by telephone.

The Meskills lived at 27 Connecticut Avenue, and the Downeys at 57 Connecticut Avenue. When Tom Meskill was sick or on vacation, Jack Downey took over his newspaper route. When the Downeys went to their summer place at Norwood Beach, Tom Meskill often went to visit.

They played ball together, but eventually in different leagues. Tom Meskill was a solidly built young man, but small. He went to New Britain High School and then to Trinity College. Jack Downey went to the Choate School and then to Yale, and wound up as a defensive tackle and a member of the heavy-weight wrestling team Yet he had the makings of are

Governor Meskill said today: "He was a tremendous reader. He would read anything that was published."

thing that was published."

After the Korean war broke out, Mr. Meskill went into the Army. He knew only that Jack Downey had gone into Government service, and never knew he had joined the C.I.A. Mr. Meskill was serving in Alaska when he heard that Mr. Downey had been shot down. He believed, like everyone else, that he was dead until the Chinese said almost two years later that he had been caught and imprisoned for life.

Mr. Downey's mother made three trips to China to visit her son. His brother, William, a lawyer in Manhattan, made the trip with her once.

President Nixon telephoned William Downey at his mother's bedside this afternoon to inform him that the Chinese had promised to release John Downey on Monday. Their mother is still in a coma most of the time. On the instructions of her physician, Dr. Raúl López, she has not been told that her son is being released.

When she suffered the stroke Wednesday night, Governor Meskill was given the news by telephone from J. Brian Gaffney, the Republican state chairman and another close friend from New Britain.

The Governor phoned the White House and the State Department that night, leaving his request with staff members that a special plea be made on John Downey's behalf. On Thursday morning, he spoke again with the White House.

"Weare all very grateful to President Nixon for his efforts and to Chinese Premier Chou En-lai for his compassion in releasing John on learning of his mother's critical illness," Governor Meskill said in a statement issued by his office.

issued by his office.
"I ask everyone to join in prayers for her recovery,"
the statement said.

A hospital bulletin this afternoon said Mrs. Downey's

he had the making team. Xet condition has "deteriorated of the making as 2005/06/06;" CladRDas 4,000415R000400100019-3

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Nixon Acknowledges American Jailed in China Is C.I.A. Agent

By ERIC PACE

Special to The New York Times WASHINGTON, Jan. 31

When John T. Downey was a Yale senior in 1951, a classmate later recalled, a Central Intelligence Agency recruiter visited the campus.

"Purely as a hypothetical" possibility, the visitor mentioned that the C.I.A. might want to organize resistance in mainland China.

Mr. Downey went on to be come a C.I.A. agent, as President Nixon noted today, apparently the first public confirmation of the fact.

Mr. Downey became a prisoner of the Chinese Communists after his military aircraft was forced down in Chinese territory in 1952, during the Korean war. And the classmate, Prof. Jerome Alan Cohen of the Harvard Law School, later said Mr. Downey had under-taken the "hypothetical" mis-

A native of New Britain, Conn., Mr. Downey was mentioned by a questioner at today's Presidential news conference after Mr. Nixon had briefly discussed the cases of two American fliers being held by China by China.

Sentence Cut to 5 Years

Mr. Downey's name was brought up by a newsman and the President disclosed that the prisoner was a C.I.A. agent. The President noted that Mr. Downey's sentences of 30 years had been commuted to five years, an action that the Chinese announced in 1971. Mr. Nixon said he had "no assurance" that Mr. Downey would be freed before finishing his sentence but that the United States had made known its hope that such action would be

hope that such action would be taken. [Question 15, Page 20].
On another question of the two American fliers being held prisoner in China, Mr. Nixon said that "we have every reading and that the only other son to believe that these fliers will be released on the initiative of the People's Republic of China as the P.O.W. situation is worked out in Vietnam." [Question 14].

tion." He said, "you get used to solitary confinement," then added, "That's my problem."

Mr. Fecteau said he had been in a prison camp in or near that the only other apprisoners in his cell block were other Americans. He said they confinement," then a prison camp in or near that the only other apprisoners in his cell block were other Americans. He said they confinement," then added, "That's my problem."

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Peking and that the only other apprisoners in his cell block were other apprisoners in tion 14].



