



# 95th American Legion National Convention—Houston, TX



**Author's Note: Part 1 of a 2 part story. Part 2 will appear in next month's issue.**

Who are we? The American Legion is the largest veterans organization in America.

On September 16, 1919, the United States Congress chartered the American Legion as a patriotic veterans organization. This organization was founded by World War I veterans in Paris, France to plan assistance to returning veterans suffering from wounds and/or combat stress (i.e. PTSD).

Today, we are 2.4 million members strong with approximately 14,000 posts around the world. The American Legion's mission is to assist our veterans and their families. Each year, the American Legion convenes to continue its support for our veterans and to sustain the "Four Pillars" of the American Legion: *Veterans, Youth, Defense and Americanism.*

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### Dates to Remember...

- Sep. 14th—Cathay Post monthly meeting. Lunch following.
- Sep. 27th—Cathay Chronicle October submission deadline.
- Oct. 12th—Cathay Post monthly meeting. Lunch following.
- Oct. 7-13th—Fleet Week
- Oct. 10th—Columbus Day, Italian Heritage Parade

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# Houston Hosts the 95th American Legion National Convention

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This year, the 95<sup>th</sup> annual American Legion National Convention was held in Houston, Texas from August 22-29. American Legion members from every corner of America and Puerto Rico, France, and the historical China Post #1 (which has members scattered around the world including in Beijing China), converged in Houston for this annual meeting to pass legislation supporting our veterans, formally elect the new National Commander for 2013-2014 and continue our programs and projects to support the "Four Pillars" of our American Legion.



Cathay Post #384 team arriving at the convention center.

Cathay Post sent 5 delegates and representatives to our 95th Annual Convention: Commander David Y. Wong, Vice Commander Nelson Lum, Secretary John Li, Adjutant Tony Zhang and Post Reporter/Representative of our Board of Directors, Roger S. Dong. Adjutant Tony Zhang's wife Suzanne Zhang also attended.

## Vice President Joe



Vice President Joe Biden was the featured speaker. (Houston Chronicle)

## Biden was there:

On the first day of the convention, Vice President Joe Biden was the featured speaker. He moved the attendees with his stirring support of veterans. The Vice President stated that "the federal government will continue to honor the country's "one sacred obligation, to support soldiers and their families during deployments and once they return home."

Vice President Biden cited increased budgets, improved medical care and better efforts to bring veterans into the workforce as examples of the support he and President Barack Obama's administration have promised.

He said the federal government is pledging \$100 million to fund new research on post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries. Vice President Biden also said the Department of Veterans Affairs has hired

more than 1,600 new mental health care professionals and that the VA's budget has been increased by more than 40 percent.

A chief concern for veterans has been the backlog of disability claims for compensation for illness and injury caused by military service. Vice President Biden said that the backlog has been reduced by 20 percent with a goal to eliminate it by 2015.

"We're working overtime in the VA," he told the American Legion.

## Meet our new Commander Dellinger:

On Tuesday, August 27, 2013 the delegates to the 95th American Legion Convention nominated and elected Daniel M. Dellinger as the 2013-2014 National Commander. "We, The American Legion, the nation's largest veteran's organization, have rich traditions and a storied 95-year

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# Houston Hosts the 95th American Legion National Convention



Our 2013-2014 National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger.  
Photo courtesy of The American Legion National Convention.

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*history. But, is that enough as we move towards our 100th anniversary and beyond? Just as our country has evolved since 1776, we must evolve if we want to stay relevant. Two years ago, at the beginning of my campaign, I adopted my slogan for this year of, "Building for Tomorrow Today." With my background in construction, I know you need a good set of plans and a solid foundation if you are going to build a structure to last. We have a rock solid foundation in The American Legion, our 95 years of service, so now we need a plan to get us to the next level and beyond."*

Daniel M. Dellinger of Vienna, Va., was elected national commander of the 2.4 million-member American Legion on August 29, 2013, in Houston, during the 95th national convention of the nation's largest veterans organization.

He became an Army infantry officer after graduating with a degree in criminology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He served at Fort Benning, Ga., during the Vietnam War and entered the U.S. Army Reserve in 1972, separating from the service in 1984 at the rank of captain.

A member of the Dyer-Gunnell American Legion Post 180 in Vienna since 1982, Dellinger was made a life member in 1990.

He has served as post, district and department commander and chaired numerous commit-

tees. At the national level, he chaired the Legislative, National Security and Economics commissions as well as the Aerospace Committee.

He served as chairman of the Legislative Council and Membership and Post Activities Committee. He has been a member of the Foreign Relations Council, Policy Coordination, Veterans Planning and Coordinating committees as well as the Legislative Council.

**Dellinger** is a member of the Sons of the American Legion, Past Commanders and Adjutants Club, Past Department Commander's Club, ANAVICUS and the Citizens Flag Alliance.

He has served as a presidential appointee on the Federal Taskforce on SBA Hiring and as vice mayor of the town of Vienna, Va., as well as serving three terms as town councilman. He is a member of the Loyal Order of the Moose and the Loyal Order of the Kentucky Colonels.

He owned and operated a construction management and general contracting firm for 20 years specializing in commercial, institutional and industrial construction.

