THE AMERICAN LEGION

"STILL SERVING"
"...to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan..."

Abraham Lincoln; March 4, 1865

Master Sergeant Mario Enrique Gonzales Acker
Guatemala Post # 2
Antigua Guatemala
Founded July 19, 1997

Meetings 1st Tuesday of the Month
Restaurant “Jardín Bavaria”
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Commander--------William J. Shetz
Vice-Commander--Bruce Bouford
Vice-Commander--Dr.Jackson Underwood
Service Officer-----John Spears
Judge Advocate---Hubert J. Williams
Adjutant/Finance Officer---William J. Shetz

Where have we been? What have we been doing?
Our primary purpose is Veterans Service and this is where we were and
this is what we have been doing

A Very Close Call

Down a dusty street and around a corner almost at the end of the street, a retired Navy sub-
mariner almost didn’t surface. The facts are few and there has been happy ending due to your
post.

The American Legion Post #2, in Guatemala, was brought into the picture by the American
Embassy a couple of months ago. Mr. ‘C’, by last December, was several months behind in his
rent. His landlady, who lives in Guatemala City and about an hour away, decided to drive over
to Jocotenango, one of Antigua’s suburbs and see for herself what the problem was.

Once inside the dark and less than clean apartment it was apparent that Mr.‘C’ hadn’t been
eating for a long time. What was once a robust ex-Navy Corpsman was now a skeletal shell of
a man, nearly blind and so deaf that he listens to the television set six inches away. Once back
in the City, she contacted the US Embassy and explained the situation of her nearly dead tenant. The Embassy, with no mandate or mechanisms of their own to perform rescue missions, then contacted their special resource in Guatemala Post 2. ‘Could they take a look and determine what was needed?’

That would have been fine except that the landlady didn’t leave Mr. ‘C’s address with the Embassy and tracking her down wasn’t easy. Eventually contact was made, along with a home visit by the Commander of the post, William J. Shetz. ‘Appalling’ might be an apt word, because that’s what I felt yesterday, when I saw it but that’s been dealt with by he and a few other members of this very active and service-oriented post.

Over the last 17 years there have been fifteen of these rescue missions: five were veterans and the rest unlucky travelers stranded or wounded by circumstance in Guatemala. The American Legion Post#2 doesn’t receive any remuneration, recognition or accolades for these outreach missions. The US Embassy knows that they can count on Mr. Shetz and his dedicated cadre of members to drive (at their own expense) from one end of Guatemala to the other and salvage a wounded warrior or two.

Today, as he has for the last few months, Mr.’C’ had his meals brought to him by the Post. It was a dish of Bavarian ‘Rosti’, potato pancakes with two eggs on top, which has become a favorite. Other days will see as well the arrival of a jar of peanut butter, along with his dinner good for two days. Yesterday his apartment was cleaned by another post member, with two maids to handle the mops and brooms. Mr. ‘C’ has gone back to the States in a wheelchair and personally accompanied by William Shetz to San Antonio Texas. His son met him at the airport and escorted Mr. C directly to the hospital. He is now on his way to recovery.

How did this happen? It is known that Mr.’C’ emigrated to Guatemala about seven years ago, from Chapala in Mexico, driving his large Dodge pickup and accompanied by a trailer of personal belongings. Why he chose to live in a remote section of a grimy suburb, away from stores and contact with other ex-patriots is unknown. What is known is that he became rapidly blind from cataracts, besides a near total hearing loss, both of which made him totally dependent on a maid whose concerns appear to have been more self-serving. His Social Security account has been re-established, thanks to the Post and at least one of his four children will see to his immediate needs. The Post’s emergency fund, depleted by the unpaid back rent, electric and water bills, has been reimbursed by his son.

If you or a relative are considering visiting or moving to Guatemala, register with the US Embassy here. If something bad happens, they will at least have your contact information. The local American Post #2, Department of Mexico will take care of the rest. They’re better than AAA or ‘roadside assistance ‘plans: who else will bring you Bavarian-style potato pancakes or peanut butter? Most appreciative thanks go out to our members Bruce Bouford, Richard West, Edward Clark Jr. Tom Martin and Jackson Underwood.

We especially thank Ms. Jeannette Denhard of the U.S. Embassy for bringing this situation to our attention.

Next post meeting to be held August 6, 2013
For your information our post membership spans two continents with members not only in most populated areas in Guatemala such as Antigua, Rio Dulce, Quetzaltenango, Lake Atitlan but also Chile, Peru, Paraguay and Argentina.

YOUR 2012 MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED ON DECEMBER 31, 2012
You through your continued membership are our greatest benefactors
Through your membership payment allows us to serve veterans and the Community.

If you have not renewed there are now several ways to do it.

1. Go on the American Legion Web Page www.legion.org and at the top you will see a link marked renew. Just click on this and if there is any balance left on your charge cards just fill in the information.

2. If you live near a Wells Fargo Bank just go in a make a $30.00 deposit to account # 2000003092699 and send me an e-mail with the deposit information.

3. If your in Guatemala go to the BAM bank and just make a deposit of Q240.00 in account # 49-0055781-6 and send me an e-mail with the deposit information.

4. If you’re a traditionalist mail a check for $30.00 to
   The American Legion
   Codigo A-178
   P.O. Box 669004
   Miami Springs Fl. 33266

Please keep in mind that your membership is very important to us. With your membership we are able to first of all help veterans. We have this year helped 4 veterans receive pensions that they were unaware that they were eligible for. Three widows of veterans have also received pensions this year.

Secondly your dues payment keeps our operating expenses from cutting into any donations we receive to help the poorest of children receive educations that they normally would not receive.

MEMBERSHIP
The 2014 membership cards are available.
The 2013 membership cards are here and will be mailed out as soon as we receive your dues. We currently have 59 members paid for 2014. This makes us 35.76% of our goal or 165 members for 2014. If you appreciate the work that is being done by your post why not share this newsletter with your friends and any fellow veterans you may know. Membership is what keeps us going. The cost of the operation’s of the post come directly from your dues. 100% of the donations we receive go to our projects without any overhead. Membership to Guatemala Post #
2 is Membership to the world wide American legion. Please make out all dues checks of $30.00 for 2014 to The American Legion and mail to “The American Legion”, Codigo 178, P.O. Box 669004, Miami Springs Fl. 33266. Please write in the remarks section of your check “dues 2013”. If you have not renewed your membership please get it in the mail.

Your Post has not only assisted veterans and their families to receive the benefits that they earned but has established as a community service organization here in Guatemala, something all of you should be proud of.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM
We will be exchanging the Water filters at the school in the next week or so. Anyone wishing to visit the school should contact americanlegion2@gmail.com to schedule a visit. We travel to the school every three weeks to provide the breakfast food and would love to have you come along.

Dr. George H. Boyce Memorial Scholarship Program
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
The scholarship program has graduated over 11 children and currently has 13 in elementary school and three in University.

The Steve Skelton Memorial Library of the American Legion
Membership at the library is growing and the volunteers are assisting with helping library members find, check in and check out books. Come give us a visit we have over 30,000 books on just about any subject you can think of. We now have a large selection in Spanish, French, German and a smaller selection in other languages. Q100.00 for membership makes this quite a bargain.

Socials and Community Bulletin Board
We hold our Thursday Morning Breakfast at the Café Condessa at 8:30 and this event is well attended by regulars and new visitors to Antigua each week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION Houston Texas
(August 22 through August 29, 2013)

The convention allows legionnaires to participate in every aspect of the American Legion agenda from helping homeless veterans to national security. If you have the opportunity you should attend to see how truly dedicated the American Legion is to helping veterans their families and active duty service members.