

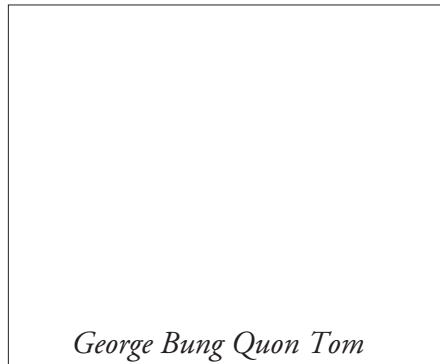
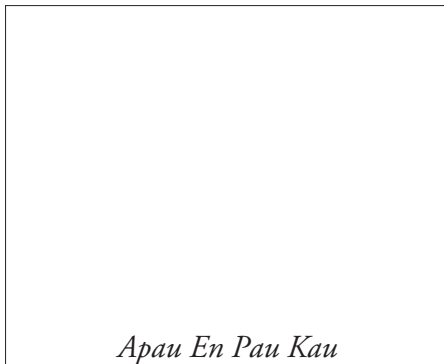
Kau Tom Post & Unit No. 11, American Legion

高譚退伍軍人會 P.O. Box 4571, Honolulu, HI 96701

Mission: Quote from the American Legion manual— “They fought for us; for us they fell. Now with one accord, in deepest reverence, we do them honor.”

History: The Great War (World War I) began in Europe in July, 1914. The US remained neutral for over two years, but finally, Pres. Woodrow Wilson requested that Congress declare war on Germany and her allies. On June 13, 1917, Major General John J. Pershing led the first American Expeditionary Forces into France. These “doughboys” eventually reached Belgium and the Swiss border as well.

Two of these “doughboys” were men from Hawaii, of Chinese descent. They were Sergeant Apau En Pau Kau (*Gao Enbao* 高恩寶) and Sergeant George Bung Quon Tom (*Tan Bingan* 譚炳岸). The Kau Tom Post 11 of the American Legion is named after them. Kau joined the army on April 6, 1917, and died on the front lines in Argonne, France, six days before the war ended on November 11, 1918—Armistice Day, now Veteran’s Day. Tom was with the 6th Engineers of the Expeditionary Forces. He died of pneumonia in a French camp, a month before Armistice Day.



On the afternoon of October 27, 1927, four friends—H.C. Ching, E.D.W. Ho, Frank S.K. Lee and Min Hin Li—all Army veterans, noted that the tenth anniversary of the first Armistice Day was only two weeks away. To celebrate this occasion, they proposed to organize an American Legion Post entirely of veterans of Chinese ancestry, and to bring together as many potential members as possible at an Armistice Banquet. Dr. Li was designated chair of this venture, and H.C. Ching acted as secretary.

The banquet was held at the Sai Fu Chop Suey House on Hotel Street on the evening of November 11, 1927, with about seventy veterans present. Twenty-seven of these signed an application of charter, and voted to hold a formal organizational meeting at the home of William S. C. Pung (3709 Paha Avenue) on November 17.

At the November 17 meeting, the name Kau-Tom Post No. 11 was officially adopted, and officers were elected.

On January 20, 1928, a Charter Banquet was held at the Sai Fu Chop Suey House, with members of the new Post as well as officers of the Hawaii Department of the American Legion present. There, a temporary charter was presented by Department Commander James R. Mahaffy. The Kau-Tom Post was the first in the American Legion to recognize veterans of Chinese ancestry.

Seventeen WWI veterans subsequently joined the Post (year of death is given in parentheses) : Yen Cheung Au (1989), Roborn N. Bing (1987), Sau Yee Chang (1990), Ung Hee Chang (1996), Ling Fong Ching (1991), Meo Kong Ching (1989), Ah Moy Chun (1990), Ty Hee Dang (???), Lum Fong (1991), Kim Wah Kam (1988), Charles K.Y. Lam (1992), Robert L. Lam (???), Joseph K. Lee (1999), Kwan Yau Leong (1987), Daniel T.K. Low (1987), Hung Lun Lum (1986), and Russell W. Voorhees (2000).

On February 16, 1929, Mrs. Min Hin Li invited women interested in forming an Auxiliary Unit to the Kau-Tom Post to a meeting in her Alewa Drive home. Mrs. James Mahaffy was present to help with the organization. Election of officers took place immediately, and, in honor of Apau Kau, his sister Juliette Kau Lee was elected president.

The officers of Kau-Tom Unit No. 11 were installed and 31 charter members initiated by Mrs. Robert Hayal, National Vice President of the American Legion Auxiliary, in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce Hall at 42 North King Street, on March 13, 1929.

Since then, the members of the Post and Unit have worked together in close harmony and cooperation.



Members at Memorial Day services at the Manoa Chinese Cemetery. Photo by James Chong

Activities

Annual activities include the following:

- Nomination and elections of Post officers, generally in May, with an installation luncheon following several weeks later;
- Ching Ming Services to honor the seven unknown soldiers and other veterans buried at the Manoa Chinese Cemetery;
- Memorial Day services held at the WWII Memorial, the Korean and Vietnam Memorial, Punchbowl Cemetery, and the State Veteran's Cemetery in Kaneohe. In addition, members decorate the graves of veterans, and post US flags along the roadways at the Oahu Cemetery, the Manoa Chinese Cemetery, and the Pauoa Cemetery. At the Oahu Cemetery, special services are held to honor Sgts. Apau Kau and George Tom. Memorial Day poppies are distributed widely.



