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## 'Welcome back to freedom'

From Associated Press reports

Fifty-two freed American hostages arrived in West Germany early today, ending a 444-day ordeal as prisoners of Iranian revolutionaries and a 12-hour flight from Tehran via Athens and Algiers.

At a stopover at Algiers' wind-swept airport, Algerian officials, acting as intermediaries, formally turned the former captives over to U.S. authorities in a brief and joyous ceremony.

The Americans, one flashing a V-for-victory sign and another shouting "God bless America," then flew aboard two U.S. medical evacuation planes to West Germany for a period of rest and "decompression" at a U.S. Air Force hospital. The planes bore "Welcome back to freedom" signs on their doors.

The medevac DC-9s touched down at the Rhein-Main Air Base near Frankfurt at 6:45 a.m. local time (9:45 a.m. PST) on the last leg of the hostages' journey from Tehran — with the next trip to the United States and home.

They had flown out of Tehran aboard an Algerian airliner 25 minutes after Ronald Reagan succeeded Jimmy Carter as president at noon Tuesday in inauguration ceremonies in Washington. And as they were led to the plane, one at a time, a group of Iran's revolutionary guards crowded around, waving their

### Hostages arrive in Germany; Carter to welcome 52 today

fists and chanting, "Death to America!" and "God is great!"

Ali Abdelaziz, an Algerian protocol officer who was on the flight from Tehran, said when the hostages were safely aboard the plane "they let their joy explode. They began to shout, to sing."

A cheer rose from hundreds of U.S. military personnel and civilians gathered at the Rhein-Main base as the freed hostages left the DC-9s and boarded buses for the 20-mile trip to the Air Force hospital at Wiesbaden.

More cheers went up from people packing the terrace and two balconies of the three-story hospital as the two buses, escorted by more than a dozen German police cruisers and U.S. military cars, entered the driveway. The grinning ex-hostages formed a single line to make their way through the crowd and entered the hospital.

A delegation led by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who headed the State Department when the U.S. Embassy and hostages were seized on Feb. 4, 1979, and Ambassador Walter Sotessel had formed a receiving line to greet the 52 when they disembarked at the

airfield.

Carter, unable to win the hostage's freedom in the closing hours of "his watch" because of last-minute delays, was scheduled to fly to Wiesbaden today as Pres. Reagan's envoy.

"USA, USA, USA" cheered the throng at the West German air base, with many people waving small American flags. The former prisoners had been served an American dinner of Thanksgiving turkey on the 1,250-mile flight from Algiers to Frankfurt.

They had left Tehran at 8:55 p.m. Tehran time Tuesday (9:25 a.m. PST) and after a refueling stop in Athens, Greece, their Algerian Boeing 727 landed in Algiers about 7½ hours later. A second Boeing 727 that carried the Americans' luggage and a smaller jet with the Algerian diplomats who had served as go-betweens in the long and often frustrating negotiations completed the three-plane mission.

Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who headed the U.S. team that negotiated the final release agreement and other American officials greeted the hostages as they left the

jetliner and went to the Algerian airport's VIP lounge.

Christopher thanked the Algerian government for its role as intermediary, saying, "Today's events would not be taking place without the role of your government."

In the United States, elated countrymen spread the news with pealing church bells and blaring sirens, and offered prayers of thanks that the burden of 444 days in captivity had been lifted.

In 95 hectic minutes televised back to the United States, the freed captives disembarked from the Algerian craft and were greeted with hugs and tears, closing the final chapter in a hostage-holding episode without precedent in modern diplomatic history.

Kathryn Koob and Elizabeth Ann Swift, the only women hostages, left the aircraft first in Algiers, each wearing in their hair a yellow ribbon — a gesture taken from the song, "Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree," that came to symbolize America's wait for the captives.

Next came Bruce Laingen, the charge d'affaires who had been the top diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran when it was seized Nov. 4, 1979. The other hostages followed in quick succession, waving and smiling. All looked physically well.

## Inauguration sparks celebrations, scuffles



Photo by Steve Dykes

One local entrepreneur hawked Reagan dartboards outside the EMU Tuesday.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ronald Reagan became President of the United States on Tuesday, promising "an era of national renewal" at home and restraint but never surrender abroad. His inauguration blended the passage of power with a passage to freedom for 52 American hostages.

As Jimmy Carter yielded the presidency, Iran yielded at last the captives it had held for 444 days. And so the celebration for Reagan, the parade, pageantry, music, cannon salutes, became a celebration of their freedom, too.

At the hour of inauguration, the promise of freedom had not become the fact of freedom, and Reagan did not mention the hostages in the 20-minute address he directed to "this breed called Americans," countrymen he described as the heroes of the land.

But the liberation of the captive Americans was the focus of his last

briefings by Carter, and his first hours as the 40th president.

And so the announcement the nation awaited came in his toast to congressional leaders at a traditional Capitol luncheon.

"And now to conclude the toast, with thanks to almighty God, I have been given a tag line, the get-off line that everyone wants for the end of a toast or a speech or anything else.

"Some 30 minutes ago, the planes bearing our prisoners left Iranian airspace and they are now free of Iran. So we can all drink to this one — to all of us together, doing what we all know we can do, to make this country what it should be, what it can be, what it always has been."

It was the announcement Carter had waited so long to make himself, but it came too late for him. So Pres. Reagan made it, while citizen Carter flew home to Georgia.

### Veteran fires campus crowd

Ron Phillips, a member of the the University Veterans Association, enraged a crowd of about 50 students in the EMU Tuesday by standing on an American flag while reading anti-war poetry.

"I'm doing this because today is inauguration day," Phillips said. "Today they put a man in power who stated that the Vietnam war was a noble cause."

Phillips' action brought angry responses from the crowd of students.

"You're an American!" shouted one woman. "That flag stands for America."

"I thought it did too," Phillips said. "When I was 19 I went and fought for it."

Phillips is a Vietnam veteran.

"I don't care what he's been through," the woman told the crowd. "He has no right to stand on our flag."

The confrontation nearly became violent when one angry student forced Phillips off the flag.

"He's not standing on that flag," the student shouted as he engaged Phillips in a tug-of-war.

The U.S. Navy officer manning a recruiting table a few feet away from the demonstration seemed unmoved by the incident.

"All I can say is I think they have their right to freedom of speech. I hope they realize we have the right to free speech, too," John Nawrocki said.