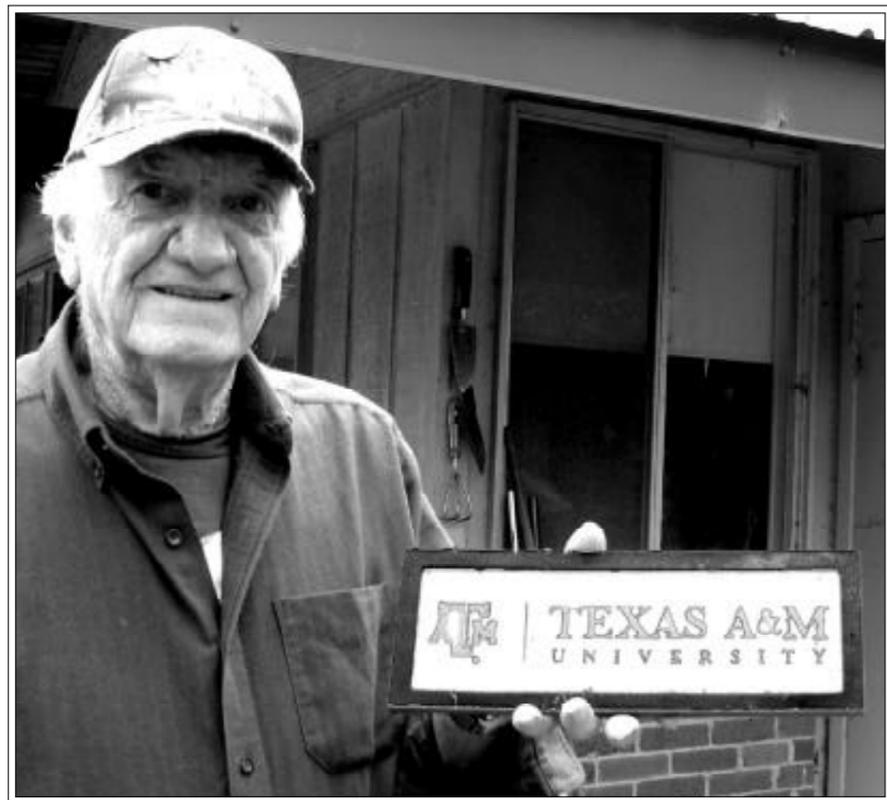


Life influences -- Union Chapel and Texas A&M

# Allsup was a young flag waver when he was picked as a Raider



## Remembering his Aggie days

"Texas A&M did a lot for me. Gave me a basis," says Keith Allsup of Union Chapel of his long-time career with the CIA. Allsup is mentioned in a recent book, "Raiders of the China Coast."

By Neil Abeles  
Monitor Correspondent

Keith Allsup has had two big influences in his life — growing up in Union Chapel and being a Texas A&M University Aggie.

The farm boy of Union Chapel became president of the student senate at Texas A&M, then graduated with a degree in architectural construction.

Allsup had first served in the U.S. Navy, then went to school on the GI bill. He finished A&M in 1950 at age 23.

That summer, 58 young men were recruited for what would become, as Allsup describes, "Forerunners of the Rangers and special forces and all. We took all sorts of training."

He thought he was just signing up for work. The work was with the CIA, however.

Of those first 58 recruits, 28 were Aggies. Why?

"Well, first, we were military. That's what they wanted, and then as Aggies it was just the way we felt about our country. We were young flag wavers."

A&M had 5,200 students then. Now 50,000 and different, Allsup said.

For the government in his career, Allsup would live and work in a dozen locations. "Thirty years at no expense," he likes to say.

These were locations in which he served: China, Formosa, Washington, D.C., Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Las Vega, New Orleans, Lafayette, England, Belgium, Norway and Scotland.

Once he helped the Atomic Energy Commission by taking scientists to Eniwetok test sites to check out the residual radiation from atomic bomb blasts.

Now 86, he lives alone in the family home at Union Chapel.

Not bad for a youth who believes he got the best start in education at Union Chapel Elementary, a building still standing and symbolizing the community.

