

# **Indochina: Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos**

## **Images Left Behind**

**Hanoi, Vietnam**

**December 12, 2017**

**On an early morning flight from Luang Prabang, Laos, our Vietnam Airlines Airbus 930 waited on the tarmac ready to host its passengers for a 55-minute hop to Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. The Airbus was barely visible from the security terminal covered in a heavy morning fog that blanketed the surrounding area and the airport, an atmospheric gift from the gods of the Mekong River.**

**Nevertheless, our flight departed on time. We bid farewell to our new friends and our local Lao guide, Anewday, at the Sanctuary Resort awaiting new guests to introduce them to the mysteries offered by their city called Luang Prabang, a wonderful Lao city in the crown jewel Indochina.**

**From the window seat, Hanoi appeared on the horizon displaying its resurrected image of prosperity with**

**skyscrapers outlining the cityscape. This was an unexpected vision based on our preconceived images of the Vietnam/American War coverage. Like the rebuilding of post-WW2 Warsaw, Poland, the aerial view of Hanoi exhibited a transformation leaving the scars of war as a past memory in their archives.**

**Hanoi International Airport offered all the amenities we've come to expect in an airport that serves as a major hub in Indochina, including a jet way.**

**In business class, we were first to exit only to be confronted with what seemed like a kilometer-long forced march to the Immigration/Visa Terminal. Having our indelible multi-entrance visa conspicuously visible in our passports, we pass the Interpol inspection with flying colors and found our driver and his assistant from the Movenpick Hotel Hanoi (a Swiss establishment) ready to escort us to his waiting van in the adjoining parking lot. With our luggage first to appear at baggage claim, his assistant followed carrying our easily identified bags cover in Vegasdrift and DriffRaff stickers.**

**The Movenpick Hotel is centrally located in downtown Hanoi and only 2 blocks from the infamous Hanoi Hilton (Prisoner of War Facility of John McCain fame).**

**As we checked in, a message from Diane's brother was handed to us. Her brother, Paul, a Computer Security Professor from Carnegie Mellon University, was in Hanoi certifying computer security procedures at the United States embassy and wanted to get together for lunch. Unfortunately, flight schedules prevented us from this family reunion due to a change in his flight to Jakarta, Indonesia. Uncertainty is an expected occurrence that's accepted in foreign travel.**

**Today's agenda included a visit to the notorious "Hanoi Hilton", the Mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh and the site of the B-52s' destruction of Hai Phuong's schools, hospitals, orphanages, and power stations.**

**Tomorrow, we move to our ship at the World Heritage Site of Ha Long Bay to celebrate Christmas in Vietnam.**

**Photos of the people of Hanoi and surrounding historical sites:**

# "Hanoi Hilton"







John Sidney McCain



## THIẾU TÁ HẢI QUÂN JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN

John Sidney McCain sinh năm 1936 tại Căn cứ Không quân Coco Solo trong vùng kênh đào Panama do Mỹ kiểm soát. Cha và ông nội John Sidney McCain đều là Đô đốc Hải quân Hoa Kỳ. Ông đã thực hiện 23 lần bay trên bầu trời miền Bắc Việt Nam. Trong chuyến ném bom xuống Nhà máy điện Yên Phụ, ngày 26/10/1967, chiếc A-4E Skyhawk đã bị bộ đội Phòng không Việt Nam bắn rơi. John Sidney McCain gần như bị chết đuối khi nhảy dù, rơi xuống hồ Trúc Bạch và bị thương nặng. Sau đó, ông được đưa tới Viện Quân y 108 để điều trị. Khi sức khỏe ổn định, John Sidney McCain được chuyển về "Hilton - Hà Nội".

### NAVY MAJOR JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN

John Sidney McCain was born in 1936 in Coco Solo air base near the Panama Canal under the control of the US. His grandfather and father were both US Navy Admirals. He completed 23 missions on North Vietnamese airspace. While dropping bombs from his A-4E Skyhawk on Yen Phu Electric Factory on October 26th, 1967, he was shot down by soldiers of Viet Nam People's Air Defense. He was badly injured while ejecting and nearly drowned after parachuting into Trúc Bạch lake. After that, he was moved to No. 108 Military Hospital for medical treatment. When he recovered, he was moved to "Ha Noi - Hilton".

**Những vị khách đặc biệt**  
*The special guests*









**VietCong Veteran & his Family**



**Flower Girl**



