

SACO NEWS



Veterans of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, World War II China
aka The Rice Paddy Navy
Perpetual Skipper VAdm. Milton E. "Mary" Miles

December 2017

WHAT THE HELL?

Issue No. 48

Reunion At A Glance

Date: June 13–17, 2018

Location: Hotel Indigo
263 West Grandview Parkway
Traverse City, MI 49684

Activities:

Tall ship sail
Black Star Farms Winery and
Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes tours
Membership meeting
Banquet

Hosts: Lynn Grabenstein and
Dairus Reynnet

Membership and Reunion Materials Inside

Inside *SACO News* are enclosed:

Green membership form. Please complete it and send to Judy Barbieri along with your check. Judy's address is on the form and on p. 2 of *SACO News*.

Reunion registration, invitation letter, and agenda. Please complete a separate form for each attendee (make copies as needed) and send to Lynn Grabenstein along with your check. Lynn's address is on the form.

Please send your payments separately to Judy and Lynn.

SACO 62nd Reunion June 13–17

The Trustees of SACO announce with great pleasure that we are holding our 62nd Reunion this summer.

SACO Original Veterans, family, and friends, including a delegation from Taiwan, will gather June 13–17 in Traverse City, Michigan, for four days of friendship, food, and fun. Situated on the shore of Traverse Bay, Lake Michigan, Traverse City is known as the Caribbean of the North with beautiful blue water, sandy beaches, and outdoor activities such as kayaking, cycling, swimming, hiking, fishing, and golf.

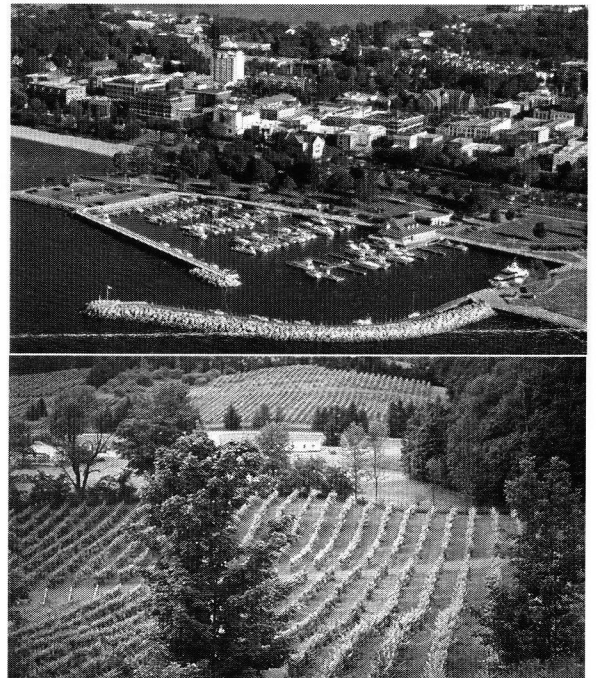
Original Veterans are invited to attend at no charge.

On Thursday, we'll take a tall ship sailing cruise in Traverse Bay. Friday is a full day with a winery tour and a visit to the majestic Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Saturday after the SACO membership meeting, you will have a free day to enjoy everything the area has to offer, from the charming shops downtown to pedaling down a Traverse City Recreation and Transport (TART) Trail, or just relaxing in the beautiful setting. We'll cap off the reunion with our traditional Saturday evening banquet.

As always, a hospitality room will be open where we can visit, share photos, and relax.

Hosts Lynn Grabenstein and Dairus Reynnet advise that you don't really need a car. The hotel is a short walk to downtown and many activities. An affordable shuttle service from the airport to the hotel is available.

Thank you, Lynn and Dairus, for arranging our reunion in this fabulous setting. We'll see everyone in June!



SACO Officers 2017

President: Dan Miller
Vice President: Dairus Reynnet
Membership Chairman: Jack Coyle
Assistant Membership Chairman: Jodi Petersen
Treasurer: Judy Barbieri
Assistant Treasurer: Richard Maurice
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Editor SACO News: Linda Kush

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Robert Hill Jr., Chairman
Penny Coats
Richard Maurice
Jack Petersen
Pete Barbieri
Lynn Grabenstein

SACO Membership

For information about SACO membership, please contact Jack Coyle, membership chairman:
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770-788-2454

THANK YOU

Many thanks to these people for contributing to this issue of *SACO News*:

Judy Barbieri
Robert Hill Jr.
Dairus Reynnet
Douglas Lawson Jr.
Robert Coats
Jack Coyle

SACO Annual Dues

Payment is due January 1 each year.
Annual dues: \$35.00
Please remit to:
Judy Barbieri
244 Silver Creek Circle
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

A green membership form is enclosed for your convenience. Please return it to Judy with your dues today!

SACO News

is published by and for WWII veterans of SACO, Sino-American Cooperative Organization (aka U.S. Naval Group China as well as the Rice Paddy Navy), their families and friends. The late Richard Rutan is Our Perpetual Editor-in-Chief. The publication is funded by annual dues of members.

Please send your comments, news, and memories (along with clear pictures, if available) to the Editor:

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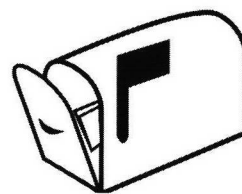
Keep your SACO News coming!

If it has been more than two years since you paid your dues, this is the last issue you will receive, as voted by the Trustees in June 2013. Please keep your dues current to stay on the mailing list.

Table of Contents

Reunion.....	1
SACO News Mailbox	3
Letter from SACO Chairman.....	4
SACO Associates in Taiwan.....	5
SACO Christmas	9
In His Own Words: Douglas Lawson.....	10
Edwards Receives Quilt of Valor	11
A Personal Plea	12
Wayne Goodson Profile	16
SACO Lecture Video Online.....	17
Taps.....	18-19

SACO News Mailbox



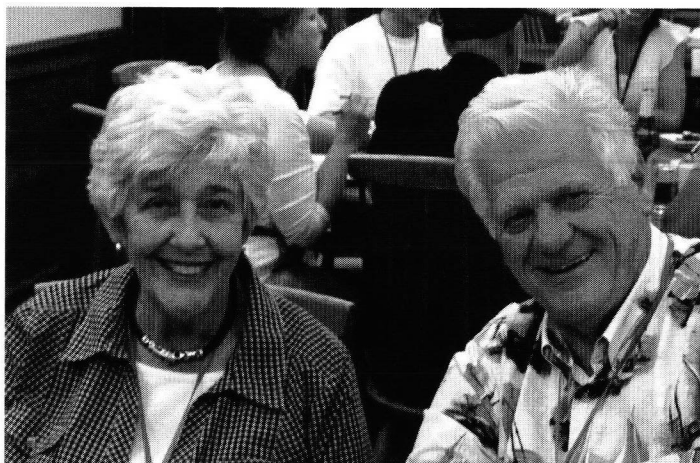
Dear SACO Vets, Friends, and Family Members:

We would like to thank all of you that reached out to us with your phone calls, emails, and concern after hearing about the horrendous firestorm that destroyed close to 7,000 homes, schools, and business establishments in our home town of Santa Rosa, California. 200 of our doctors lost their homes. We are still in shock over the devastation that we see all around us.

At one time there were fires on three sides of where we live. We still don't know how our home managed to survive. Fortunately we were in Taiwan with our son and daughter and eight other second- and third-generation SACO members. We received word from a neighbor and our son's family that our homes had to be evacuated in the middle of the night. Winds of up to 70-80 miles an hour were whipping the fire at record speed through neighborhoods, schools, and shopping centers. The fire jumped six lanes of US Highway 101. It continued on to wipe out everything in its path.

When we got home, my son's neighborhood and ours had been evacuated, and we were not able to get back in for some time. We were so lucky that reinforcements arrived in the way of crews from all over

the state, out of state, and even Canada and as far away as Australia to work on the fires near us. Police, National Guard troops, air support, and everyone imaginable came to our rescue.



