

# 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

July 2017

WHAT THE HELL?

Issue No. 47

## Chairman Robert Hill Jr. Reports on SACO Trustees Meeting in Phoenix

Dear all, which includes our original Veterans, Taiwanese sisters and brothers, family and friends, Associate members and members of SACO.

A lot has been happening in the last 17 months to say the least. So, let us begin. Our goals that were to be achieved since our last reunion in August of 2015 are being met with so much vigor, meeting more of our expectations quicker than ever anticipated. A meeting in Phoenix this past February with trustees, Taiwanese officials, and Board members went very well. We have made great progress in ushering in this new transition in SACO for future generations to come. We have tried to take great strides on framing SACO with education, awareness, museum and charities. We have renewed our solid bonds with the Taiwanese MIB and have a solid 2 years of convention sites set up in 2018 and 2019.



The agenda for this meeting was somewhat in question, because the future of SACO depends on more than good intentions and sentiment. As the case when membership declines, so does our funding. We have been fortunate to be able to receive a generous offer from our Taiwanese guests, enabling us to proceed with all the help we need. They were very instrumental with their keen insight and knowledge and very forthcoming with their interests. We are so grateful for their wonderful generosity, and above all else, their immeasurable friendship. Our foundation will include a new set of bylaws that are almost ready to be in place and adopted. We are working very diligent to modify our future, and we want to get it right, to look at every possible angle to preserve these great, honorable men of whom we owe so much to. The importance of these matters is highly significant and personal to all who cherish what we have today. This is a pivotal time for us all to get the word out and with a little awareness we can bring more attention to SACO. We all can take an active part on spreading the words U.S NAVY SACO!

I would like to thank all those who are working with us in our endeavors in moving forward in the future. Some of these people are not affiliated with SACO but have donated their services for this special group. Also the trustees and board members are to be commended on their efforts to maintain the highest integrity and honor our WWII vets deserve; their input was invaluable. A special thank you goes out to Judy and Pete Barbieri for which all the work in preparing for this meeting was nothing short of spectacular. I want you all to be assured that our goals will not lessen but increase in the future for Saco.

Sincerely  
Chairperson  
Robert W. Hill

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## 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  
57 Brighton Ave. #9  
Boston MA 02134  
linda.kush@verizon.net

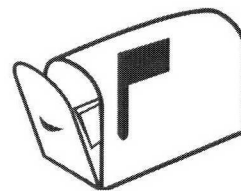
### Keep your SACO News coming!

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



May 30, 2016

Dear Linda:

I have the "Last Toast" edition of the SACO News. Marvelous things do come to an end, but as surely, we will always cherish the wonderful service to our country by these remarkable Americans.

I notice you put a couple of "comments" by me in the story about Associate members, which I appreciate. To make any contribution to the SACO organization is an honor.

Now, as to the future, I hope there will be some SACO remembrances along the way. It is too wonderful a history to be lost. Do you see anything in the future that will keep SACO alive?

Thank you again. I thank you for your contribution to SACO history.

All the best,  
Frank Kilmer

Feb. 15, 2016

Dear Linda:

Just wanted to thank you for the SACO News I received in the mail. It was great to see my father's photos get published for the heroes we have left to see. I should have done this years ago. Here are a few more photo's I found digging through my memorabilia.

Charlie Bruggeman

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## Keith Allen Publishes a Memoir

SACO Veteran Keith Allen has published a memoir, *My Name's Not Johnny*, in honor of his twin brother Johnny Coughlin, who died in 2008.

Allen published it in September 2016 after a year-and-a-half labor of love. He has reprinted it three times and sold 300 copies, entirely by word of mouth.

The book recounts his personal story and only lightly touches on his SACO experience. The focus is on his relationship with Johnny, how he met Sue Ann, his wife of 67 years, and their life together.

A theme of the book is Allen's firm belief in divine intervention.

"I have a strong belief that the Man Upstairs has always looked out for me and made things happen for me," said Allen.

While this is not a war memoir, the unusual story of Keith and Johnny is inextricably linked to SACO and is included in the book. The twins were separated

as toddlers and raised by two different families. They had a chance meeting at a basketball tournament when they were 13, an instance like many others in Allen's life that he believes was no accident.

The brothers formed a close bond and joined the navy together at age 17 during World War II. They both volunteered for SACO, and through a series of "coincidences" ended up serving together at Happy Valley as Admiral Mary Miles's personal assistants.

The book opens with a preface by Dr. Alan Marshall, a retired U-2 pilot and headmaster of Sandhill Classical Christian School in Southern Pines, N.C. Marshall and Allen became good friends when Allen appeared on Marshall's radio program, *N.C. Valor*, about military veterans of North Carolina.

Copies of *My Name's Not Johnny* are available by mail from the author. Send \$15 to: Keith Allen, 6300 Terra Verde Dr., Apt. 203, Raleigh, NC 27609.

# In Their Own Words: Letters and Diaries of SACO Veterans

## Homeward Bound

By Charles E. Sellers

*Editor's Note:* Charles E. Sellers, Radioman 2nd Class, served in Calcutta, Kweilin, Kunming, FRUCHI, and Chungking from March 1944 to June 1945. He passed away on April 25, 2017. His wife Laura shared his real-time account of his journey home from China.

