

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

January 2016

WHAT THE HELL?

Issue No. 46

The Last Toast

Indianapolis, Indiana, August 22, 2015



SACO veterans crack open the cognac. Gen Kuo, Gen Chen, Dan Miller holding buffalo horns, Adm. Richard Terpstra Jr., Mike Cannon, Bob Hill Sr., Donald Huber, Jack Petersen, Guy Purvis, Richard Terpstra Sr.
Photos by Carolyn Arnold

Six SACO veterans shared a very special toast in Indianapolis last summer. They cracked a bottle of Kelt Tour Du Monde V.S.O.P. Cognac that had been reserved for "the Last Toast." The bottle was intended to be opened by the last two living SACOs, but at their 61st reunion and 70 years after they had served together, the six decided that the time was right.

The bottle and a pair of brass-tipped buffalo horns in a handcrafted wooden case have been on display at reunions for the past eight years or so. SACO veteran William "Beep" Miller, who died in 2012, made the beautiful case lined in red felt. The brass plaque inside reads, "The Last Toast - We, the two sole surviving

U.S. Navy-SACO Veterans, raise our cups in salute to those who have gone before us."

The case is now on display at the MIB Museum in Taipei, ROC.

Veterans Mike Cannon, Bob Hill Sr., Donald Huber, Jack Petersen, Guy Purvis, and Richard Terpstra Sr. invited Gen. Kuo and Gen. Chen from the ROC to join them in the salutary drink.



SACO Officers 2015-2016

President: Dan Miller
Vice President: Dairus Reynett
Membership Chairman: Jack Coyle
Assistant Membership Chairman: Jodi Petersen
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Assistant Treasurer: Richard Maurice
Legal Counsel: Robert Dormer
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Assistant Historian: Jodi Petersen
Editor SACO News: Linda Kush

Trustees:

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Richard Maurice
Jack Petersen
Pete Barbieri
Lynn Grabenstein

THANKS

Thanks to Charles Miles, Judy Barbieri, Carolyn Arnold, Christine Altenes, Robert Hill Jr., William Sheffer, Sue Meier, Lynn Grabenstein, Frank Kilmer, Jack Coyle, Jack Shearer, and Charlie Bruggerman for contributing to this issue.

CALL FOR REUNION PHOTOS: Your editor seeks photos from the 61st Reunion in August 2015 in Indianapolis for the next issue. If you took any, please send me your favorites. I would also love to include a few from past reunions. Please send me your "oldies," identifying the year, city, and people in the photo if known. If you have copies of back issues of SACO News containing these photos, please send them; I will scan the photos and return to you.

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

SACO News

is a periodical 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. The late Richard Rutan is Our Perpetual Editor-in-Chief. The publication is funded by annual dues of members, their families, and friends.

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

Linda Kush
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Boston MA 02134
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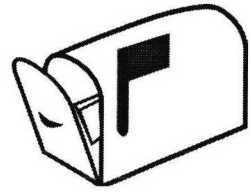
Keep your SACO News coming!

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.

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SACO News Mailbox



Dear SACO Friends and Family,

Tonight I have great news!! I received word today from the IRS that SACO has been reinstated as a non-profit organization! It has been a long struggle, and needless to say, I am doing cartwheels around the house! How much longer we will be able to maintain our numbers remains to be seen, however, for now they are allowing us to count widows and others that have served in the military, even cadets as long as they are members. I can now file the taxes and get us back on track.

I can't tell you how relieved I am as this news.

Thank you very much and much love to all of you. (I might just have a glass of wine!)

Judy Barbieri

Editor's Note: Many, many thanks to our treasurer Judy for seeing this difficult task through.

Dear Linda:

I received your SACO NEWS. Thank you very much. I promise you that I am going to attend the Reunion in August!

Sincerely yours,
Kuo Rong-Charng

March 25, 2015

Dear Ms. Kush:

Thank you for the January edition of the SACO News. We enjoyed attending the reunions for many years, and receiving the publication, especially after Bill was no longer able to attend. He passed away Dec. 27, 2014.

I am enclosing a contribution to the funding of the SACO News.

Sincerely
Bobbie Hall (Mrs. Bill C. Hall)

March 2, 2015

Hello Ms. Kush,

Thanks for SACO News. We have been looking for a Reunion update. Regret I was unable to be there. Jack Coyle gave some helpful information in previous issues, and I would like to share details about one more medal SACO veterans can receive, the China Service Medal. SACO Marine personnel received the medal, but Navy members did not.

Navy Personnel Command
PERS 312B Room 354
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis MO 63138

They responded after 18 months that the CSM has been extended to include Navy Veterans who served in China.

I am sure Veterans and families will be interested in this information. Address letter to above office along with service information.

Regards,

Clair Emerson Emerson CM RM1/c Camp 1

Feb. 25, 2015

Ms. Kush:

The small check enclosed is in memory of the follow SACO Tigers:

Richard Rutan – He provided services to SACO worth thousands of dollars, but never asked for a nickel's recompense.

Bill Bartee – Truly a Mr. SACO. His wise counsel at Trustee meetings was noteworthy and beneficial.

Jerry Coats, a corpsman at Camp 10 (where I was the CO) where he was responsible for the health of American personnel.

Jim Bash, whose distinguished work in SACO was followed by a distinguished career at the School of Education at the University of Virginia after WWII. May they find the peace they so well deserve.

Bill Sager CO Camp Ten, SACO

Linda,

I just finished your book. Great stuff. My father, Lester "Gus" Bruggemann, Major USMC, was the CO of Eastern China Unit, Kienyang from June 19, 1945, until the end of the war. I came across Doc Felmy in the book. He was a great friend of my father's, and he removed my tonsils in 1947. In 1957 when Mary Miles was CO of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, I used to visit him, and with one of his aides as a chaperone, had the run of the whole yard. I spent hours visiting the ships and submarines. It must have rubbed off because I joined the Navy in 1958 and retired to Virginia Beach in 1984 as a Senior Chief. My father ran the 1958 SACO reunion in NYC. I still have some photos and souvenirs of China which I keep for the family.

Thanks so much for your time and research.
Charlie Bruggemann

Editor's Note: Charlie sent several photos of his father in China. They appear in this issue on p. 10.

Dear SACO News:

I thought you would want to know why Alfred was not sending his dues. He passed away on Jan. 23, 2015. He loved to read your news and did right up to the past year. He had Parkinson's and cancer. But he put up one hell of a fight, as he said about his service.

Sincerely
Bonnie Bricker
(Mrs. Alfred Bricker)

March 11, 2015

Dear Ms. Kush:

I was pleased to receive SACO News, and I compliment you on its contents. It was with great sadness that I came upon James H. Bash's name listed in the newsletter as having died in 2014. I noticed that the next reunion will be held in Indianapolis. I wish I could be there to share in the fun and reminisce with SACO veterans, but that is not possible. I am 88 years

old and have mobility problems. Were Jim alive and well, he would certainly attend, for he grew up in that area, having graduated from Arsenal Technical High School and attending Jordan Conservatory of Music. We met through our mutual love of music. We were married for 68 years, and I miss him terribly...