He remembers the three teachers. "Susey Robinson,

Attress Randall and Novelle Moore. All good."

He remembers things worked well then. For example, graduating from Atlanta High in 1944 in just over three years.

"Back then, we only went eight months a year. And during the war at Atlanta High, we went to school on Saturday so to get out of school early during the week and help on the farm."

His parents had been Van Buren and Era Mae Kerbow Allsup.

"We were told when Dad built this home it was the first brick house outside of town in Cass County."

Life was challenging. "We had a Delco power plant for electricity in 1931 until the Depression hit and some batteries broke on the unit. We had no money to replace them and so had no electricity from 1932 to 1938."

Of his five brothers and sisters, he's the youngest. Neysa still lives. The others were Wilder, Brice, Doris and Rupert. Rupert was killed in Phillipines in 1945. Brice was wounded on Okinawa in 1945.

Today, he lauds those youthful years.

"This community is one of the best a person could ever grow up in. Exceptional neighbors. Didn't have much, standing and symbolizing the community."

He remembers the three teachers. "Susey Robinson,

but we all looked out after everyone. Parents would look after peoples' children. In 1933, our barn burned after harvest. The community rebuilt it."

In a list Allsup made, he found 17 Union Chapel young people volunteered for WWII service. "None of whom were drafted," he tells.

He remembers communities at fairs would have booths to show their products and compete with others.

"You'd have 15 to 20. Union Chapel and Bear Creek were always strong."

Life was closer and slower then, he said.

"On a trip from Naples to Douglassville along Highway 77 you might stop at five or six stores. Wagons just couldn't go far. Now there's hardly one and no one stops."

He had small upsets, of course.

Once when a carnival was in the area, he with Eleanor Griffin and Elta Frost got too close to the ferris wheel.

"We were standing there and some of the riders above us got sick and vomited on our heads. We had to go wash up."

Allsup says he was never reserved about speaking up and doesn't know where he got the habit.

"One thing that helped me was A&M. It gave you a basis. They used to tell me I'd have been a tough Army sergeant."

As the CIA raider and

widely traveled military person, Allsup never forgot A&M.

"Once when another Aggie Raider, Pat Ramsey and I were talking, I asked him if he'd ever borrowed from Mr. Long at A&M."

Long had a little office at A&M that helped students.

"If you needed, say, \$5 for

the week end, you could ask Mr. Long. No pressure. You could pay the loan back when you could and if you had a little extra, why, maybe add a \$1 to it."

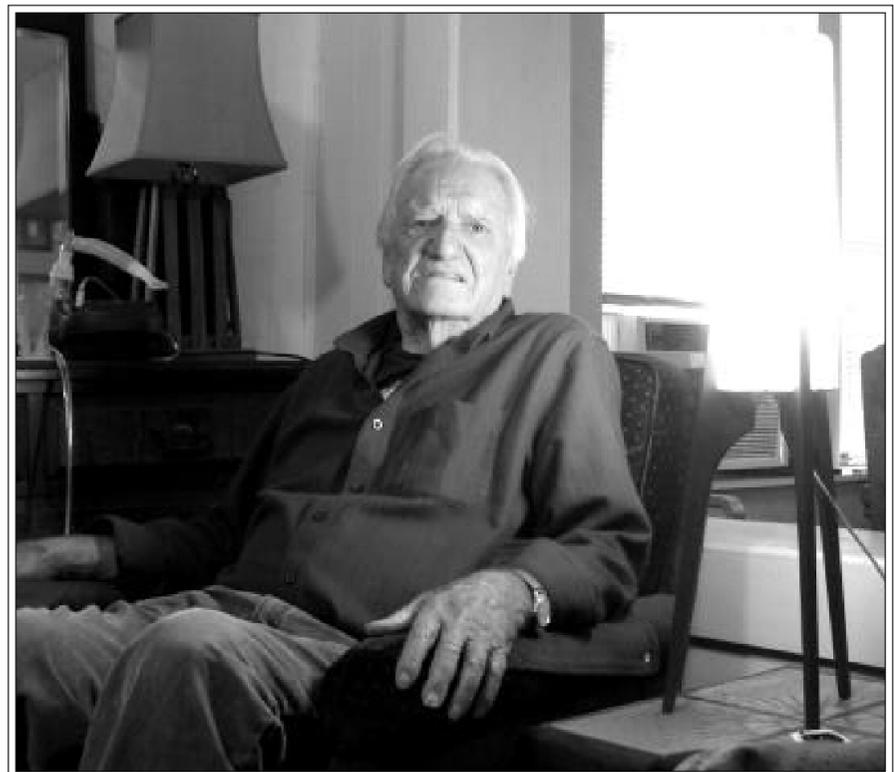
"Sure, I did," Ramsey said about borrowing from Mr. Long.

