



SACO

**SINO AMERICAN COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION
U.S. NAVAL GROUP CHINA VETERANS**

NOVEMBER 2020 SACO NEWSLETTER

SACO HISTORY

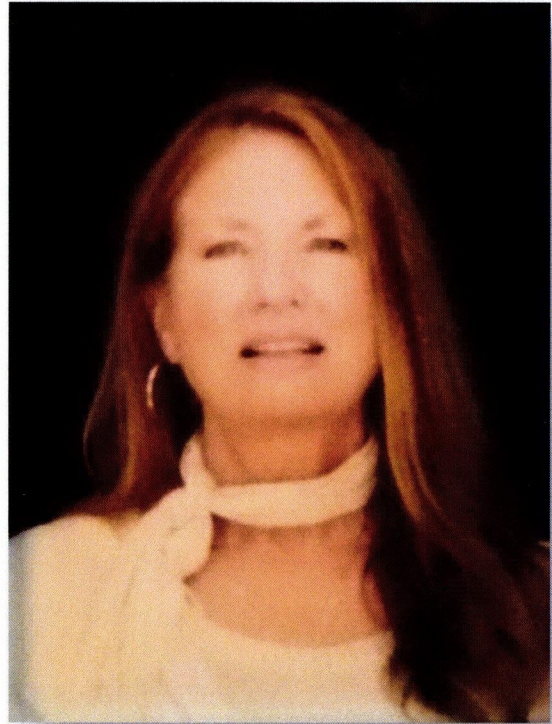
SACO (pronounced "Socko") stands for Sino-American Cooperative Organization established during WWII with the approval of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Highly secret, originally known as U.S. Navy Group, it was placed under joint command of General Tai Li, (Head of BIS - Bureau of Investigation and Statistics, i.e. Intelligence), as Director of SACO and then Commander (later to become Vice Admiral) Milton Edward "Mary" Miles as Deputy Director. The Chinese and American members of SACO joined in combined effort to perform intelligence and guerrilla operations. The group became known by the sobriquet "The Rice Paddy Navy." SACO men were and are known as "SACO Tigers" who served hundreds of miles behind enemy lines in China, establishing vital weather stations to report to the Pacific Fleet, coast-watching to report on enemy shipping, intercepting Japanese code, rescuing downed allied airmen and being involved in numerous other military, medical and humanitarian endeavors. The American personnel numbering approximately 2,500, were volunteers from several branches of services, but for the most part, Navy and Marine men. Three books, "The Rice Paddy Navy", "A Different Kind of War" and "The Army-Navy Game" as well as one movie, "Destination Gobi" were the revelations of SACO. Note of Interest: This group probably held the distinction of being the first American Military Group to ever serve under a foreign leader in time of war.

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LYNN GRABENSTIEN

Dear SACO Family,

Since the Traverse City gathering in 2018, the Officers and Board have attempted to keep SACO running smoothly despite Covid-19 complications. The 2020 Reunion in Bozeman, MT, was cancelled and has been rescheduled for June 16-19, 2021. Details to be found in this issue of the SACO News. Many thanks to Ken Brown and his daughter, Dixie Burlingame, for their willingness to tackle this job twice! SACO is in your debt.

The Board has approved an updated and personalized SACO mission statement that I would like to share with you. The Mission of the Sino American Cooperative Organization is to preserve the heritage of our forefathers who were engaged in a unique Naval mission during WWII in China. To support this Mission we will continue to cherish and build upon Operation Friendship with our Taiwanese partners as we celebrate the accomplishments of The Rice Paddy Navy. We will achieve this by:



- Maintaining strong relationships with the Taiwanese SACO organization
- Educating members about the history of the SACO mission and its uniqueness
- Assuring that the stories and memorabilia of these Navy vets and others in China and their service will be preserved
- Sharing the story of this WWII mission via enhanced website and other social media, documentaries, and educational outreach

I am happy to demonstrate that we exemplified the above statement by actions taken during the past two years. Since we last met there was: 1) a May 2019, SACO meeting in New Orleans for the purposes of being introduced to the new Director General (DG), Director



