



HOME DPA HISTORY

Post 9951 History

C. L. Elms Post 9951



C. L. ELMS



"Post 9951 History"

Chartered: Sept 27, 1965

Original Location: Bangkok, Thailand

New Location:

Commander-in-Chief:

Updated information provided by James Oden 9 December 2005

A Brief History of Post 9951

It is often not clear how a particular VFW Post is assigned a particular number. If a Post surrenders its charter, after a time the National Headquarters may re-issue that number to a new Post. So it is with the VFW Post # 9951.

According to a document on file from the Office of the ADJ GEN, the first time the number 9951 was issued was to a Post formed in Shanghai[1] China on 1 April 1949. That Post lasted only two years. In 1953, 9951 was re-issued to a Post formed in Toul, France, which subsequently moved to Nancy. That Post became defunct in 1964.

When a VFW was chartered in Bangkok Thailand in 1965, 9951 was issued for a third time. The official date of inception of the Bangkok Post was SEPT 27, 1965. For a few years, the Post was simply known by that name *The Bangkok Post*. In AUG 1968, the Post sought permission from the family of Charles L. Elms to use his name for the Post's. In FEB 1972, Nat'l HQ made this official. [see below]

Reportedly, the Post nearly folded in 1976 as the Armed Forces completed their pullout from Thailand following the Vietnam War. Membership had fallen off to under 50 (down over two-thirds) after a period of rapid growth in the early 1970s. It was to the credit of the local retired members, especially James A. Brown and Albert Lyman that the Post remained viable. Unfortunately, all the Post records prior to 1977 seem to have been disposed of.

Post Membership data: (per records obtained from Nat'l HQ)

1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
15	20	24	20	141	95	44	61	62	77

1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
64	83	89	79	95	110	125	148	153	154

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
64	172	172	177	179	186	187	197	193	208

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005				
209	209	220	226	234					

Soon after it's founding in 1965, Post 9951 showed a membership of 94 (as of Mar 66) The Post has shown steady growth since 1980 and that year was the single decline in membership since a low point in the 70s. Having crossed 100 in 1985, it grew steadily to >200 by the end of the millennium.

Post 9951 is sustained by a large number of retirees and veterans who have chosen to live in Thailand. Approximately 50% of the membership, however, lives in the US or elsewhere. Many of these members served their country in Thailand and have maintained an allegiance to 9951 since those days. Records indicate that the longest serving current member joined the Post in 1966.

An analysis of the current membership at the end of 2003 indicates that less than 10% of the current members joined the Post before 1981 and just over half have joined the Post in the past 10 years.

Date joined members

Before 1970	2	1%	86-90	45	21%
71-75	8	4	91-95	35	16
76-80	8	4	96-2000	53	24
81-85	26	12	After 2000	42	19

Post 9951 has met in literally dozens of locations in the past 40 years. Some of the longest serving is the current JUSMAGTHAI location and the Capital Mansion Hotel on Paholyothin Rd. from 1973-76 and the "Jim George Hall" at Washington Square Soi 22.

Post records indicate that 9951 has faithfully participated in Thai Memorial Day (3 Feb) and ANZAC Day (25 APR) ceremonies at least since the early 1980s and likely before. Whenever there has been a celebration of the 4th of JULY by the American Community, 9951 has been present for duty. Likewise, the Post has held graveside ceremonies at the Catholic and Protestant cemeteries in Bangkok every year.

Post 9951's Namesake

Charles L Elms was a member of VFW Post known then as the Bangkok Post at the time of his death on May 12, 1968. He was the first member of the Post to pass away, so the membership sought permission from his family and Nat'l HQ to name the Post after him. His daughter writes, "Dad was a very patriotic American and was proud to serve in any way he could."

As an only child of Arthur and Betty Elms, he grew up in Glens Falls, New York, where according to his daughter Betty (named after her grandmother), "his mom was a stern and loving mother and his father worked in a quarry and volunteered as a firefighter. They had a cabin on Lake George where Chuck spent his summers on the water and was an avid skier and swimmer." In 1959, at the age of 17 and immediately after graduating high school in Glen Falls, he enlisted in the Coast Guard. There he served as an Electronics Technician. He served an 18-month tour of duty in Vietnam. He also participated in the rescue of Cuban refugees in 1965 while serving on the CG Cutter Lamar in the Florida Straits. He was stationed at the Port Arguello Loran Station in Lompoc, CA at the time of his death in an automobile accident.

In the September 1968 letter to his parents requesting permission to use his name, the Post's SVC Donald Mowl notes that Chief Elec Tech Elms was known to the Post members as "chief" and that he was "one of the really active members of our post."

It is not precisely clear how he became associated with the Bangkok Post.

Betty Elms Weimer further writes, " My Grandparents are very proud of my father and have been a wonderful connection to him. Having grown up without him in my life I have been very fortunate that he has left such a legacy for my siblings and me. I am proud to have had him for a father and wish I could have had more time with him. It is truly an honor that you have an interest in him and that his memory goes on in your Post."