The Barbieris in Taiwan

One of our very own SACO Vets, Roy Walk (some may remember him as he received his medal at the reunion we hosted here in Santa Rosa a few years ago) was evacuated in the middle of that first terrible night. Roy lived in a senior residential facility. He is safe with his son in Marin County, which is just south of us near San Francisco.

Santa Rosa now has a huge recovery ahead of us. We have FEMA, the EPA, toxic removal experts, contractors, insurance adjusters, and all kinds of people all over the place. We hope they all know what they are doing. The displaced families are having a difficult time finding housing as we have had a shortage of housing long before the fire. Many are in hotels or living with friends and family members. Some are still in shelters. Please continue to keep Santa Rosa in your prayers, and THANK YOU again for your love and kind thoughts.

Pete and Judy Barbieri

SACO News Seeking Volunteer

Hi Everyone:

SACO News has a volunteer opportunity for someone who is comfortable with Excel and can spare an hour or two twice a year. We need a member to prepare the mailing list for the printer. It would be a big help because it comes up when I'm trying to finish the newsletter.

I will send you the master spreadsheet, along with step-by-step instructions, via email. You will have a week to complete it and email it back to me.

Please send me an email if you are interested.

Best regards,
Linda Kush, linda.kush@verizon.net
SACO News editor

Letter from SACO Veterans Chairman

Dear Saco Family

What do you know, time does fly by so quickly! It has been a busy year for some of us behind the lines so to speak (a little pun for this group). There are three items at the top of our immediate agenda:

- We are preparing for the upcoming reunion in Traverse City, Michigan, June 13-17, 2018.
- Some of our members will be updating and upgrading our SACO website, because the existing website cannot be maintained anymore. At this time we will be reaching out to rebuild and restructure the website. This is a very important priority for all of us; we need the website for our global communication reference base. The sooner this is done the better.
- We are looking at ideas to expand our digital communication. For example, we will increase the activity and participation in our SACO Facebook group. Promoting this idea will improve the communications in the future for up-to-date news coming in from our SACO families. This will serve us well because we can be assured that this is part of the future, and younger generations will have a greater amount of knowledge about their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers. We are entertaining ideas for future reference in regards to putting the SACO newsletter online, but as it stands now, we will keep it in print form.

There is a method to our madness, a pattern in which we must revitalize an idea to let the world know of one of the best-kept secrets of WWII, the SACO Tigers. These fine, brave men, who were behind enemy lines 365 days a year, passing Japanese soldiers as close as a street market gathering or in a rice-paddy field, open prey, yes! Did I say brave men? Well my thoughts are only focused on three words for these men, "a quiet courage." I feel compelled to expose this group of men to anyone and everyone. It is just an honor to be able to brag, boast, and take pride in being

associated with these men.

All of us have birthdays every year, and mine happens to fall on one of the best days of the year, Veterans Day! When people ask me what I want for my birthday, I simply respond, it would be a great present for me if you would go and shake a veteran's hand, because without them, I, in all probability, would not be able to celebrate my birthday. So, a big shout-out for all the vets: thank you! I do cherish my freedoms and hold my head up high to be associated with such an honorable group as my father's.

In the days ahead, we will continue to diligently meet our goals to renew, reintroduce, revamp, and restructure the future of SACO. I could go on about all the wonderful work that our SACO staff, board members, and trustees (including original SACO men) are doing for us, but there will be time for better recognition and attributions later. I do know this, we have an opportunity to expose the stories of SACO men to all, so let's capitalize on it. I am beholden to my dad for many reasons, and knowing what I know about his history with SACO only makes my obligations run deeper in respect for these esteemed men. I will maintain the integrity of SACO with reverence as long as I hold the position of chairman; this is my word. I will always be in debt to our vets and as a civilian will always try to educate those who need to know more about their American history. I am very proud of my history and will never be half the man my dad was, and I owe him a lot. The honor of being a part of SACO is precious, and my goals are transparent. So, the way is simple, we just step up, pay it forward, and then give back. It is imperative that we get it right!

Happy Holidays to all and God Bless to all the SACO Family!

Bob Hill
Trustee Chairman

SACO Associate Members Visit Taiwan

Celebrating "Double Ten" Day, Oct. 7-13, 2017

By Dairus F. Reynnet
Associate member, SACO

Twelve associate SACO members recently enjoyed the trip of a lifetime when they were invited by the Military Intelligence Bureau, MIB, to visit Taipei, Taiwan for the annual National Day, or "Double Ten" celebration this last October. These members included Penny and Robert Coats from North Carolina, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Allen Maurice and Judith Ann Maurice from Wisconsin, Pete and Judy Barbieri and their son Peter and daughter Katherine from California, Lynn and Edward Grabenstein, and their son Joel from Michigan, and Dairus Reynnet, also from Michigan.

My late father Francis, a SACO veteran, and my mother Caroline, had attended the 100th anniversary of the National Day of the Republic of China in 2011. I knew this would be a special opportunity to experience a lot of unique events and attractions, along with spending time with our SACO and MIB friends.

Our MIB hosts planned our outings and activities with great care and accompanied us as we explored Taipei and the Sun Moon Lake area. MIB members included both familiar faces such as Howard Wang, Brian Lee, Vince Lin, and retired General Kuo and retired Major Laura Lin, but also many new members such as Angella Chiang, Mina Juan, Brian Chang, Prot Huang, and Frank Pan.

Taiwan is beautiful country that is a top tourist destination in its own right. The short introduction we received left us longing to return. From vibrant cities and tropical forests with lakes and hiking trails, to beautiful temples and splendid Chinese art, Taiwan has much to offer. After just a short stay, one understands why the Portuguese explorers long ago named Taiwan "Ilha Formosa" meaning beautiful island.

City Tour and Taipei 101

We were all greeted by our MIB hosts at end of our long flight. Angella, whom I met last February during our meeting in Phoenix, greeted me with a big hug as I came out of the jet way. Vince, Mina, and Howard were also there to welcome us, along with General Kuo. General Kuo, his wife, and Laura Lin, traveled with us to the Sun Moon Lake area and made regular appearances throughout our stay, and we were all touched that they spent so much time with us.

After gathering our luggage, they whisked us away to a five-star hotel, the Palais de Chine. The

next day we boarded a charter bus for a tour of the city that included Taipei's famous Taipei 101 skyscraper.

After a trip to the 88th floor observation deck and shopping on the lower levels, we had a dim sum lunch at Din Tai Fung, an internationally known, Taiwanese based restaurant famous for its steamed dumplings. This would be the first of many memorable meals.

Sun Moon Lake



On the train to Sun Moon Lake

Traveling first by train and then by charter bus, the trip to the Sun Moon Lake area allowed us to see the interior of Taiwan. We passed by neatly cultivated green fields and rice paddies and saw the impressive, modern buildings of Taiwan's large cities.

The day began with a yacht ride. The fresh-water



SACO associates at the Taipei 101 skyscraper

lake is about 3 square miles surrounded by picturesque foothills. The docks around the lake are bustling with tourists in a constant cycle of boarding and departures and the yacht captains jockeying around each other for open dock space. Our captain was adept at maneuvering in confined spaces, and we were soon out in open water. The yacht captain, with Angella translating, pointed out landmarks, such as the Ci En Pagoda that Chiang Kai-shek built for his mother on a mountain.

After the excursion around the lake, we checked into our hotel, The Fleur De Chine. Each room had a direct plumbing connection into the area's hot water mineral springs which could be enjoyed from a special bath tub without leaving the room.

Later that night we had an elaborate banquet at the top of hotel overlooking the lake and mountains.

General Kuo and his wife Yung Wu hosted us along with Laura Lin. We each received a tea mug and matching coaster specially designed by General Kuo himself with the SACO and MIB emblems and the US and Taiwan flags with the words "Enduring Friendship" printed above. General Kuo's unique gift was cherished by all.