It is June 11, 1945, and tomorrow we are flying the hump to Calcutta. There are 14 of us going home. Flying over the hump to China didn't bother me, but now going home, I am pretty worried—think I will request a parachute.

June 14 we are at Camp Knox in Calcutta (a good size naval base). This place did not exist when we first arrived in Calcutta 18 months ago. The navy gave each of us a case of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer yesterday, and I tried to drink mine all at once. (21 bottles hot) Sure have a big head today and not interested in any more beer for some time. Still no information as to when we are leaving or by what means.

We boarded the *General Hase* troop transport ship today (June 20) along with about 2,000 other personnel heading home. Admiral Miles or someone is looking out for us SACO boys. We are bunking and eating with the ship's officers. We had bacon, eggs, and milk (powdered) for the first time in many months.

We are now several days at sea and the ocean is really rough, waves coming over top deck. We had a nurse on board being returned home due to a mental breakdown, and she broke loose from her guards and jumped overboard. No hope of saving her due to rough water, and ship not permitted to stop for anyone overboard during wartime.

A lot of people are getting seasick, but I have been lucky so far. I felt a little queasy a couple of times, but slept it off in my bunk. We mostly played cards and sat on the deck just watching water. This was not like the South Pacific where we saw lots of flying fish and porpoises. Passed through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal and anchored off shore from Port Said, Egypt. Still anchored next morning, and Port Said appears to be a beautiful city from this distance—bet it isn't if we

could get ashore! Natives are out to ship selling trinkets—bought some, but mainly it is junk.

Sailed through Mediterranean Ocean, passing Rock of Gibraltar and entered Atlantic Ocean today. They say we are heading for Norfolk, Virginia. The water is so smooth it looks like blue glass and that one could walk on it. A few more days of perfect weather, and we are in Norfolk. Someone still taking care of us. They announced over the loudspeaker that naval casualties would leave ship first. We were supposedly the "casualties." We were met by a Navy Commander who booked us on a riverboat up the Potomac to Washington, DC. We arrived in Washington after spending a night on the boat. We reported to the Navy Department on July 22 and spent a few days having fun there and home with 30 days leave July 28, 1945.

P.S. It wasn't until almost 50 years later that I learned that our Tipsheet Editor, Leonard O'Dell, also came home at the same time and on the same ship, the *General Hase*.



**The USS *General W.F. Hase*. The U.S. Navy troop transport ship made six round trips between the U.S. West Coast and the South Pacific and circumnavigated the globe twice between April 1945 and April 1946. Sellers's voyage home was part of the first circumnavigation. Source: Wikipedia**



# Forty Years Later: Ruggieri to an American Missionary in China

Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Ruggieri  
3053 Erie Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

March 6, 1985

Rev. Howard Trube, M.M.  
Maryknoll Technical School  
Hong Kong, China

Dear Father Trube:

You won't remember me, but I do remember you – however, you might remember the occasion when we met. The year, I think, was 1945 and I was in the U.S. Navy and stationed in China, and was with a small group of men (6 or 8) on a scouting mission on our way to the coast. We had only been in China a month, and as you know, transportation was not too good. We were going to ride bicycles for the first part of our journey.

The first day out the trip wasn't going too well, for even though we were in good physical condition, trying to ride up and down the mountains soon got the best of us. Early in the afternoon of the first day we stopped at a tea house along the road. We were discouraged, unhappy and depressed, when one of your Mission Sisters walked down the road. We ran after the good Sister, and she invited us to visit you and the Mission. We welcomed the invitation.

You not only welcomed us, but you fed us a fine dinner that included water buffalo steaks and French-fried sweet potatoes. Not only did you feed us, but you put all of us up for the night. We left the next day feeling much better. Thanks to you, we were in a better frame of mind to continue our mission.

We were later to break up into groups of two's and cover a wide area. I went with the Commander of our group, Phil Bucklew, a tall man, prematurely bald. We all promised to stop by at your Mission on the way back to our base. When Bucklew and I returned by sampan late in the evening, you had already heard of our approach to the town and had a man meet us and take us to the Mission, where again you had a hot meal waiting for us. All of this happened about the time that your mother or father had died, and you asked Bucklew to deliver a letter to your sister, who was a nun stationed in or near Kunming.



Ruggieri on recon, 1945

I was at a retreat in the late 50's or early 60's, and they showed a movie of China. You were in the movie and were teaching the Chinese how to make noodles out of wheat flour.

You are probably wondering why I am writing. We, my wife and I, receive the Maryknoll Magazine, and she noted that the January 1985 issue had an article about you in Hong Kong. She had heard me talk about you many times. She also felt that it is about time that I repay you for your kindness. That is the reason for the enclosed check, and I anticipate more later on.

I know that you are busy, and you don't have to write to me, but I hope that you can write a short note or a card to Bucklew. He was called back into the Navy and retired as a Captain a few years ago. Last November he had a stroke, but he is home and showing great improvement. He speaks well and is very alert. We keep in touch and I just talked to Buck and Helen (his wife) this past Sunday. I asked if he remembered you, and he certainly did. The thing he remembered the best was your "Out House." He said it was the best one in China!

Bucklew's address is:  
Phil H. Bucklew  
3142 Barkley Drive  
Fairfax, Virginia 22031

As I said at the beginning of this letter, you won't remember me, but I have never forgotten you.