Roger S. Dong  
Post Reporter



Daniel M. Dellinger is sworn in as the 2013-2014 National Commander. Photo courtesy of The American Legion National Convention

# Forward March

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On Sunday, August 25, 2013, the American Legion troops, family, and friends gathered to strut their stuff and display our national colors. This was the American Legion's annual PARADE. The Department of California delegation proudly displayed its Colors and joined the other 50 State delegations with their Lady's Auxiliaries and the Sons of the American Legion from all our states and territories.



2013 National Convention Parade in Houston.  
*Photo by Cathay Chronicle Staff.*



2013 National Convention Parade in Houston.  
*Photo by Cathay Chronicle Staff.*



2013 National Convention Parade in Houston.  
*Photo by Eldon Lindsay/The American Legion.*



2013 National Convention Parade in Houston.  
*Photo by Eldon Lindsay/The American Legion.*



Cathay Post Houston American Legion National Convention 2013.



2013 National Convention Parade in Houston.  
*Photo by Eldon Lindsay/The American Legion.*

# From the Commander's Desk

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To **Cathay Post** Members and Friends,

This month, it's about extending "thank yous," talking about benefits and giving you a summary of the American Legion convention.

I want to start off by thanking the large number of veterans and support members who attended the August meeting and luncheon. I also want to thank the significant number of you who have sent in your membership fees. If you have not done so, please mail in your payment as soon as possible. The Post continues to receive membership application from veterans and support members. We want to welcome our new members to our Post. And, so that each you can do the same, I'll get you their names in a future edition.

## **Veteran Education Benefits**

You may qualify for veterans education benefits through the Veterans Retraining Assistant Program (VRAP). This program offers up to 12 months of retraining assistance to veterans who meet all of the following criteria: 1) you are currently unemployed; 2) you are at least 34 but no more than 60 years of age; 3) you have a characterization of discharge that is something other than a dishonorable discharge; 4) you are not eligible for any other VA education benefits program; 5) you are not in

receipt of VA compensation; and 6) you are not enrolled in a federal or state job training program.

## **Veteran Medical Benefits**

As you know, on January 1, 2014, major provisions of The Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, come into effect. The bottom line – those veterans who do not have private health insurance or a VA health care card, should consider obtaining health coverage from the VA now. The VA wants all veterans to obtain health care that improves their health and well-being. If you are currently enrolled in the VA health care plan, you don't need to do anything else to meet the health care law coverage standards. The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs. For additional information, contact the nearest Member Services at the VA Office for assistance. Naturally, a veteran can delay the process of obtaining VA health coverage. But there is a risk that acceptance for future VA healthcare coverage will be based on eligibility factors at the time of application. This being said, there is a possibility that a denial of health care coverage could happen due to federal budgetary constraints. Currently, the standard VA copays generally range from \$15 to \$50 per visit for non-service connected care. VA care for service con-

nected condition remains free of charge.

Military service members can receive expedited processing of disability claims from Social Security. Benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application. The expedited process is used for military service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs.

## **American Legion Convention**

I just returned from the 95th annual convention of the American Legion in Houston which was attended by an estimated 10,000 Legionnaires. The Legion was founded on the four pillars of strong national defense, veterans affairs, children and youth programs, and Americanism. During the convention, Legionnaires discuss and renew their positions on the four pillars. The American Legion's impact is potentially significant. When a new Congress convenes in-session, the Legion will have new resolutions, calling on Congress' action on these important issues.

During the convention, I spoke to a number of post commanders to learn more about their operations. I also spoke to the past

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# From the 1st Vice Commander

Comrades! September is here. School has started. There is much to report from this past summer. Our new board of directors is in place.

The War Memorial Commission Office led by 2nd Vice Commander Nelson Lum has moved into CitiCenter. The Veterans Success Center, founded by past 1st Vice Commander Roger Dong, opened its door at 1720 Market Street. Adjutant Tony Zhang is moving his company into 1524 Powell Street.

We hope the renovation of the War Memorial Veteran Building will be completed by our next Post elections in 2015. Good luck.

Please keep in mind that our building is open for community events. Comrades, let us know of any community groups that could use our building for events. We want our building to be full of life and not empty.

In February, we will begin searching for Boys State candidates. San Francisco is allocated 12 city slots. Out of the 15 American Legion Posts in San Francisco, Cathay Post 384 contributes 4.

This year we have 5 schools fighting for four of our Post's slots. While we are proud that our Post contributes the highest percentage of Boys State candidates, it is also a reflection that other Posts are not doing as well. Many of these Posts are losing more members than they are gaining. We feel fortunate that due to your efforts, our Post continues to grow. Thank you for your friendship and we hope our fellow American Legion



Image Credit: Visions of America/UiG via Getty Images.

Posts grow as well.

Last month, we reviewed the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to our country's constitution. How could these items be overlooked from the original constitution? No one is perfect, this country is not perfect, but we strive to make this a more perfect union. There currently are 27 amendments on file. The next 5 amendments (11-15) are:

**The 11th Amendment**, which was ratified on February 7, 1795, states that "The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or Equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State."

**The 12th Amendment**, which was ratified on June 15, 1804, is one of the longer amendments. It revised presidential election procedures.

**The 13th Amendment**, which was ratified on December

6, 1865) abolished slavery and involuntary servitude.