We were scheduled to return to Taipei in the afternoon, so many of us set out early the next morning to enjoy the hiking trails and scenery circling the lake. A short but brisk walk down from our hotel and up a steep hill was the Wenwu Temple dedicated to the Gods of Literature, of War, and Confucius.

I hope to return to Sun Moon Lake someday. The natural beauty, the hiking and cycling trails along with many other activities all in a tranquil setting makes Sun Moon Lake a favorite destination.

Double Ten Parade

The next day after our return from Sun Moon Lake was October 10th, "Double Ten" day. We viewed the parade from VIP seats on the main street in front of the Presidential Palace, not far from various military personnel in dress uniforms, who I presume were from other nations.

It was a hot and humid day for a parade, but thankfully we got some shade from our bleachers. The parade started on a parallel avenue and then made a right turn following down in front of our bleachers. Across the street a large video screen was set up where one could see other parts of the parade on a parallel street. This was ideal, as we could see the event twice. Several of Taiwan's military marching bands passed by in formation.

Part of the program involved a Special Forces demonstration. About 50 or so black-fatigue-clad military men poured out into the center of the street in a tight box formation. They stood still for a brief moment, then they all broke out in a frenzy of fast ninja-like moves. Swinging kicks and flying fists. Once the mock attackers were subdued, the platoon resumed formation and disappeared. Six or so soldiers then gave a demonstration of close quarter hand-to-hand combat. A very impressive display!

A military police motorcycle company rode slowly by in large white polished motorcycles. In a country that has so many motor scooters, it must be a particularly high honor of be part of the Military Service motorcade.

The parade paused for President Tsai Ing-Wen's speech. "Better Taiwan" was this year's theme, and President Wen spoke a message of cooperation between the political parties and achieving shared goals.

Once President Wen closed her speech by thanking the participants and guests, the parade resumed. The colorful floats with their attendant marchers represented an appreciable cross section of Taiwanese society, including prominent businesses, public utilities, indigenous groups, several universities, athletic teams, and various city, regional, and national government agencies. Of course, there were dragons too.



One of the colorful floats in the Double Ten parade

Courtesy Call to MIB headquarters and the Director General. The Grand Hotel banquet

We all understood that our courtesy call to MIB headquarters was a somber occasion. We were being invited not only to a very secret place that few Americans or Taiwanese would see, but we were being hosted by the

agency that has a direction connection to the Sino-American Cooperation Organization history.

The connection is clear when entering the MIB lobby, where a large portrait of General Dai Li is stationed. Looking at the great portrait, at that moment, I felt the importance and significance of SACO's history and its relationship to the MIB. Before proceeding, I stood for a moment admiring the painting of Dai Li, created in traditional Chinese style. I had read much on the history of China during this time as well as Admiral Miles' book, *A Different Kind of War*. As a child, I grew up listening to my father's experiences in China, and then later at the reunions, the stories of other SACO veterans. Now, here I was, practically face to face with one of the most intriguing men of that time. General Dai Li, head of Nationalist China's Military Investigation and Statistics Bureau, co-commander of SACO, colleague of Admiral Miles, whose vast influence protected our fathers and grandfathers while serving in China during the war.

I would have stayed longer gazing at the Dai Li portrait; I was so in awe of it. However, this was a formal visit and we were on a schedule. We were seated in a large open lounge, similar to those diplomatic meeting places where world leaders meet for pictures for the press. Director General Liu addressed us and thanked us for our visit. He told us that the SACO relationship makes us all part of large family. I believe we strengthen those family connections with the friendships we made with our MIB hosts.

The MIB has a museum which is in the final stages of renovation. Judy and Richard Miller presented Director General Liu with a very special gift to be added to its collection. Judy's father had written Madame Chiang Kai-shek some years after the war. She wrote a letter back to her father, which Judy kept as a family treasure. They presented both letters in a matted frame along with an edition of Life Magazine featuring Madame Chiang as the cover story to the Director. The gift was deeply appreciated by the MIB.

Lynn Grabenstein then spoke, reiterating our interest in maintaining the SACO family ties. She then gave a preview of the events planned for next June's Traverse City reunion and invited the Director General and his delegation to be our guests.

Next followed a presentation of gifts, which included items both specifically related to MIB and others more broadly to Taiwan itself. Among the gifts presented to us was a small porcelain vase containing wine that was specially prepared for the recent anni-

versary of the MIB. We also received a large medallion with the blue, gold, red and white MIB symbol on one side and the image of General Dai Li and Chiang Kai-shek on the reverse. Our MIB friends also gave us a DVD of Taiwan showing the beautiful interior and coastline of country and their solutions to some of development challenges the country faces. Lastly, we each received a presentation box containing a piece of jade crafted into the shape of the island set under glass in a dark wooden frame.

After our official meeting, we were taken into an adjacent lobby containing a large, two-sided mural. On one side the MIB symbol is in the center and visible upon entering the area. The Director General, however, made a point to show us the other side of the mural. There on the other side, on the left is the mission statement of MIB and on the right is the image of General Dai Li. A vast blank white space separates the two. Director General Liu explained that this symbolizes the secretive nature of their work as well as their commitment to being free of any bias or partiality. This is a testament to their professionalism.

We were directed outside for more photos in front of the adjacent MIB museum. It was a medium size building designed in a more ornate style with the traditional sloping Chinese roof and red pillars. Near the entrance on either side there is a stone memorial to General Dai Li and another stone memorial to Admiral Miles. We were told that this museum would be opened next year and that we had an open invitation to return. I sincerely hope I have the opportunity.

Taipei's Grand Hotel

Following our visit to MIB, we took a short ride to Taipei's historic Grand Hotel for lunch with the Director General and his staff. The historic hotel was very impressive with its large grand lobby, wide stair cases, golden ceilings, and red interior carpeting. It is a classic hotel. Several of us posed for in front of a large flower display in the lobby.

The upper level of the Grand Hotel has several specialty shops, including a tailor who makes custom fitted suits. While browsing the tailor's shop, Mina along with Judy Barbieri and her daughter Katherine were invited in for tea by the owner.

Director General Liu rejoined us for a banquet lunch held in the top floor of the Grand Hotel. The views of Taipei were as magnificent as food. Several courses were served, all by very attentive wait staff who displayed a superior level of service. Director Gen-



Tea time at the tailor shop

eral Liu, accompanied by his officers, began the meal with a toast to SACO friendship. Because much wine, champagne, and whiskey was freely served with the food, after a while many of us began making our own toasts. We made toasts to our hosts, to Director General Liu, to the people of Taiwan, and of course those whom we owe so much, the SACO veterans, those living and those who have passed on.

Our final activity that day in contrast was much more informal as we visited the Shilin night market. Somewhat similar to a farmer's market, a wide variety of vendors set up semi-permanent stalls and sold clothing, housewares, luggage, and food.

I was eager to go to the market, not so much for shopping, but rather to try something that has become a tradition among SACO members who visit Taipei. All manner of traditional Chinese food can be found there, however, there was one Chinese delicacy in particular, known as "stinky tofu" that I sought out. Partaking of this particularly robust smelling tofu has become sort of an initiation. (Apparently the aroma comes from fermentation). I like tofu, and while somewhat apprehensive, I was determined to try it. We found a vendor situated among other stalls selling all manner of sea food and noodles, who dished a generous portion of the hot fried tofu out of a large

wok. I was pleasantly surprised to find that it was far from being overpowering, and merely had a strong vinegar-like smell. We all sampled some and can all claim we passed the test. Some of us, myself included, decided to try even more adventurous items.

The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, National Palace Museum, and flaming duck

On our last day we returned to the Presidential Palace where we had watched the Double Ten parade. We were guided through the ground floor of the palace by a very well-informed docent who explained the development of modern Taiwan over the last hundred-plus years from the time of the Japanese annexation in 1895 to the current day. We learned of the Japanese influence on Taiwan during that period. The tour provided a good introduction to the modern political history of Taiwan.

