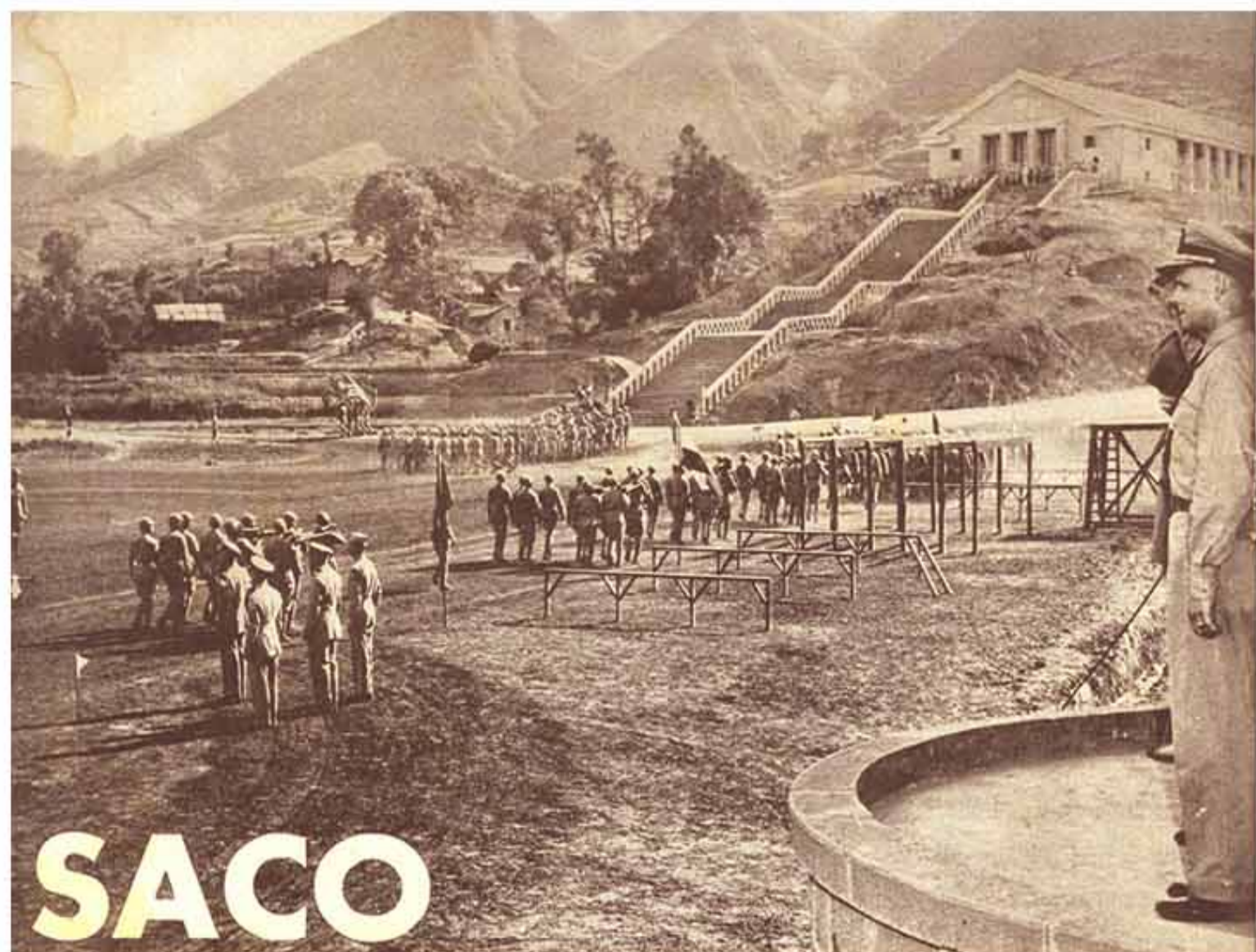


SACO

Bold Navy Teams Aid Chinese Guerrillas Conduct Secret War Behind Enemy Lines



NAVY 'TASK FORCE' secretly trained and equipped Chinese guerrillas for special missions against Japs in China.

ANOTHER “now it can be told” story—one of the best-kept secrets of the Pacific war—came out last month when it was revealed that a U. S. naval group had been operating with Chinese guerrillas behind the Jap lines in China. Their combined efforts, the Navy disclosed, had been a vital factor in the smashing blows of the Pacific Fleet against Jap-held islands, the Jap Navy and, finally, Japan itself.

How Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard men teamed up with Chinese fighters was not a story that could be told even when V-J Day came because so many of the members were in parts of China still dominated by Japanese troops. Now that the Japs have been rounded up and disarmed, the U. S. Navy and the Chinese Government have felt it safe to lift the curtain on “SACO,” the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, which brought essential information to the Allies and death to the Japs.

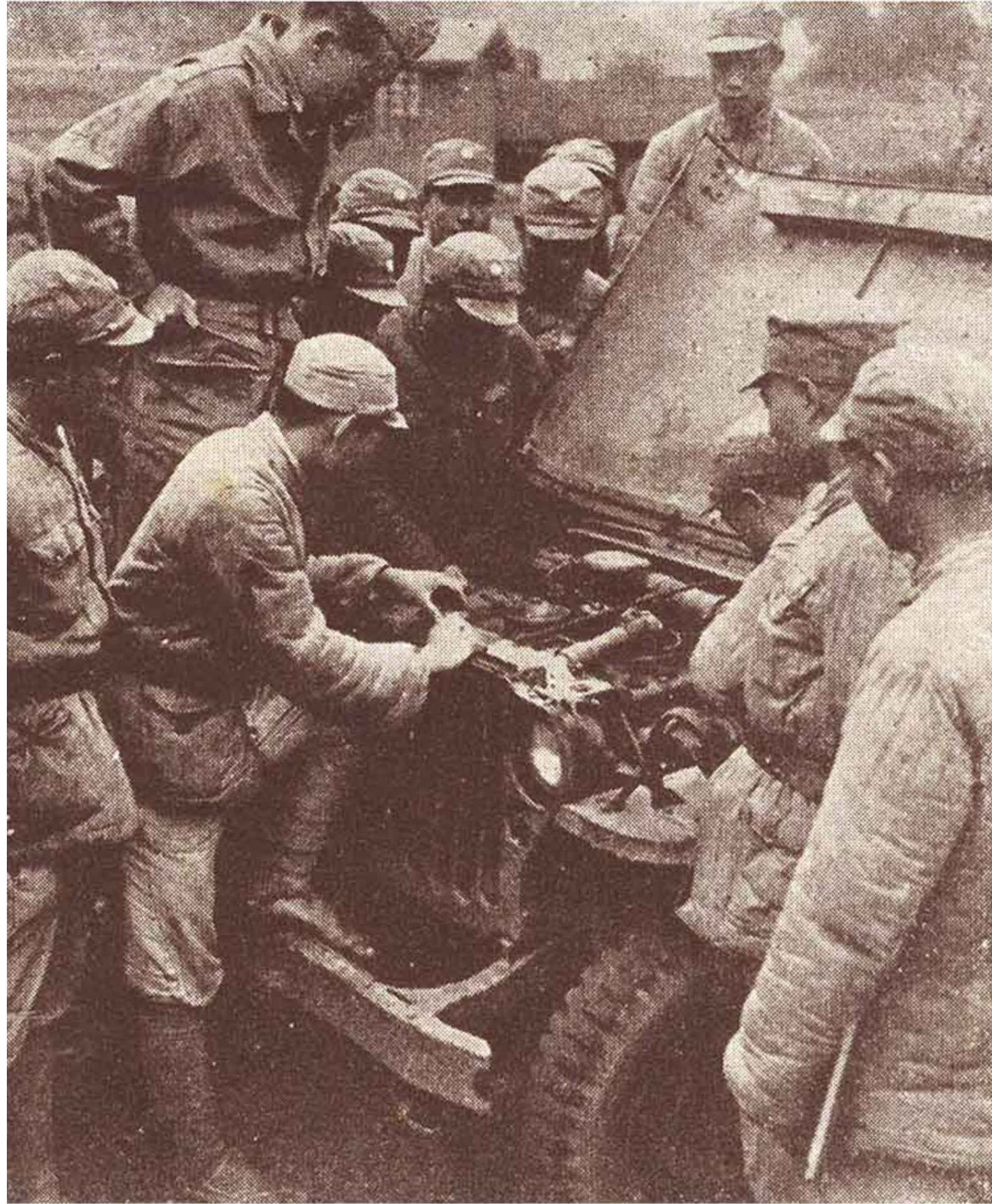
Among other little jobs, SACO (pronounced “Socko”) had:

- set up weather, communications and intelligence stations behind the Jap lines.
- supplied information from inside China for the prowling U. S. Fleet and for U. S. submarines just off the coast.
- put the finger on strategic targets for our air forces.
- provided air-ground communication against advancing Jap troops.
- aided aerial mining of enemy-controlled waters.
- rescued 76 Allied pilots and air-crewmen.
- killed, in one 13-month period, more than 23,000 Japanese.

