

Betty Beale: Washington

From the Hanoi Hilton To Conrad's



POW John S. McCain III, shown here arriving in the Philippines, will be among honored White House guests.

WASHINGTON — There will be a parade of POWs marching from the Washington Hilton down to the White House on May 24. That's when President and Mrs. Nixon will entertain 600 or more of the heroes from morn 'til night.

"It will be a red, white and blue day all the way through," said a White House spokesman. And what a moving day in Washington history! Conrad Hilton is putting up all the former prisoners and their wives free, probably to show them the enormous contrast with the "Hanoi Hilton."

Among the POWs will be Lt. Comdr. John S. McCain III, whom his North Vietnamese captors called "the crown prince." Because his father was the admiral in command of all U.S. Naval forces in the Far East he was tortured more horribly than many others.

Will he be able to march, his mother was asked. The beautiful Roberta McCain, who was glimpsed at a luncheon for Mme. Thieu said, "He can do anything because he exercised so much in prison — even though they had crushed the left socket of his shoulder and both arms and one leg were broken. No matter how much it hurt, he exercised.

"He can't play tennis anymore because he can't bend one knee, and he can't raise his arm because of the shoulder which was fractured twice by his captors but he can do push-ups," his mother said to listeners marvelling at such spirit.

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Biggest surprise of the Thieu visit was Thieu himself. After years of reading about him in our papers, no one, least of all newsmen, expected to find a quality of softness in him, but they did.

As Acting Chief of Protocol Marion Smoak put it, "He's a sweet guy — smiling, friendly, reserved, nice, and not at all pushy."

Cracked Chief Justice Warren Burger with a twinkle at the Vice President's dinner in Thieu's honor, "This fellow isn't as bloodthirsty or as murderous as I read about him."

Now back in the Far East, that double ambassadorial pair, Ellsworth Bunker and Carol Laise, house-hunted while in Washington for the Thieu activities.

Contrary to a previous report, Carol as well as her husband, will continue her career. Ambassador Bunker will wind up all his activities in Saigon by May 1 and return here with his wife to see her receive the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award on May 4. After that there will be three weeks at Kathmandu for Ambassador Laise's wind-up activities and that's probably where they'll be when they celebrate his 79th birthday on May 11.

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Visitors pouring into the National Gallery of Art to see the French impressionists masterpieces on loan from the Soviet Union assume that the plexiglass cases around each painting came with them. But not so. The plastic protection was put on at the gallery when the Russians insisted there had to be a shatter-proof and



PRESIDENT THIEU greeted in Washington by Mrs. Agnew and Ambassador Bunker.

acid-proof covers over the works of art lest some anti-Soviet demonstrators try something.

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A super-posh ball is being planned for the gorgeous pair whose marriage shook Spain, particularly Don Juan, father of Prince Juan Carlos.

At the time of his marriage a year ago, Alfonso de Borbon, eldest son of the eldest son of the last king of Spain, was called Prince Alfonso but after his marriage to Maria del Carmen, granddaughter of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, the title "prince" was played down in official circles on the orders of Franco.

Alfonso's father, a mute, had renounced the throne for himself and his heirs, but a lot of people began getting ideas.

So when Spanish Ambassador and Mrs. Sagaz give an embassy ball here for Alfonso and Carmen on May 25, the invitations will read "Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cadiz."

It will be a strictly non-official party and no requests will be made to top government officials to receive the handsome duke. The fewer than 200 people to be invited will be drawn from Washington's creme de la creme young group which is bound to include a few assistants to the President and Vice President, but no wheel as big as Henry Kissinger.

In short, the ambassador and his wife will avoid giving the kind of rank-filled to-do that was tossed for the heir to the throne, Juan Carlos, when he and Sophia

were last here. Except for Henry's absence, the sticky Spanish political situation will undoubtedly make for the best kind of swinging party.

The princely pair are coming to the U.S. for the Metropolitan Opera gala in New York on May 21, and a dinner dance the next night by Spanish Ambassador to the U.N. and Mrs. Jaime Alba. On the 23rd Sonny and Marylou Whitney will give a dinner for them in their New York apartment. The Whitneys, you know, are up to their ears in Spain.

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There's going to be a gold rush near Washington this spring. "Gold in the Blue Ridge — The True Story of the Beale Treasure" by Pauline and Walter Innis will be on the book stands by April 30. After that there's no telling how heavy the traffic will get down near Montvale, Va.

The fact that Thomas Jefferson Beale (an ancestor, no doubt) buried \$2 million worth of gold and silver in the Blue Ridge between 1819 and 1822 has long been known. The codes he left indicating where the treasure is are also familiar to cryptologists the world over including the key to the second code.

What Admiral and Mrs. Innis have done is collect all known facts and weave them together. Every known key, code and maps are included in this volume. Since happenstance broke code two, an amateur armed with this book could locate the fortune that must be worth at least \$10 million today.