I was sorry to learn of Richard Rutan's death. He did a wonderful and exceptional job with SACO magazines. Jim gifted all of his SACO magazines to Alderman Library at UVA where they are available to anyone who may wish to research SACO activities.

Jim and Richard had a special friendship. Jim used to tell me about their adventure when they slipped out of a reunion meeting and drove around through Indiana where they both had family roots. I don't remember whether or not Richard's mother was with them.

When Charles "Seagoing" Miles was in Charlottesville to visit a friend as he often did, he and Jim would occasionally share an early morning coffee. Jim was very proud of his years spent with SACO and often spoke of his friends who were with him in China. One of his Chinese SACO buddies from Washington State visited with us in Charlottesville, bringing with him his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter. It was a highlight of Jim's life.

He was assigned by the navy to the V-12 Unit at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Va. He was "shipped out" to Kunming, China, where he learned respect for the Chinese people but saw poverty all around him. He became convinced that education was the key to ending poverty, and this observation led him to his life-long work at UVA having to do with "according equal human status" to all people regardless of race or gender.

I have written to the Commandant of the Navy to offer my belated thanks for the military honors that the navy provided for Jim's funeral, and I have enclosed a copy of this letter thinking that you might be willing to printing it in your next issue. It was truly a profound ceremony and one that brought comfort to all who attended. I think it is worth of reprinting for SACO veterans to review. It is my understanding that one only need request this service from the navy in order for them to comply.

Thank you for continuing the SACO NEWS and for including me on your mailing list. I have included my dues for \$35 with a little extra to help with costs.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. James H. (Jean M.) Bash

**Letter from Mrs. James Bash to Commandant,
Dept. of the Navy**

Commandant
Dept. of the Navy
Naval Region Mid-Atlantic
1510 Gilbert St.
Norfolk, VA 23511-3737

March 11, 2015

Dear Sir:

On November 7 I received a letter of condolence from Sheryl I. Tius regarding the death of my husband, James H. (Jim) Bash who died of acute leukemia on October 6, 2014. Jim was a Naval enlistee veteran of World War II who spent most of his service to this United States of America assigned by the Navy to the Sino-American Cooperative Organization in Kunming, China.

This letter is meant to thank you belatedly for the Flag Ceremony which Naval personnel performed at Jim's graveside service on October 18, 2014.

On a beautiful sun-lit fall day, "Taps" were sounded tenderly and softly by a Naval bugler to mark the passage of Jim's life into eternity. The United States flag was unfurled in all its glory and refolded by two uniformed officers in dress whites. The flag was then presented to me with words of appreciation from the United States government. This ceremony only took a few minutes but all people assembled at the gravesite were comforted by this profound rite.

I was impressed with the solemnity and with the dignity of this ceremony. If at all possible, I would like to have a copy of the words that were spoken to me upon presentation of the US. flag.

Thank you for honoring Jim with this ceremony.

Sincerely, yours,
Mrs. James H. (Jean M.) Bash

Help Identify This Photo



Dear SACO Veterans and Friends:

This photo was taken at Fort Pierce in December 1944. I believe the men were trainers.

Do you recognize them or have any additional information?

If you can help, please call or email me.

Many thanks,

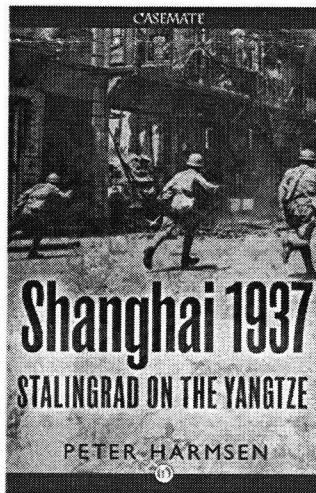
Sue Meier

Associate member, daughter of James Hall

812-216-4200

suemeier04@yahoo.com

Book of Note



Shanghai 1937: Stalingrad on the Yangtze

by Peter Harmsen

Casemate Publishers, 2015

from amazon.com

This deeply researched book describes one of the great forgotten battles of the 20th century. At its height, it involved nearly a million Chinese and Japanese soldiers, while sucking in three million civilians as unwilling spectators—and often victims. It turned what had been a Japanese adventure in China into a general war between the two oldest and proudest civilizations of the Far East. Ultimately, it led to Pearl Harbor and to seven decades of tumultuous history in Asia. The Battle of Shanghai was a pivotal event that helped define and shape the modern world.

For Associate Members, Commitment, History

Associate members of SACO Veterans are the wives, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and friends of SACO men. Some were introduced to the group through a SACO veteran, accompanying him to a reunion. For others, the SACO Veterans organization was a window of discovery after a father had passed away or after learning SACO's astonishing history. Associate membership strengthens bonds with loved ones, builds friendships, teaches lessons in history and patriotism, and provides volunteer opportunities to enrich the lives of the veterans.

Associates reflect on how they joined the SACO Veterans and why they treasure the connection.

Discovering the SACO Veterans

Robert Hill Jr., son of Robert G. Hill: My father is a living member of U.S. Navy SACO. We are blessed that he is still with us. We have attended and even hosted a couple of convention-reunions over the years.



Pete and Judy Barbieri

Judy Barbieri, daughter of John McAfee: My husband Pete and I both became Associate members of SACO several years ago. My father, John McAfee, was a SACO Vet-

eran. He passed away at 57 years old and because of his business was never able to attend a reunion. I was introduced to SACO by my father's friend, Phil Whitney. Mr. Whitney got me in touch with Paul Cassamajor, who was then the membership chairman. Paul was responsible for me receiving my father's medal, which I did at the reunion in Philadelphia, hosted by Jim Kelly.

Christine Altenes, daughter of Henry "Hank" Scurlock: I have known of my dad's involvement with the SACO group since the late 80's and never really fully understood the relevance until years later, when I became his caregiver and had the opportunity to accompany him to Richard Rutan's funeral.

William I. Sheffer, son of Irvin H. Sheffer: I became connected to the SACO Veterans via the internet while researching information about SACO after my father died. Not long after I submitted a story about my father, I received a surprising call from Richard Rutan, who was very interested to learn how I knew so many details. We had a nice chat. I'm saddened by his recent passing, a great veteran and editor. From a Navy veteran I salute Richard with a Navy's "Well Done" as a tribute to his covering of SACO's untold role in WWII.

Frank H. Kilmer, friend of SACO: I spent three years there in Taiwan on a geology study. In a Taipei bookstore, I discovered the book by Mary Miles and bought a copy. The book was an eye-opener as to what was going on in the China-Burma Theater during the war. It was an unknown piece of history to me. Later, I purchased Mrs. Miles's book, "A Navy Wife," another fine piece of history. I called Mrs. Miles and spoke to her, and received some nice greeting cards from her.

Sometime later, I began to communicate with Paul Cassamajor. About 20 years ago, he approved my application to be an Associate Member of SACO, and I began to receive the marvelous bulletin that Richard Rutan published each year. One of the Letters to the Editor was from Colonel Tex Hill, a celebrated pilot of the American Volunteer Group. In the letter, Tex said he was planning to attend the SACO convention coming up in Fredericksburg, Texas, so that he could personally thank SACO for rescuing AVG fliers during the war. I thought it would be great to shake hands with a Flying Tiger, and I decided to attend the reunion.