Most sincerely,  
Frank P. Ruggieri

## Father Trube Replies

Maryknoll Technical College  
45, Choi Ha Road  
Jordan Valley  
Kowloon

March 22, 1985

Dear Frank:

It was wonderful to have my memory nudged and to share with you the experience of 40 years ago. The encounter was as welcome to me as it was for you. At that time it was good to see an American face and to hear first hand news after being cut off from the outside world for too long.

We had a couple of good years to work in the Ng Fa region of Kaying Province but conditions began to change after the communists took over. Initially they harassed us, then it was house arrest followed by confinement in a pig sty for about two years. Finally they expelled us.

For most missionaries Hong Kong became their haven as it has been and still is for countless refugees. Not wishing to be too far from our missions and with the hoardes of refugees coming in, our work was laid out for us. The Japanese occupation had left Hong Kong very poor in resources and manpower and so the Government was very happy to have our help. With the aid of relief organizations we built homes for those

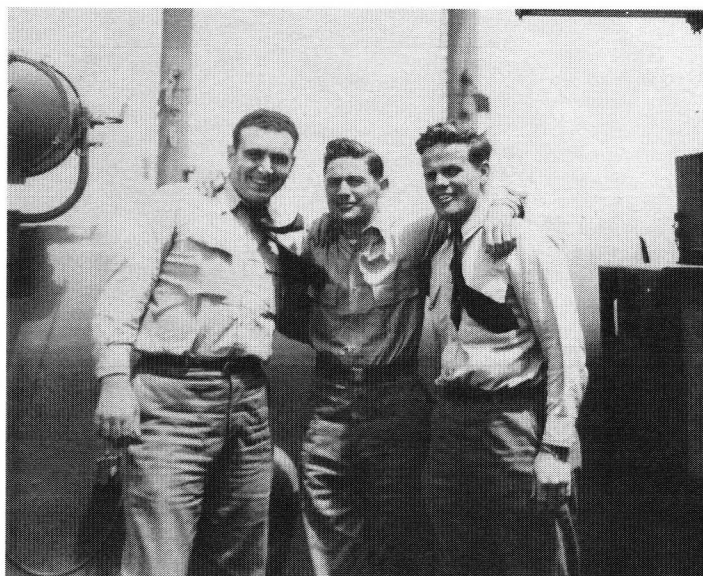
who occupied shanties and fed these refugees.

I was assigned a small plot of land and was able to build a hut which served as residence, office, meeting place and chapel. With funds coming in we were able to build stone huts, schools, workshops, noodle factories, and bakeries. At that time we opened up adult classes to reeducate the refugees in a self-supporting occupation.

At the time of your visit to Shuichai I remembered particularly one of the group—a big Texan. When I escorted you all to the road to start on your way to your next destination, he drew me aside and told me that he had left something at the church for me. On return to the church, I found it was a carbine and a supply of ammunition. This has caused me untold problems when the communists took over. I had in the meantime given the carbine to a school that had been plagued by brigands. They used it to frighten them off in future holdups. However, it was my job to trace the final whereabouts of the gun and ammunition before the communists were placated.

Than you very much for your check, and I certainly shall use it to help continue our work of services here in Hong Kong.

Sincerely  
Howard Trube



Ruggieri and friends on their way home, 1945



Father Trube having a laugh with students of Maryknoll Technical College, Hong Kong, 1985

# Bella's Fund Honors SACO Mascot, Supporting Health of Service Dogs for Wounded Veterans

Bella, beloved canine companion of Jerry Levendowski, passed away at the age of 13 in June 2016, but she will be fondly remembered for her life of service. She was destined to a life of helping others and brought smiles to all she visited.

Levendowski, nephew of late SACO veteran Vern Herberg, honored Bella by establishing Bella's Fund for Assistance Dogs of Wounded Veterans,

providing financial support for medical treatment at the University of California Davis veterinary hospital for assistance dogs of veterans who have sustained disabilities during their military service.

Bella began her journey as a Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) specially trained puppy. This organization provides canine companions to assist individuals with disabilities. Inspired by the devotion of an assistance dog he happened to meet, Levendowski decided to volunteer at CCI. Attendees of the 2011 SACO Reunion in 2011 may recall our visit to CCI's Santa Rosa campus.

Levendowski was the puppy raiser for Bella's mother and then for Bella, nurturing her through the initial, 14-month phase of her training. Bella then underwent advanced training at CCI and was later returned to Levendowski to assume a new important role as mascot for SACO Veterans.

Her gentle poise and good-natured temperament eased her transition to becoming the SACO mascot.



At events, she proudly wore a red cape and dog tag that read, "Bella, U.S. Navy SACO Scouts/Raiders, and Mascot." Her mission was to visit veterans and their organizations and serve as a goodwill ambassador for our nation's military forces.

Levendowski, who served in the Minnesota Army National Guard, Minnesota National Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, hopes that his gift to establish Bella's Fund will continue to make a difference—helping canine companions assisting wounded veterans. Bella's Fund combines his devotion to our nation's veterans with his passion for service dogs and the difference they make in the lives of people with disabilities.

"I want to give to those who gave to us," Levendowski said.

For information about contributing to Bella's Fund for Assistance Dogs of Wounded Veterans, please contact the UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Office of Development at 530-752-7024, or [svmdevelopment@ucdavis.edu](mailto:svmdevelopment@ucdavis.edu).



# Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society: Reaching Out to Sailors, Marines, and Their Families

SACO Veterans has chosen the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society as its charity for the coming year.

The Society offers sailors, marines, and their families interest-free loans, financial planning advice, education assistance, support for families with newborns, and visiting nurse services.

Navy and marine personnel have a long tradition of taking care of each other in times of need, passing the hat to assist widows and orphans of fallen comrades. In the early 20th century, a group of naval officers, their wives, and civilian friends formalized this practice with the establishment of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. Proceeds from the Army-Navy football game of 1903 provided the seed money for their efforts. Today, the Society relies on donations and a network of thrift shops to fund its programs.

During World War I, paychecks for military personnel were often delayed. The Society filled the financial gap for those serving in the navy and marines, offering interest-free loans to help families meet living expenses while they waited for their pay. Out of

this program, the Society developed a financial assistance program that today loans money to sailors and

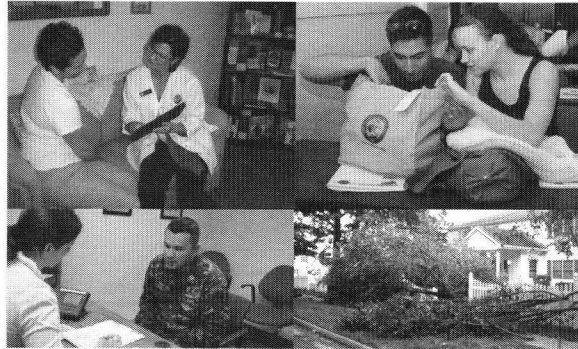
marines for medical bills, car repairs, funeral expenses, setting up a household, and expenses due to natural disasters and family emergencies. It also offers financial counseling.

In 1922, the Society hired a full-time visiting nurse to assist dependents of sailors and marines not covered at that time by government programs.

Today, NMCRS visiting nurses are available to make in-home visits to families with newborns and those suffering from combat injuries.

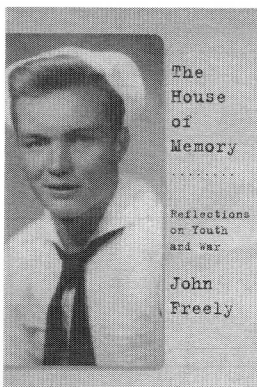
The Society's education program provides interest-free loans and grants for post-secondary education to children, spouses, widows, and orphans of navy and marine personnel.

The SACO Veterans Board of Directors is proud to support the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. It provides important financial and counseling services to the families of navy and marine personnel and veterans not covered by veterans' benefits. To learn more about this wonderful organization, visit [nmcrs.org](http://nmcrs.org).



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## John Freely's Last Book Recounts SACO Days



*The House of Memory: Reflections on Youth and War*

By John Freely  
Knopf

SACO veteran John Freely, physicist and author of some 60 books on travel and history, published a memoir of his childhood growing up in Brooklyn and Ireland and his WWII

experience in China. He died at age 90 on April 20, 2017, shortly after the book was published.

The idea for the book first occurred to him at the

tender age of 20, when he read Maurice O'Sullivan's *Twenty Years A-Growin'* after his discharge from the navy. Ten years ago, he made a first attempt at it, but no publishers were interested. In 2015, while teaching in Istanbul, his wife of 64 years died on their wedding anniversary, and shortly thereafter, he moved to a nursing home in England near his daughter. There, he dusted off the old manuscript and revised it. Knopf Publishing accepted it and released the book six weeks before his death.

In a review for the *Wall St. Journal*, Gregory Crouch said, "Mr. Freely has provided an account of how a world at war transformed the fate even of those who barely saw action."

# Henry Heimlich Shares SACO Memories

By Veronica Buchanan and Alexander Badue, University of Cincinnati Libraries Blog

On July 17, 2014, Assistant Dean of University of Cincinnati Libraries and Executive Director of the Henry R. Winkler Center, Stephen Marine, and Christa Bernardo of the UC Foundation met with Dr. Henry Heimlich, his daughter Janet, and granddaughter Maxine at his home in Cincinnati.

One thread that seemed to connect throughout the discussion was Dr. Heimlich's connection with SACO, the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, an unprecedented military partnership between China and the United States during WWII.

LTJG Henry Heimlich, MC, USNR had volunteered for a mission to China on January 9, 1945, so dangerous given the terrain and remote location that his commanding officer tried to talk him out of it. Heimlich was eventually assigned to a 12-member U.S. Naval unit in China; they were given the code-name "The Apostles" due to their number. Their final destination was a town called Shempa in the Suiyan Province in the interior of Mongolia at the edge of the Gobi desert. The Apostles arrived on June 4, 1945 and quickly got to work constructing what would be known as Camp No. 4.

Camp 4 provided guns, medicines and medical care, supplies, and training for Chinese Nationalist guerrillas, headed by General Chang Kai-Shek; in return, the Chinese provided both weather and intelligence information, navigational aid, and assistance with sabotaging Japanese targets.

