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Haldeman Out of Prison for Holiday

LOMPOG, Calif., Dec. 21 (AP) — Urging fellow inmates to "have a merry Christmas," former Nixon chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, freed on a six-day holiday furlough, walked out of the minimum-security federal prison today where he is serving a sentence for conviction of Watergate crimes.

Haldeman repeated the greetings to reporters who waited for him shortly before dawn as he walked to his car.

Without further comment, Haldeman climbed in, and kissed his wife, Jo, who was there to drive him away.

Mrs. Haldeman said Tuesday the couple would be in Los Angeles for the holidays. It was not immediately known if their four children would join them.

Prison spokesman Gary Aldinger said 115 of the 420 inmates at the prison camp have been granted

Christmas furloughs of three to seven days. Haldeman, he said, will be required to return Dec. 27.

Furloughs, Aldinger said, "must be based on need, and usually in this case, it's based on a need to maintain and strengthen family ties."

While free, prisoners are required to adhere to such prison rules as avoiding intoxication and refraining from the use of narcotics. Most furloughed inmates, Aldinger said, are also prohibited from driving cars.

The former Nixon administration official has been at the central California prison since June 21. He was sentenced on Feb. 21, 1975, to 2½ to 8 years in prison on conviction of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury charges. Two months ago, U.S. Judge John J. Sirica reduced Haldeman's sentence to one to four years.

He becomes eligible for parole on June 20, 1978.