Lynn Grabenstein, daughter of Richard Terpstra: I became involved with SACO when my dad hosted the reunion in Grand Rapids. Dad needed help, so my sister-in-law, who at the time lived near him, and I, (who was across the state)



Lynn Grabenstein

did our best. I attended as a registration table helper and general coordinator which allowed me the immense pleasure of meeting and greeting everyone. I was pretty much hooked!

Bonding with fathers

Robert Hill: My dad is and always will be my role model and hero here on earth. I have slowly gained more information from him, which is not easy because of certain memories that are difficult for him to re-live. I have gained even more respect knowing now more than I ever had, of what he did and what he had to do, and what he saw.

Sue Meier, daughter of James Hall: I became an associate member because SACO was very important to my dad. He was proud to be a part of SACO. Even though he is no longer with us, being a part of the SACO family keeps him alive for me! Just listening to the stories of the Vets brings back memories of the stories that he told us. And it is just like he is there with me! I look forward to the reunions.

A growing circle of friends

Judy Barbieri: From that first reunion on we have tried to attend all the reunions. We have met so many wonderful people, both Veterans and their families and friends and of course the friends from Taiwan. They have all embraced Pete and I and have become our extended family. We always look forward to the reunion and keeping in touch through out the rest of the year. We feel truly blessed to be part of this amazing organization.

Frank Kilmer: The Fredericksburg reunion resulted in many new friendships for me.

I met Tex Hill, and he was very friendly and happy to answer my questions. I was very impressed with the gracious attention he gave to a 12-year-old boy who wanted to know all about the Flying Tigers. After the reunion, we became friends, corresponding and exchanging phone calls, and I got to know his wife Maizie, who was a great lady.

At the meeting, I also made friends with Richard Rutan, who had brought his mother. We visited a local brewery and had a fine beer served in tall, heavy

glasses. I still have that glass, and I think of Richard every time I see it. We spoke on the phone every few months after that, and I talked to him a month or so before he passed away.

Lynn Grabenstein: It was apparent that the time spent with these guys and their families was something to be cherished. The personal connections between the veterans and their Taiwanese friends after all these years is something to behold, and I was excited to be a small part of it. Year by year those bonds grow stronger and all of us are enriched by the experience.

A learning experience

Robert Hill: My special interest as an associate member includes my overall experience in fact finding about a group that was so covertly concealed behind Japanese enemy lines. It was even concealed from most everyone until the "secrecy act" was lifted from the Navy around SACO tigers.

I have found the history and interaction with SACO and the Nationalist Chinese to be fascinating and a remarkable bonding experience over the years. It is a quite unique relationship. To work together and combat a common foe, their history must be preserved. The Chinese hold their ancestors in the highest degree and truly apply age with wisdom to their elders. They look to them for sound advise and respect is a given. The men, who are still with us are living history; they are proud men.



Jack Coyle and Associate Carolyn Arnold

Jack Coyle, son of Jack T. Coyle: My dad was a SACO veteran, and we talked sometimes about what he did. However, I never asked him to write everything down or interview him with a tape recorder. I was always going to do so, but did not expect him to die so young. I have read some of his comments in the pages of

the SACO books he had and learned that he was part of some of the stories written in the Rice Paddy Navy, although his name was not included as being a member of Unit 14 as stated on page 295 of the book. He also indicated two other people were members who were not included.

On page 301, it tells a story about the FRUCHI compound being next to HQ of the Nationalist forces, and they were having a problem with one of the war lords on the hill above the compound, and mortar rounds were being fired over the heads of the FRUCHI compound. The SACO guys made a U.S. flag out of a bed sheet, and by the time it was dark had it flying above the compound on an antenna wire attached to a tree. They took a light from a jeep and lit the flag so everyone could see it. I remember dad telling me the story, and in the book he wrote "Coyle in this deal."

Frank Kilmer: My daughter and I visited Paul Cassamajor in Walnut Creek, Calif. Over the years, through phone conversations, we discovered that we had attended the same junior high school in Pasadena, Calif., a few years apart. I enjoyed his stories about photography working in Kunming and his interest in forestry.

Serving SACO Veterans

Christine Altene: I have been able to listen to my father's stories, read his books, meet some of his friends and unfortunately, attend funeral services.

Then he said that the American SACO group had been nominated for a Medal of Honor and the paperwork was sitting on then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's desk. Roosevelt's untimely death during office nixed the Medal of Honor for the team. As my dad told me this story he began to sob. I never forgot this story. We associate members may need to resurrect the Medal of Honor paperwork. I have no idea where to start.

Jack Coyle: I was in the Army Reserves and working full time so I did not have much vacation left each year to go to the reunions with dad, but when I got out of the reserves and retired, I could do so to honor my dad and SACO Veterans.

The first reunion I attended was in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Dick Terpstra was the Reunion Coordina-

tor. When I got there I started helping in anyway I could and became the person in charge of loading and unloading the buses. I asked another associate member to help me as there were two buses, and we could each be in charge of one bus. By the third day Dick asked me if I would be interested in becoming a Trustee and I said I would if that is where I could be of best use. During the general membership meeting when the position of Assistant Secretary came up. Bill Bartee put my name in for the position and I got it. It was a surprise to me and Dick.

Next year I was nominated for Secretary and got it. I served for two years, and when someone asked about the position of Historian, I put my name in for it, as I collected many books about SACO and loved the history of SACO and military history in general. I have many books about the history of the U.S., and most of them are military history. When Paul could no longer handle the position of Membership Chairman, no one came forward, and so I said I would take that position. I did not know at the time but it gave me a great opportunity to talk to veterans and listen to their stories.

Building the SACO legacy

Robert Hill: I believe in the Ten Commandments. The Fourth Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," for me, is part of the way I feel about SACO. It is both closure and insight for me. I want to walk the path of a good patriot by helping and maintaining SACO history.

With our dear members moving on from this world at a very quick rate, I need to step up and let my grandchildren know who their great-grandfather was and who he served with. It is my responsibility to keep honor alive and to explain to them what men with integrity have done to insure our freedom that we cherish and sometimes take for granted.

Jack Coyle: I feel very strongly SACO MUST continue to honor our SACO Veterans and to honor SACO and tell the story of SACO and what our Veterans did for our great country. Very few people know about SACO, even people in the military, including Navy personnel.

I wear my SACO cap all the time and tell people about SACO. I was asked to speak at a VFW meeting about SACO, and a Vietnam Veteran who worked for the VA in helping veterans to receive assistance told

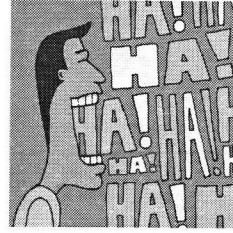
me after he never knew about SACO and he thought he knew every unit in WWII. That is why I do it. To tell the SACO story. Keep history alive for our children. Now I am active in many other veteran associations. The Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association, WWII Roundtable Association, and Veteran Brunch meetings. I assist a friend who writes stories about veterans for a newspaper. I always look for veterans who are willing to tell their stories. I tell them it is not for themselves, but for their children and families. Most respond to this and will share their stories for their families' sake.