Secret of SACO’s amazing military achievement was the natural friendship between Americans and Chinese and their mutual determination to defeat their common enemy. In fact, SACO became known in military talk as Friendship Project and “Friendship” was the code name that protected its members.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the U. S. Navy and the National Military Council of China began laying their foundations for offensive action against Japan. They decided to establish a weather service in strategic locations throughout China including

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CARE AND FEEDING of Yankee machines, especially the jeep, was popular subject with Chinese guerrillas.

the Jap-held areas, from which the weather comes on its way across China and Japan into the Pacific.

To cooperate with the Americans on this venture, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek assigned his Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the National Military Council, which was to provide forces and facilities needed in China. For the U. S., Admiral King and General Marshall, Navy and Army leaders, assigned Rear Admiral (then Commander) M. E. Miles, USN, who was to work out the arrangements and head the American participation.

With this help from the Chinese Government, our fleet was already getting regular weather reports from occupied areas in the Far East by the end of 1942. The success of this opened up some other possibilities, valuable both to us and to the Chinese.

The Navy found that the weather service could be readily expanded to provide coastal intelligence on Jap shipping movements. The Chinese adapted it to increase their sources of general information on Jap operations.

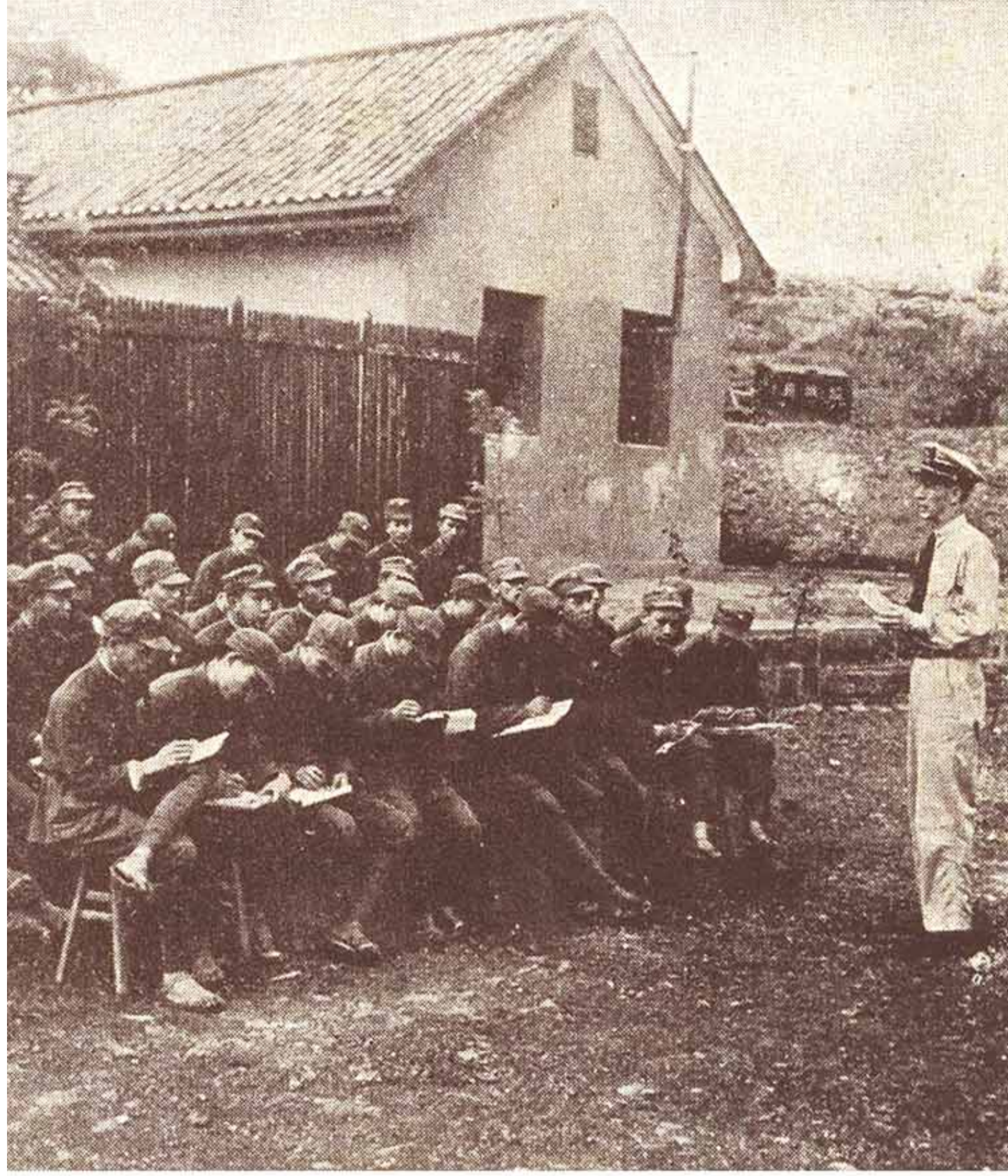
The Chinese provided substantial undercover forces to protect the American observers. The Navy, using Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel also, gave these men training and equipment, and they became the best organized and most effective of all Chinese guerrillas fighting the Japs.