**The 14th Amendment**, which was ratified on July 9, 1868, defined citizenship to include all persons regardless of race born or naturalized in the United States, prohibited states from abridging the Privileges or Immunities Clause, guaranteed citizens Due Process and Equal Protection.

**The 15th Amendment**, which was ratified on February 3, 1870, prohibited the denial of a citizen's right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

May Joy and Happiness follow all of you from the Pon Family.

Jay Pon,  
1st Vice Commander  
jpon@jps.net  
415.409.8858

## From the 2nd Vice Commander

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Greetings! September marks the beginning of another school year for millions of youngsters. Those of you with school age kids are no doubt busy assisting them in their preparation for their school year. Here at Cathay Post, the Executive Board is also preparing and planning for our fast approaching events.

What has the Executive Board been up to? We've been working hard to complete an agreement for the lease of the Post's basement and first floor levels.

Additionally, we've submitted application forms for the Post's participation in the Italian Heritage Parade, and we have put together plans for the Post's first participation in the Veterans' Day Parade.

I would encourage all members to participate in these events. But of course, you need to be a member which means you have to renew your membership for the fiscal year 2013-2014. So far, because of our faithful members, Cathay Post is well on its way to exceeding our membership numbers from last year. Let's keep up the great work; let's keep those renewals coming.

Having just returned from the American Legion National Convention in Houston, Texas, I will explain what I have learned from my attendance at the convention. As the Delegate representing District 8, I attended the California State Caucus where important resolutions were presented, debated, and voted upon. The results of our vote will dictate how our Department Commander will vote at the na-



Vice Commander Lum enjoying a root-beer after the convention.

tional stage.

There were two resolutions sponsored by the membership of California that should be of interest to you.

Resolution 18 calls for Congress to change the established dates for qualifying memberships in the American Legion and to recognize those veterans who served and participated in the operation in Lebanon between July 15, 1958 and October 23, 1958.

Resolution 19 calls for Congress to pass an amendment to Title 36 of the United States Code to include all honorably discharged veterans (including Reserves and National Guards) as being eligible for membership in the American Legion. This resolution, if passed, will do away with the requirement that a veteran has to be designated as a "War Veteran" in order to join the American Legion.

Why are Resolutions 18 and 19 important? As most of you know, the American Legion's membership has been steadily declining. Simply stated, our

members are dying and the American Legion in general is not able to get enough younger veterans into the ranks. The few WWII veterans left are dying at the rate of approximately 250 a day; the Korea era veterans are not too far behind. While the young men and women returning home from their current military service are busy adjusting to civilian life, for the most part, they simply don't have time [or don't believe they have the time] to take on the work load of the Legion. In order for the Legion to survive and thrive, those who served in the "Cold War" (the period of time between the Korea and Viet-Nam conflicts) must be allowed to join the Legion. They are all in their 50's and 60's, established, and can contribute greatly to all the pillars of the Legion. It is my opinion that all honorably discharged veterans should be eligible to join the Legion. To continue the practice of exclusion will only hasten the demise of the Legion.

Unfortunately, neither resolution met the approval of the Internal Affairs Commission of the American Legion at the national level. The Commission recommended that the resolutions be reworded to eliminate possible unintended consequences, including granting politicians the opportunity to reopen and possibly changing the tax status of the Legion. The California Delegates voted to follow the recommendations of the Commission and tabled the resolutions.

I will work to draft another resolution to alleviate the concerns of the Legion. Once drafted, I will submit it to the District for

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# From the 2nd Vice Commander

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approval.

It will take a while before the resolution can work its way back to the National Stage, but I feel very strongly that this must be done for the betterment of our the American Legion. Concurrently, I will contact our congressional representatives to seek their assistance to amend the United States Code that restricts the American Legion's ability to be more inclusive.

All veterans should be interested in the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center, located in Fort Miley. The Center, which is in partnership with the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), has provided years of excellent medical services to the



SF VA Medical Center  
[www.sanfrancisco.va.gov](http://www.sanfrancisco.va.gov)

veterans who reside in this region.

The collaborative efforts have led to improvement and development of new medical knowledge along with creating job satisfaction for the participating physicians. Unfortunately, the Center's future is at risk due to its inability to expand at the current site.

The old complex has reached

critical limits and is in need of a replacement. Additionally, UCSF is in the process of moving its medical operation and research to the Mission Bay district of San Francisco. Even in optimal traffic, it will take approximately 1 hour to travel between Ft. Miley and Mission Bay. For those physicians and nurses who provide medical services to the veterans at Ft. Miley, it will add another layer of difficulty if they are required to travel back and forth between the two locations.

While the overall budget of the Veterans Administration (VA) has increased in recent years, the ever increasing number of veterans in need has placed a tremendous amount of burden on the VA.

As I mentioned above, Ft. Miley is no longer a viable option for the medical needs of the veterans in the future. The complex was built in the 1930's and it is grossly inadequate no matter how much renovation is rendered. To rebuild the entire complex will take a minimum of ten years plus and the renovations will not be as effective as the current collaboration with UCSF. The most viable solution to this predicament thus far is to relocate most of the medical and research facilities to Mission Bay while converting the current facilities at Ft. Miley to mostly nursing care units.

