

August 24, 2021

Keith T. Kallberg, President  
Alumni Association of  
Alpha Mu Chapter of the  
Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity at MIT  
P.O. Box 390528  
Cambridge, MA 02139-0006

Dear Keith,

Many thanks for your inspiring July, 2021, letter as I hasten to write this delayed response by August 31st. I am also very appreciative of the copies of "530 AM", the reporting about the 2021 initiates, and the survival of Alpha Mu through the pandemic which I feel is due, in no small measure, to your efforts. The news about the new class of Phi Kaps was most welcome and reminiscent of my own experience.

I arrived in Boston in the Fall of 1941 after two years at a rather sheltered prep school in New Hope, Pennsylvania, and two years younger than contemporaries. That was eighty years ago and, with that background, I still regard my pledge to Phi Kappa Sigma as a sort of miracle. I use the term "miracle" advisedly because, in the Spring of 1941, I had been interviewed as a candidate for an MIT scholarship by an alumni committee which included a Phi Kap from the twenties. The interview went very well, but it has always been my surmise that there was a connection between the Phi Kap at the interview, my attending "rush week" at Alpha Mu in the Fall, and the subsequent invitation to pledge Phi Kappa Sigma. Without the good fortune of having Alpha Mu as a home-away-from-home and the support of brothers, I doubt that I would have made the grade at MIT or returned after the wartime interruption.

As I reflect on more recent historic events (January 6th, 9/11, JFK assassination, etc.), I still remember exactly where I was on the afternoon of Sunday, December 7th, 1941: after Sunday dinner, playing bridge in the Chapter Room, 2nd floor, front, and every one throwing down their cards to a chorus of "Oh s—t" when the news of Pearl Harbor came through. The prospect of a peaceful, uninterrupted time at MIT had suddenly become something quite different.

I guess I'm one of the last (if not the last) members of the twelve 1942 initiates. We all left for some type of military service, all survived and all (with one exception) returned to Alpha Mu and to MIT to graduate in the late forties.

I began summer-time employment with the Pennsylvania Railroad in the summer of 1942 as a Block Operator (controlling train movements) at Rahway, New Jersey, left MIT to serve three years in the US Navy, returned to graduate in Course I in 1947, continued with the PRR in management, survived two mergers and a bankruptcy, and retired in 1990 after 48 years of continuous service.

For the Alpha Mu archives, I'm enclosing my original copy of a letter that Jim Brayton circulated to brothers during the World War II years; it's undated, but a close reading suggests that it was written very late in 1944, possibly around Christmas-time. I've made a copy for myself, but I think this original has a better chance of preservation if it's in Boston. Jim was class of 1945 (accelerated to 2/45) so he would have been a Senior at the time this was written.

Thank you again for your good work on behalf of Alpha Mu, and please tell the new Phi Kaps of my hope that their years at Alpha Mu and MIT will mean as much to them as they have to me.

Fraternally yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Cooper". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Cooper".

John Thomas Cooper  
3500 West Chester Pike CH23  
Newtown Square, PA 19073

## ALPHA MU REVIEW

Since the last letter not too much has been happening except that the school is still going along pretty much as usual. At the beginning of the term we had both the president and the vice-president of the senior class in the house, but since that time one of them has left and is in the Navy radio training program, and Hildebrand was drafted, and is at boot-camp, and is also in the Navy radio training program.

You will remember that in the last letter that we mentioned the football tournament. We lost the first game to the Phi Gams in a hard fought game, and the Phi Gams went on to win the tournament. The only game that they lost was a game we played with them at a later time - with which thought we have been consoling ourselves ever since, even though we did not win the keg of beer.

Some others of the men have left since the last letter. Johnie Cullinan, Diet Hauser, Dick Worrel, and Bob Welsh have left and are now with the armed services.

Dick Worrel was elected to Alpha Chi Sigma before he left, and was also the Commodore of the Nauticle association. Dave Harden has been elected to the Walker Memorial Committee. Summers Hagerman is a section leader, and is working on the T.C.A. The other boys are all out for one of the activities at least, and the house is still carrying on its good name on the campus. Jim Brayton came into the position of General Manager of Voo-Doo when the previous G.M. had to resign.

That is just about all the news. The rest of this letter will be devoted to addresses of the fellows, and excerpts from the letters we have received since the last letter was sent out.

The first news that we have is bad. Ward Reeves has been announced as killed in action flying over France. He was on his third mission in a P-51, and was forced down in the big storm that wrecked all the docks and communications in France. Lee Hall (Sid's brother) was killed testing a plane at Wright Field.