Honoring beloved veterans

Christine Altenes: When Richard died, it meant a great deal to my dad to attend the services. Dad could not walk on his own and required a walker and a lot of help to move anywhere. I promised to do whatever I had to, so he could be there to honor Richard. With lots of help from several of the male attendees, we got Hank to graveside. As Taps was played for Richard, a member of the Honor Guard presented my dad with the flag from Richard's casket. I watched as my dad, again, showed his emotions. I tried to video the ceremony, got most of it, but had to stop. I was overcome by my own emotions. This was a turning point for me. This was the first time I fully understood the importance of what the SACO Group had done and what it means to America.

Richard's flag now flies in front of Seal Beach Leisure World Administration Building. It will fly there until it can no longer, in Richard's memory and the memory of every SACO Member. I have a new appreciation of SACO and hope to continue the memories and stories of this amazing group.

Robert Hill: I am proud to be an American and even more proud to be an associate member of U.S. Navy SACO! Sometimes I wished I could go back in time to be there in China with my dad. It really would have been a great honor and privilege to serve with him and watch his back. He would have been a great guy to get to know. Thank you, Dad, and may God bless you for all the days we have together.



Just For Laughs

Having passed the enlistment physical, Jon was asked by the doctor, "Why do you want to join the Navy, son?"

"My father said it'd be a good idea, sir."

"Oh? And what does your father do?"

"He's in the Army, sir."

"Well," snarled the tough old Navy Chief to the bewildered Seaman. "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and piss on my grave."

"Not me, Chief!" the Seaman replied. "Once I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in line again!"

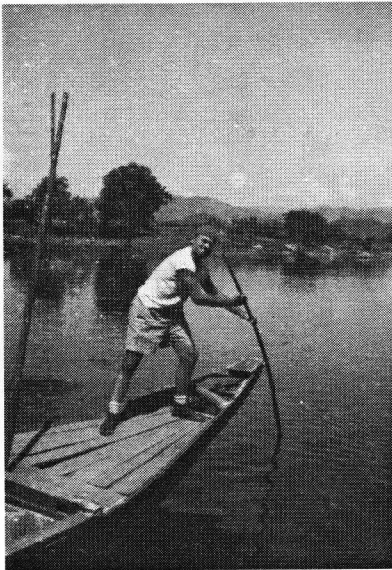
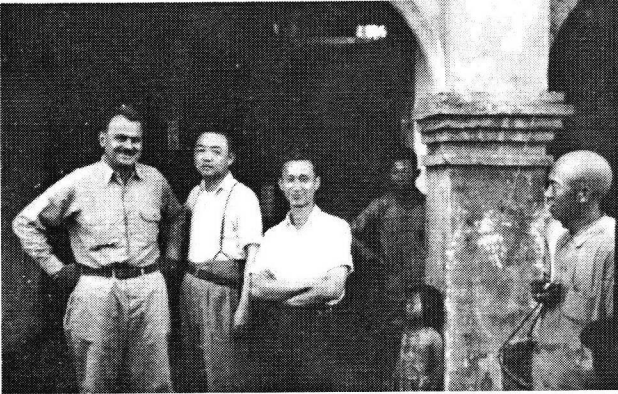
A man is flying in a hot air balloon and realizes that he is lost. He reduces height and spots a man down below. He lowers the balloon further and shouts: "Excuse me, can you tell where I am?" The man below says: "Yes, you're in a hot air balloon, hovering 30 feet above this field." "You must be a Chief Petty Officer," says the balloonist. "I am," replies the man. "How did you know?" "Well," says the Balloonist, "everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's of no use to anyone." The man below says, "You must be an Officer." "I am," replies the balloonist, "but how did you know?" "Well," says the man, "You don't know where you are, or where you are going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it's my fault."

A Navy officer was walking through the crew's quarters of his ship one day and chanced upon a sailor reading a magazine with his feet up on a table. "Sailor!" the officer boomed. "Do you put your feet up on the furniture at home?" "No sir," replied the sailor, "but we don't land airplanes on the roof either!"

Two Sailors were talking about assignments they would like to get.
First Sailor: "Someday I'd like to ride on a submarine."
Second Sailor: "Not me! I wouldn't set foot on any ship that sinks on purpose!"

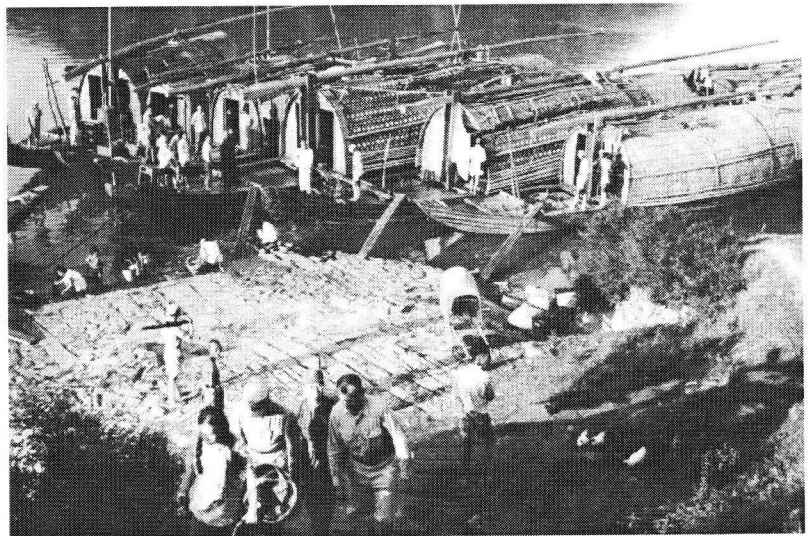
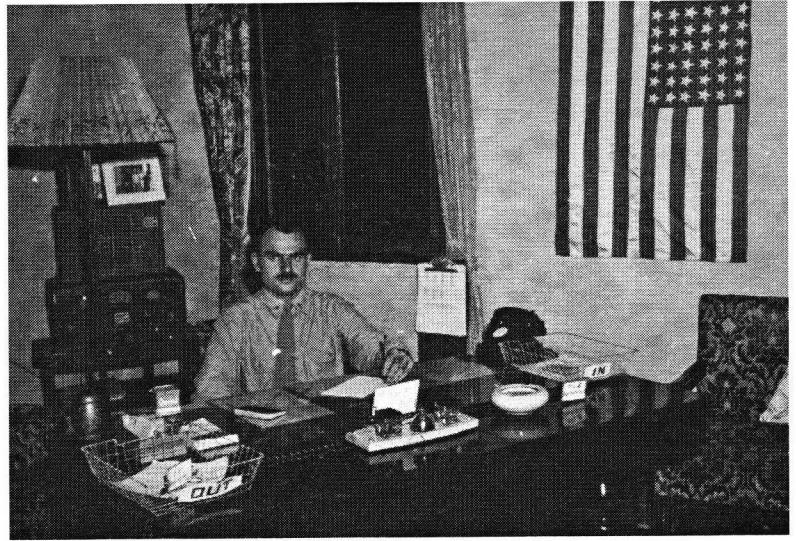
SACO Flashback Photo Album...Chungking to Inner

USMC Major Lester "Gus" Bruggeman, 1945, hard at work and at play in China. Top right is his desk at Happy Valley. Gus served in SACO in Chungking, Chihkiang, and Shunan from February to September, 1945. He passed away in 1984. Thanks to his son, Charlie, for sending these photos. See Charlie's letter on p. 4.