The medical and research units at Mission Bay will be housed in privately funded facilities leased by the VA. These facilities will be built in 5 to 6 years and will save the VA money.

This process of combining public and private sector financing is

known as Public-Private Partnerships and has received approval from Secretary Eric Shinseki, Secretary of Department of Veterans Affairs as ways to improve services to our veterans.

Please let me know how you feel about any of the above issues. I welcome and treasure all your input.

As veterans, it is our duty to look after and safe guard the welfare of all veterans.

Hope to see you all at our next monthly meeting.

Nelson Lum,  
2nd Vice Commander  
Chair, ALWMC



The Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, this year's Distinguished Service Medal recipients.

*Photo courtesy of The American Legion National Convention 2013.*



# From the 3rd Vice Commander

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To Members and Friends,

I'm very excited about some changes we have in store for our newsletter. We currently use Microsoft Publisher to get you your monthly fill of Cathay Post #384 news. As great as the Publisher format is, our staff is exploring other programs to see how we can get you the best and most current news in the most readable and enjoyable format possible.

I want to thank member Thanh Huynh, our Chief Reporter Roger Dong, Secretary John Li and Support Member Mike "Young" Louie for taking time off from their busy schedules to discuss how we can get our newsletter to the next level. In particular, I want to thank Thanh for initiating the discussion and conducting a training session. It's great to see new members like Thanh and Mike dedicate so much of their time and expertise behind the scenes to help make the Post run so well and efficiently.

Cathay Post #384 exists to serve our members. Without our members, our Post would not exist. The Post's newsletter is a great example of utilizing a medium to serve our member. Our staff, from our technical layout editors, Tony Zhang, John Li and Mike Louie, to our dedicated Chief Reporter Roger Dong, put in countless hours, meeting tight deadlines, to get you our final, finished product on a timely basis. However, we know we can do better and we will.

I'm going to put several challenges to our membership.

First, I want to hear from you on how we can improve our newsletter. As I mentioned, Thanh has already stepped up and shared with us his wealth of information about publishing a newsletter. Please let me know if there are certain articles that you want to read or a layout element that we can improve on. Do you want the newsletter to be more informative or less so? Do you want Roger, our intrepid reporter to do more hard hitting reporting or less?

Second, I want our members to contribute content to our newsletter. If you want to submit an article, don't worry about perfection [trust me, ask Roger or any of our Commanders!]. It's my job to clean up your submission. I'll take care of the punctuations, the grammar and the spelling. Your job is to get your content to me. I'm also looking for photos. Whether it's from your time in service or today [or yesterday].

This brings me to my final challenge. I want our Post and our members to know you. I'm going to get this done by doing a feature on every member [at least, that's my goal]. To get this rolling, I want every member to answer the following [and submit the answers to me by US Mail or to my email account at galinluk@hotmail.com:

## MEMBER FOCUS

1. Hometown:

2. Education [High School, College, other training]:

3. Branch of service:

4. Final rank:

5. Duty location:

6. MOS: the numeric designation and in lay words;

7. Current profession:

8. Why did you serve?

9. Is there a family history of military service?

10. Interesting story about your time in the service?

11. Why did you join Post 384?

12. What are your goals with Post 384?

13. Your partner's name?

14. Children? Their names?

I will also, need a recent photo and photos from your time in service.

I want to thank Post member Mario Gomez for stepping up and being the first one to answer the questions and providing me with his photos.

Galín Luk,  
3rd Vice Commander

# Cathay Post Team Plans for Newsletter Upgrade

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On Sunday August 18, 2013, Post volunteers Vice Commander Galin Luk, Secretary John Li, Thanh Huynh and Support Member Michael Louie (and Roger S. Dong who snapped the photos) met at one of the efficient conference rooms of the law firm of Foley and Lardner LLP at the original A. P. Giannini castle on 555 California Street (aka: the Triple Nickel) to discuss enhancing the production and management of the Post's Cathay Chronicle.



The Triple Nickel on California Street.

The Team discussed using a software program called Mailchimp that will make editing draft articles easier and automate the email distribution of our newsletters every month to our members, support team and friends. It will still be important

for all writers to meet our deadlines, so that there is sufficient time to edit the articles and send out the final drafts a week before each monthly meeting. The only glitch at this time is that printing hard copies generated by the MailChimp software results in one long, continuous sheet. This is excellent for electronic distribution, but the digital file must be manually segmented to print hard copies for mailing to some of our members.

Hard copies are also needed for face to face meetings to promote our Post. More importantly, the Post needs hard copies to file in our Post history books for display at our Post. At our last Post meeting it was agreed that we will publish all our newsletters in one or more binders so that visitors and our own members can review the newsletters which now, are in fact, our his-

toric files.

Galin supplied a cornucopia of doughnuts, and Michael borrowed a few granules of Peet's coffee beans from his office stash to brew for our coffee aficionados.

We began at 0900 hours and finished at noon, then adjourned to the R & G Lounge for their famous baked lobster and baked crab dishes and champagne.

Unfortunately, no one had enough cash for the good dishes, so we had to settle for steam rice, honey glazed ribs, sautéed beef, and a fish with veggies dish.