Lou De-Min, and to help implement his vision to televise a panel discussion at the National WWII Museum on Veteran's Day. At that time the importance of third generation members was stressed in the interest of the future continuity of SACO. 2) A trip to Taiwan, sponsored by the Taiwanese, took place in early September of 2019, with 20 members in attendance, half of which were third generation SACO. 3) The celebration of Veteran's Day on November 11, 2019, at the National WWII Museum which was attended by the media, the public, SACO members, and a Taiwanese Delegation including the DG. Ken Brown and Charles Miles were the panel stars. The event was a Veteran's Day highlight and a great national promotion for SACO. 4) A business meeting was scheduled for early April of 2020, in Santa Rosa, CA, hosted by Judy Barbieri. Unfortunately, this had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. We appreciate all the hard work Judy did to organize! In lieu of an in-person board meeting, one was held successfully online in early June. It was decided that a committee to work on the by-laws would be an affirmative step. We will be going forward with this, as well as media enhancement, work on a documentary, and a new SACO News editor, namely and thankfully, Mia Del Prete, Pete and Judy Barbieri's daughter and a 3rd generation member. 5) The Taiwanese, given the absence of a reunion in 2020, had a commemorative SACO celebration in Taiwan in September 2020, which included a well-done short, historic documentary and several personal videos sent by our SACO membership.

I am excited to work with an excellent team and hope to continue in a positive direction until the next meeting in Montana 2021. I would also like to welcome any new members to the SACO family. It is our great hope that you will find a connection to SACO history, camaraderie with those of like mind, and the undeniable spirit of friendship. Trusting this letter finds you all safe and in good health.

Best Regards,
Lynn E. Grabenstein
President and Chair of SACO

**SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM DIXIE BURLINGAME,
KEN BROWN'S DAUGHTER**

Just a short note to say to "HI" and let you know what is happening in the Rockies this year. Ken Brown and daughter Dixie Burlingame had a marvelous 2019 starting with celebrating his 96th Birthday in January 2019 and followed by a very busy year. We danced our way around the world. Starting with his birthday party we danced there then in July at

the Jubilee Days in the street, then we went to Taiwan in September and danced there too. We had a marvelous trip even though it was long. Then a week after returning home we met in Laramie and attended a 60th Wedding Anniversary Party and an induction into the Wyoming Cowboys Hall of Fame for 2019! We packed up again and went to New Orleans for the Veterans Day Celebration and presentation were we danced to the delight of all the idle observers then someone in our group told the crowd that the couple dancing was a WWII Veteran and his daughter. We were applauded and cheered. Then December saw me in Laramie again for Christmas with dad where he suggested "WE" host the 2020 SACO Reunion as he did not want to wait until 2021.

In January 2020, I started looking into places to hold it and all the neat things we could do in Yellowstone (my backyard). By the end of February I had it all put together except for the final room reservations. Along came March with it's ugly head of COVID 19. With reports in mid April, it was not looking favorable for us to host the Reunion. Unfortunately, I had to cancel the event.



We are moving ahead with planning the 2021 Reunion. I was able to secure the bus reservation for the same price, hotel agreed to move our date to June 2021. All is good to go! Just waiting for COVID19 to be over. It is probably a good thing we cancelled the 2020 Reunion, as we did not have very good weather in June 2020. Dad and I attended a Zoom Meeting for the Board of Directors and Officers on June 9 and we had about 6 inches of snow that morning. We voted on June 2021 dates for the re-run of the Reunion and it was unanimous for June 16-20. Please make tentative plans to attend the 2021

Reunion in Montana. Dad and I sure hope to see you all in June 2021. Have a great holiday season, stay healthy and safe. You are in our thoughts often.

Dixie and Ken

SACO DUES

I would like to make all SACO associate members, friends, and supporters aware that now is the time to send in your annual dues for 2021.

Our future success depends on the financial support as well as involvement of our membership. Your continued support will aid us with the planning of future SACO activities and reunions.

Associate membership dues are \$35. To ensure I have the most correct and up-to-date information, please complete the form at the bottom of this page and enclose it with your dues.

Thank you so much. Dairus Reynnet.

