



# CATHAY DISPATCH

Veterans - Sounding Off Since 1931

## DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY By Nelson Lum

“Don’t count the days; make the days count,” said American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett.



Dale Barnett’s son, Joseph had the honor of capping his dad as the new National Commander.

*Photo by Lucas Carter.*

On September 3, 2015 at the 97<sup>th</sup> American Legion National Convention in Baltimore, delegates to the convention elected Commander Dale Barnett as its national commander for the year 2015 to 2016. A member of The American Legion for 20 years, he will now lead and represent the 2.2 million veteran member organization.



Dale Barnett being sworn in as the 2015-2016 American Legion National Commander.

*Photo by Lucas Carter.*

Commander Barnett is a graduate of West Point and retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel after serving 22 years as an infantry officer. During his service in the Army, Commander Barnett was deployed to the Middle-East during the Gulf War, Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm serving under the late General Norman Schwarzkopf. After his retirement from the military, he then went on to fulfill his lifelong goal of teaching and coaching. He returned to Georgia, took accelerated classes to obtain his teaching certificate, and began to teach history, geography, and political science at a local high school.

The following 15 years, Commander Barnett brought American Legion programs such as Boys State and Oratorical Contest into the schools. He himself attended Boys State in 1969. He was named Teacher of the Year in 2006. He retired from teaching a few years later in 2011 and focused his energy exclusively for The American Legion. He is a member of Post 105 in Fayetteville, GA. He ascended through The Legion holding various leadership roles until he reached the top of the pinnacle as the national commander of The American Legion. The Department of Georgia hasn’t had a national commander since 1990, making him the fourth national commander from Georgia.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Important Dates:

- Oct 3– Area 2 Meeting in San Leandro
- Oct 5-12—Fleet Week
- Oct 10—Monthly Meeting at 11 a.m. ay SFWMVB rm 202
- Oct 11—Italian Heritage Parade @ 12:30
- Oct 12—Columbus Day
- Oct 31-Halloween

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### Commander Barnett, Continued

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He is married to Donna, his high school sweetheart of 40 years and they have five (5) children together; two are grown with families of their own and the other three (3) ages 16, 12, and 11 are busy with school. Commander Dale Barnett is being praised as a man with impeccable integrity and one who possesses the “can do” attitude. His motto is “Duty, honor, country.” During his acceptance speech, he went on to describe what each of those words means to him. Duty – “The first lesson of basic training was to know your job and do your job to the best you could.” Honor – “It was an honor to wear the military uniform.” Country – “Our country needs us.” (To read more on

his acceptance speech, go to <http://www.legion.org/convention/229738/duty-honor-country>)

Commander Barnett’s initiative for his term is “Walk for veterans.” It is to raise awareness about veterans and The Legion’s impact on communities and families. Much of the proceeds donated to the walks will be to the National Emergency Fund (NEF), which helps Legion family members and posts that are affected by natural disasters. The goal for this year’s fundraiser is \$1 million.

We at Cathay Post No. 384 congratulate National Commander Dale Barnett. He has our support and we look forward to meeting him when he visits Northern California.

### 97<sup>th</sup> National Convention Highlights *By Roger Dong*

This year, our 97<sup>th</sup> annual convention was held at the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) in Baltimore, Maryland from August 28, to September 3, 2015. The BCC is huge and each of the first three floors is over 300,000 square feet. I got plenty of exercise each day strolling the BCC and did not need to use the gym. The size of the BCC made it pretty difficult to get around for many of our senior Legionnaires. I saw one senior on a scooter that was immobilized because his scooter battery was exhausted. A 3D GPS is recommended the next time we use this

large structure.

California, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Mississippi delegations stayed at the famous Marriott Renaissance Harborplace hotel. It is a very large hotel and there is only one bank of elevators serving all 10+ floors. The Renaissance is one hotel where when you step out of your room and turn the wrong direction heading for the elevators, you would walk an extra 120 yards to get to the elevator. Some seniors were pooped when they made the trip from their rooms to the lobby to catch the bus to the BCC. The remaining Department

delegations were distributed among 10 other hotels in the proximity of the BCC.

Members of Cathay Post including myself attended the annual awards meeting and luncheon of the National American Legion Press Association. We learned that California posts, detachment, and districts won 11 of the 41 national awards. Cathay Post took home three of the 11 - 1<sup>st</sup> place to Commander Nelson Lum for his excellent article titled "National Security - One of the Four Pillars;" 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Ms. Clara Pon for overall excellence of

*(Continued on page 9)*



## COMMANDER NELSON LUM

October is here. For some of you, that means figuring out what costume your kids will be wearing when they go trick or treating. For those of us whose kids are grown, we must also be prepared to provide treats for the youngsters when they come knocking on the door. Before long, the holiday season will be upon us. Father Time marches rapidly as 2015 approaches its final quarter. Our SF Giants put up a great fight despite the many injuries to its key players and the 49ers have been, well let's say - entertaining.

