

## 2003 – 2005 C0mmander's Report

By Wan Y. Tam

This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lt. B. R. Kimlau Chinese Memorial Post 1291. As Commander, I have tried to promote patriotism, provide better membership services, and more participation in community activities, to help enhance our lives. It has been a privilege and honor to have served this organization for Legion Years 2003-2005.

Following is a chronological listing of some highlights of my two years:

- July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003 we held our largest and most elaborate Independence Day celebration ever. After months of planning and hard work, we were able to pull together the different groups and affiliations, so that the event proceeded smoothly. We conducted a community essay and drawing contest to highlight **America** and Edward Chin, the celebrity/soldier who placed an American flag over Saddam Hussein's statue, was our honored guest of the day. The Kimlau Post and our "story" was published in Hoy, the Recorder, the Associated Press, Newsday, the China Press, World Journal, Ming Bao and Sing Tao.
- July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003, we participated in a local Soccer Tournament. We played against four other teams and brought home the trophy. This tournament was a fundraiser for Project Open Door and NY Mei Wah School, and each team donated \$1,000.
- August of 2003, our member Peter Lor was nominated for a Mayoral award for outstanding volunteer service for the community. He is one of eleven recipients of this award. We were very proud since Peter was the only Asian American to receive this award.
- August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the entire northeast region suffered one of the largest blackouts. If a Legionnaire was unable to return home, I made arrangements for him to stay overnight. Those persons in need of assistance, to walk down the stairs were assisted by other fellow Legionnaires. The remaining people followed me, as we hitchhiked our way to homes in Queens.
- October of 2003, we celebrated the election of Fang A. Wong as National Vice Commander. This was a huge steppingstone for the Chinese-American community. We were very proud of his accomplishments and his national recognition.
- December of 2003, we reestablished our annual Scholarship Program. Eligible students, who fit our criteria, were awarded \$500 each.
- February of 2004, we drove over five hours to Arlington Cemetery to attend the funeral service of SPC Roger Ling. SPC Ling was the first Chinese-American casualty from the east coast. Later, our Post created a SPC Roger Ling memorial scholarship for students, who graduated from SPC Ling's alma mater, Benjamin Cardozo High School. This scholarship was created in his name, as a small token of appreciation to a Chinese-American, who lost his life in Iraq, in the service of our country.
- March of 2004, we attended the funeral and memorial services, two separate occasions for SPC Doron Chan in Highland, NY, a reservist who lost his life in Iraq.
- May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004 we attended the "2004 Memorial Day Weekend Celebration" in Washington, DC for the dedication of the "World War II Memorial". Over 200,000 visitors attended this event. Our Legionnaires enjoyed themselves so much, that they have requested to go again.
- July of 2004, we selected five members to attend the Department of NY Legion College, to support and promote the development of the next generation of American Legion leaders.

- November of 2004, we attended Marine CPL Jeffrey Lam's funeral service in Flushing, NY. CPL Jeffrey Lam lost his life fighting in Iraq.
- February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005, we were awarded a Community Service award from NYU Downtown Hospital, for promoting the teaching of Tai-Chi classes without fee to the community, for good health and happiness.
- Beginning April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005, every Wednesday we provided "Ear Acupuncture Sessions" without charge to the community. We began with service to 45 patients, and now we have served 60 patients.
- April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005, a St. Vincent's Hospital Community Service award was given to the Post.

Other worthy on-going activities are as follow:

- As part of overhaul plan to improve traffic flow for the Chinatown community. We have been in discussions with the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) on the possible relocation of the Chinese-American Veterans Memorial Arch from Lt. Kimlau Square.
- With the activation of The American Legion Lt. B. R. Kimlau Chinese Memorial Auxiliary unit 1291 and The Son of American Legion Squadron 1291. We have added two new organizations that will no doubt enhance our total involvement in the Legion and the community. The ladies have been working very hard to support the streets clean-up of Chinatown. They are also very active in the veterans' rehabilitation efforts by their frequent visits to various VA facilities.
- We have continued our annual contribution to the American Legion National Emergency Fund and to the American Legacy Scholarship Fund.

The past 5 years, we've coped with almost everything, from September 11<sup>th</sup> to the Tsunami in Asia. We've learned to handle these catastrophes and to help those in need; in return we have improved ourselves as a whole. I would like to thank everyone for their support and cooperation, which made all of our endeavors possible. As we look into the next five years, I see a bright future with continued success and opportunities.