SACO DUES AND CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Cellular: _____
Email: _____
Relationship to SACO (Optional): _____

Please make your check payable to: SACO

Please mail your dues and membership information to the address below:

Dairus Reynnet
c/o SACO
8608 E. Vermontville Hwy
Dimondale, MI 48821

SPECIAL 911 STORY

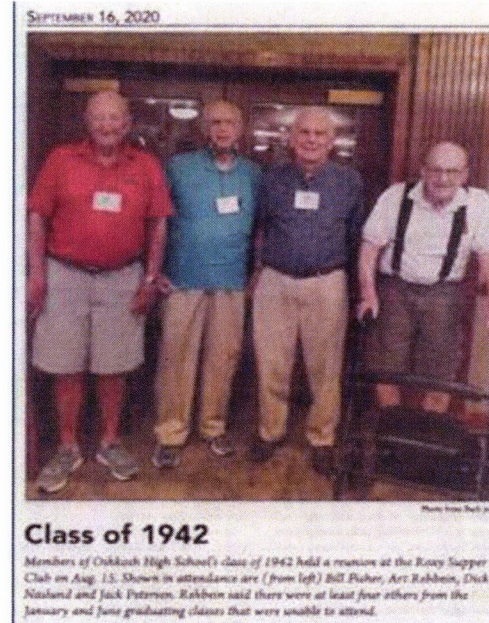
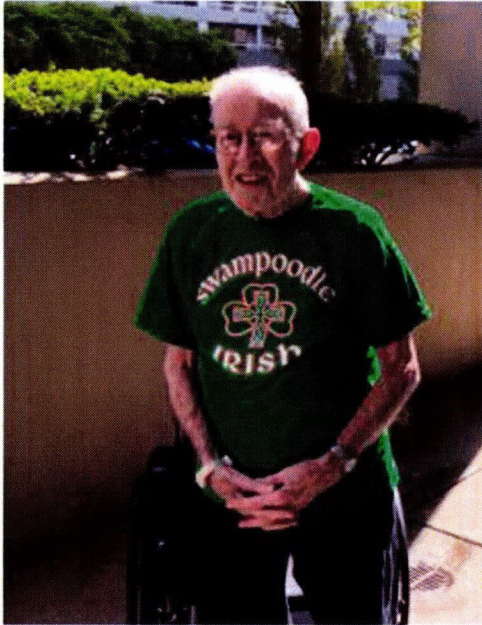
I bet you did not know about this: After Flight 77 hit the Pentagon on 9/11, the following happened:

A daycare facility inside the Pentagon had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare supervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do. There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants who would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers. Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, "Well, here we are, on our own." About 2 minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child, and the rest started gathering up toddlers. The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac.

Once they got about 3/4 of a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing - they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West. Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers, to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children. The chaplain then said, "I don't think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there." There wasn't a dry eye in the room. The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted; could we expect any less from them? It was one of the most touching stories from the Pentagon.

It's the military, not the politicians that ensures our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It's the military who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag. If you care to offer the smallest token of recognition and appreciation for the military, please pass this on and pray for our men and women, who have served and are currently serving our country, and honor the memory of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice!

JUST SO YOU KNOW....