Before talking about what's in store for October, I want you to know the "move" back into the War Memorial Veteran Building (WMVB) took place during the month of September. While there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, The Legion has reestablished its foothold in the building. On September 16, 2015 at 11:30 a.m., the Honorable Mayor Edwin Lee attended the rededication ceremony of the San Francisco WMVB. In addition to the customary celebratory remarks, he reiterated his desire to end chronic veteran homelessness by the end of this year. We at Cathay Post support

the mayor's efforts.

The \$200 million major seismic upgrade and space renovation rendered the WMVB to its former magnificent glory. Cathay Post No. 384's assigned office in the WMVB is in operation. Any member who would like to visit the building and our office should contact Junior Past Commander Jay Pon. Our post will support any activities in the spaces allocated to The Legion that is covered under the four pillars of the American Legion. As has been mentioned numerous times before, we will only have ourselves to blame if we do not utilize the spaces allocated to the posts of The American Legion. While the issue involving the definition of the term "patriotic organization" is still a matter before the court, our usage of the facility must increase in order to justify our long held position. That being said, we need more space in order to provide the needed services to our veterans.

October typically is a busy month for members of Cathay Post. Fleet Week will take place during October 5 through October 12, 2015. Aside from all the usual activi-

ties which include the fantastic Blue Angels air show, we usually host a luncheon for about 200 sailors and Marines. Unfortunately due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts with the Fleet Week Committee, we will not be able to hold one this year. We hope to resume our annual Fleet Week lunch next year.

The Italian Heritage Parade will take place on Sunday, October 11, 2015. We will be a participant in the parade as usual. However, this will be a very special event because we will be joined by a locomotive on wheels from the 40/8 or 40 & 8 (read 40 et 8) Voiture from the Bay Area. It will add a tremendous amount of flair to our contingent. For those that don't know, the origin of the 40/8 goes back to WWI when troops and horses were transported to battle by trains. Each boxcar of the train was able to carry either 40 men or 8 horses, thus, the name 40 & 8. While we have been somewhat isolated in the past, through the excellent publishing efforts of our Cathay Dispatch, our post is becoming well known throughout the state and many parts of the country.

(Continued on page 8)



Nelson Lum

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Cathay Post Member  
since: 2005

Branch: Army

Final Rank: SPC

*"In order to grow, it is essential for us to break down the barriers and to establish working relationships among different Legion posts and across districts."*



**Roger Dong**

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Cathay Post Member since: 2005

Branch: Air Force

Final Rank: Lt. Col.

*“Our post along with all the other American Legion posts within the Eighth District Council have been provided with the vintage style wood panel offices to continue the American Legion tradition.”*

**1<sup>st</sup> VICE COMMANDER ROGER DONG**

September was another stunning month. Not a month goes by that is not filled with great events for The Legion. This month was the magnificent reopening of our War Memorial Veterans Building (WMVB).



Rededication ceremony in the Herbst Theatre on September 15, 2015.

Our WMVB officially reopened on Wednesday, September 15, 2015. Even though finishing work was still in progress, the public was shown three of four floors of this historical charm. While this only represents a partial reopening of the building, the great news was most of the spaces assigned to the veterans which includes room 101, our American Legion War Memorial Commission office on the first floor, the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which houses the offices and meeting rooms along with the back portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor have been modernized and are ready to facilitate the business of the American Legion. What a huge joy it was to return home to such a magnificent building.

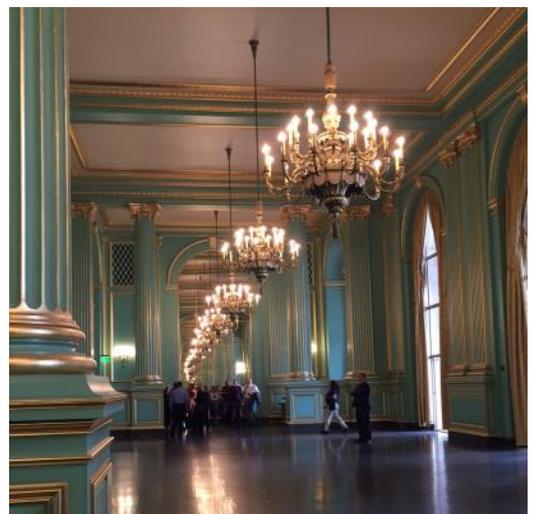
Our post along with all the other American Legion posts within the Eighth District Council have been provided with the vintage style wood panel offices to continue the American Legion tradition. We are very pleased The Department of California Ameri-

can Legion Auxiliary decided to return to the WMVB to conduct its operation. It is great to see the staff's smiling faces whenever we encounter them in the halls.

The San Francisco Posts of the American Legion are the beneficiary of these upgraded and seismic retrofitted offices. Approximately \$3 million worth of materials and labor were spent on the floor spaces designated to us veterans. This includes Room 101, the offices of the American Legion War Memorial Commission, and the Eighth District Council.

Several years ago, Assemblyman David Chiu, then president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, sponsored legislation which passed that raised \$200 million in certificates of participation (COP) to fund the seismic upgrade and renovation of the WMVB. The COP is a general fund secured debt program by the City to pay for special projects. These types of certificates do not require voter approval; however, it does carry with it a much higher interest rate.