Roger S. Dong  
Post Reporter



Left to right: John Li, Michael Louie, Galin Luk, Thanh Huynh

# Remembering 9/11—and our Heroes



Photo courtesy of <http://www.911memorial.org>

On September 11, 2001, there were many heroes. Many remember that 363 firefighters and police officers and 38 first responders perished when the South and North Towers of the World Trade Center imploded. These public servants were all considered heroes because they gave their lives in the line of duty. We should never forget their heroic efforts to rescue several thousand citizens from around the world who worked or were visiting the World Trade Center on 9/11. Each of these public servants were doing the risky jobs they had chosen. They perished in the line of duty. Even among the many heroes, there were four special heroes. Their stories must be repeated for their heroism must not be forgotten.



Zhe "Zack" Zeng

First, there was the 28 year old Zhe "Zack" Zeng, a young banker with the Bank of New York. He was not a typical citizen. Zack was an immigrant who came to America when he was 15, studied hard and graduated from Rochester University. While at Rochester, Zack completed his Emergency Medical Technician certification and then volunteered as an EMT. That fateful 9/11 morning, Zack arrived via subway into Manhattan shortly after both Twin Towers had been struck. He dashed to his nearby office, picked up some supplies and

equipment, and then darted several blocks to the Towers before each one collapsed. After the dust finally settled, Zack was nowhere to be seen. His family and friends had no idea what happened to him. Some assumed the worse, but initially it was all speculation.

For Zack's heroism, fate would not allow this



Zack comforting a victim before the calamity (Sing Tao).

"Good Samaritan" to go unnoticed. Fox 5 Television, which had employed a surveillance camera focused on the front of Twin Towers, captured the scene in front of the South Tower up until that structure collapsed and video went dark. Weeks later, the Fox videos were played for public viewing. Even though Zack's mother rarely watched the Fox channel, that evening she watched in horror when the camera captured the view of Zack render-

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# Remembering 9/11—and our Heroes

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ing comfort and aid to a victim before the South Tower collapsed crushing everyone in the scene.

While stunning and shocking to his mom and family, there was now closure for Zack's family. New York City officials were contacted, and his remains were excavated and confirmed by DNA tests. With strong urging of Zack's friends, co-workers and former college mates, the Governor of New York and the Mayor of New York City honored Zack with a city wide ceremony and the naming of one block of Bayard Street, Zhe "Zack" Zeng Way.

It still incredible that despite this young man's true heroism, most Americans, even those who live in New York city have never heard of Zack's heroism. In April 2009, this reporter visited New York City and stood at the eastern end of Zack Zeng Way for one hour, and asked each passerby "Do you know Zack Zeng?"

There was not a single positive response. During the hour a young school teacher was leading a over a dozen young Chinese students on an a class excursion and as they were passing by the Zack Zeng monument. I asked her, if she knew who Zack was. She did not.

I plan to repeat this exercise the next time I am in New York. I hope the next time, someone will tell me he or she knew Zack and his heroics.

Zack Zeng was not the only Chinese American hero on 9/11.

Flight Attendant (Purser) Betty Ong exemplified extraordinary courage during the final 30 plus minutes of American Airline Flight 11 which crashed into the World Trade North Tower. During the hijacking, Betty took the courageous step of reporting critical elements of the hijacking and the hijackers to authorities, maintaining her calm and composure throughout. She was proclaimed a hero by Mr. Tom Kean, the Chairman, 9/11 Commission who described Betty's actions in the harrowing and fatal flight as demonstrating



Betty Ong

"duty, courage, selflessness and love."

Next, there was Isaac Hoopii, the off duty Pentagon officer and a very fit veteran, who made more than a dozen trips into the Pentagon which was engulfed in fire, gasoline fumes and smoke after American Airlines Flight 77 had been hijacked and used as a battering ram on the Pentagon. Isaac personally carried 15 victims out of the Pentagon inferno, and was decorated with the Department of Defense's highest honor, the Medal of Valor for his courageous and heroic actions.



Isaac Hoopii

And then, there was David Lim, a NY Port Authority K9 Officer, who was assisting six firefighters lifting an elderly lady down a flight of stairs in the North Tower when it collapsed. Miraculously, Lim, all six firefighters and the lady were wedged in an air pocket and all survived and later rescued. Zack, Betty,



David Lim

Isaac and David were Chinese Americans. We salute all of them, both the fallen heroes and the surviving heroes. They are an inspiration of courage for everyone to emulate.

Roger S. Dong  
Post Reporter



## In Memoriam—Bok Pon

On July 21, 2009, Cathay Post #384 and the San Francisco community lost a visionary, a renaissance man, a dedicated and loving father, husband and a great leader.

Born in Canton, China on September 28, 1941, Bok Pon immigrated to the United States as a young boy. From 1962 to 1965, he proudly served in the Army as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. Bok devoted his post military career to public service. He was elected to the California Republic Party as the state Vice Chairman of the Northern Region and volunteered in numerous community service organizations.

Among members of Cathay Post # 384, Bok's most revered, remembered and significant contributions were in revitalizing Cathay Post #384. It's a story about a historic Post that many had forgotten about, and would likely not exist today without Commander Pon and a chance meeting with longtime member John Nelson.