After lunch, we continued on to the National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. The reverence that the Taiwanese have for the late Chinese Nationalist leader is evident by the massive memorial dedicated to him.

The approach to the monument is at the end of large mall. Rising several stories out of the mall, the white, four-sided structure has a blue octagonal-shaped roof.

Two equally impressive buildings flank the monument: the National Theater on the north and the National Concert Hall on the south. A park with extensive gardens and walking trails borders the monument.

We first entered the lower level gallery to view where the history pertaining to Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen, and wartime China are displayed. We then



Changing of the guard at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial



SACO associates at the Presidential Palace

moved into the main chamber, on the upper level in time to see the changing of the honor guard that stands on both sides of the statue of Chiang Kai-shek.

The Chiang Kai-shek statue looks out to the mall and gardens below the 89 steps up to the memorial.

Having just a few hours before our farewell banquet, we all tried to maximize our time in the National Palace Museum. It was difficult to decide what to explore as the National Palace is one of the world's great museums with close to a million pieces of art covering thousands of years of Chinese history. A return visit is a must. Like the Grand Hotel and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial, much care was taken in the museum's design. Its outside is equally inviting, being situated among green foot hills somewhat away from the city.

Reading Admiral Miles' book, one notes that many of the meetings he attended included a banquet. The many banquets we were given, each with several entrees skillfully prepared, gave us an appreciation of how central food is in Chinese social customs. This banquet took place at the top floor of our hotel, the Palais de Chine. As in other banquets, we were seated at a large round table. The most dramatic entrée was the flaming duck. Off in a corner, the chef prepared a special braising sauce. The lights were dimmed, and he set alight the (already cooked) duck which lit up in a light blue flame. All were impressed. The farewell banquet was made even more special by the company of both our new friends, Director General Liu and our hosts, and our old friends, General Kuo, his wife, and Laura Lin.

With only a handful of SACO veterans remaining, the duty to preserve the unique history of the Sino American Cooperative Organization belongs now to the second and third generations. I am heartened to see that there is a desire to do so. Under the combined command of Admiral Miles and General

Dai Li, SACO contributed greatly to the defeat of the Japanese in China during World War II. That this was achieved with meager resources, spread thin over the vastness of China, and with constant undermining by inter-service rivalries, makes their success that much more significant. Equally important was the spirit of mutual cooperation and friendship that developed between two very different cultures. This spirit of friendship continues today with our Taiwanese friends. I encourage all who appreciate that fact to become involved in SACO events by attending our upcoming reunion, liking our SACO Facebook page, or visiting our soon-to-be-revamped SACO website.

For more photos from this trip, visit our Facebook page, SACO - Sino American Cooperative Organization. —Ed.

SACO Christmas

By Linda Kush

In December 1942, SACO was still known as the Friendship Project, and the outfit numbered just 15 men under the leadership of Capt. Milton "Mary" Miles, living and working at Happy Valley, in the hills above Chungking.

Christmas is always a poignant time for military personnel away from home, and so it was at Happy Valley. Miles's Chinese partner and host, Gen. Dai Li, understood what Christmas meant to Americans and did his best to honor it.

On Dec. 25, he gave an elaborate Christmas banquet for the navy group featuring a parade of exotic courses and gumbai (bottoms up) toasts, crowned with a luscious-looking layer cake with a huge American Beauty Rose of red icing on top.

The Americans hadn't seen such a treat in months and gratefully accepted generous slices. Miles took a big mouthful to the delight of his host and struggled to retain his composure as he forced himself to swallow; the "icing" was nothing but colored lard.

The following Christmas, the Americans threw a party of their own for the orphans who lived nearby. Dai Li maintained an orphanage at Happy Valley to provide for the children of his MIB agents who had died, and these children became part of SACO life. It was a joy to give them a Christmas party complete with presents, funny hats, and a visit from Santa. The party became an annual event that the SACOs looked forward to as much as the children did.

In His Own Words: Douglas Lawson Writes Home

This is an excerpt from one of the approximately 200 letters that Douglas B. Lawson, Lt(jg) USNR, wrote to his wife and infant son while he was assigned to SACO, Camp 8, July 1944–December 1945. With censorship lifted after Japan's surrender, he explains for the first time what his duties in China were.

—*Doug Lawson Jr.*

Sept. 18, 1945
Shanghai

My Darling Wife and Son,

...Censorship regulations are now off so I'll attempt to tell you what I am doing and a part of what I have done in the last 14 months. For the time being I can only give you a summary of what I have done as otherwise it would require too much time.

From Kunming China a group of Navy personnel in which I was included were sent out into the field to establish Camps behind the Jap lines. We flew from Kunming to Kwelin and from there to Kanchow. We were in one of the last planes to land at Kwelin before the Japs took over. At the time we landed there, American fighter planes were taking off from the field with bomb loads and returning in less than 5 minutes for another load. There we only stayed for 10 minutes before taking off for Kanchow. At Kanchow the Army had a nice airfield which had practically been completely evacuated; but transport planes were still coming in. I stayed in Kanchow only 3 days as well as I can remember and then started the most dangerous part of the whole trip which was by truck. ... We had two wrecks in three days and fortunately only 1 Chinese boy was seriously injured. From Kanchow went by truck to Kienyang, to Lunchuan, to Yunho to Yuhu. Yuhu was the final destination. From Yunho to Yuhu was where all the walking started. When we reached Yuhu, there we learned what was to be our real job. It was to train Chinese troops in Marine Gorilla Tactics and in American small arms. You can imagine about how much I knew about such things after my great amphibious life; but fortunately there were already some Marine Corps officers at this place who knew what was to be done. This was not the job that we amphibious men were sent to China to do. We were supposed to go to Chungking Lake district and teach Chinese troops Amphibious Warfare. You can imagine

what that would have been like with Chinese Sampans as the only boats. Boy I am happy that the Japs took over the Chungking Lake District while we were in transit from the States thereby killing someone's big idea. Our Camp in Yuhu was known as



Naval Unit 8 or **Douglas Lawson, Lt(jg) USNR** Camp 8. It was about 50 miles South West of Wenchon which was on the Chinese Coast. ... Many times we had to pack our gear and get ready to move when we would get information that the Japs were coming, of course they never came but we never knew if they were on their way or not because of the poor communications. No roads, no telephone or telegraph, just Chinese runners. There was no way of getting away from Yuhu without climbing mountains. Well, anyhow I helped to train the Chinese Troops until May 26 when I went out in the field to operate with a Battalion of them. During the first class that we trained I taught demolitions. I was in charge of the demolition training and had three enlisted men helping me. I had never known a thing about demolitions but learned from a marine officer in Camp in less than a week. At one time I could have told you that I was instructing Chinese in demolitions; but wouldn't do it because I knew that you would worry. It never crossed my mind that I would get hurt and fortunately no Americans working with me were seriously hurt. One enlisted man got the ends of two fingers and a thumb blown off in testing an experimental explosive charge. He was working on a booby trap at the time. I'll never forget the instructions I gave him before he went out to try this. Two Chinese blew themselves up during the time I was in camp. ... I taught demolitions during two training classes which totaled about 1500 students. The third

class I became Training Officer and got away from demolitions and boy was I happy. Before the third class was completely finished I was sent out in the field with the Old long [?] to be remembered 11th Battalion. The commanding officer was Colonel Hong who was really a swell guy. I had with me 5 American enlisted men including a pharmiscist (sic) Mate and two Chinese Interpreters(sic). I worked directly with the Colonel helping him to plan operations and one time even to help carry it out. If you remember when the Japs evacuated Foschow that is when we started to work. We got behind them at Pingyang which is South of Wenchow and stayed with them going North as far as Ninghai when the war ended. Ninghai is just South of Ningpo. Both on the Coast or nearly so. The 11th Battalion had only a few over 300 men; yet during this time approx that number of Japs were killed. I sincerely believe that no other Chinese Battalion has such a good record as this one. About 50 men from the Battalion were killed and a large number wounded. I was actually in only one operation which was at Haimen. This was North of Wenchow on the Coast. Two enlisted men and I set up a 50 cal. Machine Gun and fired on Japanese who were crossing the river evacuating Haimen. According to Chinese reports we sunk two boats, killed two horses and killed 30 Japs. I have always doubted the report as being even halfway true. Anyhow I know what it's like to be shot at and what it's like to have Mortar shells landing all around you.