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The beautiful Green Room with gold trim and bold gold curtains.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE COMMANDER HELEN WONG

As we head into October, the start of Fall and the rush of activities seems to be on us sooner than expected. With the annual San Francisco Fleet Week when the City is visited by thousands of Navy sailors and Marines from all over the nation and joint military forces from other countries, it is quite an event to experience. Due to scheduling difficulties of the Fleet Week Committee, we will not be hosting the luncheon for the sailors and Marines as planned.

For many of us veterans of past wars and conflicts, seeing these young faces brings back a lot of memories of when we were their age and full of hope and adventurous spirit. Many of us left home for the first time and started learning about life in the world. We learned how to get along with others of different backgrounds, cultures, religions, race, and work ethics.

It doesn't seem so long ago that we had to endure conditions in the battlefield, in the units, in the branch of services which demanded extreme physical endurance and sometimes emotional endurance to survive. We put up with

conditions which now would be considered abuse and torture. Yet for many of us, it was the price we had to pay to be loyal, to be patriotic to the cause of protecting freedom. Serving our country seemed to be the pinnacle of our lives as far as what we had achieved for the good of all our brothers and sisters in arms and we will remain forever fiercely protective of that freedom and those who served.

For some, the choice to serve was made for them whether being drafted or for financial or educational or career training reasons so they had to adapt to the situation. Military force members these days have not had to worry about being drafted so they enter military service voluntarily and for many of the same reasons as past generations. Some of the same physical and emotional challenges still exist and with the present instant access to news, social media communications, the pressures to continue to serve while being bombarded with negative information is quite an obstacle. While some handle it well, we need to keep in mind that not all have that capability.

Whether we have someone in our families with a service member or know of someone currently serving, or as we interact with the young sailors and Marines that floods our city in October, keep in mind we all can reach out to find out how they are adjusting to life in the military or afterwards. It doesn't take much effort to find out where they are from, where they have served, where they have traveled with the military, where they have relatives or friends, and to tell them as former military, we care about what happens to them.

It doesn't take much effort to let them know after their active duty career is over, there are veterans service organizations, such as the American Legion, that exist to help them with the transition back to civilian life as we all have been there. We could be the first contact that many will have with someone from the veteran community.

Again, let's make a difference in a life by making that effort: Reach out and touch someone in a heartfelt and meaningful way! Show that you care.



**Helen Wong**

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1 (415) 797-7384

Cathay Post Member since: 1990

Branch: Army

Final Rank: Lt. Col.

*“Again, let’s make a difference in a life by making that effort—reach out and touch someone in a heartfelt and meaningful way.”*



San Francisco Fleet Week 2015  
Center for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response

## Veterans Summit

6 October 2015

**Overview:** The Veteran Employment Summit is an opportunity for veterans, agency officials, company executives, hiring managers, and potential employers to come together and discuss the best practices for recruiting transitioning and retiring members of the military as well as military veterans. The conversation will focus on what attracts veterans to companies, the challenges faced when communicating military culture and skill sets, why these are attractive to companies, and what incentivizes veterans to stay with an organization.

**Events:** Two simultaneous events will occur on Tuesday, 6 October. The Veteran Career Workshop/Expo; and the Employer Summit. Ideally both of these events would be co-located to allow for maximum opportunities for engagement between veterans and employers.

- The Workshop/Expo begins the morning session with a classroom style setup; approximately three such set-ups would be ideal. The purpose is to hold tutorial sessions for veterans and transitioning services members on resume writing, the job application process, interview skills, and a session on entrepreneurship. The American Legion will take the lead on this area from the office of Veteran Employment in Washington, DC.
- The Workshop/Expo will begin the afternoon session with a Career Expo. This will require a job fair-type setup with tables for employers and room for signage, etc.
- The Employer Summit will be a full day event geared towards bridging communication between senior executives, hiring managers, and the military. This Senior Leader Seminar style-event, seeks to continue the dialogue with corporate executives about best practices for hiring Veterans and transitioning military. This will require a theater-style set-up with a front table set up for panel-style discussion, and a podium.
- Both the Workshop/Expo and the Employer Summit would participate in a buffet style lunch, with table seating to create an opportunity for networking and dialogue.
- There will be an invited speaker for the lunchtime event.
- The day will conclude with a hosted reception involving participants from both events.

# Military, Veterans & Staff

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(Tell Your Friends too!)



## Nelson Lum, Continued

*(Continued from page 3)*

This led to the expansion of fellowship with other Legion posts in the area. In order to grow, it is essential for us to break down the barriers and to establish working relationships among different Legion posts and across districts. All our members are invited to join in the parade. You may want to be a part of the color guard or just march along side the vehicles. Please contact Secretary John Li if you are interested in coming. It is important for us to know ahead of time how many of you will be coming in order to make the

proper preparations.

On October 28, a fund raising event will be held at the SFWMVB Green Room from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. to promote a permanent resource to support veteran activities within the building. The event will be co-hosted by the American Legion War Memorial Commission, American Legion Eighth District Council, and One Vet One Voice. Prominent city officials have already committed to attend. The event is designed to raise funds to equip the various meeting rooms with electronics and appliances for the kitchens so that

they will be more useful and facilitate media and technological needs. This event deserves and needs our support. We will update you with further information as the event draws closer.