Commander Pon's involvement with the Post became necessary when the Post began experiencing significant membership problems from the 1970s through the 1990s. These problems were not unique to the Post; American Legion Posts in general were having a difficult go at attracting members and retaining membership. By the 1990s, Cathay Post was doing nothing more than collecting rent from its first floor tenants. When long time Post member John Nelson reconnected with the Post in 2000, he had learned that the Post had stopped filing some of the paperwork neces-



Bok Pon, circa 1963

sary for it to maintain its active status and that the Post had deferred on capital maintenance and upkeep.

During one visit to the Post, John spoke with a representative of the church leasing the Post's first floor and was told about a leak inside the church.

When John asked why the church did not tell the Post about the leak, the representative replied that they "were praying for the leak to stop."

John soon answered their prayers. Using rental money in the Post's savings account, John got the leak fixed. Saddened by what had become of the Post, John then set about getting the Post back into good standing by getting its paperwork in order.

With Post Headquarter in disrepair, John also started on a capital improvement project. That led to his meeting with Bok Pon in 2002. Bok, intent on joining an Asian American Post, had just returned from the Department of California American Le-

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## In Memoriam—Bok Pon

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gion where he was told he needed to see John Nelson.

Bok then made his way over to Cathay Post's Headquarter, marched up a flight of stairs and then introductions were made. John called Bok a "Godsend."

Both shared a passion and interest in revitalizing Cathay Post. Bok soon took over the reigns and from 2003 to 2007, Bok served as Post Commander while John served as Adjutant.



Bok Pon at Boulder Creek 2008

Through dogged determination and tireless effort, Commander Pon recruited new members, raised capital and infused in the organization a sense of pride, unity and dedication to the community and public service that was no doubt part of the founding members' ethos and which are still evident today.

Commander Pon made Cathay Post a place to hang out, plan for community events, and support wounded and homebound veterans.

Some of Commander Pon's goals have become reality. Commander Pon never forgot the importance of public service, particularly those who continue to put their lives on the line on a daily basis.

The Post now has a trust fund to pay the full tuition of returning veterans attending San Francisco City College.

He also helped create an award given during the Post's annual dinner to San Francisco's top firefighters and police officers.

Galin Luk  
3rd Vice Commander

### **Bok Pon—A Man with Boundless Energy**

It is easy to forget people when they are no longer with us, especially as we are scampering around handling our personal affairs and doing our volunteer work. But, it has now been 2 years since Commander Emeritus Bok Pon left us. I will never forget Bok; he was a tremendous man with boundless energy.

Cathay Post has not been the same since he departed. During his final year with us, our Post held over 50 events. Approximately an event a week, a torrid pace that the Post could only handle because of Bok's tireless energy, leadership, and vision for Cathay Post.

The Post is now hosting 1-2 events a month, something that the Post can be proud of because it is reasonable and sustainable in light of our membership, and being without Bok Pon.

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# Bok Pon—A Man With Boundless Energy

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No one member today can rival Bok Pon's energy, devotion and total commitment to the success of Cathay Post. The Post was able to host an event almost every week because Bok did most of the preparation work. Bok will probably be the last bilingual Commander with fluency in Cantonese, a useful and important skill dealing with many of our Chinatown leaders and organizations. Bi-lingual leadership within the Post is a rare commodity. Today, we must rely on some of our support group members to effectively communicate with those Chinatown groups still run by elders who rely on Cantonese.

Few of us were members of this Post at the end of the 20th Century. Had it not been for one earlier Post hero, John Nelson, there might not have been a Post for Bok Pon to resurrect. Our thanks to John for all he did to sustain Cathay Post for those years as our membership aged and became less active [a problem familiar to all American Legion Posts].

Sometime around the turn of the Century, Bok Pon found Cathay Post on life support. He was shaken that our Post was so inactive. Bok decided to resuscitate our Post, and there would be nothing to hinder or stop his charge.

About a dozen years ago, Bok began to make our Post friendly and welcoming to our members and guests. He improved our environment with photos of our visitors and our events. He made sure that our history was well documented and properly



Bok Pon

displayed. He would pick up snacks at CostCo so that there was always something to munch on at our Post. Remember all the raspberry twists and chocolate candy he sprinkled around the Post? They aren't here anymore, because no one has picked up this tradition.

He would meet with lower and high ranking officials to promote our Post.

Even after learning that his liver was only going to last a few more months, he jumped on a jet to meet with VA Secretary Eric Shenseki and convinced the former 4 star Army General to visit Cathay Post.

Not only did Bok resurrect our Post, he put the Post on the American Legion map. Our Post is not just known in our own District and Department of Cali-

fornia, the Post is now known nationally.

Some of us have forgotten what a tremendous fund raiser, our Commander Emeritus was. He raised thousands of dollars for our Post and was always getting more people and organizations to sponsor and support our organization. The Post's 75th anniversary album is a perfect example of this.

Beyond our shores, Bok Pon even initiated friendly relationships with a veterans group in China. If it was anyone else other than the all American Bok Pon, the FBI might have been asking a lot of questions.

But Bok Pon had a vision that

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# Bok Pon—A Man With Boundless Energy

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*(Continued from page 15)*

there had to be an option other than fighting between two of the most powerful militaries in the world. Military veterans around the world share a common bond of patriotic national service.