When the war ended we went back South to Haimen where we got on a Chinese Junk (boat) and sailed Northward for Shanghai. [The naval battle that occurred after the war ended is described in other letters.] We landed on August 26 after 5 days at sea. That was one journey that I was sure proud to get over. There was Japs all over Shanghai, but they had suddenly become pretty peaceful. Since landing I have never been a busier person. We had to get buildings, transportation, deal with war prisoners and hundreds of other things. Camp 8 in Shanghai became hdqts for the whole Naval Group in China under Admiral Miles. You have probably already heard a lot about the Navy in China. The organization is called SACO-Sino Chinese American [Cooperative] Organization.

All my love Sweetheart to you and Duggie and here's hoping and praying that soon we may be together again. ...

Yours always,
Doug & Daddy

Bill Edwards receives Quilt of Valor

Ninety-four-year-old Hancock, Wisconsin, veteran Wilbert "Bill" Edwards was honored with a Quilt of Valor during the Hancock Firefighters Jamboree on Sept. 3, 2017. Edwards, who was there with his son, Scott, was presented the quilt by Hancock Deputy Fire Chief Cody Johnson during the parade. During a ceremony, Joe Farago, a local US Navy veteran who fought in the Korean War, expressed his gratitude for the service Edwards provided to his country as a member of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, a secret organization formed in 1941 during World War II. The veterans who served in SACO were part of an extensive network of weather stations and intelligence agents, guerrilla columns, saboteurs and 18 training camps in China, Burma and India.

Quilts of Valor are handmade by volunteers and presented to active US service members and veterans touched by war. The Quilts of Valor Foundation, based in Winterset, Iowa, administers the program. To date, more than 175,000 quilts have been presented since the organization's founding in 2003.

—*from the Waushara Argus and the Quilts of Valor website*

Old SACO News Issues Wanted

The late Richard Rutan produced more than 40 issues of *SACO News*. They were packed with veterans' reminiscences, reprints of magazine and newspaper articles, recaps of reunions, and personal news from veterans. SACO veterans and associates alike would love to read these stories again, or for the first time.

Do you have copies of *SACO News* from the Rutan era in your home? If so, I would be grateful if you would loan them to me. Mail them to me, and I will scan and return them. If you prefer, you may scan them yourself (PDF format) and send to me via drop-box or similar file transfer service, or copy to a disk and drop it in the mail. Thank you!

Linda Kush, editor SACO News
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A Personal Plea

By Robert Nathaniel Coats

Robert Coats is the grandson of SACO veteran Jerry Coats, who passed away in 2014. Robert posted this piece for his friends on Facebook after a moving visit to Taiwan with his mother, Penny Coats, and other SACO associate members in October 2017. For more about this trip, see Dairus Reynnet's story on p. 5. —Ed.

Gerald F. Coats, Chief Pharmacist's Mate

My grandfather, Jerry Coats, attended his last reunion of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization Veterans in 2014. He was the closest thing I would ever have to a dad. My mom raised me as a single mother, but my grandparents were always there to help us out. I tried to show my tremendous respect for my mom and grandparents by living up to their values. But I took my grandfather for granted, as if he would always be there whenever I needed him, for guidance or support, or just to tell me one of his stories. Over the years at the SACO Vets reunions, I watched the health of many of the veterans deteriorate, and each year, they read the names of members we'd lost since the year before. It was a somber part of each reunion, but I had a sense that my grandfather would still be around to tell me about his war stories and experiences in China. He was always in great health for his age, and when I spoke with him, mortality always seemed so distant. I believed that any questions I wanted to ask him about his life could wait for another day.

In September of 2014, living in a nursing home, he had a stroke while getting out of bed. He fell to the floor, breaking his hip and almost fracturing his facial bones. But he survived. He had always survived. This wasn't his first stroke, nor his first bad fall. He had lived with Type 1 diabetes for six years before this and survived. He had lost my grandmother, the love of his life, 10 years before and survived, through the endless grief. He had survived the loss of two of his three adult children. Decades before, while still in the navy, he had survived an accident when an aircraft fuel hose blasted him in the face, which left him without a sense of taste or smell. He had survived the "God Damn Imperial Japanese Army" during the war, being hunted after the Japanese placed bounties on the heads of SACO members in China because of the destruction they were causing to the Japanese war plans. He had survived the death of his own father, when he was only

16. He was a survivor.

But this stroke, his third in four years, drained his strength. Yet he was recovering. He was discharged from the hospital and moved to a rehabilitation center to recover from the hip injuries and learn to walk again. But while he was there, he caught pneumonia. He was moved back to the hospital in critical condition. Two days later, with my mom and me in the room at his side, me grasping his hand as he breathed, my grandfather passed away. I had been crying the whole night, fearing these might finally be my last hours with him. At the end I was sobbing to the point where I was dehydrated. I was begging, pleading, sputtering out desperate prayers to God, not to take him from this earth, for him to wake up and start breathing again. It was the first time I had prayed in years. In my darkest moment, I asked that God take me instead. Me, who has accomplished so little of real importance, in exchange for my grandfather, who had done so much good for the world. I reasoned that he deserved life more than I did. My mom was handling it better than I was, and I would rely on her strength, and the compassion of friends, to get me through the next few weeks.

Listen to veterans

Those hours in that hospital room, those minutes at his side as his breathing slowed, the moment his heart monitor stopped and the nurses came rushing into the room, where the hardest of my life, knowing that I'd never hear his stories again, that the answers to any questions I'd neglected to ask were gone forever. He lives on in my memories and the memories of the surviving SACO Vets, but the experiences he had in China are lost to history, unless I pass them down. One thing I can do is tell his story as best I can. And to beg you readers, please, with all my heart, learn the stories that the veterans in your family have to tell. Listen to their experiences, ask about what motivated them or kept them going, and what they did before or after their service. Take them to dinner, and hear what they have to say. Because once they're gone, so are the answers to any questions we've never asked. Veteran's Day is held on November 11th to commemorate the end of the First World War. Today, every veteran from that war is gone, and the World War 2 generation isn't far behind. My grandfather would have been 96 last August. A photo from his SACO reunion was taken three years ago, and only five of those men are still alive today. Please, spend time with the World War 2



SACO veterans at their reunion in 2014. Jerry Coats is in the front row, second from the left. Only five men in this photo are still living.

veterans in your life while you have the opportunity. The same goes for younger generations of veterans and current service members. And make those memories count.

The Sino-American Cooperative Organization

So in honor of my grandfather, here is the story of his unique US Navy service.

My grandfather, Jerry Coats, was part of a US naval group that fought in China during World War 2. In the US, we don't hear a lot about the Chinese theatre of the war, instead focusing more on the European front and the island hopping campaign in the Pacific, but China was an important ally against Japan during the war. The leader of the Republic of China (ROC) was Chiang Kai-shek, and he and his Chinese Nationalist Party, known as the Kuomintang, formed friendly relations with the US, the UK, and the other western Allies fighting a common enemy. Early on, American military leaders believed that any potential invasion of Japan would need to be spring-boarded from China, and since the Chinese and Japanese had been at war since 1937, it would be in our best interest to help the Chinese win that fight. Plus, tying down Japanese troops fighting in China meant fewer could be used against US forces in the Pacific.