Army cooperation, including air transport from India over the 'Hump,' benefitted Friendship Project from the start. OSS—the Office of Strategic Services—also contributed greatly, especially in assigning particularly well-qualified personnel for the operation and in establishing special training courses to augment the normal naval training of candidates for duty with the project.

U.S.-China Teamwork

As this unique Chinese-American project grew and its activities expanded, there developed a need for substantial and dependable logistics support. To arrange for this, the responsible heads, General Tai Li and Admiral Miles, made proposals which were incorporated in a formal agreement signed by Foreign Minister T. V. Soong (now Premier) and the late

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GUERRILLA SCHOOL offered variety of instruction. These SACO students are learning veterinary medicine.

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, and approved by the Generalissimo and the late President Roosevelt.

This agreement created SACO and under it China and the United States operated what is probably the most closely integrated Allied organization that ever surmounted a language barrier.

Chinese and Americans lived, worked and fought side by side, getting out the information which our ships and subs needed. Individual units set up weather, communications and intelligence stations all the way from the borders of Indochina to the northern reaches of the Gobi desert, with most of the activity concentrated along the China coast behind the north-south Japanese lines.

SACO Americans became adept at Chinese disguises, and, guided by SACO Chinese, slipped safely through enemy lines time and again. Not one SACO member was ever detected.

Fleet operations in the western Pacific made the most of China weather reports, especially in planning and executing hazardous carrier strikes despite the treacherous weather conditions prevailing near Formosa and the Jap home islands.

SACO coast watchers aided the sub campaign against Jap shipping, providing the information which enabled U. S. undersea craft to intercept and destroy Japan's seaborne lifeline. They also aided the 14th Air Force, reporting not only Japanese shipping but troop movements, supply concentrations, airfield developments, bridges and other strategic targets which hard-hitting Army flyers promptly attacked.