Bok started the annual gala to honor our local firefighters and police officers. He worked with Rose Chung to sponsor Asian American beauty pageants.

The Asian queens and princesses add much needed color and glamour to our events and help raise funds in our raffle ticket sales. They really light up the room when we visit veterans at the Fort Miley Veterans Medical Facility.

Among many of Bok Pon achievements, perhaps his most important accomplishment was his recruitment effort.

Today, with the exception of a few of our most senior members, almost all of our Post members were either recruited by Bok Pon, or were recruited by those who initially were recruited by Bok. For example, one Post member was recruited by Bok, who in turn, recruited Galin Luk, W.T. JeanPierre, Walter Chiao, Bruce Smith, Carl Lewis, Tom Davac, Jake Goetzow, Joe Chan, Richard Hum and Kurt Lee. Other Post members recruited by Bok Pon have done the same.

While Bok was our renaissance man, he was, more importantly, a man of action. Bok was a unique individual who devoted a huge amount of time to resurrecting our Post, but he never neglected his family.

Agnes Pon will tell anyone who wants to know, that Bok was the ideal father and husband. He never neglected Agnes or their

children. In addition to being our greatest leader, Bok Pon should be a role model for many of us, especially those of us who are very busy, and sometimes neglect our families.

And so today, we all remember Commander Emeritus Bok Pon, a leader among leaders, and the American Legion veteran whose individual efforts resurrected our Cathay Post and enabled the rest of us to have a home for all of us to serve our Community. Thank you Bok.

Roger S. Dong  
Post Reporter

## Special Presentation...

### “China—The Next 10 Years”

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Our in-house China Specialist, Roger S. Dong, former Defense Attache in Taipei, Taiwan and Assistant Air Attache in Hong Kong, will be giving his latest lecture title "China - the next 10 years," after our meeting and lunch this Saturday. So don't miss this.

Donations will also be accepted for our Post's general fund. One Post member has pledged \$100.00 donation for this event.



# Leadership—Grow Your Flowers, Pluck Your Weeds

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Randy Hetrix, founder and CEO of TRX

Randy Hetrix is a former U.S. Navy Seal and founder and CEO of TRX, a company offering an effective fitness program and equipment. He has built TRX's culture from his background as a Navy Seal where the Seal Teams' culture gets people to do very dangerous things for little money.

Randy gave a presentation at the Inc. Magazine Leadership Forum in San Diego on June 12, 2013. You can see the videos from his presentation here: <http://www.inc.com/andy-hetrick/trx-culture-glue-for-your-company.html>

During his presentation, he talked extensively about how culture is the glue of your company or organization because it pulls everyone together. It should be tied to your brand and to your hiring.

One phrase that stuck out to me was, "Grow your flowers, pluck your weeds." I'm no botanist, but, as far as I know, you can't turn a weed into a desirable flower. But weeds can overtake the beautiful flowers and kill them. Left untouched, weeds will eventually take over an entire garden. For a beautiful garden and ecosystem, you've got to tend the flowers while still plucking the weeds. The same goes for your employees. You've got to grow your employees who are flowers and let go of the ones who are weeds. Otherwise, your weeds of employees or members demoralize your flowers of employees and, if not handled, en-

courage your flowers to leave.

For us veterans, we understand the value of teamwork. We also appreciate the value of training. The military invests so much into each new recruit to ensure they are ready to do their jobs. On the other hand, we are also used to working with what we are given. That means we could be bad bosses or bad followers and still have a job. Doing that in your business only hurts your bottom line.

We can certainly apply the good practices we learned in the military to our businesses in the civilian world.

Work hard to create a team that is pulled together by your company culture and values. Invest in training your flowers. Be a good leader. But don't accept that you must keep your weeds. Let them go as fast as you can. You, your employees or your members who are flowers and your company or organization will thrive even more because of it.

Contributing Writer,  
Laura Renner

Laura Renner is a United States Air Force Academy graduate who attained the rank of Captain before discharging. She is also



Laura Renner, The Hiring Coach

the Post's newest member.

Laura is the Hiring Coach who helps business owners to make smart hiring decisions by making the hiring process easier and more effective for them.

Her next one-day workshop, "Hire with Intention: The Soup to Nuts of Effective Hiring" occurs on Oct. 2, 2013, from 8.30 AM to 5 PM at the Oakland Chamber of Commerce.

For more information and to register, click here: <https://hiringcoachworkshop.eventbrite.com/>. Use the PROMO Code VETERAN to receive \$100 off the registration fee.

# Continued... From the Commander's Desk

(Continued from page 5)

national commander, Fang A. Wong, at greater length about issues affecting the American Legion. In addition, I had the opportunity to chat with the current commander of the Lt. Kimlau Post No. 1291 in New York City. A number of photos were taken between members from our Post and #1291, which will be published in a future newsletter.

If your schedule permits, please attend our month-

ly meeting on Saturday, September 14th.