Our monthly meeting will be on October 10, 2015. The location of this meeting has been changed to the **WMVB, Room 202, at 401 Van Ness Avenue**. It will provide an opportunity for our members to visit the newly remodeled building and contribute to the usage of the space. Hope to see you all at the meeting.

## Roger Dong, Continued

*(Continued from page 4)*

All visitors to our newly modernized building were stunned and surprised at the beauty of the restoration. Thanks to the brilliant power of LED lighting, the building now glows like it never did before. These new lights enable our building to glow after sunset and brighter than any other building in the Civic Center complex. I should add a reminder as to who invented the LED technology which has brightened our lives. Dr. Tsuji Nakayama, an

Asian American, received the Nobel Prize for inventing the LED technology 20 years ago.

A momentous achievement occurred in September, the final review and the first stage of the formal acceptance of important revisions to our post by-laws. The task of revising a post's by-laws is not trivial. It took us many months to complete our revisions which were very admirable. Much thanks for the hard work goes to Junior Past Commander Jay Pon, Commander

Nelson Lum, Assistant Historian Stan Ellexson, and Ms. Clara Pon for planning, drafting, and reviewing the thought-out updates to our by-laws. The required second reading will take place at our next meeting on Saturday, October 10, 2015 at the War Memorial Veterans Building in room 202 beginning at 11:00 a.m.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting and showing anyone who hasn't been to the newly renovated veterans building around.

## Convention, Continued

*(Continued from page 2)*

our Cathay Dispatch in the small post category; and 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Secretary John Li for the post's Facebook page. Two years ago, few Legionnaires had ever heard of our post. However, thanks to the extraordinary talent of Clara's newsletter publishing and composition skills, Cathay Post has established an excellent reputation throughout the Legion. Our post's newsletter has set a great example for other posts to follow.

On the Sunday before the actual convention convenes, everyone enjoyed the annual American Legion National Convention parade. There was a threat of rain, but not a single drop dampened this year's parade with bands from several of our states and always the very colorful bands from our Legion delegations from Puerto Rico, Mexico, France, and our famous China Post.

On the first day of the actual convention, all delegates convened in a large hall where Commander Mike Helm called the convention to order and introduced The Texas Tenors (one of the top four finalists in America's Got Talent) to open up the convention with the singing of our National Anthem. We were then introduced to this year's Master of Ceremonies Mr. Noah Galloway. He is a survivor of an IED (improvised explosive device) during his tour in Iraq in 2005, and an inspiration to all for his exceptional recovery and adjustments to life after losing two limbs. You might also know him from "Dancing With the Stars."

Galloway, Commander Mike Helm, and senior American Legion officers tendered awards to 2014 American

Legion Youth Champions in Baseball All-Academic Team Captain – Matthew Walsh (MA), 2014 Boys Nation President – Matthew Ellow (AL), 2015 Eagle Scout of the Year – Ethan Copple (NE), 2014 National Shooting Sports Champions – Antonio "Andre" Gross (NY) & Michael Steinel (OH), and 2015 National Oratorical Champion – Geeta Minocha (FL).

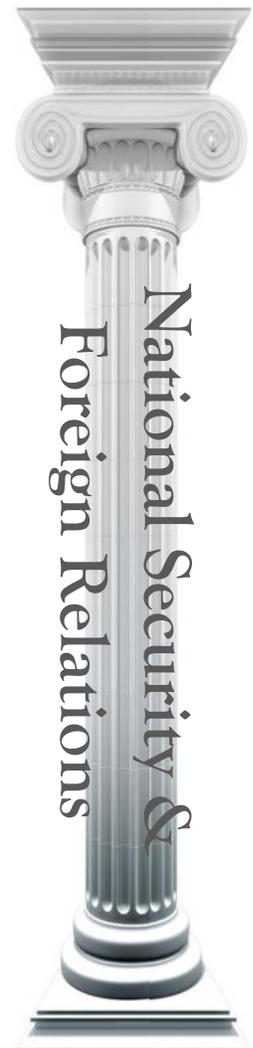
Recipients of this year's 16<sup>th</sup> annual Spirit of Service Awards were presented to outstanding military professionals from the Army – Sgt. Danielle Salley (Fort Bragg, N.C.), Air Force – Senior Airman Richard L. (Baskerville, IL), Navy – Hospital Corpsman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Fredelyne G. Dolores (San Diego, CA), Marine Corps – Sgt. Stephen K. Little (Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan), and Coast Guard – Yeoman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Casey B. Lawrence (Coast Guard Base Elizabeth City, N.C.).

Our National Commander Michael Helm awarded the American Legion's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Medal to former Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

*(Continued on page 10)*



Commander Michael Helm and former Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel, recipient of the American Legion Distinguished Service Medal.  
*Photo by Lucas Carter.*



### Convention, Continued

*(Continued from page 9)*

The convention also honored Deputy Sheriff Ben Adams from Ocala, FL with the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award and Steven Brune from West Point, NE with the Firefighter of the Year Award.