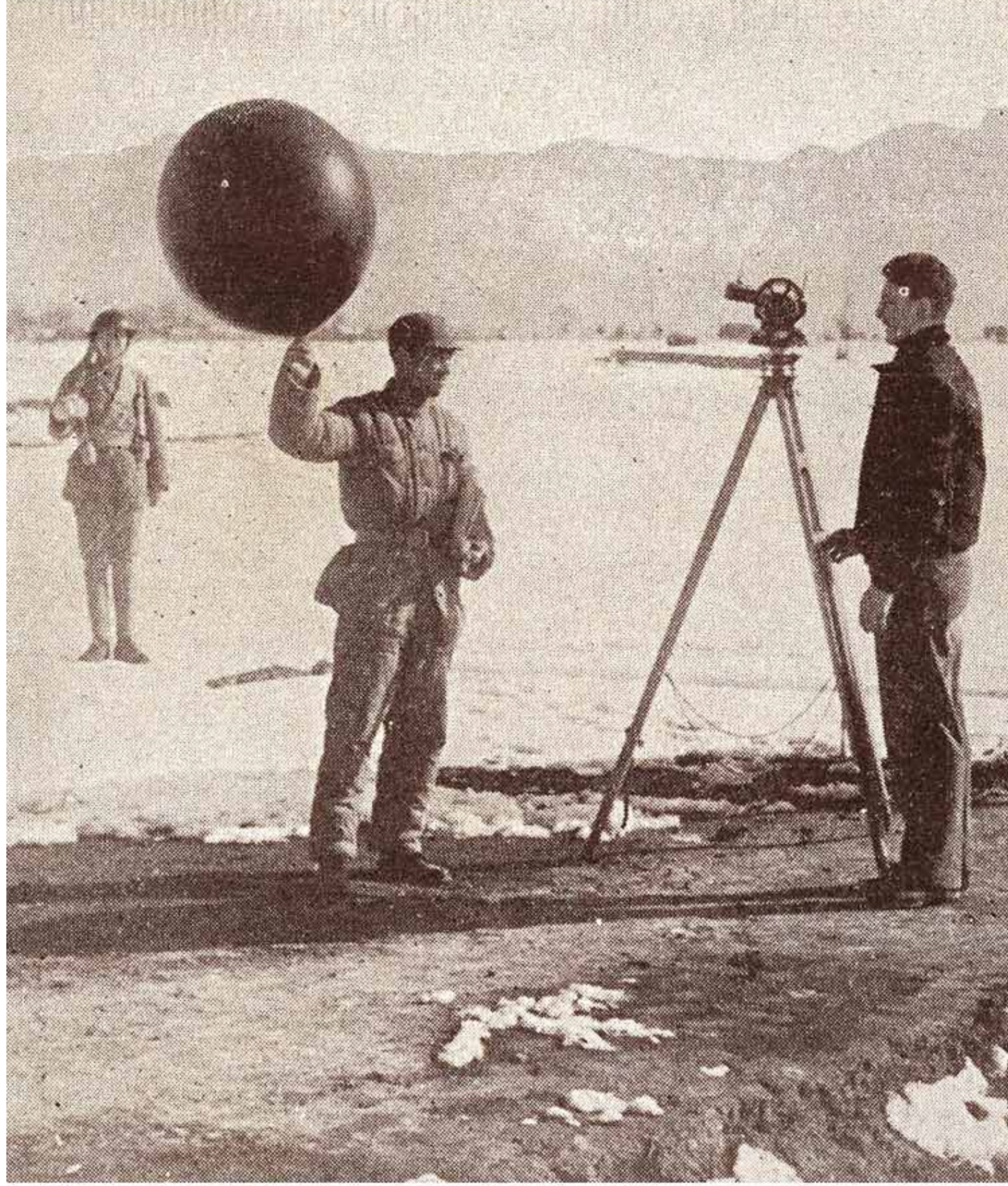
In addition, all SACO intelligence and weather reports were sent promptly to Chinese and American army headquarters.

How SACO Socked 'Em

Some examples of how SACO worked in various ways against the enemy:

- During the critical Japanese drive on Kweilin in August 1944, when Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault's planes were having difficulty locating enemy columns advancing through rugged terrain northeast of the city, Lt. Stanley E. McCaffrey, USNR, a SACO officer attached to the 14th Air Force, joined front-line Chinese forces, established air-ground communications, and stuck

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WEATHER INFORMATION forwarded by SACO guided fleet and air strikes on Formosa and Jap homeland.

to his post only a few hundred yards from the enemy for 19 days despite injury from the constant mortar and artillery fire. A 14th AAF officer reported, "It was as if our planes were being led by the hand." For his feat of bravery and endurance, which aided the Army flyers in killing 3,000 Japs and knocking out eleven 75-mm. guns, Lt. McCaffrey received the Army Bronze Star.

- Sparked by Naval Group China, which provided trained mine-warfare officers, the 14th AAF began aerial mining of enemy-controlled waters as early as October 1943. SACO forces furnished intelligence for Gen. Chennault's Liberators to plant mines along coast shipping routes, in Jap-held harbors and on the vital inland water routes of the Yangtze river. Thousands of tons of enemy shipping were sunk, transportation routes were paralyzed and ports were closed for weeks while the frantic Japs tried to clear them of mines.

- As a result of this aerial mining and of the alertness of the many SACO coast watchers, the Japs shifted their shipping routes further out to sea—where they promptly fell prey to U. S. submarines.

- Chinese guerrillas, trained and armed by the Navy, formed demolition squads that killed Japanese, blew up trains, and destroyed or captured huge quantities of enemy material and equipment.

- Using ambushes and raids on outposts, patrols and garrisons, SACO-trained guerrillas struck at roving Japs out on the search for food in rural areas. By repeatedly wiping out these foraging groups, the guerrillas cut enemy food supplies and made the Japanese afraid to come out from their strongholds except in force. In some areas this guerrilla pressure was so great that Japanese soldiers were weakened seriously by starvation diets.