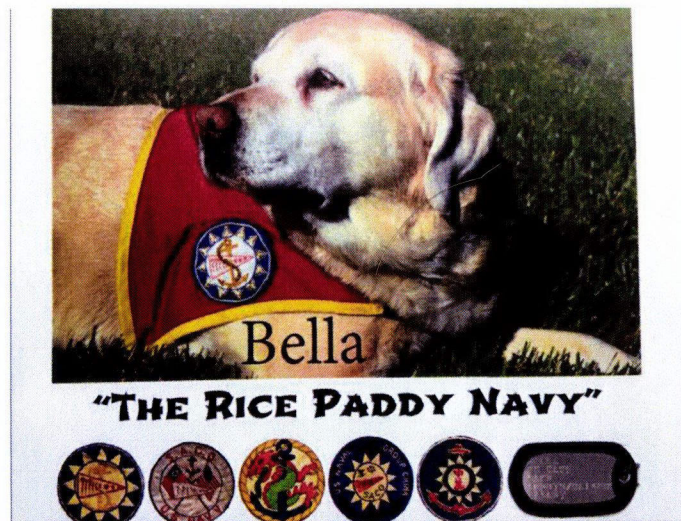
- Jim Kelly, lives in Philadelphia, PA, turned 99 in May 2020. He is doing well and keeping everyone on their toes (pictured above in the green t-shirt).
- Vernard Dalrymple lives in Santee, CA. He celebrated his 95th birthday recently and he is doing well.
- Wayne Goodson lives in Greenboro, NC. both Wayne and his wife turned 95 in June and celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary.
- Donald Hardenbrook lives Weiser, ID. He is doing well and keeping busy.
- Douglas Ray lives in Forth Worth, TX. He is 92 (must have been a baby of the guys) is doing great!
- Jack Petersen lives Oakkosh, WI. He recently attended his High School Reunion and celebrated his 96th Birthday in August (picture above, forth person on the right).
- Roger Moore lives in Amelia, Florida. He is 95 and doing well. Not doing much with his photography these days. Please to share there are no hurricanes near him.

If you know about any other veterans that we can highlight in future Newsletters please email Judy Barbieri at 707-540-2367, 2522 Caballo Ct., Santa Rosa, CA 95401 or email judy.barbieri@yahoo.com with an update and photo.

BELLA'S FUND FOR ASSISTANCE DOGS OF WOUNDED VETERANS

Bella, beloved canine companion of veteran J.C. Levendowski, Ph.D., was destined to a life of helping others. She brought smiles to all she visited. Levendowski honored her by establishing Bella's Fund for Assistance Dogs of Wounded Veterans, providing financial support for medical treatment at the UC Davis veterinary hospital for assistance dogs of veterans who have sustained disabilities during their U.S. military service.

She began her journey as a Canine Companions for Independence specially trained puppy. This organization provides canine companions to assist individuals with disabilities. Inspired by the devotion of an assistance dog he happened to come across, Levendowski decided to volunteer for the Canine Companions. He was the puppy raiser for Bella's mother and then for Bella, nurturing her with an initial, 14-month phase of training. Bella then underwent advanced training at the Canine Companions and was later returned to Levendowski to assume a new important role as a mascot for the World War II U.S. Navy veteran unit organization.



Her gentle poise and good-natured temperament eased her transition to becoming the mascot for SACO, the Sino-American Cooperative Organization. This unit was instrumental in conducting a wide-range of military intelligence operations in China during World War II. 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.

Bella passed away at the age of 12 in June, but she will be fondly remembered for her life of service. 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 assistance dogs assisting wounded veterans. "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 Office of Development at 530-752-7024 or svmdevelopment@usdavis.edu.

REUNION UPDATE

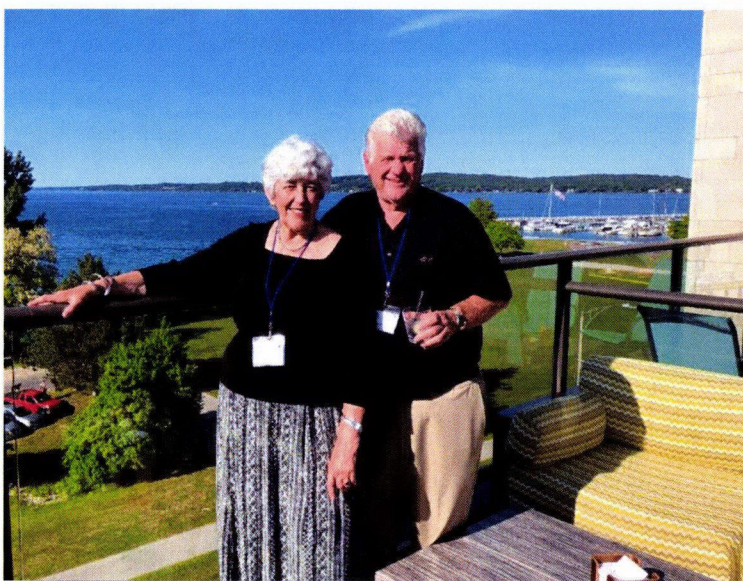
Once we are confident the Reunion can be held in June 2021, a newsletter dedicated to reunion details will be emailed and mailed to all SACO members.