Associated Press John T. Downey

The President did not mention the fliers by name, but he was understood to be referring to Capt. Philip E. Smith of the Air Force, and Lieut. Comdr. Robert J. Flynn of the Navy.

⊌र**क**न्य लाखना । जा Harbert, who was seized in Chinese waters in April, 1968, while on a pleasure cruise.

Both Mr. Fecteau and Mr. Downey were officially identified at the time they were r forced down as civilian employes of the United States Army.

When he was freed, Mr. Fec-la heau said that during his 19 years of imprisonment in China "I was in solitary for so much time I'm not used to conversation." He said, "you get used to solitary confinement," then added "They's are realism."

during a reconnaissance mis-slop in 1965. Lieutenant Flynn was downed during a mission

14. Prisoners in China

Q. Mr. President, there are two American flyers still being held prisoner in China, and they are sort of in limbo— well, three Americans, but two flyers. I wonder if you could give us their status, and do you expect them to be returned with the other prisoners?

A. This matter we have discussed when we were in the People's Republic of China, and we have every reason to believe that these flyers will be released on the initiative of the People's Republic of China as the P.O.W. situation is worked out in Vietnam.

I won't go beyond that because this is a matter that should be left to the People's Republic of China, but we have, we believe, every assurance that will

15. Case of C.I.A. Agent

Q. Downey, also? A. Downey is a different case, as you know. Downey involves a C.I.A. agent. His sentence of 30 years has been, I think, commuted to five years, and we have also discussed that with Premier Chou En-lai. I would have to be quite candid. We have no assurance that any change of action, other than the commutation of the sentence, will take place, but we have, of course, informed the People's Republic through our private channels that we feel that would be a very salutary action on his party.

That is a matter where they must act on their own initiative, and it is not one where any public pressures or bellicose statements from here will be helpful in getting his release.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

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THE WASHINGTON POST

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When a reporter asked if mericans still held prisoner iff. China might be released, the President tied the fate of two of them to the release of prisoners held in Vietnam.

"We have every reason to believe that these flyers will be released on the initiative of the People's Republic of China as the POW situation is worked out in Vietnam," Mr. Nixon said.

The President was referring to two pilots downed off China's Hainan Island on the Gulf of Tonkin, when their planes strayed into Chinese air space, according to Pentagon sources. Their names were given as Air Force Maj. Philip E. Smith, missing since September, 1965, and Navy Lt. Cmdr. Robert J. Flynn, missing since August, 1967, officials said.

cials said.

John Thomas Downey, a CIA agent, was captured by the Chinese in October, 1952, during the Korean War. He was originally sentenced by a Chinese court to life imprisonment.

Downey's case is different from the case of the pilots, the President said. While he said he had no assurance that Downey would be released he said he had discussed his case with Premier Chou En-lai and had urged his freedom. Two Years ago. Downey's life term was reduced to a term scheduled to end in about five years

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Mrs. John Dowdy to Run For Husband's House Seat

By BETTY JAMES

The wife of Rep. John Dowdy, D-Tex., said last night she will be a candidate for the House in the Democratic primary in May.

Her husband, who was con-victed on eight counts of con-spiracy, bribery and perjury in Baltimore on Dec. 30, said he will not seek re-election to 11th term next year because of ill health.

A ruling on new trial motions is pending.

Calls and Telegrams

"I just decided this thing yesterday," Mrs. Dowdy said

last night. "I'm not organized yet. We'll probably go back next week and get things set

"So many people called and wired, I just decided I'd try it.
I just thought, 'Well, why
not?'"

Mrs. Dowdy said her husband "thinks it's all right," but didn't urge her to run.

Mrs. Dowdy, who is called "J.D.," has worked in her husband's office here for 20 years. Before her marriage, she was elected a district clerk in Tex-

The seat Dowdy holds in the 2nd Congressional district in

Texas has been redistricted, and Mrs. Dowdy is seeking the new seat.

Moving to Lufkin

She will move from Athens, Tex., to Lufkin, located in a newly established District which no longer includes Athens but does cover a number of counties her husband currently represents.