In a copy of Heimlich's personal diary, he describes the "amenities" of Shempa and his medical duties:

"This is what I found in Shempa. We had taken over some not too bad mud buildings which the Chinese had stolen from some Belgian priests to give us. Governor Fu-Tso-I had given us horses. After dashing over sand dunes we had a natural swimming hole, about 200 feet in diameter, of clear water, which we shared with horses, oxen, and camels. My work was to treat all the American and Chinese in camp officially. Out of this group I actually drew most of my interesting and seriously ill patients. In addition, I treated any peasants who came to my clinic. In short, I was the only source of medical attention for the thousands around here. There were times when 50 carriages were lined up outside camp during my sick call."

Heimlich stayed in Shempa for two months following the end of WWII. When asked about the end of the war in a 1995 interview in *Navy Medicine* magazine, Heimlich responded, "About a week [after the atomic bomb was dropped], we got a message that was the first ever not in code: "It's Over." We screamed and yelled. The Chinese were troubled; their future was in jeopardy."

Two months following the end of the war, Heimlich traveled to Shanghai where he spent 6 months on the hospital ship *Repose*. In the *Navy Medicine* interview, Heimlich relays a story of a patient that haunted him for years:

"One of the Chinese soldiers got shot in the chest accidentally during training. The first night I just put on a bandage because the light was really bad. Chest surgery was in its infancy and I had surely never opened a chest before. It was a through-and-through wound and by the morning he was near death. Therefore, I decided to operate. I found a huge hole from the entrance wound to exit wound, 5 to 6 inches. I found a 3-inch hole in one of his lungs and sutured it up. But closing was basically impossible due to massive amounts of torn tissues. Unfortunately, the patient expired during final closure. I always felt guilty; should I have done anything else?" This soldier's story eventually inspired Dr. Heimlich to create the Heimlich chest drain valve. The valve was eventually used extensively during the Vietnam War. Recently, Dr. Heimlich asked the Winkler Center to research the use of the valve in Vietnam. Through this request, we uncovered notes Heimlich wrote following a 1993 trip to Vietnam; he noted that he was greeted with much respect by doctors and civilians alike and was told he saved numerous lives in Vietnam. He was then surprised to find that it was not because of his famous Heimlich maneuver but rather his invention of the chest valve.

Through the lens of Dr. Heimlich's archival collection, we hope to make further connections relating to what inspired Heimlich to create his world-renowned inventions and techniques. Hopefully, that goal will be accomplished further through the acquisition of artifacts connected to Heimlich's time with SACO in China, which Dr. Heimlich graciously agreed to donate during his meeting with Steve and Christa.

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 46, Jan. 2016, as of June 1, 2017. Locations of service are in chronological order.

Robert Boger, February 17, 2017  
Camp 1, Kharagpur, India, Kweichow, Camp 1,  
Washington, DC

Elwood "Bud" Booth, June 26, 2016  
Kunming, Chungking, Shanghai

John E. "Jack" Demmer, January 31, 2017  
Calcutta, Liutung, Shanghai

James H. Dess, September 10, 2010  
Calcutta, Kunming, Foochow

Joseph Fagan, October 31, 2016  
Calcutta

John W. Foster, August 1, 2013  
Calcutta, Kunming, Shanghai

John Freely, April 20, 2017  
Kunming

Henry Heimlich, December 17, 2016  
Camp 4, Shanpa, Peiping

Robert G. Hill, February 24, 2017  
Calcutta, Kunming, Changshow, Kulangsu,  
Changchow

Gilbert H. Knorr, October 27, 1974  
Camp 8, Yu Ou, Camp 8, Shanghai

George Edward McCarthy Jr., 1993  
Calcutta, Kunming, Kanchow, Kienyang, Shunan,  
Shanghai

Guy Purvis, December 5, 2016  
Calcutta, Chungking, Changchow, Shunan,  
Changting, Shanghai

Charles Sellers, April 25, 2017  
Calcutta, Kweilin, Kunming, FRUCHI, Chungking

Phillip Shannon, 1989  
Chungking, Kanchow, Kienyang, Pact Doc, Shunan,  
Camp 7, Foochow, Changchow, Shanghai

Stanley Spirakus, August 21, 2016  
Chungking, Kunming, US Navy Photo Interpretation  
Unit 1, Calcutta, Cienou

Robert Thomas, July 16, 2016  
Chungking, Shanghai

Guy Tressler, April 25, 2016  
Calcutta, Kunming, Foochow

Alphonse W. Yuskewicz, August 10, 1966  
Camp 8, Yu Ou, Camp 8, Shanghai

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## Robert Boger

Robert Alvin Boger, 93, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2016. He served during World War Two and Korea in the United States Marines. Robert enjoyed fishing at Lake Weiss and building and repairing engines. He would build, plumb and wire houses and could fix just about anything. Robert was of the Baptist faith and treasured spending time with his family. He was preceded in death by his parents, Eugene and Celina Boger; and his loving wife of 62 years, Betty Ruth Hankins Boger. Survivors include his loving daughters, Celina (Ronald) Hamrick, Teresa (Mike Fitzgerald) Wilhoite, and Cathy (Bendy) Kellerhals; brother, Doug Boger, of Ellijay, Ga.; nephew, Kenneth (Sherry) Wyrick; grandchildren, Jeff and Jenny Wilhoite, John Wiggins, Stella Mathews, of Savannah, Ga., Robbie Kellerhals, and Trace Kellerhals; along with nine great-grandchildren.