If you have any questions, contact

Dixie Burlingame: grammaarump@gmail.com or 406-224-0195

<https://www.saconavy.net/>

GREETINGS FROM CALIFORNIA



I would like to thank all of you for reaching out to me and Pete to check on us during yet another fire season. We really appreciate your concern for our well-being.

Those of us in Northern California are getting tired of fires. It is becoming a routine that we experience wildfires in the Fall, this year we had two huge fires, one in August and the second

one in September, only weeks apart. Both fires burned thousands of acres, caused a great deal of damage and destruction.

We have learned how to be prepared. We have a generator in case the electricity is turned off, we keep our cars full of gas, have extra water and a "Go Bag" ready and handy. Our neighborhood organized an Emergency Preparedness Plan. We know who lives in each household, including pets. We have emergency phone numbers for



everyone. We all know where gas and water hookups are located at each house. Everyone in the neighborhood looks out for each other. We have had to be evacuated several times. We make it a priority to make sure everyone is out and on their way to safety!

A few years ago we decided to make sure our neighborhood is prepared due to earthquakes in California. However, the fires have caused us to use our Emergency Preparedness Plan yearly! How easy it is to get lacks about things? I have thought often about our SACO guys. How they worked together under unusual circumstances and made do. We can all learn a lot from them to carry over in our daily lives.

We hope this newsletter finds you all well and staying safe during this unrepresented time in our country. We look forward to seeing you all at the next Reunion in June 2021.

Sincerely,
Pete and Judy Barbieri



VETERANS OF SECRET UNIT GATHER IN DES MOINES FOR REUNION

Bob Hill was in a bad pinch on a fittingly rainy, blustery night in 1944. He was surrounded by enemy Japanese forces near Amoy Island along coastal China while on watch duty. Hill and his comrades quietly slipped into a small Chinese fishing boat and drifted out to sea. Cloaked by nightfall, they camouflaged their craft among other fishing vessels as rainfall pounded from above. It was Hill's closest brush with Japanese forces during his World War II naval service, and "that was close enough," he said.

Sixty-three years later, Hill, was 85 and among 30 World War II veterans from all over the United States who gathered in Des Moines during the month of June 2007 for the 53rd Annual Reunion of the Sino American Cooperative Organization (SACO). The once intensely secretive group now strives to share as much of its history as possible as its members dwindle in numbers year by year. "I'm happy to see the group, and I keep thinking I'll be happier to see them next year," said Hill, a retired businessman from rural Norwalk who served as a naval radio operator.



The hospitality suite at De Moines' Airport Holiday Inn was the group's base for the weekend, where the veterans shared experiences such as Jack Petersen's first airplane ride. Petersen, from Oshkosh, Wis., couldn't have been more than 19 when he boarded a DC-6 airplane to fly from Calcutta, India, to Chungking, China. The pilot emerged from the cockpit to show Petersen and the others something on the ground. "I wondered what was going on," Petersen said. "I thought, Who's flying this thing?" The pilot had put the plane on autopilot to point downward to an airfield stocked with Japanese warplanes. Part of the group's reunion was a Thursday morning trip to the World War II Memorial at the Iowa State Capitol grounds. The wind whipped through the passage leading to and from the monuments as 16 veterans and assorted family members and friends laughed and reminisced. Some shed a few tears. "We're brothers," said SACO veteran Mel Goguey of Chiloquin, Oregon. He paused, drew in a deep breath and added: "This is where I get emotional. We're just one big family."

This article was written by Jason Pulliam and appeared in the October 2007 Newsletter.



MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BUREAU
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
SHIHLIN, TAIPEI, TAIWAN
REPUBLIC OF CHINA

October 21, 2020

Dear SACO members:

It's really a pity that the Reunion for 2020 in Bozeman was cancelled due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Even though we were unable to get together this year, I would still like to express my thankfulness to Kenneth Brown and Dixie Burlingame for all the efforts they made in preparing for hosting the 2020 SACO Reunion. There is a well saying, "The road to happiness is strewn with setbacks." I believe that after going through the challenge of the pandemic virus, the reunion next year will be even more meaningful.