This year's Patriot Award went to The Oak Ridge Boys, the Legion's celebrity "spokesband" for their support in raising awareness for the needs of veterans and their families. The Home Depot received the Employer of the Year Award for Hiring Veterans.

The Hon. Robert A. McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and our Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter made timely and inspiring presentations.

The nine (9) American Legion Commissions and additional Committees reported on resolutions and were voted upon by the delegates. One of the

resolutions that passed quietly was the \$5 increase in the national membership per capita. There was much discussion amongst the members that the increase would be highly contested on the convention floor. It was, however, quietly and quickly passed in the Finance Commission instead. The seven (7) day event culminated with the unanimous election of our 2015-2016 National Commander, Dale Barnett.

Attending the national convention isn't all work and no play. Our post conventioners took a break one evening and wandered and gawked at some of the nightlife in the Inner Harbor area of Baltimore. Commander Lum and I strolled into a big street party where security staff checked everyone's IDs. Nelson and I unhesitatingly displayed our driver's licenses, making us feel young again, but were told not to bother since we were too far over the legal drinking age.



S E A



A I R



L A N D

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*240 years of defending our Nation*

**American Legion**

**Newport Harbor Post 291**

**& Orange County Navy League**

# **Navy Birthday Ball**

AMERICA'S  
NAVY

## **Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>**

*Members and guests from all service branches are invited*

\$40<sup>00</sup> donation per person

Money raised for US Naval

Sea Cadets, El Toro Battalion

Cocktail Attire

Black Tie Optional

Guests, Uniforms and VIPs

World War II Veterans

Seating is Limited

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Office 949.673.5070

No Host Bar: 5:00 pm

Dinner: 6:00 pm

Birthday Celebration: 7:00 pm

Dance: 7:00-11:00 pm



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# Arts & Crafts Fair!

November 7, 2015 9am to 4pm

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San Francisco, CA 94128

For Questions call Brenda Ternullo at 650-455-6755 or email [1vp.ca15@blustarmothers.us](mailto:1vp.ca15@blustarmothers.us)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items selling: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please check off what you need:

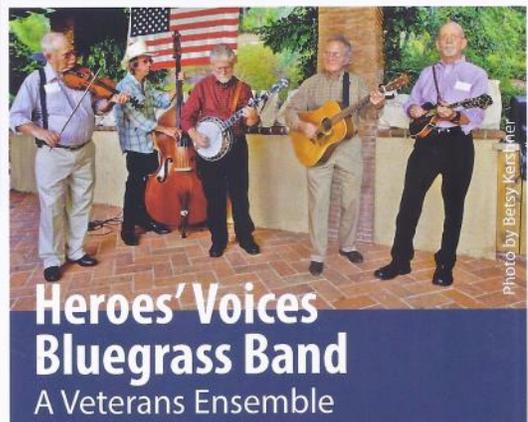
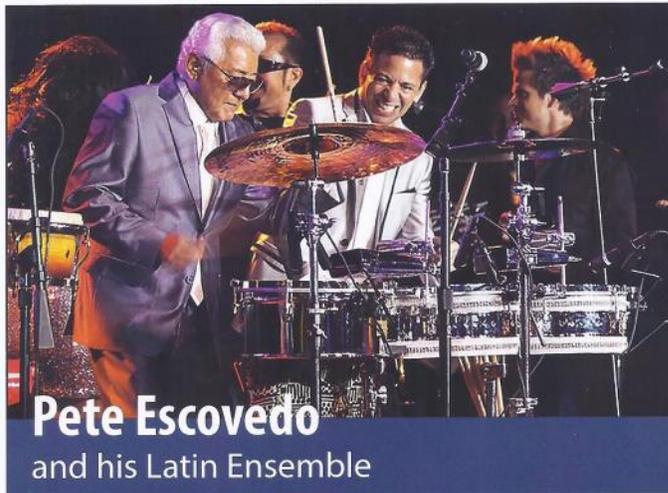
- 1 table \$40.00
- 2 tables \$75.00

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# HEROES' VOICES

## Concert to Honor Veterans

Featuring:



**Veteran's Day**  
November 11, 2015 - 7:30 pm

**Herbst Theatre**  
**War Memorial Veterans Building**

401 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Tickets \$40, \$30 and \$20**

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## Adjutant's Message—Connie Tseng

At the American Legion National Convention in Baltimore last month, the delegates approved a resolution to increase the per capita to national by \$5.00. This increase boosts the per capita between national and the department to a combined total of \$33.50. In anticipation of the proposed increase, our membership voted to raise the dues from \$40 to \$50 effective with the 2016 membership year.

The increase approved by the national delegates will go into effect on January 2016 which means if you pay your dues after

January 20, 2016, our post will loose an additional \$5.00. Please see me before or after our next meeting and bring me your \$50 check if you have yet to renew your membership. I will be happy to process your membership and bring it up to date. Again, our post will "benefit" if you pay your dues before January 2016.

Members that were delinquent in 2015 will see that their continuous service years have been reset back to 1 year. Members that are still delinquent for 2015 need to pay for both years in

order to be current. Per our by-laws, he/she will also need to be voted back into the post. These are rules set up by The Legion and we must adhere to those rules.

