

Told His Captors Secrets, Downey Says

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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 interrogation by the Chinese, Downey said: "I would say I revealed about every bit of information I 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 thought the 20 years for a large extent was wasted and I don't see it benefited anybody."

It was not clear, however, whether Downey was questioning the worth of the 1952 mission that led to his capture or the time he spent in jail. He did not elaborate.

10 Months in Leg Irons

Speaking in a quiet, reserved manner, Downey said during the first 10 months after his plane was shot down over Manchuria in November 1952, he was kept continually in leg irons.

The Chinese subjected him to "pretty intensive questioning" and threatened his well



United Press International

South Vietnamese military policeman, right, and Vietcong soldier start 32 American POWs toward Bienhoa center for scheduled release from captivity on Friday.

being, but never beat him, he said.

The slightly balding Downey was released to be at the bedside of his mother, Mary V. Downey, 75, who suffered a severe stroke Wednesday. She remained in critical but improved condition, and visited twice with her son.

Asked during the 45-minute news conference whether he would remain with the CIA, he said: "At present, I would say not."

he never lost hope but felt some bitterness 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."

Surprised by Nixon

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 a.m. and included required listening to political broadcasts and participation in ideological "study periods."

He was permitted to leave his white washed cell for between 30 minutes and four hours of exercise in a 30- by 90-foot courtyard. Prisoners also were taken on supervised visits to farms, factories and the Great Wall, he added, and his captors gave him enough to eat.

[CIA officials in Washington said that Downey was carried on agency rolls as an employee throughout his imprisonment and will get back pay, presumably 20 years worth. But the officials refused to disclose how much Downey was making and how much he now has coming to him, claiming such information was Downey's personal business.]

Downey, who joined the CIA after he graduated from Yale University in June 1951, said

2 'Missing' U.S. Pilots Died Flying Downey Into China

By Thomas O'Toole
Washington Post Staff Writer

Two civilian American pilots who had been listed as missing on a flight from Korea to Japan in 1952 were killed piloting the plane that took CIA agents Jack Downey and Richard Fecteau into Communist Chinese hands when it was shot down deep inside China, it was learned yesterday.

The fliers were pilot Robert C. Snoddy and copilot Norman Schwartz. At the time of the crash, both men were employed by Civil Air Transport, an airline which flew covert air operations in the Far East for the Central Intelligence

Agency during the Korean war, which we have as reference in our files."

A State Department official said Snoddy and Schwartz were on the plane with Downey and Fecteau when it crashed in Manchuria in late November, 1952. Downey and Fecteau survived and were taken prisoner by the Chinese. Fecteau was released December, 1971, and Downey just two weeks ago.

"We have confirmed all this in private conversations with Downey and Fecteau," the State Department official said. "We also have a bulletin to this effect from the New China News Agency in 1954,

The State Department's admission that Snoddy and Schwartz were pilots for Downey and Fecteau surprised even former CIA men who have kept up with the case because of their friendship with Downey. For years, they had believed that the plane had been operated by Chinese Nationalists flying for Chiang Kai-shek.

For the last 20 years, the State Department has told the families of Snoddy and Schwartz that the two fliers were lost when their civilian

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cargo plane went down at sea on a flight from Korea to Japan. The State Department said that an "extensive search" had been made for the two fliers, but that they were "presumed dead."

The first hint the fliers' families had that this might not be the whole story came in 1954 when the Chinese announced the capture and conviction of Downey and Fecteau, who the Chinese said were caught when their plane was forced down attempting to supply a Chinese Nationalist spy ring in the mountains of Manchuria.

A year earlier, Snoddy's mother had turned in a small life insurance policy on her son that he had begun payments on when he was a teenage newboy in Roseburg, Ore., where the Snoddy's lived.

The policy was paid and returned with a copy of his flight plan the day he and Schwartz were said to have been killed. The flight plan for his C-47 aircraft gave Seoul as his departure point and Tokyo as his destination. It also listed as passengers on the plane J. Downey and R. Fecteau, who were described as Department of the Army civilian employees.

"When we heard a year later that Downey and Fecteau were prisoners in China we didn't know what to think," said Snoddy's sister, Mrs. John Boss, who today lives in Creswell, Ore. "Of course, all we could think of was that Robert and Norman (Schwartz) might be alive too."

Mrs. Boss said she and her mother wrote to then Sen. Wayne Morse of Oregon asking him for help in finding out what happened to Snoddy.

Morse wrote the Snoddy family saying he would pursue it further, but the Snoddys heard nothing more from the State Department.

"We still don't have anything in writing," Mrs. Boss said yesterday in a telephone interview. "We really think we're owed an explanation of what happened after all these years."

Oregon Republicans Sen. Mark Hatfield and Rep. Delenback wrote to Secretary of State William P. Rogers last Friday, and asked:

"Are Snoddy and Schwartz dead? If so, how and where did they die? Were they serving their country as employees of the U.S. government at the time? If they were, does the government have any legal or moral obligations to the families of these men since they were acting under the direction of government employees?"

Ex-China Captive a Lawyer

BOSTON—John Downey, a prisoner in China for 21 years and now a graduate of Harvard Law School, will join a two-man law firm in Wallingford, Conn., this fall, according to a close associate.

The information came from Harvard Law Professor Jerome Alan Cohen, an undergraduate classmate of Downey's at Yale three decades ago. Cohen led the fight to free the former marican intelligence officer.

Since then, Downey has said little in public about his experiences. He married the former Audrey Lee in 1975. She was born in China and the two met a few months after Downey's release when he was studying at Yale where his future wife was a research associate in biophysics and biochemistry. They have no children.

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