Tomb of the Seven Unknown Chinese Heroes.



Honor guard on Memorial Day.

- Presentation of School Awards to the Farrington High School ROTC, the McKinley High School ROTC, the St. Louis High School ROTC, St. Patrick School, St. Theresa School, and Damien Memorial High School;
- Monetary donations towards the American Legion Baseball Program, which enrolls 14 teams;
- Participation in and donation towards the American Legion Oratorical Contest, held at the Pagoda Hotel in February;
- Monthly bingo activities at the Tripler Center for the aging, if security permission is granted;
- Participation in the annual American Legion Convention, held in June at the Pagoda Hotel;
- Participation in the annual Waikiki Natatorium Services for WWI veterans. The names of Sgts. Kau and Tom are engraved on the WWI Memorial Plaque.
- Annual “huli-huli chicken” sale to raise funds;
- Visit to the Maluhia Hospital and the Palolo Chinese Home, with gifts for residents;
- Fourth of July Parade in Kailua; and
- an annual Christmas party.

Special events include the 1993 luncheon to honor WWI veterans, including five living survivors (then in their 90s): Ung Hee Chang, Ty Hee Dang, Robert L. Lam, Joseph K. Lee and Russell W. Voorhees. A souvenir booklet with brief biographies of these five men was produced.

Sources: UCS publications, KauTom Post & Unit 11 booklets, and correspondence with James Chong.

Post Commanders

1928 William S.C. Pung
1929 Philip N. Sing
1930 Min Hin Li
1931 Yun Sau Loo
1932 Albert F. Lee
1933 Richard C. Ching
1934 Allen S. Mau
1935 Frank S.K. Lee
1936 Joseph S. Yap
1937 Joseph K.S. Chang
1938 Joseph S. Yap
1939 Francis F. Luke
1940 Charles A. Char
1941 Koon Hung Sunn
1942 Henry K.S. Yap
1943-44 Kim Chung Zane
1945 En Kui Chung
1946 Herbert Y. Wong
1947 Kemp Young Ng
1948 Sahn K. Lowe
1949 Henry S.P. Wong
1950 Leslie W.S. Lum
1951 Clarence T. Lee
1952 Kwan Hee Ho
1953 Francis K. Tom/
Wallace C.S. Young
1954 Wallace C.S. Young
1955 John W.F. Chang
1956-7 A bel F. Doo
1958 Kay Fong Louie
1959 John Chong
1960 Frank W.S. Seto
1961 Henry Hing Lowe
1962 Edward Kau
1963-64 David Namaka
1965-66 Harold T.L. Lum
1967 Frank K.S. Mow
1968-69 Albert A.C. Mark
1970 Sammy K.W. Young
1971 Kay Fong Louie
1972-73 Raymond S.L. Kam
1974-75 Wilbert K.S. Chang
1976-78 Bernard K.Y. Lee
1979-80 Eugene K.B. Won
1981-82 Francis K. Tom
1983-84 Salomon K. Maunu
1985-90 Albert A.C. Mark

1991 Clifford Y.B. Wong
1992 Alfred W.C. Jay
1993-05 James C.F. Chong

Unit Presidents

1929 Juliette K. Lee
1930 Choy Kyau Lee
1931 Mary A. Chung
1932 Elizabeth S.L. Tseu
1933 Eleanor M. Kau
1934 Rachel Yap
1935 Rose A. Wong
1936 Jessie L. Pung
1937 Frances L. Ai
1938 Margaret W. Chinn
1939 Ellen P. Matherly
1940 Belle Tyau
1941 Jennie W. Inn
1942 Aileen H. Hiram
1943-44 Esther L Soong
1945 Ethel Z. Wong
1946 Frances L. Ai
1947 Helen H. Ho
1948 Daisy A. Luke
1949 Irma K. Auyoung
1950 Priscilla Akina
1951 Gladys C. Lee
1952 Grace L. Chang
1953 Annie M. Hee

1954 Jennie H. Zane
1955 Beatrice P. Lum
1956 Eileen C. Soong
1957 Sarah C. Liu
1958 Helen Ho Hee
1959 Elizabeth T. Lau
1960 Elsie L. Yap
1961 How Ching Au
1962-63 En Kyau Kong
1964-65 Mary Y. Au
1966-67 Annie T. Lum
1968-69 Eleanor A. Lai
1970-71 Edythe P. Kaanapu
1972-73 Violet C. Chock
1974-75 Betty K.C. Mark
1976-77 Elizabeth J. Lee
1978-80 Laura H. Hashimoto
1981-83 Karen C. Tom
1984 Elizabeth J. Lee
1985 Gladys C. Lee
1986-88 Violet L. Maunu
1989 Violet L. Holeso
1990-91 Elsie L. Won
1992-3 Georgia M. Lee
1994-95 Josephine Keanu
1996-05

Membership: The members are made up of returning veterans and their family members, who pay annual dues of \$26.



The Honolulu Mayor, the Narcissus Queen and her court, and Miss Chinatown USA join in the services