There is a news worth mentioning, the AIT members were touched by the spirit of the reunion as well as the solid friendship established during WWII, therefore they proposed that they will represent the SACO members and that we should still held an anniversary event here in Taiwan. The event was held on the 28th of September in Taipei. During that day, in order to celebrate the over 60 years of friendship, we not only invite professional performers to perform Chinese traditional dance, customized a cake to celebrate the special event but also design jackets with 66th SACO Reunion elements as memento. Here I would like to especially give my gratitude to Grabenstein family, Dairus Reynnet, Daniel Miller and Dan Halperin for sending us regards through the films, we were all very touched and it was the highlight of the whole event.

In times of the pandemic disease, we shall face the difficulty together and fight the coronavirus hands in hands. I hope that the pandemic will be alleviated soon, and the reunion next year could be held smoothly.

Wish all SACO members and family good health and happiness.

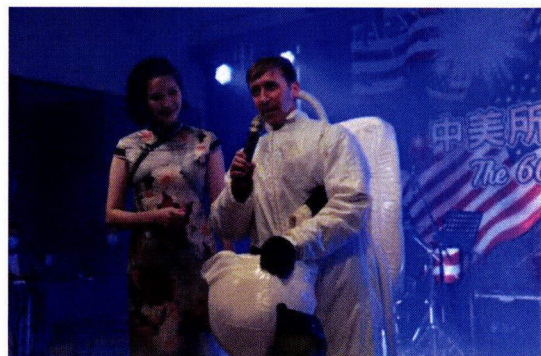
Yours sincerely,

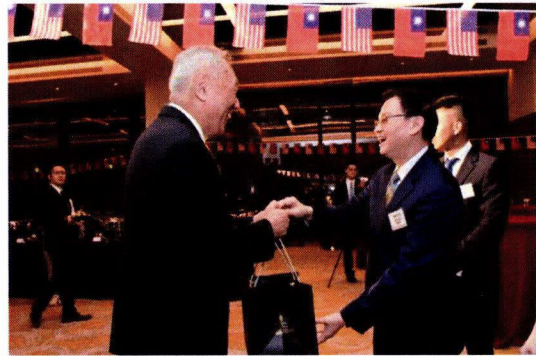


Lt. Gen. Luo De-Min, ROCA
Director General









October 16, 2020

Dear General Luo and SACO Members, Family and Friends,

I was honored to have the opportunity to participate in the commemoration of SACO on September 28, 2020. It is important to remember and celebrate the close cooperation and friendship embodied by the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO). Thanks to Taiwan's exceptional handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to come together as a group for an evening of festivities devoted to the achievements of SACO. The staff of the Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB) put together a thoughtful and heart-warming program, to include a video of SACO's key accomplishments and a display of SACO artifacts. It was also great to see the video message from SACO families and friends who could not attend in person! We were impressed by the meticulous planning by MIB officers that went into making this such a wonderful event. Thank you to MIB for making it possible to pay tribute to SACO this year.

Very respectfully,



Matthew Kent
Chief
Liaison Affairs Section

OBITUARY FOR KEITH ALLEN

Keith Erwin Allen passed away peacefully on Thursday, September 17, 2020 at his residence. He was the son of the late Luther and Gertrude Allen of Franklin, West Virginia. He was preceded in death by his beloved twin brother, Lt. Col. Johnny G. Laugh (Retired Maryland State Police), 2 sisters and 3 brothers. Keith was raised and educated in Franklin, W.V.

Always a Mountaineer fan, Keith is a graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in Business Administration. Keith was a veteran of World War II (Navy) and the Korean War (Army). He served with the precursor to the U.S. Navy Seals during

WWII in a highly classified mission in China. He was one of 26 surviving members out of 2500 who served in the Sino American Cooperation Organization (SACO) in WWII. Their mission with SACO wasn't declassified until about 1970. Keith was a long-time member of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Raleigh, N.C. and attended St. Catherine's Episcopal Church after moving to Florence, SC. Keith is survived by his wife of 70 years, Sue Ann Allen; his daughter, Cynthia "Cindi" Nixon (Mike) of Florence and his son, Keith E. "Chip" Allen II of Arizona; his 3 grandchildren, Ricky Nixon (Florence), Abby Allen (Chicago) and Ressa Nixon (Florence); and several nieces and nephews.

