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McCain travels to Vietnam

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Shaking hands with crowds of Vietnamese, a nostalgic John McCain returned Tuesday to the Hanoi lake where in 1967 he was dragged ashore and beaten after parachuting from his downed warplane.

The bitter war has yielded to reconciliation, and the Arizona senator strolled with his family around the busy shorefront of the capital's Truc Bach lake, stopping at a sidewalk memorial marking his rescue.

"I put the Vietnam War behind me a long time ago," McCain said upon arriving in Vietnam on Tuesday. "I harbor no anger, no rancor."

People on the street seemed to feel the same. A crowd of Vietnamese gathered around McCain as he walked, greeting him as a friend and shaking his hand.

McCain, who spent more than five years as a prisoner of war here, is now a leading proponent of rebuilding relations with the impoverished communist nation.

Vietnam celebrates the 25th anniversary of the end of the war on Sunday, and the former presidential candidate is the most prominent of the numerous returning U.S. veterans.

"My job here is to commemorate the beginning and continuation of a new relationship between the United States and Vietnam," said McCain, who was instrumental in restoring formal ties five years ago.

His schedule was filled with war reminders.

Shortly after he arrived, McCain attended a solemn airport repatriation ceremony in which an 11-person military honor guard placed six small boxes of remains, believed to be from U.S. servicemen, into silver metal coffins.

About 50 U.S. civilians and military personnel watched as the containers were draped with American flags and carried into the hold of a C-17 cargo plane heading to Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii for forensic analysis.

The remains were recovered this year as part of the ongoing American effort to account for more than 2,000 servicemen missing in Indochina, including about 1,500 in Vietnam.

International excellence



Dr. Tiliu Lanne, associate professor in the Department of Languages, receives a faculty award for International Excellence presented to Dr. Janis Stout.

21 hostages remain in rebels' custody

SEMPORNA, Malaysia (AP) — Authorities hunted the seas between Malaysia and the Philippines Tuesday for two fishing boats controlled by heavily armed men holding 21 hostages they abducted from a Malaysian diving resort two days earlier.

The kidnapping might be tied to Muslim rebels in the Philippines who are seeking the release of militants jailed in the United States, although some authorities said the Abu Sayyaf rebels were just trying to attract attention.

"Our group is behind the abduction of the foreigners (in Malaysia) and there are still a lot of surprises for the government if they won't listen to us," Abu Sayyaf spokesman Abu Ahmad told Philippine radio station DXRZ.

Several hours later, however, said he would neither confirm his group was involved.

Officials were searching for the hostages. They were taken from lush Sipadan Island in the Borneo state of Sabah.

A police intelligence report said the hostages were taken to the Sulu at the southern tip of Mindanao no more than an hour's boat ride from Sipadan. But Lt. Edgar Jodan, a navy pilot, said he found the three-hour search of the sea area today.

Malaysian officials said the kidnappers were believed to be on the side of Malaysian waters.

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