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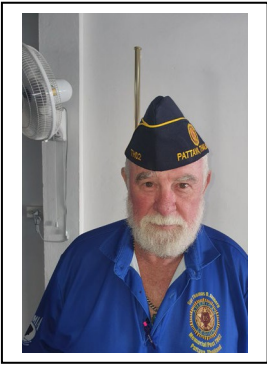
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Sgt Thomas Oliver Ahlberg



From the Commander



As we near the end of the current year it is only natural for us to take a look back at what all has taken place over the last 12 months. I have to admit I was struggling to come up with the topic for our end of the year message. As many of you are, I am also somewhat overwhelmed by the events that have occurred during 2020.

After taking a moment to gather my thoughts I realized that it almost writes itself. In the year 2020 we have done what some would think impossible. We have formed, organized and stood up a new American Legion Post here in Thailand. If we knew what was ahead of us back at the beginning of the year I would suspect we would have been told it couldn't be done.

The US Armed Forces have taken as one of their slogans, 'The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer.' This is demonstrated with what we have accomplished as an organization.

We will look back and reflect on 2020 and we all will have a different perspective of all the events that have taken place. We won't dwell on the events of the past for very long as we push forward into the New Year. So take the time to reflect on 2020, take some solace in our individual accomplishments and celebrate our achievements.

I have decided that our December general membership meeting will be a very informal setting and we will take a step back and just celebrate the Holiday season by enjoying the comradery we share as Veterans. I want to wish all of you the very best during the upcoming holiday season and I look forward to the upcoming challenges that the New Year will bring. I know as an organization that we will continue to grow and we will solidify our membership and continue to provide the very best for all of our Veterans, their families and all of the expat community here in Thailand.

William Martin Ahlberg

Commander, TH02



From the First Vice Commander

I want to echo the Commanders thoughts as we prepare for the upcoming Holiday season at the end of an unusual year to say the least. I want to wish each and every one of you the very best for the holidays. Celebrating Christmas here in Thailand presents its own challenges.

As many of you are aware the country of Thailand has a population that is mostly Buddhist (95%) with a sizable Muslim minority (4%) and a small number of Christians (1%). There are countless festivals and special events held in Thailand throughout the year. Some of these are celebrated nationwide (e.g. Songkran and Loy Krathong) whilst other festivals are specific to particular cities or provinces. With a number of Thai festivals and Buddhist holidays, the exact date varies each year because it depends on the lunar calendar and the night of the full moon.

The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ is simply not the huge event it is in Christian countries. The concept of Sanuk and enjoyment is a fundamental part of Thai culture. Thai people like to party and so any excuse for a celebration is gleefully seized upon. The religious meaning of Christmas might not be important to most Thai people, but they know it's a time when other countries are celebrating, and they are happy to join in with the party. The celebration of Christmas being a fundamentally Western tradition does offer a unique opportunity to share the concept and celebration with our other expats here in Thailand. I would like all of you to take this opportunity to celebrate your holidays in the manor that you are accustomed to with others that share the same beliefs and spiritually as you.

Thank you,
Joe Thomas



From the Second Vice Commander

Comrades,

I also would like to wish all of you my holiday greetings. As we look back we need to be reminded that the Holidays will affect all of us differently. The isolation that has occurred as a result of the pandemic will present its own set of challenges. As we continue to face the realities that the pandemic has caused we need to remember that there are members out there that may be particularly affected.

With the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that is affecting us all, the Buddy Check program is perhaps more important now than ever before. The idea is to connect with Veterans who may need assistance but don't know where to go or who to ask. The American Legion Family already reaches out to fellow Legionnaires at this time of year but now we must do more. It's not enough to simply pick up the phone and call the veterans you know. We need to check on ALL VETERANS in each of our communities to be sure they are safe, feeling OK and have access to health care and services. If we hear of someone in need, we can offer someone a ride, deliver groceries or supplies and, in short, be there for them. Some people won't ask for help. Encourage members of your post to reach out and offer assistance to other veterans in your area. Please be particularly attentive to seniors, a population that is especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of this virus.

If anybody is aware of a Veteran in distress please reach out and let's assist this Veteran especially during this Holiday season. In addition to assisting our Veterans be mindful of anyone that may be in distress. Our Service to others is not limited to just our Veterans. Let's take our commitment to others to the maximum effort during the upcoming Holidays.

Shane Curtis

VETERANS ARE OUR BUSINESS



From the Adjutant/Finance

Michael J Chitwood

Adjutant/Finance Officer

I want to remind all that there are US troops serving overseas this Christmas (excerpt from legion.org)

Service members serve on all seven continents — there is one service member in Antarctica — and on all the seas. Military personnel serve in more than 170 countries. Our Service members are still deployed around the world during Christmas - we need to keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

- Afghanistan: 14,000
- Bahrain: 7,000
- Iraq: 5,200
- Jordan: 2,795
- Kuwait: 13,000
- Oman: 300
- Qatar: 13,000
- Saudi Arabia: 3,000
- Syria: Unknown
- Turkey: Unknown
- United Arab Emirates: 5,0000

Sailors will man their ships from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Mexico. Navy officials maintain that roughly a third of the Navy is deployed at any one time. Air Force missileers and airmen are in the silos, by the planes and in the command centers ensuring the nuclear system is ready if needed.

Michael J Chitwood

Adjutant/Finance Officer TH02



From the Service Officer:

I want to extend my personal holiday greetings to all of our members and their families. As we reflect back on the past year and anticipate the upcoming New Year it is difficult to not be somewhat taken aback by all that has taken place. As a Veterans

organization we have once again shown what makes us truly unique. We stood up our post, assisted our fellow Veterans, participated in numerous ceremonies for our fellow Comrades and honored those who have passed on to the "Post Everlasting".

With that said my Holiday contribution is in keeping with the 12 Days of Christmas. There is probably nothing as intimidating as trying to navigate the tremendous amount of information available to us on the internet. I will introduce over the next twelve days a selection of websites that are of particular interest to our Veterans. These are the sites as a Service Officer I turn to while assisting our Veterans and their families.

In closing I want to once again wish everyone the best for the upcoming Holiday season and a Very Happy New Year.

Shane Curtis
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Our page is located at- <https://americanlegionpost02.wixsite.com/home>

Any and all suggestion are welcome. Please provide suggestions to:

michael.j.chitwood@gmail.com and I will forward these to our webmaster Shane Bentley.

Take a look at the page and comment.