Dowdy was convicted of accepting a \$25,000 bribe to block federal prosecution of a man who admitted cheating Washington homeowners. The 59-year-old Democrat claimed he was the victim of a smear and insisted he was innocent.

A ranking member of the House District Committee, he was unopposed in his bid for reelection last year while under indictment.

Fecteau Says Chinese Held Him In Irons for Months Before Trial

Richard G. Fecteau, recently teau said. released by the Communist Chinese after spending 19 years imprisoned on a spying tary, hospital in Pennsylvania charge, spent his first months of captivity in irons under a constantly light, The Lynn Daily Evening Item reported today.

the details of his imprisonhime to remain silent throughout the proceedings "even if I heard something said that wasn't exactly true," the newspaper reported.

The lawyer then entered a guilty plea, saying, "Richard George Fecteau is of course guilty of all these crimes.
However, it must be remembered he was brought up in the capitalistic school of America and this has to be

years in a mannant China 24 mons of hore at a time, prison. The military tribunal the newspaper quoted him.
Toward the end of September, 1953, the leg irons were removed.

For 10 months after his captron and this prison. The military tribunal the newspaper quoted him.
Toward the end of September, 1953, the leg irons were removed.

The interest at a time, prison. The military tribunal the newspaper quoted him.
Toward the end of September, 1953, the leg irons were removed.

He came here from a milito spend the Christmas holiin irons under a burning bright wife and twin daughters.

Describing for the first time on Dec. 12. Fecteau has reon Dec. 12. Fecteau has replus a piece of hard dark fused to comment on the bread." ment, Fecteau, 43, said the charge he was a spy. Miss Har-charge he was a spy. Miss Har-almost constant interrogation.

Chinese lawyer appointed to bert, who was imprisoned four almost constant interrogation.

"Most of them (the questions) years, has denied she was spying.

Fecteau, a former Army ci-

the aircraft was shot down, state. the newspaper said.

LYNN, Mass., Dec. 31 (UPI) taken into consideration," Fectinually, day and night, and the bright light of the cell was, never turned off."

> "Each morning same as the one that preceeded. The heavy iron door would open. I was passed a He was released from Communist China, with Mary Ann Harbert, 26, Palo Alto, Calif., rice boiled the night before,

> "Most of them (the questions) I had no answer for. They wanted to know about the varvilian employee, was shot lous speeds of different airdown in North China in Nov-craft. Their power and so ember, 1952, with John T. forth. I knew nothing about Britain, the planes, but the question-Downey of New Britain, the planes, but the question-Conn., who still faces five ing continued. Sometimes for years in a mainland China 24 hours or more at a time,"

ture, Fecteau said he was held December, 1954, when Fecteau in irons, wearing only the tat- learned he was to go on trial tered clothing he had on when for crimes against the Chinese

After he was sentenced to "No one spoke to me for the "20 years imprisonment withfirst few weeks, I had no idea out mercy," Fecteau began an of what was to come. But I did easier routine in another realize I was in some kind of prison, in Peking, where he maximum security prison," he got one hour a day of exercise said. "Guards watched me con in an enclosed courtyard.

China's Prisoners:

Pawns In the Game of Peking

Speaking barely above a whisper and wringing his hands nervously, Richard G. Fecteau last Wednesday held his first meeting with reporters following his release from 19 years of imprisonment in China. When asked whether he had been a spy, as the Chinese charged, Mr. Fecteau replied almost inaudibly: "No comment."

In November, 1954, the Supreme People's Court in Peking convicted Mr. Fecteau, of Lynn, Mass., then 27, and John T. Downey, 24, of New Britain, Conn., of espionage. Mr. Fecteau was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. Mr. Downey received a life sentence. According to the court, the two Americans were Central Intelligence Agency operatives whose plane had been shot down in Northeastern China on Nov. 29, 1952. They had been making contact, it was charged, with Chinese anti-Communists whom they had previously organized and dropped into China.