<u>Year</u>	<u>Post CDRs</u>			<u>Meeting locations</u>
1965-66	Swain, Billie T.			various hotels: Rama, Trocerdora, Rex
1966-68	Malmgren, Robert			Victory hotel, AUA auditorium, Atlanta hotel, various homes Soi 39 and 63
1969-70	Oppenborn, Fred B.			Soi Suan Phlu off Sathom Rd.
1971	Henry, Jesse J.			
1972	Oppenborn, Fred B			
1973	Cutsforth, Thomas L			Capitol Mansion Paholyothin Rd
1974	Reck, William L	Turpin, Joseph I	Johnson, Neil	
1975-76	Wodenscheck, Albert W.			Soi 22 Sukhumvit
1976-77	Grubb, Norman E. (resigned MAY 77)	Watson, Ken I. (resigned JUL 77)		Royal Bangkok Sports Club & Asoke Bowl
1977-78	Coons, James M. (resigned AUG 77)	Brown, James A.		My Lady Lounge Soi Cowboy
1978-79	Dyste, John B.			Mitch and Nam's restaurant
1979-80	Nestle, Burt G.			Star Bowl, Crown Pizza.
1980-81	Crabb, William V.			
1981-82	Kee, Thomas, A. (Al)			
1982-83	O'Neill, Hugh W	Jones, Emory Jr.		JUSMAGTHAI compound
1983	Woodfin, John. R. (died in office Jan 84)			
1984-86	Vileo, Leon R. (Dick)			"Jim George Hall" Soi 22
1986-87	George, James W.			
1987-88	Luckinbill, Robert, D.	McRae James W.	Edward J.George	
1988-89	Jones, Robert L.			
1989-92	Nestle, Burt G.			JUSMAGTHAI compound

1992-93	Evers, Peter J.		
1993-99	Nestle, Burt G.		
2000-01	Brayshaw, Lester	Nestle, Burt G.	
2001-04	Karwacki, Jerome J.		
2004-	Oden, James E.		

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[1] In 2002, Leroy Johnson transferred his Life Membership back into 9951. He showed a membership card proving that he had been a member of the Shanghai Post in the 50s.

US and Thai Veterans Together

Many Thai Korea War Vets proudly wear the shoulder patches of the 2nd INF DIV and the 1st CAV DIV in their reunions and ceremonies.

With the opening of hostilities in Korea in June 1950, Thailand was among the earliest nations to contribute troops to the war effort. Elements of all Royal Thai Military Forces, Army, Navy, and Air Force were dispatched.



RTA

The Royal Thai Army 21st Regimental Combat Team was initially attached to US 187th Airborne RCT in Nov 1950. In Feb 1951, the Thai RCT became part of the 1st Cavalry Division and fought in the battles of Chunchon and Hwachon. Later, re-designated as the Thai 1st Battalion, they garnered much praise at the battle of Uijongbu. The King of Thailand awarded that BN the King's Colour Ribbon for their battle flag. Before being transferred to the US 2nd Infantry Division in 1952, they fought at the battle of T-bone hill in June 1951 and held a portion of the Jamestown Line. By October 1952, they were occupying a key position on Pork Chop Hill where they again fought with distinction during the Chinese counter-attack. Surviving a fierce attack on 1 MAR 53, they counter-attacked and took Monty Hill from the enemy forces on 11-12 MAR.

Following the Armistice, the Thai contingent was reduced to Company size but remained until JUN 1973.

RTN

Two Corvettes of the RTN delivered the above RTA RCT to Pusan in NOV 1950. They were then assigned patrol duty at the Sasebo Naval Base. While operating above the 38th Parallel in JAN 1951, the HTMS Prasae was lost in a storm, while the HTMS Bangpakong continued to patrol. The US then provided two Frigates to be manned by the Thai Navy. One was re-named HTMS Prasae to substitute for the lost Corvette and the second named HTMS Ta-Chin. The HTMS Bangpakong returned to Thailand in FEB 1952. The two Frigates maintained escort duty through the Armistice.

RTAF

Operating out of Japan, three Thai C-47s provided air transport and air evacuation capabilities flying hundreds of sorties into Korea. Following the Armistice, they remained in Korea as part of the UN Command until 1974. In addition, the RTFA staffed an Air Evacuation Team for 29 years.

All in all, nearly 13,000 RTA, 2500 RTN and 799 RTAF personnel served in this conflict. 136 were killed in combat and 469 wounded. 9 RTA were awarded the US Legion of Merit; 39 the Silver Star and 30 the Bronze Star.

Each year, members of the VFW Post 9951 join their Thai counterparts in a wreath laying ceremony at the Victory Monument on Thai Veterans Day 3 FEB. WE are honored to stand by our fellow Vets who stood by us in Korea, Vietnam and now Iraq.

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Pictures of the Past

Click on Thumbnail to Enlarge



Dist 5 Memorial



2001 Wreath Laying, CDR Nestle ANZAC Day



Bridge over River Kwai



Former POW's at ANZAC Day Ceremonies



Honor Guard 4th Jul



CINC Goldsmith Visits BKK



Veterans Day at JUSMAGTHAI



AMB's Residence Nov 11, 2001



Grave of Ralph Cook



Dist 5 Commander Dick Vileo prepares to lay wreath to Honor Thai Vets



Thai Honor Guard Fires Salute



Thai Veterans

If you have anything to add to the History of the Department of Pacific Areas, either to the Department, Districts or Posts, Please Email dpahist@vfwddeptpacific.org with the information in Document format.