In 1943, the US approved formation of a navy detachment called the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, or SACO, under the joint command of Chinese General Tai Li, who was Chiang Kai-shek's chief of security and intelligence, and American Vice Admiral Milton Miles. Nick-named the Rice Paddy Navy, the group was made up of around 2,800 to 3,000 US sailors and marines, along with many thousands of Nationalist Chinese troops who fought with them.

While fighting off the Japanese invasion, China was also undergoing a civil war between the Nationalists of Chiang Kai-Shek and the Communists of Mao Zedong. There was a temporary cease-fire between the two sides to fight the Japanese, but the opposing sides maintained separate armies and never really worked together against the common enemy, sometimes preferring to secretly undermine each other instead of focusing on Japan's troops. This helped Japan achieve many military successes in China during the early years of the war, as they were never opposed by a truly united Chinese front.

One of the most important functions of the US side of SACO was training raw Chinese recruits in basic military combat training and guerrilla warfare. They worked side by side with the Chinese troops in the field, sabotaging Japanese equipment, attacking ammunition and fuel depots, ambushing their troops, disrupting supply lines by destroying bridges and railroads, and spreading chaos, fear, and disinformation behind Japanese lines. They also performed vital non-combat roles, like intelligence gathering, coast watching to report Japanese shipping movements, radioing weather information to the US fleets in the Pacific, rescuing downed Allied airmen, and providing humanitarian and medical assistance to local civilians. These US servicemen, including my grandfather, worked closely with their Chinese counterparts, depending on each other for survival, learning each other's language, training together to improve their skills, and making life hellish for the Japanese invasion forces. When the war ended in 1945 with the Japanese surrender to the Allies, SACO was officially disbanded, but many American SACOs remained well into 1946 to continue training and equipping the Nationalist Chinese army.

Post-war China

Though Germany and Japan had been defeated, the western Allies were seeing the rising threat of the Soviets and communism on the horizon. Germany was split between East and West, and Korea between North and South, the Russians steering their halves towards communist ideologies. While the Nationalist

Kuomintang Party under Chiang Kai-shek was still in control of the ROC, the civil war with the Communist Chinese never went away, only calmed down a bit while the Japanese were a threat. American strategists were concerned about Soviet ambitions in East Asia, and though officially neutral in the Chinese Civil War, the US continued to assist Chiang's government with equipment and troop training, hoping the Nationalists could win the fight. The Russians had the exact same plan, however, and gave supplies and military advice to the Communists. Mao Zedong was a charismatic leader and held his faction together in the face of sometimes overwhelming odds. The Communists were also recruiting massive amounts of new troops from the peasantry classes, who felt left behind and neglected by Chiang's Kuomintang, which they viewed as corrupt. On the heels of World War 2, the civil war started up again, with victories and close calls on both sides until 1949. For quite a while the tide of the war was leaning in the Nationalists' favor, but after several disastrous defeats, mismanagement of resources and brilliant military maneuvers by the Communist forces, they found themselves on the losing end of the war, only a few months after overall victory was within sight. Chiang's government, in retreat and in danger of being surrounded, withdrew to the island of Taiwan, bringing with them the entire Chinese gold reserve, thousands of pieces of art and artifacts from Chinese museums, as much military equipment as they could carry, and 3 million Nationalist soldiers and supporters. Quickly setting up a base of command in northern Taiwan, the plan was to regroup, resupply, and reorganize for an eventual invasion of the mainland to strike back at the Communists. This re-invasion would never come. Meanwhile, Mao Zedong and the Communists declared victory and proclaimed the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), while the ROC continued on in Taiwan. Today, both countries still claim the territory held by the other, and the war has never officially ended, but relations are nowhere near as hostile as they were.

This turn of events utterly shocked the US and the western world. Just a few months earlier the Nationalists had been winning, and now unexpectedly and relatively suddenly, the most populous nation on Earth had converted to communism. Add to that, the first test of a nuclear bomb by the Soviets occurred that same year, and US leaders were getting very worried, very fast. They believed they'd underestimated how quickly and how far communism could spread, and the

US committed itself to halting the ideological advance by the Soviets. This is why US and UN became involved in the Korea War only one year later, in 1950. Known as Domino Theory, the thought was that if China fell to Communism, then South Korea could fall, and if it fell, then South Vietnam would fall too. Korea and Vietnam were both split North and South, between Soviet and US spheres of influence. If Communism spread to all of Vietnam, then it would spread to the rest of South Asia, Cambodia, Burma, India. With all of its neighbors converted, eventually even US-occupied Japan could be lost, until the dominoes were falling so quickly you couldn't stop it.

The Nationalist withdrawal to Taiwan ended the civil war. There were now two countries that claimed the mantle of "China," the Republic of China (ROC), still headed by Chiang Kai-shek and controlling the island of Taiwan and a few smaller islands around the coast, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) controlled by Mao Zedong and the Communist Party, which held the mainland, consisting of what most people think of as China. Each of these governments denies the validity of the other and claims the other's territory, the ROC considering itself the rightful government-in-exile, and the PRC considering Taiwan a rebel holdout against the revolution. In the 50s and 60s, most of the western world, including the US and NATO, sided with the ROC in this dispute, while only the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc states recognized the PRC's claim. The ROC even held the China seat on the UN Security Council, despite controlling no territory on mainland Asia. The gold reserves brought over in 1949 helped stabilize the Taiwanese economy and provide a base from which to grow into an economic powerhouse in the region. But major diplomatic shifts occurred in the 1970s, with most countries shifting recognition of what is China to the PRC. The ROC lost its seat on the UN council in 1971 and lost US recognition in 1979. The PRC maintained a policy wherein they would not hold any diplomatic relations with any country that recognized Taiwan's claims. Given the choice between having relations with the small island, however economically strong it may be, versus the mainland of China, which was rapidly recovering from the failed policies of previous decades to become the new regional power in Asia, nearly all other nations chose the PRC.

That, while greatly oversimplified, is where the situation stands today. The US no longer maintains official, on-paper foreign relations with Taiwan, and the

PRC has the island in a bit of a diplomatic stranglehold, with few nations willing to risk damaging relations with mainland China, just to pursue official ties to Taiwan. There are some under-the-table dealings, however. For example, many nations hold de facto consulates in Taipei, and the US still sells military hardware and weapons to the Taiwanese military, as well as maintaining a defense treaty with the island in the event of any aggression by the mainland.

SACO Veteran families and the ROC

Because of this diplomatic isolation, Taiwan fully embraces the friends it has. One of these friends is SACO. The Taiwanese recognize the part SACO played in the combined defeat of the Japanese and remember the bonds of friendship formed by the American and Nationalist Chinese soldiers who fought shoulder to shoulder in the war. Beginning in the late 50s, the American SACO veterans would begin holding reunions every year, and delegates from Taiwan would often attend.

The first reunion I attended was in Seattle, Washington, when I was eight years old, and I've only missed a handful since. My family would often plan our summer vacation around the city where it was held that year. We've attended reunions in Syracuse, N.Y., Williamsburg, Va., San Antonio, Tex., Palm Springs and Santa Rosa, Calif., Philadelphia, Pa., Neenah, Wis., Grand Rapids and Dearborn, Mich., Indianapolis, Ind., and even here in Raleigh, N.C., back in 2010. Ours was a small family (just me, my mom, and my grandparents), and these trips to the reunions were very special to us.

When I was much younger, I just thought of the SACO group as that bunch of my grandpa's old friends that we get to see once a year, along with some Asian dudes. But near the end of middle school, I began to learn about who the men were, what they did, and what this group was really about. I started to ask more about their history, their experiences, and who those funny Asian guys were. The SACO Vets became like a second family to me. Many of them watched me grow up over the years, even though I only saw them for one week a year. I became friends with a few of the Taiwanese delegates, who were officers in the Taiwanese military equivalent of our CIA, though who was selected by their government to attend could shuffle around each year. This group and their stories inspired my love for history, especially World War 2 history, and turned me into the geography/history nerd I am

today. Hearing about their sacrifices and hardships during the war, and the courage and devotion to each other that helped them survive, instilled a deep love of country and patriotism into me. Many of the SACO Vets were jokingly disappointed in me when I enlisted in the Army instead of joining the Navy, laughing that my grandfather hadn't brought me up right by letting me join a rival service. But I knew they were proud of me anyway.