In announcing Mr. Fecteau's release, the New China News Agency reported that Mr. Downey's sentence had been commuted to five years' imprisonment, starting from the date of commutation, which was not specified. Said the agency: "In view of the fact that the two culprits . . . admitted their crimes during the trial and their behavior was not bad while serving their terms, Chinese authorities decided to grant them leniency. . . . "

Released at the same time as Mr. Fecteau was Mary Ann Harbert, 25, a Palo Alto, Calif. student. American authorities thought she had perished when a sailboat on which she was traveling from Hong Kong to Manila vanished in Chinese waters in April, 1968. But last week the Chinese revealed that she had been arrested as a spy and that a companion in the boat, Gerald L. McLaughlin, detained at the same time, had committed suicide in 1969. Nothing was said about two other Americans held by Peking, military pilots Philip E. Smith and Robert J. Flynn, whose planes went down over Chinese territory during the Vietnam conflict.

It wasn't difficult to draw a connection between the Chinese actions toward three of the imprisoned Americans and the modest thaw in Sino-American relations and President Nixon's coming trip to Peking.

In 1955, the last time Peking initiated a serious effort at rapprochement with Washington, negotiations had sought the release of some 30 American civilians detained by China and 130-odd Chinese scientists and scholars who had been prohibited from leaving the United States. All of the detained Chinese and most of the Americans won their freedom, but, before Mr. Downey, Mr. Fecteau and a few others were released, the agreement broke down, amid charges of bad faith by each side.

Then, early in 1957, Peking, still seeking a variety of contacts with Washington and eager to have the American people learn of the accomplishments of "new China," indicated that it would release the remaining American prisoners if Washington would allow American newsmen to visit China. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles announced that he would

not approve such an arrangement because it would constitute yielding to Chinese "blackmail." Mr. Dulles's justification of his decision rested on the assumption that the conviction of Mr. Downey and Mr. Fecteau was based upon "trumpedup charges."

The State Department last week officially still refused to concede the truth of the Chinese charges but privately officials admitted that Mr. Downey and Mr. Fecteau actually were C.I.A, agents. As Mr. Fecteau's divorced wife reminded the press last week, despite governmental instructions not to discuss the case: "The Chinese haven't been lying."

Since China's "Ping-Pong diplomacy" last spring, a succession of undisclosed communications from the United States Government, including some from Henry Kissinger, the President's national security adviser, and a personal plea by Mr. Nixon himself, made it clear to Peking that no gesture of reconciliation would be more welcome to public opinion in the United States than the release of detained Americans. It was recognized that the fate of the two detained military pilots may be linked to that of the American prisoners of war held by the Vietnamese Communists. But hope for the freedom of Mr. Downey and Mr. Fecteau began to rise.

There is a natural sense of disappointment at China's failure to release Mr. Downey. Yet, in view of the fact that the Supreme People's Court found him to have been "the chief criminal in the case" and accordingly gave him the more severe sentence, it is not surprising that he has been treated differently from Mr. Fecteau. Commutation of his sentence to a fiveyear term, after 19 years in prison. was undoubtedly intended to signify the seriousness with which Peking continues to regard the case. (Four Chinese involved in the episode were executed.)

Moreover, because of the resentment that all patriotic Chinese feel

> pects for the release of the remaining Americans, but it will further tarnish the reputation for veracity of previous Administrations. Thus far, the Government appears to be steering between Scylla and Charybdis.

-JEROME ALAN COHEN

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Mr. Cohen, professor of law at Harvard, is author of "The Criminal Proc-

NEVER LOST HOPE FECTEAU ASSERTS

Says He Was Alone So Long He Isn't Used to Talking

PHOENIXVILLE, Pa., Dec. 15 (UPI)—Richard G. Fecteau said today that during his 19 years of imprisonment in China "I was in solitary for so much time I'm not used to conversation."

Mr. Fecteau made the statement at the first news conference held since he and Mary Ann Harbert were released by China on Sunday. Both were taken to the Valley Forge Army Hospital here yesterday.

Speaking in a barely audible voice and wringing his hands, Mr. Fecteau, who is 6 feet tall and weighs about 175 pounds, and weights about 175 pounds, said that during his entire period of captivity "I never gave up hope." He said, "you get used to" solitary confinement, then added, "that's my problem."

Miss Harbert, captured in Chinese waters while on a pleasure cruise between Hong Kong and Japan in April, 1968, posed for 10 minutes for photographers a short time after tographers a short time after Mr. Fecteau's news conference but would answer no questions. A hospital spokesman said she would hold a news conference at 1 P.M. tomorrow.

