

An Unexpected Meeting With Vice Admiral McKane At CINCPACFLT HQ

By Captain Ace Trask, USN, (Ret)



I was Chief of the Navy Section of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) stationed in Taiwan, Republic of China (R.O.C.) The R.O.C.'s Chief of Naval Operations at the time was Admiral Soong. Whenever the R.O.C. Navy needed equipment or advice, their request went through my office which was located inside Admiral Soong's compound on the outskirts of Taipei.

After being in Taiwan for several months, I went to Hawaii for a Western Pacific conference hosted by CINCPACFLT. As the conference was ending a USN Captain came and said "Admiral McKane would like to see you." Needless to say, I was quite surprised. But all the Admiral wanted me to do was to relay a message to Admiral Soong and his wife, Helen. Due to political problems with China, it was not possible for him and his wife to visit Taiwan at the present time. And suffice to say, CINCPACFLT could not send a message to Admiral Soong via regular communication channels. So, I hand carried the message to Admiral Soong.

A few months later, I relieved U.S. Army Brigadier General Forney Jr. and became Chief of the MAAG at about the same time Admiral Soong was promoted to Minister of Defense for the R.O.C. So once again he was my counterpart in the R.O.C. defense of Taiwan.



Old HQ MAAG Sign, circa 1968

Departing Calls

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When I was scheduled to leave Taiwan, it was appropriate for me to make "Calls" to certain senior Chinese officers I had been working with over my three-year tour. It was also appropriate for them to host a dinner or lunch for me and my wife. Needless to say, we were given a grand sendoff.

Before departing however, my protocol Chinese lady, "Kitty", said to me, "Are you going to make a call on the Premier?" I told her "he doesn't want to see me." Now Kitty was kind of persistent and after about the third time she asked me I said, "O.K. Kitty, schedule a twenty-minute call with the Premier if he really wants to see me before I depart." Within 48 hours the answer came back that yes, he did want

to see me. So now I have to inform U.S. Ambassador Unger who has to accompany me. He was about to go on vacation for two weeks with his wife. Unfortunately, their trip had to be cancelled. The Ambassador and I then went to the Premier's office for my twenty-minute call, which ended up lasting about an hour and a half. It turned out the Premier was quite interested in what the MAAG had accomplished and greatly appreciated all it had done for the Republic of China.

It is worth noting that the Premier was the son of Nationalist Party leader Chiang Kai-shek.

Captain Trask during his time as Chief of the MAAG



BG Forney Jr.

CAPT Trask