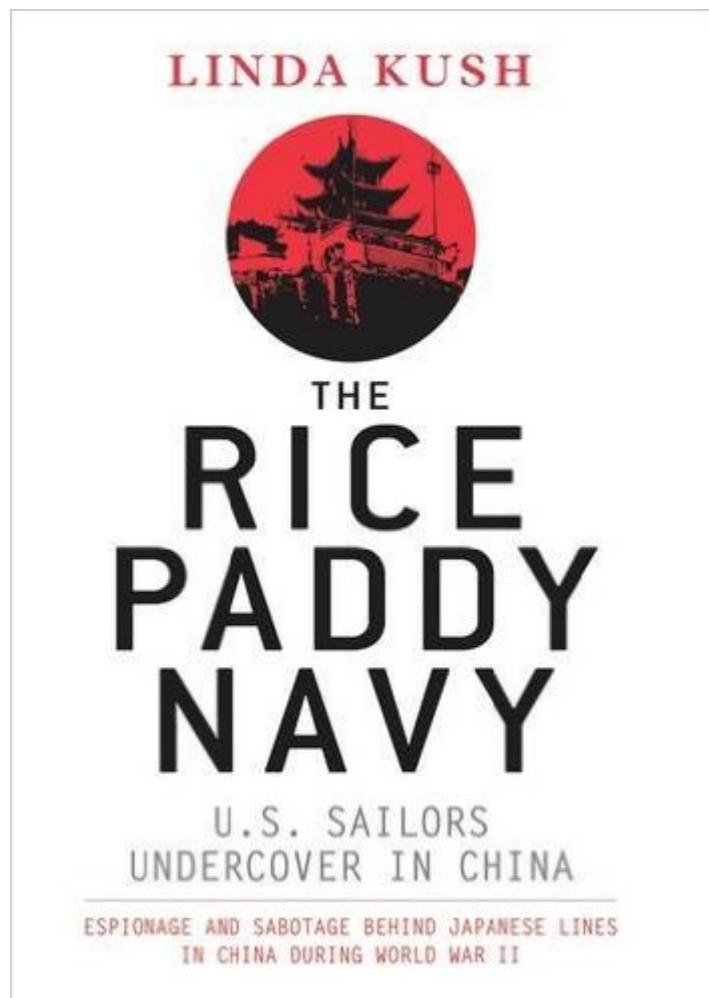


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# The Rice Paddy Navy: U.S. Sailors Undercover In China (General Military)



## Synopsis

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy knew it would need vital information from the Pacific. Nationalist China was particularly well-suited to provide vital information about the Japanese and the Pacific weather patterns. Captain Milton 'Mary' Miles journeyed to China to set up weather stations and monitor the Chinese coastline-and to spy on the Japanese. After a meeting and a handshake agreement with Chiang Kai-shek's spymaster, General Dai Li, the Sino-American Cooperative Organization was born. SACO consisted of nearly 3,000 American servicemen (from the Navy, Marines, and Army), 97,000 organized Chinese guerrillas, and 20,000 individualists, including rival pirate groups and lone-wolf saboteurs. This top-secret network worked hand in hand with the Nationalist Chinese to fight the Japanese occupation of China while it erected crucial weather stations, intercepted and cracked Japanese code, blew up enemy supply depots, laid mines, destroyed bridges, sank scores of vessels, and trained Chinese peasants in guerrilla warfare. Its work supplied critical information to the U.S. military, rescued more than seventy-five downed aviators, and contributed to the felling of more than 26,000 Japanese-while losing only five of their own men. SACO-the rice paddy navy-was one of the best-kept secrets of the war. Miles and his SACO men battled military attacks, harsh conditions, dangerous weather, and political in-fighting to provide unprecedented intelligence and training that helped further the Allies' cause in the Pacific. Working at times in tandem and at odds with the OSS, SACO helped build bridges between the Americans and the Chinese in a fight for the security of Asia. In *The Rice Paddy Navy*, Linda Kush reveals the story of this covert operation, uncovering the military accomplishments, diplomatic ties, and political wrangling that colored one of the most successful-and little known-efforts of World War II.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Linda Kush's new book, The Rice Paddy Navy should be read by people who have an interest in World War II, an interest in heroic characters, an interest in how to work closely with the folks of a foreign culture in their own country, and by any politician who proposes that we fight in a foreign country, especially when we need the help of one or more factions within that country to have a chance at success. Milton 'Mary' Miles, a navy officer and the central character in The Rice Paddy Navy, was sent in to China to clandestinely set up weather stations, to set up coastal observation stations to track Japanese naval activity of all kinds, to monitor Japanese Military radio transmissions and troop movements, and to disrupt the activities of the Japanese Army and Navy whenever and wherever possible. This effort, which was highly successful because of the courage and wisdom of Miles, is carefully chronicled by Linda in all its complexity, in its twists and its turns as the personalities, ambitions, and egos of driven men (American and Chinese) clash and jockey for position atop the heap of command. Linda's mastery of the material and her clear style allow the reader to follow this tale of intrigue as it unfolds and grows into a web covering much of China. It includes the Chinese Nationalist Army, the United States Navy, the United States Marines, the United States Army, the United States Army Air Corp and the OSS (predecessor to the CIA).

"The Rice Paddy Navy" by Linda Kush is a must read for anyone interested in WWII, the art of the spymaster, or the complex history of American/Chinese relations. The book tells the story of a little known, undercover operation in China by the US Navy that began just after Pearl Harbor and which has remained largely untold before the publication of this book. The Japanese Navy hid behind a weather front to avoid detection off Hawaii in advance of the attack at Pearl Harbor. The Americans realized they had no insight into weather patterns across Asia and the Pacific and would remain at a decided disadvantage against the Japanese until this situation was remedied. The US Navy sent Captain Milton "Molly" Miles to China to set up a weather forecasting system, harass the Japanese, and aid the Chinese. This effort succeeded beyond expectations, yet the story of this operation has remained largely untold. SACO, the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, started with a handshake between Miles and Chinese Spymaster Dai Li. It grew to a contingent of 2500 US sailors working across China to provide the US Navy with daily weather forecasts. They trained and went

into battle with 97,000 Chinese guerrillas to sabotage Japanese operations, rescue downed pilots, and kill the enemy. They are credited with over 26,000 Japanese deaths at the loss of five US sailors. SACO succeeded to a large degree because these Americans immersed themselves in the Chinese culture. They treated the Chinese with respect: they ate what they ate, they lived how they lived. This approach was in contrast to the more colonial attitudes of the Operation of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor to the CIA.

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