So, together, right at that moment, the two mailed \$25

each to Mr. Long. They continued doing so until the the Allsup and Ramsey fund got to be around \$2,000.

"Then, it all got consolidated," Allsup said, smiling.

If he had one piece of wisdom for people today, it would be this. "Believe in your country. Vote. Make it a better place."



## An easier life

Keith Allsup of Union Chapel has several objects at his home from around the world experiences as part of his work with the CIA. The lamp at right is from Norway.

60 years later, the story can be told

## 'Raiders of the China Coast' tells the story

By Neil Abeles  
Monitor Correspondent

Sixty years ago, Keith Allsup of Union Chapel was part of secret raids on the coast of China.

The story is told in the book, "Raiders of the China Coast — CIA Covert Operations during the Korean War."

The book's author, the late Frank Holober, a paramilitary case officer for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), signed a copy of the book to his friend Allsup. Here's what Holober wrote.

"My favorite Texan, including BJ, who deserves a book all your own. Thanks for all the precious memories we share and your help in fleshing out the book. Warmest regards, Frank Holober."

The book is the first to tell the story of efforts to distract China from the Korean front in 1951 via covert guerilla raids on China's southeast coast around the island of Quemoy.

Allsup appears in one photo in the book and is described at another point as being one of the "loud and strong variety of Texans."

He is also credited for being able to build whatever was needed.

The raiders Holober writes about were "civilian" employees of a CIA-run, import-export firm, called Western Enterprises, Inc. (WEI).

The raiders included men from the Army, Marines and Air Force officers on loan to the CIA, WWII veterans, reservists, smokejumpers, college football stars and psychological warfare specialists.

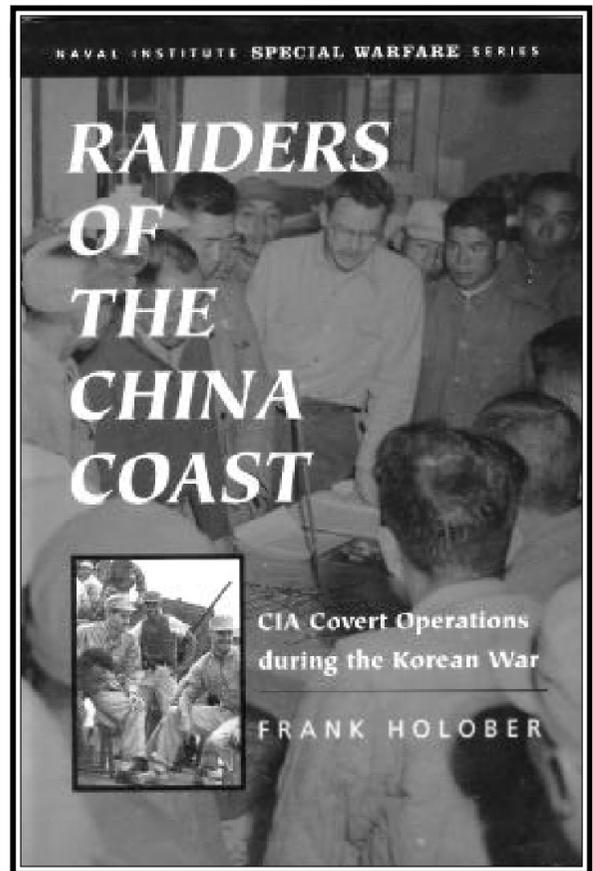
Allsup was one of the first 17 to arrive on those islands in 1951. The importance was so significant that he recalls the CIA airplane was met by the legendary Flying Tiger Claire Chennault.