The first letter we have here is one from Bill Buzzard. He writes from his ship on his way going overseas. He says that he wonders, "whether the rivets will fail by shearing, crushing or tearing," but that isn't what keeps him awake at nights - "its the lack of oxygen". His address is - Pvt. W.S. Buzzard 31457091 BTRY C 542 F.A.Bn., APO 411, % P.M., N.Y.

Bob Byrne writes that he is in New Guinea, but does not find it as bad as he expected. He is planning to come back after the war, but he won't be living in the house, because, "I'll be married. Peggy Bacon and I announced our engagement last summer when I was home", he says. His letter from New Guinea was censored by Carl Lindeman, a Theta Chi, Bob Byrne's address is Sgt. Robert M. Byrne 11080636 Cas Det 2166B APO 322 % P.M., San Francisco.

Paul Anderson is here at the house now for a short leave, and he says in his last letter, "I have been here at Gulfport Field as a Celestial Navigation Trainer operator - a job that any WAC could do. I'm not complaining though, because I like the work, have good hours, no KP, and easy P.T." He mentions also that he saw the Sugar Bowl game in New Orleans. His address is: Pvt. Paul N. Anderson Jr. 11121402 328th AAF Base Unit Squadron T Box 11B, Gulfport Field, Miss.

Chuck Holzwarth writes. "Still in Oklahoma. Working like hell ever since the furloughs were over trying to get this egg crate in shape for overseas duty. Getting there slowly but surely -- Haven't heard from Thena in nearly a month. Last I heard he was in France, having already been at the front. He was resting behind the lines. His address is: Co E, 397th Inf. Regt. APO 447, % P.M., N.Y." Chuck says that he is having a good time in Oklahoma City, but wants to get out of the place as soon as possible. His address is: Sgt. Chas. W. Holzwarth, 11121564 655th Bomb Squadron (H) Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Okla.

We have a letter here from Tom Cooper. He says that he will be finished his radio training in March some time and will be back to visit the fellows at the house. He is evidently having a good time. From the reports we have received on him he has been meeting women all over the country, and right now he is doing a lot of skiing out in California. His address is: J.T. Cooper RT 3/c USNR, RMS BKS21 Co.46, Treas. Is., San Francisco.

Gerry Mackinnon is now in Oklahoma, and in his last letter he said that the town is outdoing itself to entertain the boys out there. The local girls go to the USO (i.e., if they have shoes), and he says that they will dance if you can teach them how, and above all evidently the town is dry. He seems to be going on making friends everywhere as he made them here at Tech.

We received a letter from Russ Gwilliam's father after we sent out the last letter saying that Russ had been in the air corps but had been dumped into the infantry, but he did not enclose any address.

Johnie Woolston writes from Midshipman school that his luck has finally run out and that instead of receiving engineering training, he is being sent to deck school, and will get sea duty before he ever has a chance to use his course 13 training. His address is John Woolston, Co.B, North Baker East 304, USNR Midshipman's School, Cornell University, Ithica, N.Y.

Dieter Hauser writes from boot camp that every thing is fine although not as good as back at 530 Beacon. He expects to be back here in Boston sometime soon.

Jack Baring is now a Lieutenant and is down in Ft. Monmouth New Jersey. He says that they are teaching him about the GI

telephone. He mentions also that he has heard from Bob Melville, Bob is in the engineers and is a fireman "red truck style" at Ft. Lewis in Washington. Baring's address is: Lt. J.A. Baring 01649978, OC Area, Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey.

Fred Gander is now with the Fleet Air Wing and says that he has seen Walt Boyd and Tom Saathoff. He says that Walt is an aircraft engineering officer on the USS Nehenta Bay and has been in the thick of the fight in the Pacific. He says, "Walt, Tom, and I had a good get together at a local officer's club when I first got out here about six months ago, and we got happy enough to start singing a few Phi Kap songs in competition with some other fellows from Cornell who were also having a reunion." He also puts in a bid to chaperone some of our future Tech Cabin parties as he is coming back to get his master's degree. His address is: Lt. F.W. Gander, Staff, Fleet Air Wing Two, % Fleet P.O., San Francisco.

Hank Henze is with the B-29's on Saipan. He doesn't give much news of himself, but he says that even out there it gets boring a lot of the time. He says also that he thinks a lot of the house and is planning to come back after the war. Hank's address is: 870 Bomb Sq., APO 5666, % P.M., San Francisco.