Responds to Questions

Mr. Fecteau, wearing a blue hospital robe over his pajamas, stood before a brightly lit Christmas tree during the news conference, which he opened by

saying:
"I came in here to give a short statement but I do not wish to answer questions at this time. I'm in good health."

But then he began to respond to questions relating to some of his experiences during his captivity

He said he was in a prison camp either in or near Peking and that the only other prisoners in his cellblock were other Americans, He said that during the middle years of his im-prisonment, he had a Chinese cellmate but that other times he was alone.

He said his normal prison day consisted of "reading and writing and walking outside my cell."

Mr. Fecteau, who is 43 years

old and whose home is in Lynn, Mass, identified three of the American prisoners as John T. Downey, 41, of New Britain, Conn.; Capt. Philip Smith, 37, of the Air Force, and Lieut. Comdr. Robert J. Flynn of the

Mr. Downey, who is still in prison, was captured with Mr. Fecteau when their military aircraft was forced down in Chinese territory in 1952, during the Korean war.

No Comment on Spy Charge

The United States has said only that the two were civilian employes of the United States Army at the time of their capture. Unoffical sources identified them as employes of Central Intelligence the Agency.

Agency.

Asked at the news conference if he was a spy, Mr. Fecteau replied, "No comment Miss Harbert, 26, of Pal Alto, Calif., sat on a couc with a nurse in her seconc floor hospital room clad in light green dress when she me light green dress when she me photographers. She smile broadly when a newsmar shouted, "Welcome home," but

said nothing.

Mr. Fecteau said he was able to read newspapers and magazines during his imprisonment. He said he knew the United States had put a man on the moon, that President Nixon planned to visit China and that Henry Kissinger the presidential adviser had been to China.

A medical bulletin released by the hospital said Mr. Fecteau and Miss Harbert were fatigued but otherwise normal. Both complained of eye disorders, which Chinese doctors diagnosed as trachoma.

The hospital said both had been eating and sleeping well. **19 Years in China Prison**

By Lee Linder Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 15 -An Army civilian employee who spent nearly half of his 19 years in a Communist prison in solitary said today he was generally well treated but that the loneliness had left its mark.

"I was alone so long," said Richard G. Fecteau, 42, his voice almost inaudible at times as he met with newsmen. "I was in solitary the first three years and the last

five or six years" in a prison in Peking, the Red Chinese capital.

"I am not bitter at the Chinese," Fecteau said. Asked if he were saying Chinese," that because he feared retaliation against other American prisoners in China, Fecteau replied, "No comment,

He said his trial on spy charges "lasted about an hour."

"I was tried two years after my capture and I got a lawyer the day of the trial,

he said and then grinned, explaining: "He (the lawyer) said something about that I was educated in American schools and therefore didn't know anything."

Clad in blue military pajamas, he replied to questions in short, sometimes incomplete sentences.

Mary Ann Harpert, 25, of

Palo Alto, Calif., a prisoner in China for more than three years, was released with Fecteau Sunday.

Physical examinations of hoth were completed at the name of the party valley Forge Hospital where they were brought Tuesday after a 27-hour flight from Hong Kong.

Maj. Allen Yanoff, a staff physician, said both appeared somewhat fatigued but "otherwise were essentially normal, although Miss Harbert" who weighs 97 pounds, "appears somewhat thin."

Fecteau declined to comment on the circumstances of his capture and on charges of spying made against him by the Chinese.

He said that in the first six months after his capture he was interrogated constantly but declined to give any information to his interrogaters.

For the most part, he said he was able to keep abreast of news happenings by reading the English-language Peking Review, which was sup-

plied him weekly.
He said he knew that Americans had walked on the moon and that President Nixon was planning to visit

China "I think that visit is important," he said, "it will help ease relations between our countries.

Fecteau said, "It was a surprise to be released. I thought I would have to do another year, but I never gave up hope of getting out.

"I am in good health and I want to see my family," he said. "I want to be home for Christmas. I don't want to

used to that, but that's one of my problems now. I was alone so long." His home is Lynn, Mass.

He said three Chinese shared his cell at various times during his imprisonment. "One was a colonel, one had been an interpreter for the Japanese and one was charged with espionage," he said.