- SACO-trained sabotage experts did wholesale destruction to barracks, assembly halls, storage dumps and warehouses, anchored Japanese vessels and small craft. One unit of Chinese and Americans early this year attacked a 1,000-ton freighter docked in Amoy, used delayed charges to kill or injure all personnel aboard, destroyed the freighter and threw the Amoy area into confusion.

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DEMOLITION was a major activity of SACO units. Class above is being taught to pack 'lunch box bomb'.

● From 1 June 1944 to 1 July 1945, SACO guerrillas killed 23,540 Japs, wounded 9,166 and captured 291. They destroyed 209 bridges, 84 locomotives, 141 ships and river craft, and 97 depots and warehouses.

Killing 3 for 1

The score wasn't always that lucky. In the early days of the war Chinese guerrillas were losing in combat approximately three men for every Jap killed. But SACO-trained guerrillas promptly increased the toll of Jap losses, and in 1945 had reversed the ratio. This year they killed more than 2,000 Japs a month at a cost of less than one Chinese for three Japs.

SACO activities have been inspected in recent months by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, U. S. Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley and Lt. Gen. Albert Wedemeyer, the Generalissimos' chief of staff and commander of all U. S. forces in the China theater.

SACO troops were prominent in the liberation of Foochow and Wenchow, and some SACO units, including several Chinese naval officers, were trained in the U. S. for amphibious work and captured and occupied several of the smaller Jap-held islands along the China coast.

To keep the Japs and their puppets from infiltrating into Free China, SACO Chinese stressed assistance in identification and security. Aided by the FBI and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the Navy provided a training unit on this, and Coastguardsmen also taught the Chinese the handling of dogs for sentry duty and patrol work. Improvement in Chinese security was rapid.

The Navy provided medical personnel and supplies not only to care for SACO Americans but to overcome critical shortages which had handicapped the Chinese. Small hospital units were set up in some forward areas and saved the lives of many SACO men wounded in combat.

Despite operations in some of the most disease-ridden areas of the world, Navy medical officers by rigorous preventive measures maintained a high standard of health among the personnel of SACO and were able to bring modern medical care to thousands of Chinese allies who had never known it before.

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Close Escapes

Working closely with other rescue agencies and loyal Chinese civilians, SACO also aided in the rescue of Allied flyers brought down in Japanese territory. Up to 1 July these included 30 pilots and 46 aircrewmen, both American and Chinese, as well as a U. S. war correspondent, Don Bell.

It was Bell who, reporting on the rescue of his party, wrote, "Imagine our gasps of amazed delight when told that there was a U. S. Naval Station just 80 li (about 27 miles) away. Here we had been shot down less than a mile from a Jap garrison, we had been shelled, we had been chased by motor boats and searched for by Jap planes less than two hours ago—and here was a man telling us that we were within a few hours of safety. We met the Navy within 24 hours. Boatswain's Mate Howard W. Tucker Jr., of West Annapolis, Md., was out looking for us. When we saw Tucker, swinging along with a tommy-gun over one shoulder and a bag of iron rations over the other—well, you can talk about a sailor's welcome, but you haven't seen anything."

But that was typical of SACO—a good outfit to have turn up if you were an American or Chinese and in trouble—a bad outfit to run into unexpectedly if you were a Jap.

Among the close escapes experienced by SACO personnel, you can include those of the American leader, Admiral Miles, who headed all naval activities in China during the war. Admiral Miles had two earlier Asiatic tours of duty, one lasting five years (1922-27) and a second lasting three years (1936-39). A close student of affairs in Asia, he studied the Japanese language, used every opportunity for extensive travel over the continent and established many Chinese friendships.

His success with SACO led the Japanese to put a bounty of two million yen on his head, and there were numerous attempts on his life—one would-be assassin delivering leg and shoulder knife wounds. The Japs tried to get him several times during his trips to distant field units, and made several ambushes and special bombing attacks, one so nearly successful that he was again wounded.

Despite these and many other close scrapes, SACO and its work went on, to the profit of the Allied cause and the serious crippling of the Japs' aggression schemes. Chinese and Americans, working together, helped turn the Jap dream of empire into a grim No-Prosperity Sphere which was to be the final resting place for countless thousands of Japan's army, navy and merchant marine.

ALL HANDS

THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL INFORMATION BULLETIN

DECEMBER 1945

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