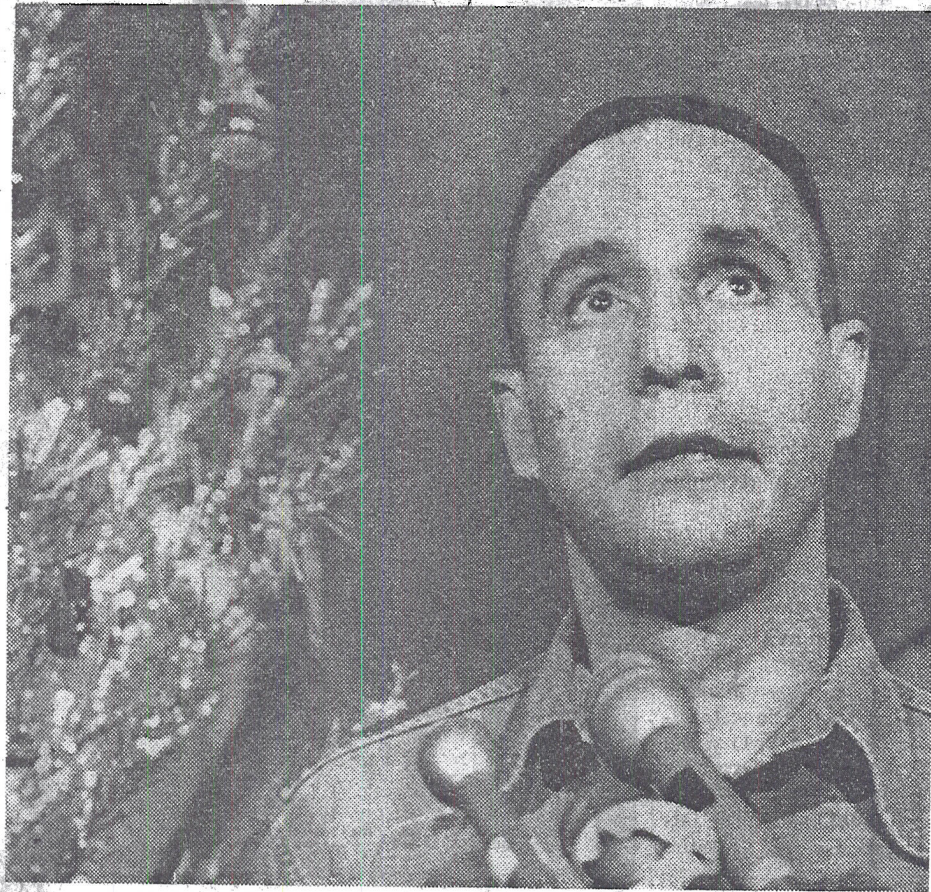


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**HE NEVER GAVE UP THE HOPE OF ULTIMATE FREEDOM**

Richard Fecteau beside a Christmas tree in hospital at Phoenixville

SE Examiner

DEC 15 1971

—AP Photo

**'Never Gave Up' in 19 Years**

PHILADELPHIA — (AP)

— An Army civilian employe who spent 19 years in a Chinese prison said today he "never gave up hope of getting out."

"I was in solitary the first three years and the last five or six years," in Peking, Richard G. Fecteau, 43, of Lynn, Mass., told newsmen in the first interview he has permitted since his release Monday in Hong Kong.

Mary Ann Harbert, 25, of Palo Alto, a Chinese prisoner for more than three years, was released at the same time.

Miss Harbert posed for 10 minutes for photographers a short time after Fecteau's news conference but would answer no questions. A hospital spokesman said she

would hold a news conference tomorrow.

Fecteau and Miss Harbert are undergoing extensive medical tests at the nearby Valley Forge Medical Center and Hospital.

Fecteau, clad in blue military hospital pajamas and bedroom slippers, stood in front of a Christmas tree and told newsmen his trial by the Chinese on spy charges lasted about one hour.

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

Asked at the news conference if he were a spy, Fecteau replied, "No comment."

Fecteau said that, for the most part, he was able to keep abreast of the news happenings in the world by reading the English-language Peking Review.

He said he knew that

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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."

**Told of Freedom**

Fecteau said he was advised only last Thursday that he would be freed when he was taken before a military tribunal in Peking. He said he spent most of his years in prison in the Chinese capital.

Fecteau, described by hospital authorities as withdrawn and cautious, said, "It was a surprise to be released."

"I thought I would have to do another year," he said.

**In Good Health**

He declined to answer specific questions about his capture and his years in prison and prefaced the news conference by telling newsmen,

"I don't want to be interviewed."

"I am in good health and I want to see my family," he said. "I don't want to talk to newsmen because I have been so long in solitary confinement. You can get used to that, but that's one of my problems now. I was alone so long."

He said the Chinese treated him well, except for the solitary, and that 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 cell block was occupied by the four other Americans known to be imprisoned in China.