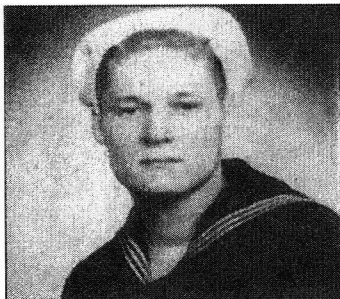
This year, the Taiwanese Government, specifically the MIB (Military Intelligence Bureau, a descendant of the security forces headed by General Tai Li) invited the families of many SACO Vets to come to Taiwan to commemorate 10/10 (October 10th), the founding day of the ROC. We only had to pay for our flights out there, and they footed the bill for everything else. Hotels, food, the stunning sights we got to see, were all paid for by the Chinese government which our fathers or grandfathers fought to save. They wanted to return the favor for when we invite them the reunions here in the States, and to honor and recognize the friendship our ancestors forged with their ancestors. Unfortunately, no actual SACO veterans were able to make the trip due to their advanced age. Each day I was in Taiwan, having the best adventure of my life, I was reminded of how extraordinarily lucky I was to be there. Because the reason I was invited had nothing to do with me, and everything to do with who my grandfather was and what he did.



SACO Vets associates in Taipei at the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial. Robert Coats and his mother Penny Coats are 4th and 5th from the right.

WWII Navy Veteran Married His Pen Pal

By Harry Thetford, Greensboro News & Record



Wayne Goodson, 19

Wayne Goodson's widowed mother was reluctant to approve his 1944 entry into the Navy. He was only 17. It is also doubtful he or his mother fully understood the recruiting slogan "Join the Navy and see the world."

Goodson took Morse

Code training on the campus of Ohio's Miami University.

"I could recite the code backwards and forward," Goodson said. "The campus was wonderful. It made me want to go to college after the war."

A Navy buddy had a cousin he wanted Goodson to date. Goodson didn't meet the cousin, but they became pen pals. He earned top secret military clearance. Assigned to Naval Intelligence, he was about to see the world.

After stops in Newfoundland, the Azores, Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and India, Goodson and seven other sailors landed in Calcutta. Having never flown before, he was getting a much better grasp of the Navy's slogan. Unfortunately, military clearance did not allow him to share it with his mother.

In Calcutta, the sailors were ordered to ship their uniforms home and issued Marine Corps fatigues.

"I know my mother thought the worst when my uniforms arrived, but I could not tell her anything," Goodson lamented.

His group had one more lap to make.

"During the night, we flew over the hump of Burma into China; between the darkness and frozen windows of the C-47, we couldn't see a thing," Goodson said. "Just about everyone aboard got very airsick. We landed first on an airfield used by General Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers and later were flown over to Chungking. From there, we went by jeep over very bumpy roads to Happy Valley."

"We basically ate what the Chinese ate. I know we ate lots of rice. We sometimes wore Chinese garb."

Assigned to the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, Goodson's radio skills served him and his country well until the end of the war.

"As part of a mutual intelligence gathering effort against the Japanese, we monitored enemy troop and ship movements," he said. "Among other things, we sent weather forecasts to U.S. forces three times each day. It was interesting to communicate with radiomen from our ships at sea and with 14th Air Force fighters. I also got to know Adm. Milton Miles, our commanding officer; he hung around the radio room a lot, waiting for messages."



Joyce and Wayne Goodson

SACO personnel equipped and trained Chinese guerrilla forces in military operations and sabotage. In the latter stages of World War II, SACO mapped the coast of China. Their scouting for potential staging areas suitable for launching an attack on the mainland of Japan was made moot by the atomic bomb.

A highlight of Goodson's time at Happy Valley was a gala featuring Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek and other high-ranking U.S. and Chinese officers. This same coalition would become a historical highlight

later. Following the Communist takeover of China, SACO—particularly Happy Valley—was falsely blamed for wartime atrocities.

Take it from Wayne Goodson: "I was there—those charges are patently false."

Goodson completed his China service in Shanghai. In June 1946, he arrived at San Francisco.

"First, I ordered a salad and a milkshake. Second, I called my pen pal in Buffalo, New York. We had written often but had never talked. We agreed to meet under the large bronze buffalo statue at the train station.

"The first time I laid eyes on her, I knew she was the woman for me."

Goodson made good on his plans to attend college, graduating from the University of Alabama with a degree in personnel administration. He worked in human resources for Dupont for 34 years.

Oh, yes, 63 years ago, he married Joyce, his pen pal. They have two children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. They live in Greensboro.

SACO Lecture Video from the IWP

On March 31, 2015, Col. Preston McLaughlin, USMC (Ret.) gave a lecture entitled "The Sino-American Cooperative Organization/Naval Group China, 1942-1945: A Case Study In Special Operations" at The Institute of World Politics in Washington, DC.

Col. McLaughlin concisely lays out SACO's history and its importance in the CBI Theater and the war in the Pacific. It is a classic case of a low investment-high payoff strategy in an Economy of Force Theater. This study offers insights into modern special operations forces and their relationships with intelligence, as well as allied Grand Strategy and the origins of the Cold War.

A video of the talk can be viewed online at the Institute of World Politics website:

https://www.iwp.edu/news_publications/detail/col-preston-mclaughlin-discusses-the-sino-american-cooperative-organization

It is also posted on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bk4anKR8E7w>

[NOTE: At the end of the talk, the Q&A session, though interesting, is hampered because the questions are not audible.]

Col. McLaughlin spent several years in the Asia-Pacific region during a 27-year military career. These assignments included: Amphibious Section Head, G-3 Operations, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa Japan; Commanding Officer, Combat Assault Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan; and Command Operations Officer, G-3 Marine Forces Pacific, Camp Smith, Hawaii; Combined Marine Forces Command, and Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Security Force Regiment. His final assignment was as the Chief of Staff, for Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan.

Following his retirement from the Marines in 2010, he was on the staff and Adjunct Faculty of The Citadel, as a Program Manager for the Krause Center for Leadership & Ethics and as Director of Professional Development. He currently works for System High Corporation of Chantilly VA.

He posted a suggested reading list for further study of SACO history and related topics, some well known to SACO members and a few new ones.

A Different Kind of War: The Little-Known Story of the Combined Guerrilla Forces Created in China by the US Navy and the Chinese During World War II, by Vice Admiral Milton E. Miles (1968)

SACO - The Rice Paddy Navy, by LCDR Roy Olin Stratton USN (1950)

The Army-Navy Game, by Roy Stratton (1977)

Sampan Sailor: A Navy Man's Adventures in WWII China, by Clayton Mishler (1994)

Ninety-Day Wonder: Flight to Guerrilla War, by John Horton (1994)

The Rice Paddy Navy: Espionage and Sabotage Behind Japanese Lines in China During World War II, by Linda Kush (2012)

Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service, by Frederic Wakeman (2003)

Commandos From The Sea: The History Of Amphibious Special Warfare In World War II And The Korean War, by John B. Dwyer (1998)

Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945, by Rana Mitter (2013)

OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War, by Maochun Yu (2011)

The Dragon's War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China, 1937-1947, by Maochun Yu (2013)

OSS Special Operations in China, by Francis B. Mills, J. Brunner, and Robert Mills

The OSS and Ho Chi Minh: Unexpected Allies in the War against Japan, by Dixee Bartholomew-Feis (2006)

Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage, by Douglas Waller (2012)

Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937, by Frederic Wakeman (1996)

Secret War in Shanghai: An Untold Story of Espionage, Intrigue, and Treason in World War II, by Bernard Wasserstein (1999)

The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China, by Jay Taylor (2011)

General Albert C. Wedemeyer: America's Unsung Strategist in World War II, by John McLaughlin (2012)

Flying Tigers: Claire Chennault and His American Volunteers, 1941-1942, by Daniel Ford (2007)

DAY IS DONE ... GONE THE SUN...
FROM THE LAKES, FROM THE HILLS,
FROM THE SKIES.
ALL IS WELL ... SAFELY REST.
GOD IS NIGH.