## Elwood "Bud" Booth, Jr.

Elwood "Bud" Booth, Jr., 93, of Liverpool, passed away on June 26, 2016, at Francis House. Bud attended St. Lawrence University, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree. He then joined the Navy and served during WWII with the U.S. Naval Group China (SACO) in Happy Valley China. SACO was a top secret organization working with the Chinese against the invasion by Japan. After leaving the navy, Bud returned to school, attending Syracuse University, where he earned a second bachelor's degree and his PhD in chemical engineering. He was the director of research at Allied Chemical, where he worked for 37 years. Bud was a member of the Onondaga Yacht Club, serving as commodore, and as past commodore for over 50 years. His love of Snipe sailing was exemplified by winning the District V trophy and many regattas he attended. He was a member of the engineering advisory board at Syracuse University. He was predeceased by his brother, Clayton.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen (Campbell) Booth of Liverpool; his son, Steven (Lisa) Booth of Rochester, NY; daughters, Barbara L. Booth of San Antonio, TX; Susan (Donald) Ward of Holley, NY; his sisters, Patricia (James) Previterra and Ann Kaman, both of St. Petersburg, FL; two granddaughters; one great-grandson and several nieces and nephews.

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## John E. "Jack" Demmer

Jack Demmer died peacefully in his home surrounded by his loved ones on January 31, 2017. He was 93 years old. Jack is survived by his wife of 68 years, Margaret; his children, Patricia (Tom) Groszko, Susan (Bill) Hermann, Bill (Sharon), Jim (Linda), Marianne (Art) Nelson, and Jean (Colin) Zick; 21 grandchildren; and 19 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his daughter-in-law, Shirley (nee Dudek) Demmer.

"He was the type of person where if you met him once, he made a mark on you," said granddaughter Jackie Demmer, 29. "He always gave you a big hug, had a warm smile and a pretty infectious laugh."

Demmer was born July 10, 1923, in Detroit to Helen Davis and Charles Joseph Demmer. His road to auto fame started 16 years later in his father's front yard used car lot, where he sold his first car, a 1935 Ford Coupe, for \$130. He pocketed a \$7.50 profit.

Years later, Demmer joined friend Jimmy Spitler to open an Edsel dealership in 1957 at a former gas station in Wayne, according to the Jack Demmer Ford website.

"While we mourn the loss of such a wonderful man and chairman of the Jack Demmer Automotive Group, we also celebrate his remarkable life," business officials said in a Facebook post. "Jack's spirit will always be remembered, while the Demmer family and our team continue to make him proud by carrying on his legacy."

Demmer and Spitler expanded their business together until the partner's interest was bought out in 1975. The company became Jack Demmer Ford and continued to grow into Jack Demmer Automotive Group in 1998.

By 2000, the group had acquired Krug Lincoln-Mercury in Dearborn, the nation's fourth-largest Lincoln-Mercury dealership, The Detroit News reported at the time. That December, two Dearborn locations opened as Jack Demmer Lincoln-Mercury and Jack Demmer Collision Center, according to the company.

Today, Jack Demmer Ford is touted on its website as "one of the premier dealerships in southeast Michigan."

But Demmer shied away from his own success, according to his granddaughter.

"One of the biggest things I would want to highlight is just his generosity and his personality," Jackie Demmer said. "He was the simplest-living man ever, and tried to take care of other people. He never wanted to be recognized for any success; he was very humble and he was always very bashful."

The auto dealer, first to join the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals in Business, focused on customer service from the time he started his enterprise.

"Even then, we handed out little cards so the customers could let us know how they felt they were treated," he told The Detroit News in 1995.

Demmer's sons, William and James, grandson Matthew and granddaughter Jackie all followed Demmer into the family business, Jackie Demmer said.

"His family was always the most important thing to him," Demmer said. "Definitely a great role model and amazing grandfather."

Published in the Detroit News

## Henry Heimlich

Henry Heimlich, the physician who was known best for inventing the anti-choking Heimlich maneuver, died Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016, in Cincinnati, Ohio, according to multiple news sources. He was 96.

He died from complications resulting from a heart attack that he had Monday, according to a statement from his family.

In 1974, while working as the director of surgery at Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, he published an article detailing the treatment for choking victims that bears his name. The technique calls for rescuers to apply abdominal thrusts, forcing air out of the lungs to push the obstruction out of the windpipe. Although others have claimed Heimlich was not solely responsible for the creation of the life-saving treatment, the name "Heimlich maneuver" stuck and has often been portrayed movies and TV shows.

"I know the maneuver saves lives, and I want it to be used and remembered," Heimlich told The Associated Press. "I felt I had to have it down in print so the public will have the correct information."

*[Editor's note: My mother, Joanna Kush, performed the Heimlich maneuver on a co-worker who was choking during their lunch break. When Mom pressed on the woman's diaphragm, a piece of carrot arced across the room, and the woman took a deep, delicious breath.]*

Another important life-saving invention was the Heimlich Chest Drain Valve. The valve allows drainage of blood and air from the chest cavity, allowing a collapsed lung to expand. This device, which the doctor invented after witnessing the death of a Chinese soldier during World War II, is in everyday use on battlefields and in emergency rooms.

Born Feb. 3, 1920, in Wilmington, Delaware, Heimlich graduated from the Weill Cornell Medical College in 1943. During World War II, he was sent by the U.S. Navy to treat Chinese and American soldiers fighting the Japanese in the Gobi Desert. He then completed a residency in thoracic surgery.