On a lighter note, I am so happy to be a part of this organization. I have chosen to be a part of this post because of its unique history. I really stand by the good hearts of all my comrades and recommend our post to all other veterans that I meet. I hope you will also invite other veterans you meet to come join us in our little community.

## Annual China National Aviation Corporation Dinner By Roger Dong



Captain Moon Chin waving.

**B**ack in September, our old and dear friend Captain Moon Chin held his annual China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) reunion dinner for the surviving World War II "Humpsters." The "Humpsters" were those daring air crews who repeatedly challenged the Mighty Himalayas, and were skillful and lucky enough to survive the

very thrilling and dangerous bumpy rides over the unforgiving Himalaya Mountains. More than 2,000 pilots and aircrew did not survive the challenges, and a few crews still have not been found. Even with today's technology and navigation know-how, flying over these legendary peaks is still treacherous as rescue is nearly impossible due to the steep terrain.

This year's CNAC gathering was in Millbrae attended by over 120 people. The gathering consisted mainly of family members of late CNAC

pilots and crewman. Some of the attendees came all the way from China. In recent years, China has participated in genuine efforts to honor the brave American aviators who flew heroically for Flying Tigers and CNAC against the Japanese Imperial military during WWII. The government of China is one of the big donors toward the building of the Flying Tiger Museum. These reunions have taken place for decades. Due to the devotion and generosity of Captain Chin, a spry 103+ years, one hopes these reunions will continue indefinitely.



## SF War Memorial Veterans Building Now Open by Jay Pon

It's official that the War Memorial Veterans Building (WMVB) is in the process of opening for business. On Wednesday, September 16, Mayor Edwin Lee along with numerous dignitaries rededicated the opening of the building. The prevailing theme from the mayor to the various officials was how the city should provide care to the veterans and the building offers the base for such care.



District Commander Nelson Lum spoke on behalf of the veterans and

expressed appreciation for the magnificent building as well as stressing the need for all parties to collaborate for a common goal. The general public was invited to take a tour of the building and its renovated spaces after the ceremony.

As a beneficiary, we, members of the San Francisco posts of the American Legion, are entitled to occupy a significant amount of space within

the building. Although there is currently a dispute between the parties over what organizations may qualify to occupy space in the building, it is now up to us to use the space that has already been allocated. Cathay Post No. 384, as one of the more active posts in our district, should take advantage of this golden opportunity to walk the walk and move as many of our post functions as we can into the WMVB.

The management of the complex will be watching the frequency of how we, the veteran groups, utilize the building. Using the building once a month or less, as some of our groups did in the past, will no longer be adequate. I call on each and every member of our post to think of just one event or meeting we can hold at the WMVB for the next 12 months. The events will need to fall in line with the four pillars of the American Legion which are: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth. Cathay

Post 384 is about 130 members strong. I would love to receive a minimum of 130 suggestions.

Cathay Post 384 has established an office at the WMVB in Room 213B. For the time being, the office will be open on an appointment only basis. There is a computer and printer that members can use. As the elected delegate to the War Memorial Commission and designated by our commander as the person assigned to that office, please email me at: [jpon@jps.net](mailto:jpon@jps.net) if you need to use our office or schedule the use of the various meeting rooms. There are five (5) meeting rooms available for our use and each one can accommodate up to 75 or more people.

Cathay Post 384's first official event at the WMVB will be on Saturday, October 10 at 11 a.m. when our post holds its monthly general meeting in room 202. The meeting will be followed by lunch and a tour of the veteran assigned spaces.

Veteran Affairs &  
Rehabilitation

### Disclaimer

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---

### *When*

**November 12, 2015**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
Light refreshments will be served.

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## CHINESE AMERICAN VETERAN HERO CHINGWAH LEE



**Name in English:** Chingwah Lee

**Name in Chinese:** 李清华 [李清华]

**Name in Pinyin:** Lǐ Qīnghuá

**Birth Year:** 1901-1980

**Birth Place:** San Francisco, California

The hard working members of **Chinese American Heroes** frequently come up with surprising information about some of our past Cathay Post members. This month, they found a very famous Chinese American gentleman who had made tremendous contributions to our community and also served in the Army during World War II. He was Chingwah Lee, a veteran, a movie actor, a community activist, the founder of the famous Chinatown Boy Scout Troop 3 (which has always conducted its meetings at our Post), along with having served as our Post Commander in 1944-1945. Lee was the co-founder of the Chinese Historical Society of America and the Chinese Cultural Center in San Francisco. His contributions to San Francisco Chinatown were legendary.

Even though his name is etched on our list of past post commanders, very few of us paid much attention to that list let alone the various accomplishments of those listed. I had the privilege to have met and worked with Mr. Lee when I was doing Chinatown tours during my college days. Holy cow, that was a long time ago!

Mr. Chingwah Lee's contributions and story are most unusual, and this month, we are very pleased to honor him as our Chinese American Veteran of the month.

Above image from the film, "The Good Earth" 1937.