David Y. Wong,  
Commander



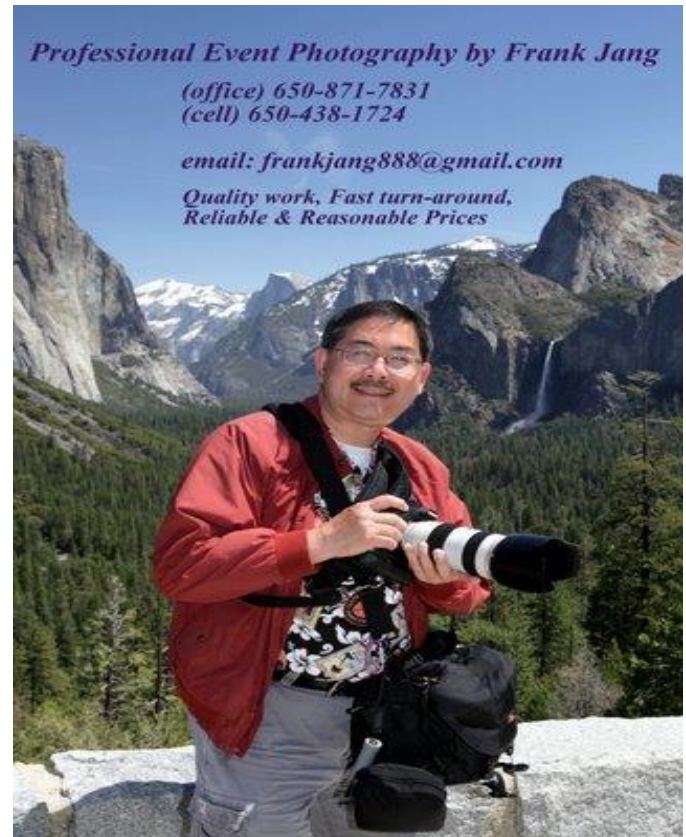
Houston—American Legion National Convention 2013



The George R. Brown Convention Center



Our Post representatives getting fueled for another full day at the convention center.



## Member Focus—Mario Gomez

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Mario Gomez 2013

I'm proud to introduce you to Post member and native San Franciscan Mario Gomez.

After graduating from Balboa High School, Mario traveled across the country and earned an A.S. from Montgomery College in Maryland, a B.A. in Business from N.L.U. in Virginia and a M.S. from American University in Washington D.C.

In search of an adventure, Mario joined the Navy. He served active duty from 1977 to 1981 and in the active reserve from 1981 to 1992 as an Operations Specialist, a TAC Air Controller, Intelligence, Military Sea Command Assistant, Naval Control Shipping and Anti-Submarine Air Controller.

Mario attained the rank of Senior Chief Petty Officer [E-8], Operations Specialist before discharging due to health reasons.

If you see Mario, you should ask him about his time in service. He's got a lot to be proud of and he has a lot to share.

Mario traveled to 33 countries, and in his spare time shot down incoming missiles and aircraft in the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf, served on the Admiral's Staff in Desert Storm, engaged Libyan fighter planes, and assisted with logistics in the Falkland Island Conflict.

Following his distinguished mili-

tary career, Mario continued to put his military experience to good use and for the benefit of our Country.

He worked for defense contractor Vitro Corporation designing and testing tomahawk cruise missiles and SM2 surface to air missiles. Mario currently works as a Local 6 IBEW electrician.

After looking at many other American Legion post, Mario joined Cathay Post #384 in January 2013 because it is a very active and friendly post. Mario could have joined many of the other Posts in the City and the other Posts in the Bay Area. We're proud that Mario selected Cathay Post #384.

Galin Luk  
3rd Vice Commander



Mario Gomez attaining the rank of OS2 [E5] in 1980



Mario Gomez after promotion to CPO [E7] In 1989

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Photo by Stephen Sexton

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**Executive Committee Photo taken on May, 2013**

Top, L to R: Adjutant Tony Zhang, Secretary John Li, Treasurer Ed Wong  
 Bottom, L to R: 1st Vice Commander Jay Pon, Commander David Y. Wong, 2nd Vice Commander Nelson Lum,  
 and 3rd Vice Commander Galin Luk





[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

## Chronicle Staff

**Galin Luk** is the Editor and responsible for the publication of the Cathay Post Chronicle.

**Adjutant Tony Zhang, Secretary John Li, Clara Pon, and Mr. Mike Louie** are the Technical Layout Editors.

**Roger Dong** is our chief reporter.

The Editor welcomes article or letter submissions but reserves the right to publish, republish or not publish any submission and to edit articles or letters as appropriate. Submissions must include your name, address, and phone number. The Editor will call to verify authenticity. All submissions should be emailed to the Editor at [GalinLuk@hotmail.com](mailto:GalinLuk@hotmail.com) by the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month preceding the next month's Newsletter.

**Thanks to all our Post Commanders for contributing to this edition of our Cathay Chronicle.**

Primary Business Address  
1524 Powell Street  
San Francisco, CA 94133

Phone: 415.392.2882  
Fax: 415.392.2882  
E-mail: [cathaypost384@gmail.com](mailto:cathaypost384@gmail.com)  
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## Cathay Post No. 384 American Legion Executive Committee

**Commander:** David Y. Wong

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander:** Jay Pon

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander:** Nelson Lum

**3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander:** Galin Luk

**Adjutant:** Tony Zhang

**Secretary:** John Li

**Treasurer:** Edward Wong

**Past Commander & Historian:** Dale C. King