He said his cellblock was occupied by four other Americans, including John T. Downey, 41, of New Britain, Conn., who was aboard a plane with Fecteau when it was shot down over China on a flight from Japan to Korea in 1952 during the Korean War.

Downey, sentenced to life, has had his sentence commuted to five years, effective with the date of the commutation, believed to be recently. Fecteau said he last. saw Downey a few months ago.

The Chinese charged that Fecteau and Downey were Central Intelligence Agency spies engaged in dropping Nationalist Chinese operatives on the mainland, a charge repeatedly denied by the United States.

Fecteau identified the other Americans as:

-Air Force Capt. Philip E. Smith, shot down over the Gulf of Tonkin in September, 1965.

-Navy Lt., Robert J. Flynn, presumed shot down over China in August, 1970.

–Hugh Redmond, serving a life sentence since his armitted suicide in April, 1970.

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U.S. Won't Concede Or Deny Fecteau Was on Spy Mission

mission when captured in Park, Calif., who was arrested 1952. But it was learned they in 1968. no longer deny the charges.

Expressing reluctance yes-terday to talk about "so darned sensitive a matter," government sources nevertheless said "we are not arguing" any more with the Chinese who insist that Richard Fecteau and John Thomas Downey were engaged in espionage when arrested.

Fecteau was released Monday after serving 19 years of a

II.S. officials yesterday de- 20-year sentence. He was reclined to concede that one of turned to the United States the two Americans released by along with Mary Ann Harbert, China was on an espionage an American from Menlo

> Downey remains in China, but his sentence was reduced from life to a term scheduled to end in about five years.

> Speculation that Fecteau and Downey might have been dropping Nationalist Chinese agents on the mainland as charged was raised to a possibility Monday when Fecteau's former wife was reported by several newsmen as saying that "the Chinese haven't been lying."

She was said to have explained, "It's very involved and I'm not supposed to get into it. He was a civilian working for the U.S. government. I know what he was doing, but I way—the Chinese haven't been lying." can't say. Let me put it this

Mrs. Fecteau denied later that she said this, but she would not elaborate. Two reporters who interviewed Mrs. Robert J. McCloskey said yes- vately that the administration

State Department spokesman

Fecteau quoted the same Ian-terday, "I don't see any use no longer is following the taguage in their Monday stories. ful basis on which I could, at original U.S. characterization a When asked about Mrs. Fecthis time, discuss its previous that the charges against Fecteau's reported assertion, employment." But other officials said pri-trumped up.

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NEW YORK TIMES

ixon Made Appeal o China to Release merican Captives

Special to The New York Times ANGRA DA HEROISMO, the Azores, Dec. 13—The White House said today that President Nixon had sent a personal appeal to Peking on behalf of American prisoners, including the three granted clemency by the Chinese Government.

The Presidential press secre-tary, Ronald L. Ziegler, informed newsmen who came here for Mr. Nixon's meeting with President Pompidou that Mr. Nixon had had several days' "advance knowledge" that the Chinese would release Richard G. Fecteau and Mary Ann Harbert and would reduce the life sentence of John T. Downey. Mr. Ziegler said the information had come through the usual White House channels for secret communications with Peking.

Said to Be in C.I.A.

Mr. Fecteau, who is 43 years old and is from Lynn, Mass., had served 19 years of a 20year sentence on charges that he and Mr. Downey, 41 of New Britain, Conn., were Central Intelligence Agency operatives. Both listed as civilian employes of the Army, they were captured after a military plane on which they were passengers was shot down on a flight from Japan to South Korea during the Korean war in 1952.

Miss Harbart, 26, of Menlo Park, Calif., was on a yatch seized in Chinese territorial waters near Hong Kong in 1968. Peking said that Gerald R. Mclaughlin, also a Californian and the owner of the yacht, who was seized with her, committed suicide in 1969.

While President Nixon welcomed the favorable response to his appeal, the White House refused to discuss the chances Continued on Page 4, Column 3

Nixon Appealed to China for Release of

for the release of two Air be held.

ing the life sentence of John T. prisonment.