We also have the additional news (from Tom Cooper) that Pete Hill has been commissioned in the Air Corps and was married last August. He is a radar observer on a P-61 Black Widow. He also says that Oppenlander is an engineering officer on an LST.

Gene Ashley is in the infantry, and he says that it is true about the infantry being "all brawn and no brains". He claims to have reached an advanced stage of mental decay - not having had a thought in his head in six months. His address is: Hg. Co., 1st Bn., 5th Inf. APO 360, Ft. Benning, Ga.

Oppenlander's address (from a Christmas card we received) is: Ens. Robert Oppenlander, USNR USS LST 150, % Fleet FO, San Francisco.

Johnie Cullinan has written from Boot Camp. He says that they really treat you right if you are in Chicago. He is also in the radio training program.

Frank Brewster is still at Wright Field working in the labs out there. The only news that we have from him is that he is interested in what he is doing and that he has been recently married. Congratulations Brew, we never thought that you'd do it.

We had a Christmas card from Ø. Lorentzen giving his address: Ø. Lorentzen, Box 270, London E.C.I.

Jim Angel wrote in to help our present treasurer, and says that he is working in an office with "millions of nice sexy women around". He is living in Newark, N.J., and will be back at the house next term.

Bob Welsh starts off his letter, "Florida 'Land of Sunshine'. Nuts to that stuff. We've been turning out every morning with two suits of long woolen underwear on plus fatigues plus our jackets and we're still freezing". Bob's address is: Pvt. R. Welsh, 42188241, Co. A., 205 Bn., 63rd Reg't., Camp Blanding, Fla.

Bob Arrison is out in Oklahoma in the Navy Radio Training program, and the last we have heard from him was a box of cigarettes that we received from him at Christmas. Thanks a lot, Bob, they're hard to get here in Boston these days. His address is: R.A. Arrison Sl/c, Co. 1145, Rm. 364, NTS Okla. A&M, Stillwater, Okla.

We have also here a Christmas Card from Jack McDonald. How about dropping us a real letter some time Jack and tell us what you are doing these days? His address is Mid. C. McDonald, 3417 Bancroft Hall, USNA Annapolis, Md.

Bob Blake's present address is A/C R. Blade USNR, 1st Bn., Rm., 129, St. Mary's College, Calif.

We have received quite a few letters from Hilde since he left. The latest epistle was a five by nine post card from the Latin Quarter in Chicago. He says, "Radio school coming soon Mayhaps Chicago. Will write news and address soon or as one turk said to another, 'can't remember the name, but the fez is familiar'" Yak! Yak! When you learn some more new jokes Hilde, write in, and we'll see what we can do about getting them in Voo Doo.

Jim Palmer was back in Boston for a leave just a short time ago. He was transferred from the infantry to the paratroops, and has completed his training in that league. Drop us a line sometime Jim, and let us know your address.

We have a little more news of what some of the boys are doing. Bob Lohman here at the house has gotten engaged to Kate, who is known by all those who have been around the house in the past year. Bob Barnes, the last we heard of, was running a flame thrower in France. Johnie Banks is a bomb loader, and has been overseas for quite a while. It was just about a year ago that he was in Boston, and he did what will be famous in the annals of military history. He was caught at a muster eating a sandwich in ranks. Sam Haines is still at Cornell in the Marines. We have seen him in New York almost every time the school has had a vacation. He is still O.K. and seems to have at the present just about all the women that one man can handle. Kieth Cramblet and Otto Kirchner have both left Chappel Hill, and are well on their way to becoming Navy pilots. R.V. Coleman is now in India, and was in Boston just before he left. Johnie Burdakin has been commissioned, and his address is: Lt. John Burdakin, 01117791, Staff and Faculty Dept. V, The Engineering School, Ft. Belvoir, Va. Wilfred Brehaut is another who has gotten married and his present address is: A/C Wilfred H. Brehaut, Grp.A, Sqdrn. 2, Flight 3, Class 48B, 2156 AAF Base Unit, Decatur, Ala.

That is all the news we have at this time, but maybe by the end of next term we will have received some information from those who did not write the first time. Bob Lohman and myself are the only ones left at the house who know most of you fellows, and we just can't answer personally all the letters that we have received.

This weekend at the house we are having Hell Week for our three Navy pledges. They are Red Harrington, Griz Baer, and Ted Henning. Things are just about the same as usual, and we hope that they will be that way when you all get back.

Jim Brayton