He married Jane Murray, a daughter of the famous ballroom dancing instructor Arthur Murray, who preceded him in death.

Some of Heimlich's views have been contentious. He promoted the use of the Heimlich maneuver on drowning victims. This application of the procedure is not supported by medical groups like the American Red Cross.

Later in life, he advocated for treating AIDS/HIV patients with malaria. Other doctors objected to his experiments with malariatherapy on HIV patients in China and described them as dangerous. His son Peter has also been a vocal critic of his father's work.

Many others, however, have praised Heimlich for his efforts to save lives.

"My father was a great man who saved many lives," said son Phil Heimlich, an attorney and former Hamilton County commissioner. "He will be missed not only by his family but by all of humanity."

In addition to his sons, he is survived by two daughters, Janet and Elisabeth.

From Legacy.com

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## Charles E. Sellers

Charles Sellers died Tuesday, April 25, 2017 in his native Kentucky.

He was born in of Gilbertsville, KY, a retired employee of the US Postal Service and a US Navy veteran of World War II (Sino-American Cooperative Organization [SACO]/CBI Theater) and the Korean War.

He is survived by his wife Laura; two sons Brian and Eric (Thea); and brother William.

His neighbors Forrest and Pat Land called him "one of the nicest neighbors one could ever have."

The service was private. The family expressed their gratitude to Hosparus/Louisville, Veterans Administration (VA) and The Masonic Homes of Kentucky.

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## Lola Hill

Lola Hill, 89, passed away at her home surrounded by her living family on Saturday, December 24, 2016.

Lola was born March 15, 1927, in Des Moines to Carl and Elizabeth (Fleming) Randall. She retired from the Des Moines Public Schools where she had worked as a secretary and registrar for many years.

Lola is survived by her loving husband Robert; sons, Rick (Lisa), Randy (Ruth), Ron (Lori) and Robert (Lisa) Hill; 11 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

## Robert G. "Bob" Hill

Robert Gail Hill, 94, passed away at his home surrounded by his family on Friday, February 24, 2017.

Bob was born March 30, 1922, in Bondurant, Iowa, to Iva (Allen) and Harry Hill. He retired after many years of dedicated service from Reliable Rug Company and Iowa Furniture and Carpet Cleaning. Bob served his country proudly and bravely in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He was a charter member of Christ the King and a member of Ft. Des Moines Little League Hall of Fame, a member of SACO and also of Cummings American Legion.

Bob is survived by his sons, Rick (Lisa), Randy (Ruth), Ron (Lori) and Robert (Lisa) Hill; 11 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren; sisters, Phyllis Desenberg and Honora Tovrea; and other loving family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his loving wife, Lola in December 2016.

### **Norwalk Seaman Plays Romantic Dangerous Role**

*As seen in the Washington D.C. Newspaper in 1946*

It can now be revealed that Robert G. Hill, radioman, second class, Norwalk, Iowa, played a role in one of the most romantic and dangerous episodes of the war against Japan as a member of a naval group of guerrillas, intelligence agents and weather observers behind the Japanese lines in Asia.

The group, now known as SACO, Sino-American Co-operative Organization, began shortly after Pearl Harbor as strictly a weather reporting unit.

The project provided the U.S. fleet, the army's 14th Air Force, and the Chinese and American army with weather reports and intelligence on movement of Japanese ships, troops and supplies. It became a dangerous fighting outfit, killing Japanese, blowing up trains, raiding Japanese outposts. Its activities extended all the way from Indo-China to the Gobi desert.

SACO intelligence allowed the 14th Air Force to mine coastal waters, forcing Japanese shipping out to sea, where they were attacked by American submarines, on information from SACO.

Weather information helped the navy decide when to stage invasions on Japanese islands and raids on the Japanese homeland. Usually it was possible to enter or depart from Japanese territory by air, but SACO Americans became adept at Chinese disguises and guided by SACO Chinese, slipped through enemy lines when they chose. Through months and years not one SACO member was detected.

## Guy Purvis

Guy Purvis, age 93, formerly of Meridian, Miss., passed away December 5, 2016, in Pensacola, Florida. He worked full time into his 91st year as the founder of the company FMC that relocated its corporate home office to Pensacola last year. Even through serious illness, he never stopped planning new adventures.

Guy was the youngest son of a family of ten children. Born in Lakeland, Florida, in 1923, he became at a very early age the family patriarch, "Poppa Guy." Being a child of the Depression and raised in poverty, he was aided by the strength of his mother and a natural gift for business. To help support his family he started working when he was quite young. After working odd jobs with his father, he got a job as a paperboy at age 13. Shortly thereafter he went to work at Fortin's Ice Cream where he eventually became a partner.

With the attack on Pearl Harbor he received his Lakeland High School diploma a semester early and enlisted in the U.S. Navy on December 12, 1941 with his three best friends. He later joined the elite "Scouts and Raiders," serving on missions on three continents through the conclusion of the war, often behind enemy lines. He had a natural ear for languages and quickly picked up both Chinese and Italian during the war. He often served as the translator for his unit. The "Scouts and Raiders" were the precursor to the Navy SEALs, and his picture marking the beaches in a two-man kayak at Anzio, Italy now hangs in the SEAL Museum in Ft. Pierce, Florida.