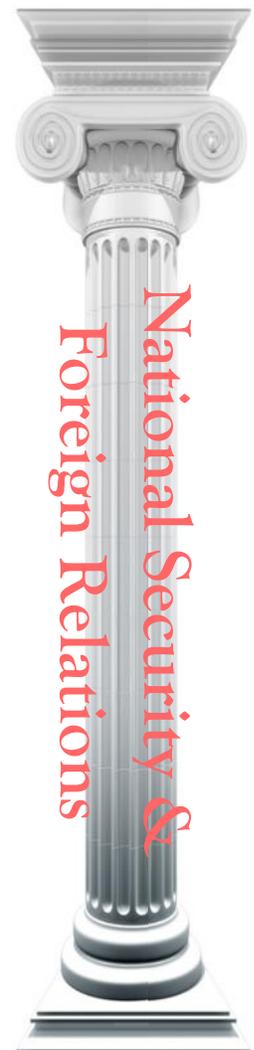
**Profession:** Business Leader, Community Activist, Actor

**Education:** Bachelor of Science, Anthropology, University of California - Berkeley, 1927

**Contribution:** Chingwah Lee's first taste of community activism was when he participated in the Portola Festival in San Francisco in 1909. As an eight-year old he appeared in the finale of the festival, the Historic Pageant Parade. The San Francisco Chronicle reported, "the Chinese more than sustained their reputation for superb pageants" with colorful lanterns, loud gongs, and dragon dances." Chingwah's role was that of a sea king aboard one of the floats.

The participation of the San Francisco Chinatown community was part of a calculated effort to change white American perceptions about the Chinese. Whites in America, from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, were raised on a steady diet of anti-Chinese horror stories. When they joined excursions through Chinatown, tour guides were happy to show them the worst of the community, to confirm these perceptions. Lurid stories were told of tong wars, slavery, opium use, gambling, prostitution, and secret tunnels under Chinatown where evil Chinese hid and did unspeakable things. Social ills which also existed in white communities were ignored but were highlighted and presented as unique to the Chinese because of what was said to be their depraved culture and morality.

(Continued on page 20)



**CAH—Chingwah Lee, Continued**

*(Continued from page 19)*

The reality of Chinatown was quite horrible enough even without the racist exaggerations. Discriminatory land laws, restrictive property covenants, and the very real threat of violence against the Chinese, forced them to live in a few tightly controlled places in California and other Western states. The few blocks that they were allowed in San Francisco's Chinatown became overcrowded with consequent problems of sanitation, health, and disease as a result. The situation was compounded by the social anarchy produced by the 1875 Page Act. This banned the immigration of Asian women for purposes of prostitution. In practice, American immigration officials assumed that all Asian women were prostitutes. Very few Asian women managed to successfully enter the United States legitimately. The majority of those that ended up in the United States, ironically because the Page Act had made it so profitable, were real prostitutes, either smuggled across borders or let through by bribed immigration officials. The Chinese population became severely imbalanced, between 80 to 90% male, almost all of them young men who hoped to make their fortunes and return to China but with almost no hope of having kids in America because of anti-miscegenation laws. Volatile young men with money and nothing to do in their spare time, and none of the constraints of women or an older generation to keep them in check, made for an unstable population in which prostitution, gambling, violence, and opium use thrived. The poor public perception this led to increased calls for even more restrictive American immigration laws with the stated goal of shrinking the Chinese American community into extinction.

The 1906 destruction of Chinatown led to several realizations. Eager whites searched the destroyed remains for the fabled secret tunnels under Chinatown for loot and failed to find a single trace of any such tunnels. It was quickly realized that tours through the "tunnels" under Chinatown prior to the earthquake had been carefully stage-managed theatrical productions put on for the tourist dollars. There never had been any tunnels. The second was that the birth records stored in San Francisco's City Hall had been completely destroyed. Because of the U.S. Supreme Court case of Wong Kim Ark in 1898, Chinese immigrants could now claim to be United States citizens by birth in San Francisco. Immigration authorities would have a very difficult time disproving such a claim. Another realization that came among the senior leaders of the Chinatown community was that for the Chinese Americans to have a long-term future they had to change the poor image of Chinese among white Americans. Chingwah Lee later said, "One factor which bound the Chinese together in the early days was a certain loneliness. They felt that the people here were not too interested in them, except as a curiosity."

The Chinese participation in the Portola Festival in 1909 was among the first steps. Another was rebuilding Chinatown. At first city leaders wanted to relocate Chinatown to the edges of the habitation then present in the city instead of the previous central location. A sustained and well-financed campaign was successful in convincing them that Chinatown had the potential to become a tourist

*(Continued on page 21)*



## CAH—Chingwah Lee, Continued

*(Continued from page 20)*

attraction. But the tourist attraction that was planned had nothing to do with the old Chinatown of an eyesore ghetto where white tourists would be thrilled with the supposed depravity of its inhabitants. Chinatown would be rebuilt as an American community with buildings that were Western in style and construction but with cosmetic Chinese architectural adornments. Small pagodas on the rooftops were but one example of this. The style was associated by Americans with China but nobody actually used this in architecture besides a few very large pagodas at major Buddhist temples in China.