CALL FOR PHOTOS

Next issue, we would like to feature photos from the SACO Reunion 2015, as well as a flashback to reunions past. Please send your SACO Reunion photos to Linda Kush, SACO News editor; email and mailing address on p. 2. Please identify which reunion and who is in the photo if possible. All photos will be returned. Thank you!



Mongolia to Connecticut



The men of Camp Four, Inner Mongolia, SACO's most remote camp, a two-month truck ride away from Happy Valley at the edge of the Gobi Desert. Top left, at a party thrown by Governor Fu Tso I marking China's seventh year at war with Japan. L ro R: O.J. Olson, Jim "Red" McGrail, J. Barringer, Jack Shearer, Doc Goodwin, Interpreter, Fu Tso I, Ken Rhicard, CO V.R. Bisceglia, Charlie Hall, Chinese officer, Bill Lutnick, Bob Perry, Mike Conway, Charlie Keil. Top right, wedding, Catholic Belgian missionary officiating. John Klos and Jack Shearer in the back row. Bottom, Camp Four veterans at a SACO reunion, September 1956, Hartford, Conn. Clockwise from L Front: Frank Budinscak, Bob Perry, Jack Shearer, Edward "Frenchy" Valliere, Bob Eastman, Donald Wilcox, George Kennedy. Thanks to Jack Shearer for these photos.

Charles Miles in Taiwan for 70th Anniversary of Japan's Surrender

Charles Miles visited Taipei in September 2015 as a guest of the Republic of China Ministry of National Defense. The five-day trip commemorated the 70th anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender on the deck of the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945. Miles was invited in honor of the contribution his father, Vice Admiral Milton "Mary" Miles, made to China's fight against Japan. Other guests included the children and grandchildren of General Albert Coady Wedemeyer, Brigadier General David Lee "Tex" Hill of the Flyer Tigers, President Franklin Roosevelt, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and President Harry Truman, as well as a 96-year-old veteran who fought in Burma, British Army Captain Gerald Fitzpatrick.



Charles Miles, Grand Hotel, Taipei

In a private ceremony on Sept. 1, ROC President Ma Ying-jeou presented Charles Miles and other honored guests and with the ROC Medal In Commemoration of The War of Resistance Against Japan.

"President Ma is not only gracious but very knowledgeable of the events of history; quite the fan of General/President Eisenhower and of all things that fly," Miles wrote. On his desk, President Ma displays a model of a plane flown by the Flying Tigers, which he showed to "Tex" Hill's daughter, Shannon Schaupp, as he presented her the ROC Medal.

The main event of the trip was a program on the Sept. 2 at MND headquarters featuring a military

band, a film about the Chinese resistance against Japan, and an awards ceremony during which some 100 people crossed the stage to receive medals, trophies, and framed letters of recognition. Miles and the others who had received medals the previous day were asked to stand to be recognized.

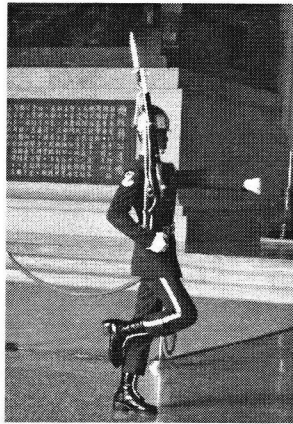


William (Bill) Wedemeyer, grandson of the General, receives the medal from President Ma

General Tang Chia-Kun, who had attended the Indianapolis SACO reunion, was at the ceremony. He greeted Miles warmly and sent his regards to the SACO family. He is no longer at the MIB and has been promoted to Commander, Armed Forces Reserve Command.

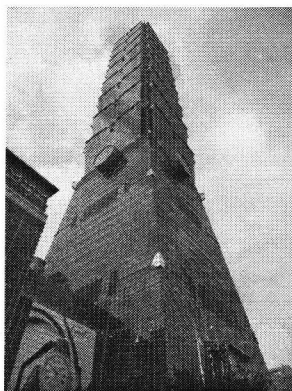


Left: ROC Medal in Commemoration of the War of Resistance Against Japan. Right: Gift to Miles from MIB



Memorial to Chiang Kai-shek: statue of the Generalissimo and changing of the guard.

The next day was devoted to sightseeing. The group witnessed the changing of the guard at the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. "It took about 15



minutes. Each step was held for a second or so. They need strength and great balance," wrote Miles. They also visited Taipei 101, the 101-story, post-modern skyscraper that towers over the city. The elevator whisked them up to the observation deck on the 89th floor in a mere 40 seconds.

For Miles, the highlight of the trip came on the last day with a visit to Military Intelligence Bureau headquarters. "This was a special, special outing for me," he wrote.

MIB Director Lt. Gen. Liu Te-Liang and former director Lt. Gen. Huang Shish-Chung greeted him. After paying his respects at the Mei Hua tree his father had planted in 1954, he exchanged gifts with MIB officials.

Miles received an elaborate shadow-box display concerning the art of war, using spies. General Huang stressed that the quote beginning "It is only the enlightened ruler . . ." aptly described Vice Admiral Milton Miles and the SACO operation.

Miles gave the MIB several artifacts from the early days of SACO: clothing Vice Admiral Miles had worn in China and a photo of Gen. Tai Li demonstrating how to carry a yo-yo pole, taken on June 9, 1942, the day Miles and Tai formed the partnership that became SACO.

The five days were punctuated with festive meals and lively conversation with Chinese and American guests, along with the inevitable gambei toasts.

SACO VETERANS CONTRIBUTORS

These contributors made gifts to SACO Veterans in 2015 in addition to their membership dues. Thank you for your support

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- Monica Stowe
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- Jean Bush
- James Eaton
- Robert A. Stoll
- Frank Anthony Mileti
- William Sager in memory of: Richard Rutan,
Bill Bartee, Jerry Coats, Jim Bush
- Robert and Valerie Griffith
- Lilma Huntley
- Gregory B. Skinner
- Wilbert Edwards
- Wayne L. Goodson

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 45, Jan. 2015, as of Jan. 1, 2016. Locations of service are in chronological order.