After the war, he married the love of his life, Toni. They left Florida, eventually settling in Meridian, Miss., where he turned a \$1500 loan into FMC, a company with 44 branches and 175 employees. Over the years, he invested in dress shops, hardware stores, oil wells, jewelry stores, automotive companies, convenience stores, pawn shops and Ramon's Reef Resort in Belize. He also worked to preserve historic buildings in downtown Meridian, renovating several buildings for his home office and donating a building to the Riley Center to help realize the project to restore the historic Grand Opera House. He was a big dreamer that always asked "What if?". He continually looked for ways to overcome the impossible and never feared failing. Despite his broad range of interests, he always set aside time to lavish attention on his beloved family.

He lived big and loved those around him with abandonment and without an ounce of judgment. He did not judge people by the color of their skin, reli-

gion, gender or sexual orientation in a time and place where such practices were all too common. He was an insanely tolerant man who was quick to forgive those who had wronged him. Guy was never inclined to take the easy path, and life rewarded him well for such courage. There was nothing he feared, not even his own death. He put his faith into people and not into religion, and on his death bed trusted that he would be reunited with his beloved wife. He was an eternal optimist with an endless sense of humor.

He is survived by his three sons, Warren Leslie, David Wayne and Tag, his sons-in-law, Richard Hibbard and Pablo Mirabal, his daughter-in-law, Sara and three grandchildren, Alex, Anna Carole and Wesley. He was preceded in his death by his parents, John Purvis and Doris Huchinson, and his wife, Toni

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## Robert "Bob" Thomas

Dr. Robert Glenn Thomas, age 89, of Rio Rancho, N.M., passed away of natural causes on June 16, 2016, at Sandoval Regional Medical Center in Rio Rancho. He was born on October 9, 1926, in Watertown, N.Y., to Glenn and Mildred (Van Horn) Thomas.

Bob enlisted in the Navy in 1944 and served in China during WWII in the SACO division. He graduated from St. Lawrence University and got his double PhD in Radiation Biology and Biophysics at the University of Rochester. Dr. Thomas was involved in nuclear weapons testing projects in Nevada and Idaho in the late 1950s. He came to Albuquerque to work at Sandia Laboratory and Los Alamos Labs. He finished his career at the Department of Energy. He was the Post-Chernobyl team leader from the Department of Energy after the 1986 nuclear disaster. He was President and Lt. Governor of Civitan International with the Albuquerque Breakfast Club. Bob was the past President of the Rio Grande chapter of the Health Physics Society, and was awarded the distinguished scientific achievement award in 1995.

Bob is survived by son, Glenn (Martha) of Rio Rancho, and daughters, Carol (Dan) Carson of Spirit Lake, Ia., and Paula Thomas of Rio Rancho, N.M.; eight grandchildren (Racheal, Nikki, Russell, Cody, Amber, Adam, Matt, and Danny); sister Thelma Robbins of Dexter, N.Y.; and niece, Gail (Chris) Brown.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother-in-law, Basil Robbins, his nephew, Stephen

Robbins; his wife, Lanny Thomas and her son, Steven (Lynn) Applen.

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## Guy D. Tressler

Guy D. "Rick" Tressler, 93, of Connellsville, passed away peacefully April 25, 2016. He was born Sept. 18, 1922, in South Connellsville, son of the late Guy D. and Elizabeth (Dienes) Tressler. Rick was a carpenter, retiring from Local 321 in 1984, and was a member in good standing of Local 1010, Uniontown. Rick served in WWII as Petty Officer G/M/1 in the U.S. Navy in the Armed Guard American Theater, Asiatic, Pacific, India, and China Theaters, and U.S. Naval Group, China. Rick received various medals including the American Theater, Pacific Theater with one Bronze Star, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Navy Combat Medal, and a medal from the China Campaign.

He was an 81-year member of the Albright United Methodist Church, South Connellsville, serving in various committees, Sunday School teacher of the Huber Bible Class, and Church historian. Rick was a member of VFW Post 21 and became a life member in 1943. He was an honorary member of the South Connellsville Firemen, Western PA Firemen's Association, member of Connellsville Sportsman Association, King Solomon Lodge 346 Lodge of Perfection of Uniontown, a 32nd Degree Mason of Consistory of Pittsburgh, former member of Syria Mosque Shrine of Pittsburgh, the Olivet Council of Greensburg, and Royal Arch of Connellsville. He was elected to the Connellsville City Council in 1956 and was last surviving member of that council. In 1964, Rick organized the South Connellsville Rod and Gun Club, where he held the office of President for 13 years. He was inducted into the Connellsville High School Hall of Fame, Class of 2014. He was also an amateur Ham Radio Operator.

Rick is survived by his wife of 70 years, Rosemary (Capo) Tressler, a daughter, Sandra Kay Russell; and two sons, Guy D. Tressler III, of Pittsburgh, and Mark D. Tressler of Connellsville; two grandchildren, a great-grandson; and a sister Dolores Blaney. In addition to his parents, Rick was predeceased by three brothers, Arnold E. Tressler, Connell H. Tressler, and John William Tressler; and a son-in-law, Earl K. Russell.

# 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 Chinese coast. The formal SACO incorporation 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

work end was 1943. SACO: 1942-1943. 197,000 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.