Downey to one of five more

Came years and releasing Richard G. Fecteau prior to the completion of his sentence," Mr. Ziegler said. "He also welcomes the release from detention of Miss seized by the Chinese. They had simply disappeared after will now be able to spend Christmas with their families is a matter of particular pleasure. The fact sailing for Manila in 1968. The the Redmond Jr., had committed suicide. His in the said that Mr. Downey had had an alias, Jack Donovan, and that he and Mr. Fecteau had dropped 11 special agents they had trained in Japan into Manchuria in 1952 to engage in espionage and is a matter of particular pleas-bert appeared.

cuss the situation of the missing Air Force men, Capt. Philip dress. Both were reported to during a reconnaissance mission in 1965, and Lieut. Robert Flynn, 33, who was downed during a mission over North Vietnam in 1967. Another officer, Lieut. Joseph Dunn, who was shot down in 1968. is misswas shot down in 1968, is missing and may be on the mainland.

It is believed that Peking is

curity affairs, visited Peking this year, Mr. Ziegler related, he discussed the prisoners with Premier Chau En-lai.

It was not clear whether Mr. Kissinger had carried the President's appeal during his first visit, last July, or during his second in October.

American officials suggested that Peking might have timed its clemency announcement Mr. Nixon's consultations with with allies prior to his trip to China on Feb. 21. He arrived last night from Washington.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5 said that all information about them would be disclosed there. Peking Government followed Mr. Fecteau and Mr. Down-the precedent set when the

"The President welcomes the sented a slight gesture of clemact of clemency of the People's ency, coming a few months be-Republic of China in commut-fore the end of 20 years' im-

Came as a Surprise

The Hsinhua dispatch, from Peking, said Mr. McLaughlin had "behaved badly" during de-tention, "resisted investigation men involved in armed actions in or over North Vietnam.
On the two occasions that Henry A. Kissinger, the President's advisor on national sequenty affairs visited Police.

In announcing the suicide the for the release of two Air ey were imprisoned in Peking. Most Rev. James Edward Walsh, an American Bishop, hands. A third pilot may also in the Canton area.

Mr. Fecteau and Peking. Most Rev. James Edward Walsh, an American Bishop, was freed from a Shanghai prison on July 1970, after servwas freed from a Shanghai prison on July 1970, after serving 12 years of a 20-year sentence for alleged espionage. Simultaneously Peking nounced that another American imprisoned for life in Shanghai for alleged espionage, Hugh F.

ure to the President."

Mr. Fecteau was dressed in Sabotage. Later, it said, they Chinese padded clothing. Miss "intruded into China's territocuss the situation of the missrial air on a spy plane in an attempt to make contact with

Chinese Haven't Lied, Says Ex-Wife of Fecteau

LYNN, Mass., Dec. 13 (AP)—waiting for word from the State Department.

The divorced wife of Richard The last photograph the twins G. Fecteau, the man released have of their father was taken

at her home: "It's very involved and I'm not supposed to get into it. He was a civilian working for the U.S. Government. I know what he was doinng, but I can't say. Let me put it this way—the Chinese haven't been lying."

The Chinese had charged that Mr. Fecteau was on a mission for the United States Central Intelligence Agency to drop Nationalist Chinese spies. The United States has repeatedly denied the charge.

Mrs. Fecteau said she was "paralyzed" with joy by the announcement of Mr. Fecteau's release. She attributed Chinese decision to free him to President Nixon's move to open lines of communications with mainland China.

"It should have happened a long time ago," Mrs. Fecteau said. "If we had only owned up to the Chinese in the beginning, perhaps he wouldn't have had to spend all those years in

prison.
"It's better to have an enemy you can argue with than one you can't even talk to."

Mrs. Fecteau was divorced from Fecteau was divolced from Fecteau in 1951, the year before he was captured and inever remarried. "We hold no resentment against our Government," she said. "They did what they thought was best."

Mrs. Fectau and her 21-yearold twin daughters, Suzon and Signice, talked to reporters after a day spent preparing for Mr. Fecteau's return and of

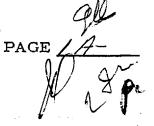
waiting for word from the State

from a Chinese prison after serving 19 years on a spying charge, said today: "The Chinese haven't been lying."