Taps

Membership Chairman Jack Coyle regrets to report the following deaths recorded since SACO News Issue 47, July 2017, as of Nov. 10, 2017. Locations of service are in chronological order.

Darvin E. Anderegg, January 22, 2004
Kunming, Chungking, FLT Radio Unit, Shanpa,
Shanghai, Camp 4

Jack Harris, May 1976
Camp 8, Kienyang, Yung Tai, Foochow, Shanghai

George W. Kenty, 1982
Calcutta, Kunming, 14th Air Force, Chungking

Bruce H. Opsahl, October 9, 2017
Calcutta, Kunming, Changchow, Chienou, Hangchow

Henry F. Scurlock, August 8, 2017
Chungking, Kunming, FRUCHI, Calcutta

Frazer Shortlidge, 1983
Camp 8, Changting, Camp 7, Foochow, Shanghai

Wiley Cornett Williamson, April 14, 2015
Calcutta, Kunming, Foochow

A SACO Prayer

By Bill Bartee

Hello, God, it's us again,
The boisterous ones called SACO men.
We're here today to laugh and play;
To remember You aren't far away.
We're older now with a bit more sense
Than years ago, when without recompense,
We all stepped forward; yelled out our "Here"
In response to the call for volunteers.

You made us part of MILES' Navy;
Home port China — Big Boss, TAI LI.
You protected us, then brought us home;
Turned us loose and let us roam.

But, at that time, You waved your wand,
And among us all was forged a bond
That half a century has not changed,
Even though our lives were rearranged.

So, at this time, we feel we must
Say, "Thank You, God, for picking us."
And thank You, too, for standing fast
To receive our Mates whose time has passed.

And if there ever comes a time
The world goes nuts and You're in a bind,
Just remember that here below,
SACO Tigers volunteer to go.

And so this Psalm we will now end;
But prior to our big Amen,
To You, OH! God, we salute and bow;
To You, from SACO, A BIG "TING HAO!"

Bill Bartee (1924–2014) composed this poem in November 1996. He served in SACO from Oct. 1944 to Nov. 1945 as Radioman 1/c in Kunming, FRUCHI, 14th Air Force, Chungking, and Shanghai. He held many leadership positions in SACO Veterans and rarely missed a reunion.

Bruce H. Opsahl

Reverend Bruce H. Opsahl, 92, most recently of Belleville, Pa., went to be with his Lord on Oct. 9, 2017. He was a Lutheran pastor and an integral part of Flemington community for many years. Rev. Opsahl was born on Jan. 22, 1925, in Appleton, Wis., as the second of six children born to Caroline (Bruchs) and Peter Opsahl. He attended schools in Oshkosh, Thiensville, and Cedarburg, Wis., and he graduated high school from Cedarburg, Wis. After high school, Bruce entered the military service, joining the Navy during World War II. He deployed to the Mediterranean and then mainland China as a radio specialist and courier. The difficulty of this period led to his calling to the ministry, and upon returning he married his loving wife Violet, and graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Ill., a seminary of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. Rev. Opsahl was called to Omaha, Neb., as a vicar and then on to his first congregation in Shelton, Neb. In 1955, Rev. Opsahl moved his small and growing family to Flemington, and was vital in establishing and nurturing St. Paul Lutheran Church where he served as pastor for 35 years. Rev. Opsahl was predeceased by his wife of 65 years, Violet (Blank). He will be dearly missed by his children, Mark Opsahl of South Port, N.C. (wife, Nancy); Douglas Opsahl of New Britain, Pa. (wife, Terry); Paul Opsahl of Franklin, Ohio, (wife, Tracy); Elizabeth Rhoades of Port Royal, Pa., (husband, George); Thomas Opsahl of Rutland, Vt., (wife, Michelle), and Marty Opsahl of Portland, Ore., (wife, Aine). He will be fondly remembered by his many grandchildren and they in turn will share his love with their children. Rev. Opsahl was predeceased by four of his five siblings. He is survived by his brother, Erhard Opsahl of McFarland, Wis., (wife, Carla). He will be remembered by the many people that he touched over the years as he spread his ministry with those whom he met. He was able to spend his last few years at Valley View Terrace in Belleville, Pa., where he was lovingly cared for by the many staff members who shared his love of the Lord. Rev. Opsahl was an integral part of the Flemington community during his years of ministry there. He was an active member of the Flemington Rotary Club, and a member of the clergy staff and board of trustees of the Hunterdon Medical Center. After retirement from St. Paul, Rev. Opsahl continued his ministry as interim pastor at numerous congregations in New Jersey and eastern

Pennsylvania. Rev. Opsahl led an active and energetic life. His children recall him snow-mobiling them up the hill behind the house for the exciting run down on the toboggan. Or he was out in the red shed tinkering on a motor, repairing a trailer, or painting an old VW red. The red theme ran very strongly in his life, as it was one of the few colors he could see well. He enjoyed gardening and had a love for trees. He planted his beautiful pine and spruce trees wherever he lived, and many of the children have his trees growing in their yards. As his body grew more tired he was forced to give up many of the activities that he enjoyed but he still loved to talk or to hear about what the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were doing. It was as if he could experience the sports he loved, golf, softball, skiing, and football through the stories told to him by his family.

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Henry F. "Bud" Scurlock Jr.

Henry F. "Bud" Scurlock Jr., 92, a long-time resident of Leisure World Mutual 4, lost his battle with cancer on Aug. 7, 2017, at the Veterans Home of California.

He was born July 8, 1925, in Santa Paula, Calif.

He was a WWII US Navy veteran who proudly served four years as a Radioman 1st Class, including more than a year in China with the Sino-American Cooperative Organization.

After his discharge, he married Laura Akeo and began a career in quality control for a few manufacturing companies.

He leaves behind his 97-year-old sister Ruth Walker of Fillmore, Calif.; his two daughters, Mary Hirt and Christine Altenes; and his lady friend, Sue Clance, all of LW. A truckload of grands and great-grands will miss him greatly.

During his many years in Leisure World, he volunteered as Mutual 4 building captain, was a member of the American Legion, Billiards Club, Spanish Club, president of the Computer Club, and a life-long member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SACO NEWS

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SACO History

SACO (pronounced “Socko”), the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, officially started in May 1942 in a rice paddy near Pucheng, 130 miles from the China coast; the formal SACO agreement was approved by both the Chinese and United States governments April 15, 1943. The Directors of SACO were General Tai Li, head of the Chinese Secret Service, and Commander (later, Rear Admiral) Milton Edward “Mary” Miles. This was a land-locked U.S. Naval unit of almost 2,700 Americans who fought the Japanese in China during WWII. The men became known as “SACO Tigers” and the outfit, “The Rice Paddy Navy.”

The center of operations, named Happy Valley, was

built eight miles west of Chungking. Fourteen additional camps were established. All of these units trained Chinese troops and gathered intelligence. At war’s end SACO included 97,000 organized Chinese guerrillas and 20,000 saboteurs and pirates.

SACO set up weather stations throughout China as far north as the Gobi Desert and by the end of 1943 began producing weather reports for the Pacific Fleet. Coast-watchers reported on enemy shipping and furnished targets for U.S. submarines as well as the 14th Air Force and Naval aviators.

The activities of SACO remain little-known at home; but these men and their deeds continue to be remembered, studied, and honored in China.