Richard Banner, March 1, 2015
 Calcutta

Alfred James Bricker, January 23, 2015
 Calcutta

Paul David Butler, June 15, 2007
 Calcutta, Camp 5, Canton, Shanghai

Temple F. Carnagey, May 10, 2015
 Calcutta

Salvatore J. Ciaccio, February 27, 2015
 Calcutta, Kunming, Foochow, Shanghai

Edward Flanagan, December 23, 2014
 Calcutta

William L. Fogle, January 15, 2015
 Calcutta, Jorhat

Melvin E. Goguey, July 9, 2015
 Shanghai

Edward Goldsmith, 1985
 Camp 7, Tungfeng, Shanghai

Billie C. Hall, December 27, 2014
 Calcutta, Kweilin, Kunming, FRUCHI, Calcutta

Noah James, July 3, 2015
 Calcutta, Hangchow, Shanghai

Bernard P. Murphy, January 5, 2015
 Calcutta, Kunming, Shanghai

Jerry Y. Skuhrovec, 2015
 Calcutta, HQ Unit Chekiang, Hospital 1, Shanghai

Elden Stringfellow, September 8, 2014
 Kunming, 14th Air Force, Chungking, Kunming,
 FRUCHI

Herman "Wes" Weskamp, April 8, 2015
 Calcutta, Kunming, Chungking

Kenneth C. Williams, November 17, 1991
 Calcutta, Kunming, Foochow

Mary Harrell Tanner

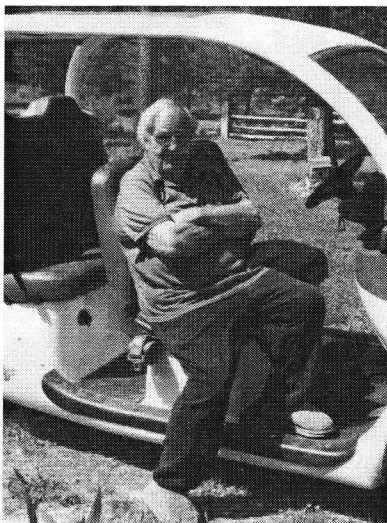
Mary Harrell Tanner of Newport News died peacefully on June 27, 2015, at her home. Mary was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and a friend to everyone she encountered. All who knew her loved her and were blessed to have been touched by her beauty, kindness, grace, and dignity.

She was born on May 26, 1926, in Martin County, North Carolina, the daughter of Benjamin Louis Harrell and Annie Brown Harrell, wife of Allen Clarence Tanner, and sister of Melvin Odell Harrell, all who predeceased her. She grew up in Oak City, N.C., attending Oak City High School, and moved to Newport News in 1944, where she had spent the last 71 years. She had a full life centered around her family, her friends, her church, and numerous social activities including Women's Investment Group, Happy Hearts, Birthday Girls, Junior League, Red Hatters, WGA at the James River Country Club, SACO, and many bridge groups.

She is survived by her three children, Allen Clarence Tanner Jr. and his wife Debbie, Benjamin Harrell Tanner and his wife Mary Jane, and Mary Elizabeth "Beth" Tanner Burrus, her sister Dorothy Weathersby, sister-in-law Fay Harrell, six grandchildren who adored their beloved "Grandmom," and her many devoted cousins, nieces, and nephews

Melvin Emile Goguey

Mel passed away peacefully on July 9, 2015, in Klamath Falls, Oregon. He is survived by his loving wife Helen of 43 years, daughters Margie and Pam, sons Chris and Jerry, two brothers Bob and Charlie, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Mel spent the last eight years of his life living his dream



retired in the beautiful mountains of Oregon. His many acres of land included amazing views of peaceful nature and stunning pine trees. He enjoyed his morning walks with his dog Paulie and having his coffee out on the porch in his favorite chair admiring the beauty of the land. He was born in Queens, New York on April 25, 1927, and raised in Long Island, New York. He enlisted in the navy at the age very young age of 18 and was part of a special operations team called the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO) that took place in China. Many years later the group of men that took part in this special operation would get together annually and reunite to catch up and share memories of the past. Mel always looked forward to getting together with his old friends each year and loved their conversations and brotherhood bonds that lasted a lifetime. He was also a member of the Rice Paddy Navy, an Elks Club member, and in the American Legion. He was proud to have served his country, and his family was proud of him. He was also a private truck driver for 50 years in California. He was a great chef and made some of the tastiest dishes you would every try. Mel will be greatly missed but never forgotten, for he left his mark here on earth and holds a special place in all our hearts. We love you, husband, brother, Dad, and Grandpa.

Written by his loving granddaughter, Tracie Gusman

Herman W. "Wes" Weskamp

Herman William Weskamp, better known as Wes to his friends, passed away on Wednesday, April 8, 2015, at the age of 91. Wes was born the second of five children on December 30, 1923, in Mansfield, Colo. His family moved to Buckeye, Ariz., and then to Twin Falls, Idaho, where he spent his formative years. During WWII, he served as an officer in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the Special Forces group Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO), where he conducted operations in China. Wes remained an active member of the SACO Veterans Organization his entire life. After leaving the service, Wes completed his education at Cal Poly, SLO, where he met and married Kathryn Pauline Stein in 1949. She was a Registered Nurse, loving wife and mother as well as an enthusiastic community volunteer. Wes and Kathryn moved to Southern California in 1952 when he accepted a teaching position at Mt. San Antonio College in the Agricultural Sciences Department. During his 33 years at Mt. SAC, he helped develop the Ag Engineering, Forestry, and Dairy programs. Kathryn passed away on April 18, 2013. Wes is survived by his two children: Mary Lou Vidosky and Jim Weskamp; his six grandchildren: Tom Vidosky, Jr., Kate Vidosky, Steven Vidosky, Jeff Vidosky, Erica Weskamp Bramhall, and Andrea Weskamp; and two great-grandchildren: Ella Vidosky and Jack Vidosky.

Richard Banner

Richard Banner, age 97, passed away on March 1, 2015. Born in Long Island City, N.Y., he was a resident of Jupiter, Fla., for 20 years, coming from Belrose, N.Y. Prior to his retirement, he worked for TDI (Transportation Displays Inc.) as a supervisor.

He served in the U.S. Navy for four years in India, in the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, a member of the Scouts & Raiders unit, during World War II.

Richard Banner is entombed at Our Lady Queen of Peace Cemetery, Royal Palm Beach, Fla., next to his wife of 70 years, Mathilda Banner.

Many nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grand-nephews will greatly miss him and his wisdom.

Salvatore J. Ciaccio

Salvatore J. "Sal" Ciaccio, age 90, a resident of Tewksbury for 62 years, formerly of Medford, passed away with his family at his side, on Friday, February 27, 2015, at Tewksbury Hospital.

He was the beloved husband of Marie E. (DiTroia) Ciaccio, who passed away on May 22, 1999.

Born in Medford on July 9, 1924, he was predeceased by his father Vincenzo Ciaccio mother Florence (DeLeo) Ciaccio, and sister Pauline Fernandez.

Sal was raised in Medford and attended Medford Vocational Trade School and immediately enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942, serving during World War II until 1946 with an honorable discharge. He received Amphibious Training in Fort Pierce, Fla., and then served in U.S. Naval Group, China. He was part of the Third Navy's Scouts and Raiders group, which were the precursors of today's Navy SEALs. The Third Scouts and Raiders organization deployed to fight with the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO) in China. Admiral Ernest J. King ordered that 120 officers and 900 enlisted sailors be trained for "Amphibious Raider" at the Scout and Raider school at Fort Pierce in order to support this mission. They formed the core of what was envisioned as a "guerrilla amphibious organization of Americans and Chinese operating from coastal waters, lakes and rivers employing small steamboats and sampans." Elements of the Third Scouts and Raiders saw active service conducting surveys of the upper Yangtze River in the spring of 1945 and, disguised as coolies, conducting a detailed three-month survey of the Chinese coast from Shanghai to Kitchioh Wan, near Hong Kong. The majority of the force remained garrisoned at Camp Knox in Calcutta, India. He was awarded the World War II Victory Medal, the American Theatre Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal.