Keith was also loved by his three caregivers, Debra Starks, Mary Williams and Yvette Bruce. Special thanks are given to Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Chandler, Kathy Hayes, Cody Locklear, Eddie Irick, Dr. Patrick Jebailey and McLeod Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made in Keith's name to St. Catherine's Episcopal Church, 4205 Byrnes Blvd., Florence, SC 29506 or St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 1520 Canterbury Road, Raleigh, NC 27608.



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Just about this time last year I was coming off a nature high from my second trip to Taiwan. I never thought in a million years that I would ever travel to Taiwan but then to return only two years later after my first trip in 2017, was a blessing. Apparently someone cancelled at the last minute. My mom, Judy Barbieri convinced me that I should join my siblings, Peter Barbieri and Angela Matthews on the 2019 trip AND what a trip it was! I was honored to be in the company of Veteran Ken Brown. As usual the MIB treated us like royalty. It was fun to see my Taiwan friends, Angella, Mina, Vience, Laura, Major General Kuo Rong-Charng and his wife Amber. I established new friendships with the Kelly's (Jim Kelly's grandchildren), and the Grabensteins (Richard Terpstra's grandchildren). It was wonderful to re-connect with Dairus Reynnet and Robert Coats, who were both on the 2017 trip with me. There were 10 of us on this trip that were 3rd generation. We are all pictured above at the Grand Hotel with Ken Brown.

When the 2020 Reunion had to be re-scheduled due to the pandemic, I, like the rest of you was extremely disappointed. I was especially looking forward to seeing Ken Brown and Dixie



Burlingame. I know how hard Dixie worked on the Reunion. We were all feeling disappointed. With my second trip to Taiwan, I had a desire to become more involved with SACO. I felt the need to give back to an organization that had provided me with information about my grandfather that I didn't know. I also learned about a part of World War II that you don't read about in the history books. My mom shared there was a need for someone to take over the Newsletter. This was a perfect opportunity for me to get involved and contribute to an organization that I have come to respect.

Especially during the pandemic, we are using technology more and more. Some, still learning to maneuver in this technology driven world. I wanted to provide a newsletter that can be emailed out to the membership however, I know there are several members that do not have an email address and/or are not interested in using a computer, so for those folks, the newsletter will be mailed.

My goal is to produce two newsletters a year. If you have an article you would like to share, please email me at lluv2cook@comcast.net. Pictures enhance the newsletter so please send them as well.

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2021 Reunion! Take care and stay healthy.

Fondly,
Mia Barbieri Del Prete

INQUARIES

This section will appear in future newsletters. This section will be devoted to questions from SACO members and families. For example a SACO or family member may want to post a question here, such as:

- Does anyone have knowledge of my great-grandfather (John Doe)? He was in Happy Valley in 1944. Does anyone remember him or have additional information they can share with me?
- How do I become a member of SACO?
- Who do I contact for information regarding upcoming Reunions?

If you have a question you would like posted in this section, please email me at lluv2cook@comcast.net and I will be sure it is included in the next newsletter.



SINO-AMERICAN COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION (SACO)

SACO OFFICERS

President and Chair: Lynn Terpstra Grabenstein

Vice President: James Hunnicutt

Secretary: Judy Barbieri

Assistant Secretary: Penny Coats

Treasurer: Dairus Reynnet

Assistant Treasurer: Peter Barbieri

Membership Chairman and Historian: Jack Coyle

Editor of SACO News: Mia Barbieri Del Prete

Legal counsel: Jim Hasson

Facebook Monitor: Carolyn Arnold:

Website Manager: Joel Grabenstein

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Ken Brown

Carolyn Inman Arnold

Sue Meier

Jonathan Maurice

Robert Coats

<http://www.saconavy.net>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/842931359068493>