The raiders' goal was to organize the guerrilla groups and back a possible invasion of the mainland by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists who had control of some 50 islands after fleeing to Taiwan in 1949.

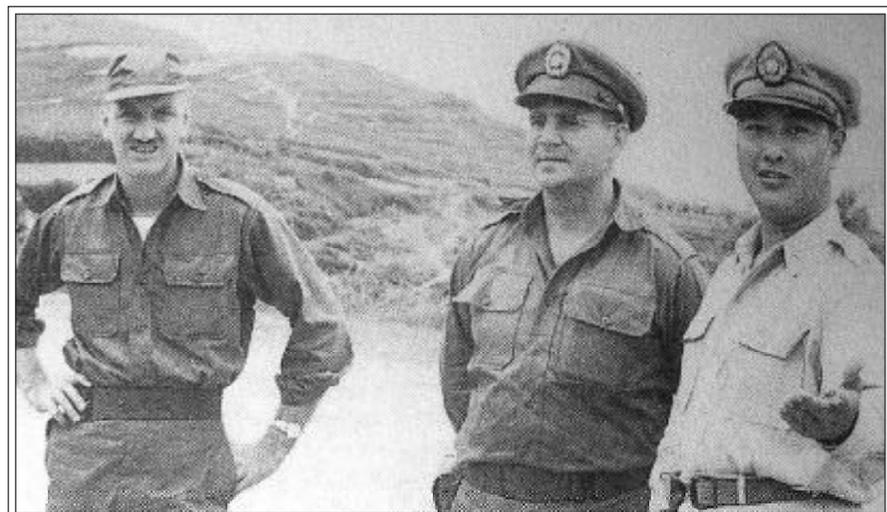
The raiders were to train and provide support for the guerrillas.

The CIA's original plans called for the guerrillas to land on the Chinese coast and then quickly march inland to link up with Nationalist supporters believed to be in nearby mountainous areas.

In September, 1951, the first 200-man guerrilla unit



Keith Allsup, who has lived all over the world courtesy of the U. S. military, is shown in Pakistan at a station which also served the CIA. He is seated at the right.



## Allsup remembers the Raiders

Off the China coast in 1951, Keith Allsup, at left, is shown with American Pat Ramsey and a Chinese guerrilla commander. Souvenir photo

set off for the mainland and landed without opposition.

But they were quickly surrounded and destroyed by Chinese Red army forces. Few if any local residents flocked to their banner.

In light of these realities, the CIA turned to hit-and-run attacks on the mainland.

Over the next two years, the guerrillas launched raids against mainland targets, achieving some success. Their ultimate impact, however, was never clear.

As the Korean War reached its inconclusive end in 1953, the Communists began to respond, and the raids ended. WEI shifted its emphasis to intelligence collection before it gave way to a new cover organization — the Naval Auxiliary Communications Center — in 1955.

Those involved in the guerrilla project judge it a success. It did not cost much, plausible deniability was maintained and U.S. losses were minimal (one CIA officer suffered a minor gunshot wound).

Allsup personally had not been on an actual raid nor had he been shot at. But he'd known those who did.

"We were doing the right thing, at least we thought,"

Allsup said he believed.

Other of the major figures thought so, too. While there, he met and once had ice cream with Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

He says the band of raiders brought humanitarian aid as well.

He stayed with the raiders until May of 1953. And until just this year, the WEI group held annual reunions where they met and always went out for a Chinese dinner.

"It was an interesting trip," Allsup, the world traveler, said of his China raiding experience.

He had made public service a career.

Holober concludes the book with, "If any college seniors feel drawn to public service and after reading the book decide to give a respectful hearing to agency recruiters who visit their campuses, I would vigorously approve."

After numerous other assignments, Allsup returned to Union Chapel in 1979 to raise cows for the next 25 years.

"I saw a lot. Organizing Chinese guerrillas on coastal islands to raid the Chinese mainland was pretty strong stuff. We were farm boys. I'm glad the story can be told now, some 60 years later."