After many years working as a machinist and then a field service engineer for Hebert Machine, he founded Sal's Machine Tool Company in Tewksbury, which he operated for 15 years.

Sal served on the Board of Trustees at the Tewksbury Hospital for over 20 years, and was a longtime member of the Tewksbury Lions Club.

An avid golfer, Sal was a member of the Long Meadow Golf Club. In addition, he was a member of the "Fire Eaters" bowling team at the former Wamesit Bowling Alley.

Sal and his late wife Marie enjoyed traveling to Jupiter, Florida, and spending time at Lake Winnepesaukee at Sandy Point in Alton Bay. He looked forward to attending the annual reunions of SACO members throughout the country.

He is survived by three children, Linda M. Traub and her husband Stephen of Newburyport, James A. Ciaccio and his wife Susan (Deacon) of Tewksbury, and Stephen M. Ciaccio and his wife Karen (Fitzsimmons) of Nashua, N.H.; six grandchildren, Kimberly A. Hawkins of Concord, N.H., Meredith E. Gertz and her husband Anthony of Nashua, N.H., Stacey L. Lawrie of Haverhill, Jonathan D. Lawrie and his wife Molly (Baker) of Wilton, N.H., Gina A. Ciaccio of Tewksbury, and Anthony J. Ciaccio and his wife Jessica (Joubert) of Lowell; seven great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his wife's siblings and family.

Alfred James Bricker

Alfred James Bricker, age 88, of Olney, passed away at 3:30 am on Friday, January 23, 2015, at Burgin Manor in Olney. He was buried in Richland Cemetery in Calhoun.

Alfred was born on November 5, 1926, in Parkersburg, Ill., the son of Loren and Vecie (Smith) Bricker. He married Bonnie (Reynolds) Bricker on February 17, 1950, in Olney. She survives. He was a World War II navy veteran. He was a lifetime member of the Olney VFW and was active for 66 years. He was a pest control owner and owned Bricker Service supply. He was a member of the Methodist Church in Calhoun.

In addition to his wife, Alfred is survived by two sons, David Bricker and companion Candy Foster of Parkersburg, and Perry Bricker and companion Tracy Hayes of Calhoun; daughter Pam Ledeker and husband Leo of Parkersburg; two brothers, Gerald Bricker and wife Sharon of Hutsonville, and Gary Bricker and wife Linda of California; two sisters, Joan Postlewait and husband Keith of Willow Hill, and Ruth Clemen of California; granddaughters Krista Mitchell and Misty Hicks, and three great-granddaughters.

He was preceded in death by his parents; infant son Alfred James Bricker Jr.; four brothers, O'Neal, Harvey, Bert and Perry; and two sisters, Blanche Bishel and Lorene Greenwell.

Paul David Butler

Paul David Butler passed away on June 15, 2007, in Oakmont/Santa Rosa, Calif. Born on June 2, 1924, and raised in Burlington, Iowa, Paul enlisted in the U.S. Marines December 1942. He attended the Marine V-12 program at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. When there was a backlog at the Marine Officer Training School in Virginia, he was offered Midshipman training in the USN at Northwestern University in Chicago. Following his commission, he completed Scouts and Raiders and Underwater Demolition training in Ft. Pierce, Fla.

He was then assigned to one of ten weather camps established between in Gobi Desert and the South China Sea to help determine weather throughout the Pacific Theater. With a Marine sergeant, Navy pharmacist mate, and 25 to 30 Chinese troops, they protected the weathermen while maximizing damage to bridges, railroads, and electric facilities between Nanning and Canton, China, for the duration of World War II.

Following V-J Day, Paul was made Assistant Port Director in Shanghai, China. After his discharge in 1946, he returned to Bowling Green University to complete his degree. There he met and married Christine Bollinger, his beloved wife. Upon graduation, he joined Procter & Gamble and was sales manager for 37 years in Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburg before assisting in expanding their Paper Products Division on the west coast in 1973. He was a devoted father to Timothy, Paul, Susan Butler Kelsch (Quincy, Calif.), and Julie Butler Brown (Santa Rosa), and leaves six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Paul and Christine retired to Oakmont in 1992. He was active in the Oakmont Tennis Club, Gold Club, and together they played golf and bridge with many dear friends.

Noah James

Husband, father, grandfather, soldier, educator, and friend, Noah (Jim) James was born in North Carolina on April 20, 1922. He passed away in Everett, Wash., on July 3, 2015. He was married to Joyce Ditz in Saginaw, Michigan, on July 14, 1956. Joyce predeceased him on November 21, 1991. He is survived by son David C. (wife Judy) and grandson Cooper of Everett, Wash., and son Eric A. of Shoreline, Wash. He is also survived by four of his nine siblings. Noah received his BS degree from Appalachian State University in 1950 and a MA degree from Colorado State University in 1954. He was the first in his family to attend and graduate college. He taught in Saginaw and retired as an elementary school principal (Lincoln and Jessie Loomis) in June 1982. He was a much loved, caring, kind, and gentle soul and will be missed by all who knew him. Noah served in the U.S. Marine Corps from August 1940 to August 1946. He was a member of the famed first Marine Raider Battalion known as Edson's Raiders and landed with that group in the British Solomon Islands in the Southwest Pacific on August 7, 1942 (The Battle of Guadalcanal). He was also with that unit in the New Georgia Islands in July 1943 for eight months. In 1945, he was a member of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization and served with them in China until the war ended in 1945. He remained in North China until April 1946. He received an honorable discharge in August 1946. He was a member of the Warren Avenue and Second Presbyterian churches. He served as church school superintendent and for nine years was a member of the session of Second Presbyterian Church. His remains were taken to the Oakwood Memorial Mausoleum in Saginaw, Mich., where he joined his wife, Joyce.

Elden R. Stringfellow

Elden R. Stringfellow was born to Henry Elden Stringfellow and Naomi Bertha Marie Rasmussen Stringfellow on Oct. 30, 1919, in Draper, Utah. He passed away on Sept. 8, 2014, of heart disease and natural causes due to age. He was preceded in death by his eternal companion Marilyn Cottle Stringfellow, brothers Douglas Stringfellow Honorable Congressman, Reid Stringfellow, Captain, U.S. Navy Ret., sisters Alona Stringfellow Pusey and Ann Stringfellow Kump. He is survived by his two remaining sisters, Mary Stringfellow Bitton and Myrna Stringfellow Messerly, and his four loving children, Dennis Elden Stringfellow, Sherida Stringfellow Cluff, Loreen Stringfellow Shumway, and Randall Cottle Stringfellow, 17 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren.