Changing the Chinese Americans themselves so that they would become American and acceptable to whites was not going to be an easy feat. The Oriental School was built to replace the one destroyed by the 1906 fire. This was a segregated school for Asian children set aside by the San Francisco Unified School District. As a segregated school the instructors provided by the district were indifferent at best. The sole intention was to keep Asian children away from white children. Chingwah said he and the other children never did any homework. "It was so . . . corrupt that none of us worried about it!" Educating Asian children into becoming Americans wasn't a priority for American officials. The students would essentially have to struggle on their own for that.

Despite the poor school system, Chingwah was a dutiful son who keenly felt a sense of responsibility to his family. His father was a respected herbalist in Chinatown who had immigrated to the United States before the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Since he was grandfathered in before the act he was able to bring a wife over from China. They had eight children in total. His father also collected and sold Chinese fine arts and antiques, an interest that Chingwah picked up and pursued throughout his adult life. Despite the family's relative wealth, they lived in crowded conditions like all Chinese did in Chinatown. With eight children in the family, money also couldn't be spared. As soon as each child was able they went to work. As early as the sixth grade, Chingwah worked and lived away from home as a houseboy for Caucasian families. He'd work in the mornings, go to school, then went back to work to help make dinner. His wages and those of his siblings went to support the family.

In 1914, Chingwah found a used copy of the Boy Scouts handbook. He showed it to others and seven boys joined him in writing to the New York headquarters asking for permission to establish their own Boy Scout troop. Chingwah was just thirteen years old. Permission was granted and the first all-Chinese Boy Scouts of America troop was formed, Boy Scout Troop 3. Due to the outdoor interests of a white scoutmaster they were soon learning how to camp out in the woods around the Bay Area. Coming from the claustrophobically crowded conditions of Chinatown the wilderness was a revelation for the boys. Among other things they learned was how to swim despite having to do so in an ice-cold creek. In 1915, they served as the guard of honor during the visit of President Taft to San Francisco for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the Boy Scouts did what they

*(Continued on page 22)*



## CAH—Chingwah Lee, Continued

*(Continued from page 21)*

could to support the war effort. They sold Liberty Bonds to fund the war, collected scrap metal, marched in parades, and acted as tour guides for soldiers and sailors passing through San Francisco.

Chingwah Lee was also a leader in establishing the first high school student newspaper for Chinese Americans. The Tri-Termly Toots came out three times per term and combined news from Chinese American students attending several high schools. The newspaper discussing common issues and problems as well as coordinated dances and other social activities as part of the Chinese High School Students' Club. These get-togethers broke one of the tenets of traditional Chinese culture in which unmarried young men and women often only first met on their wedding day. Culturally, in dress, and in manners, these Chinese Americans were looking and behaving more and more like other Americans of their generation.

Chingwah Lee graduated from high school in 1920 and became assistant scoutmaster of Troop 3. In 1923 he became scoutmaster of Troop 3, a position he would hold for over thirty years. Soon afterwards he became a student at UC Berkeley where he majored in anthropology. His varied interests though also took him into classes in psychology, animal behavior, and agriculture. During this time he was asked to help at the Chinatown YMCA, where he'd volunteered previously, but was reluctant because of the time he had to devote to his studies. He was then offered a paid position as Boy's Secretary at the princely sum of \$200 a month (about \$13,000 a month by 2014). He immediately accepted. Why would anyone pay a college student that much money? The Chinatown YMCA had just finished construction of a new building that had cost \$250,000 (about \$16 million by 2014). The new building was seen as such a grand palace that people in Chinatown were afraid to go there. Chingwah said it resembled a funeral parlor it was so quiet. The directors of the YMCA panicked that nobody in the community was using or coming to their new building and hired him to fix that. He started a Thursday night storytelling session, always with a teaser at the end about what story was coming next Thursday. The storytelling proved to be extremely popular with boys and drew bigger and bigger crowds who also participated in the other events and activities that he organized. The new facilities started being used by the community thus saving face for the YMCA directors.

[To read the rest of Mr. Chingwah Lee's interesting life, please email Roger Dong at: [roger-dong@hotmail.com](mailto:roger-dong@hotmail.com) for the complete biography prepared by Mr. Philip Chin, Managing Editor.]

**Publisher's Note:** The above article is published as it was submitted by Chinese American Heroes. It was not reviewed or proofread by any member of the Cathay Dispatch newsletter staff.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Area 2 Meeting 10 a.m. @ Post 117
4	5 Fleet Week 10/5-12	6 Fleet Week ALWMC Meeting, 5:30 p.m.	7 Fleet Week	8 Fleet Week Dist. 8 Meeting 5:30 p.m.	9 Fleet Week	10 Fleet Week Post Meeting 11 a.m.
11 Fleet Week Italian Heritage Parade	12 Fleet Week Columbus Day	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 November CD issue deadline	30	31 Halloween

# November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daylight Savings ends	2	3 ALWMC Meeting, 5:30 p.m.	4	5	6	7
8 Veterans' Day Parade	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12 Dist. 8 Meeting 5:30 p.m.	13	14 Post Meeting 11 a.m.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 December CD issue deadline	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29	30					



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6/25/1950 – 1/31/1955

**World War II**  
12/7/1941 – 12/31/1946

**World War I**  
4/6/1917 – 11/11/1918

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