Mrs. Margaret Fecteau said at a crowded news conference lat. her home: "It's very in-

THE EVENING STAR

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y freed two Americans, a held captive for 19 years a woman captured on a years in 1968. The pair crossed ato fong Kong and left on a light for the United States.

right for the United States.

Whe Peking government anconced it had reduced the life
sentence of another American
and that a fourth American
orisoner committed suicide
more than two years ago.

Hichard Fecteau, 43, a civilan Army employe from Lynn,
Mass captured during the
korean War, and Mary Ann
carbert crossed the border in
the early afternoon. A Royal
for core helicopter flew them
to Kai Tak airport, and there Force helicopter flew them to Kai Tak airport, and there they boarded a U.S. military tisne for the United States, a pokesman for the Hong Kong tovernment said.

Indisclosed Destination alse alarms, we didn't really the plane was taking them.

Paking announced that the life sentence being served by

ife sentence heing served by John T. Downey, 41, of New Services, Comp., had been com-muted to five years, starting That date was not announced.
The date was not announced to the war not announced they were was not announced.

"IA agents air-dropping Na-ionalist Chinese spies a harge the U.S government treestedly denied.

by Peking today was Gerald Ross McLaughlin. The New China News Agency said he was captured with Miss Harbert aboard a yacht in Chinese territorial waters north of Hong Kong on April 21, 1968. The Communist agency said he committed suicide March 7, 1969, while under investigation.

First Positive Word

-Peking's announcement was the first positive word of the capture of Miss Harbert and McLaughlin, and no information about them was available in Hong Kong.

-"Are you sure?" Philip Fecteau asked a newsman who told him this morning in Lynn, Mass., that his brother Richard had been freed. Philip said his parents had listened late

PRISONERS

U.S. Man, Woman Released by China

Continued From Page A-1

The New England Telephone Co. said later the Fecteaus had asked to have their telephone disconnected.

Fecteau is father of twin daughters, now 21. He and the girls' mother were divorced the year before he was captured.

Fecteau remarried, but his second wife died in a fire in 1953 in Avalon Shores, Md.

Fecteau and his daughters had kept in touch with letters until four years ago when the Chinese stopped giving the girls' letters to their father because of an address one of them inadvertently put on a

She wrote "The Peoples Republic of Red China," and the letter was returned unopened with "Red China" underlined in red.

None of the letters from the girls, named Suzon and Sidnice, has been answered since then.

Fecteau had managed to buy gifts for his daughters on some occasions, such as Christmas or their birthdays.

In New Britain, Conn., Downey's brother William said, "After 19 years, my hopes don't get dashed. We're glad there was some commutation, but disappointed that it was not now." William said he and his mother, Mary Downey of New Britain, had been told that John's sentence was being reviewed when they visited John earlier this year. Downey's sister, Mary Walsh, said through tears, "I'm very happy for Richard Fecteau—I think it's wonderful. That's all I can say now."

In the Azores, President Nixon today hailed the release

of the two prisoners and the shortening of the sentence of the third.

White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Nixon's national security affairs adviser Henry A. Kissinger negotiated with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai during his two trips to China on the subject of American prisoners.
"The President welcomes

this act of clemency of the People's Republic of China, Ziegler told newsmen who ascompanied Nixon to the Azores for a meeting with French President Georges Pompidou.

Ziegler said the U.S. government had been informed in advance of the Chinese plans to release the two Americans.

2 Others Still Held

Two other Americans are known to be still imprisoned in China: Air Force Capt. Phillip E. Smith, whose plane was shot down over the Gulf of Tonkin in September 1965, and Lt. Robert J. Flynn, a U.S. Navy pilot presumed shot down over China's Kwangsi Provinnce in August 1967.

Navy Lt. Joseph Dunn, whose plane was shot down off China's Hainan Island in February 1968, is listed as missing on the Chinese mainland.

The government spokesman said Fecteau looked healthy and wore a blue Chinese suit with blue cap. Miss Harbert, in Western-style clothes, appeared healthy but rather thin, the spokesman said. They had eight pieces of luggage with them.

Fecteau and Downey were captured in 1952 during the Korean War when a military plane on which they were passengers was shot down on a flight from Japan to Korea.