Elden grew up in Draper, UT, and later moved with his family to Ogden, Utah, where he graduated from Ogden High School in 1937. He started his career in the grocery business and met his wife and companion to be, Marilyn Cottle of Nyssa, Ore. He joined the U.S. Navy in February 1942 and was sent to the U.S. Navy Training Center in San Diego as a seaman, not knowing that top-secret classified service would come his way. Elden and Marilyn were married in San Diego on May 9, 1942, by Elden's uncle, Bishop Stanley Rasmussen, in a civil ceremony, and later married for time and all eternity in the Salt Lake City Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in February 1943. During the war, Elden ultimately became a radioman. He trained in Washington, DC, and was sent to China to intercept enemy radio code high in the jungles. After the war, Marilyn and Elden reunited and started their family. When the Korean Conflict erupted, Elden was recalled and sent to Charleston, S.C., also to intercept enemy radio code from the European Theatre. It was not revealed for many years the classified work he did for the United States.

After the Korean Conflict, he and his young family settled in Bountiful, Utah. Elden continued in the grocery business, and then the retail and variety store business, where he stayed and prospered. He served the Lord as a Ward Seventy, but the calling for which he was best known and respected was in the LDS Church Athletic Program coaching in the Bountiful 21st Ward. He took the young men's basketball team to the All-Church Tournament. A better business opportunity arose in 1968, and he moved those of his

family not yet married to Scottsdale, Ariz., where he prospered unbelievably. He resided there until 1996. He retired in 1983 as Director of Store Planning for the Yellow Front/Checker Auto Divisions. Elden served the Lord in the Scottsdale 4th Ward in many callings, including the athletic program, two Bishoprics, and on the Scottsdale Stake High Council. Marilyn also served the Lord in many leadership callings. They moved to Mesa, Ariz., in 1996 in part for health reasons and to be near their children. Elden was loved by all and is now reunited with Marilyn and so many friends and family. For that the family is thankful and joyful as they celebrate his extraordinary life.

Billie "Bill" C. Hall

Billie "Bill" Clayton Hall passed away December 27, 2014, at Wesley Long Hospital, Greensboro, N.C., with his family present. He was born March 2, 1924, to Frank and Ida Burke Hall in Lee County, Va., and was predeceased by his parents and two brothers, Elmer Hall and Ray Hall. A celebration of his life and resurrection was held at Guilford Park Presbyterian Church on December 31, 2014. Bill was a veteran of World War II, having enlisted at age 17, and was selected to serve in a select group known as SACO (Sino-American Cooperative Organization) and was sent to China to monitor and intercept Japanese radio transmissions from ships as they left port. This information was sent to code breakers in Washington, DC. After spending six years proudly serving his country, he attended and graduated from Virginia Tech where he met his wife of 61 years, Bobbie Starr Hall, who survives him along with his three children, Deborah Hall Hubert and partner Jack Hatfield of Flat Rock, N.C., Susan Hall of Gainesville, Fla., and Bill Hall and wife Beth Parks of Greensboro; two grandchildren, Kelli Hall, student at UNCW, and Jacob Hall, student at WCU. Bill was a member of Guilford Park Presbyterian Church where he served as Deacon, Elder, and Sunday school teacher, and some of his woodcarvings are displayed in the sanctuary. He also enjoyed golf, HAM radio, and a good lively discussion on various subjects. After college he was employed by Carolina Power and Light Company in Raleigh as a safety and training coordinator, then later moved to Greensboro where he founded Hall Equipment Co., Inc., which he operated until retirement.

70 Years Ago: The Death of General Tai Li

2016 marks the 70th anniversary of the death of General Tai Li, who cofounded SACO with Rear Admiral Milton E. “Mary” Miles. This excerpt from Linda Kush’s book, *The Rice Paddy Navy: U.S. Sailors Undercover in Mainland China*, Osprey Publishing, 2012, describes events of that day and its aftermath.



On March 17, 1946, at 9:45 a.m., General Tai Li and seven other passengers took off from the coastal city of Tsingtao bound for Shanghai, four hundred fifty miles to the south, in a plane with no radar. The weather was not promising, but Tai had the pilot load

enough fuel so the destination could be changed to Nanking or Chungking en route if necessary. As the plane neared Shanghai, the pilot learned that the city was engulfed in heavy rain, so he headed for Nanking, only to find himself flying smack into a thunderstorm. By radio, he announced first that he was turning back and then that he was coming into Nanking after all. At 1:13 p.m., the pilot reported that he was beginning his descent. That was the last message.

Residents of Daishan, a village of at the foot of Horse Saddle Mountain southwest of Nanking, heard a plane that seemed to be flying too low. They saw it clip a tree, slam into the mountain, and erupt into a huge fireball.

A U.S. Navy reconnaissance plane found the wreck that night, followed soon by MBIS agents on the ground. There were no survivors. Investigators identified Tai Li’s charred remains by shreds of long underwear, his gold front teeth, and the snubnose pistol Mary Miles had given him the first day they met. Chiang Kai-shek wept for the loss of his staunchly loyal servant and friend of more than twenty-five years.

The aftermath of Tai’s death proved an apt conclusion to his controversial, mystery-laden life. Admirers, friends, and enemies immediately began concocting stories of his untimely demise much more intrigu-

ing than a plane running into a thunderstorm. Some believed that a gun battle onboard between the spy-master and a Communist general had set the plane on fire. Others said Tai staged the crash and was not on the plane at all, but had escaped to America to elude his enemies. Many claimed that the aircraft had been sabotaged either by the Communists or the OSS.

In the eyes of World War II China scholar Maochun Yu, the sabotage theories are not that far-fetched. He cites two former OSS operatives who credited the agency with the crash. Edwin Putzell, William Donovan’s executive officer, said in a 1994 interview that the OSS played a role in Tai’s death. OSS gadget master Stanley Lovell even described the device used: he credited a bomb he had designed to explode in the air when the craft reached five thousand feet and that could be affixed to the tail of a plane from the outside.

Yet witnesses said the plane did not catch fire until it hit the ground.

Historians even disagree about why Tai was so intent on reaching Shanghai in the first place. One explanation is that he was hurrying to see his mistress, screen actress Hu Die, and wanted to find out whether her divorce was final so they could get married. Another says he wanted to say good-bye to U.S. Navy Admiral Charles Cooke, who was supporting Tai’s appointment to head a nascent Chinese Navy. Neither of these explanations accounts for his willingness to fly to Nanking or Chungking instead.

In Washington, Mary Miles was working in the Office of Naval History when he received word of Tai’s death. He made immediate plans to attend the funeral, only be denied permission by General George Marshall, then President Truman’s envoy to China. Marshall, in the midst of delicate negotiations with the Nationalists and Communists, feared that an official American presence at the funeral would alienate the Communists.

A year later, Miles was back in China as commander of the USS *Columbia*. As a private citizen in civilian clothes, he attended Tai Li’s elaborate final burial outside Nanking and had a pair of winter plum trees planted at the tomb entrance. The trip back to Shanghai after the ceremony took three days as former SACO guerrilla units repeatedly stopped Miles’s train to honor him.

SACO NEWS

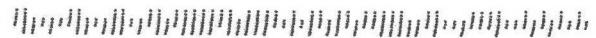
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SACO History

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.