

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

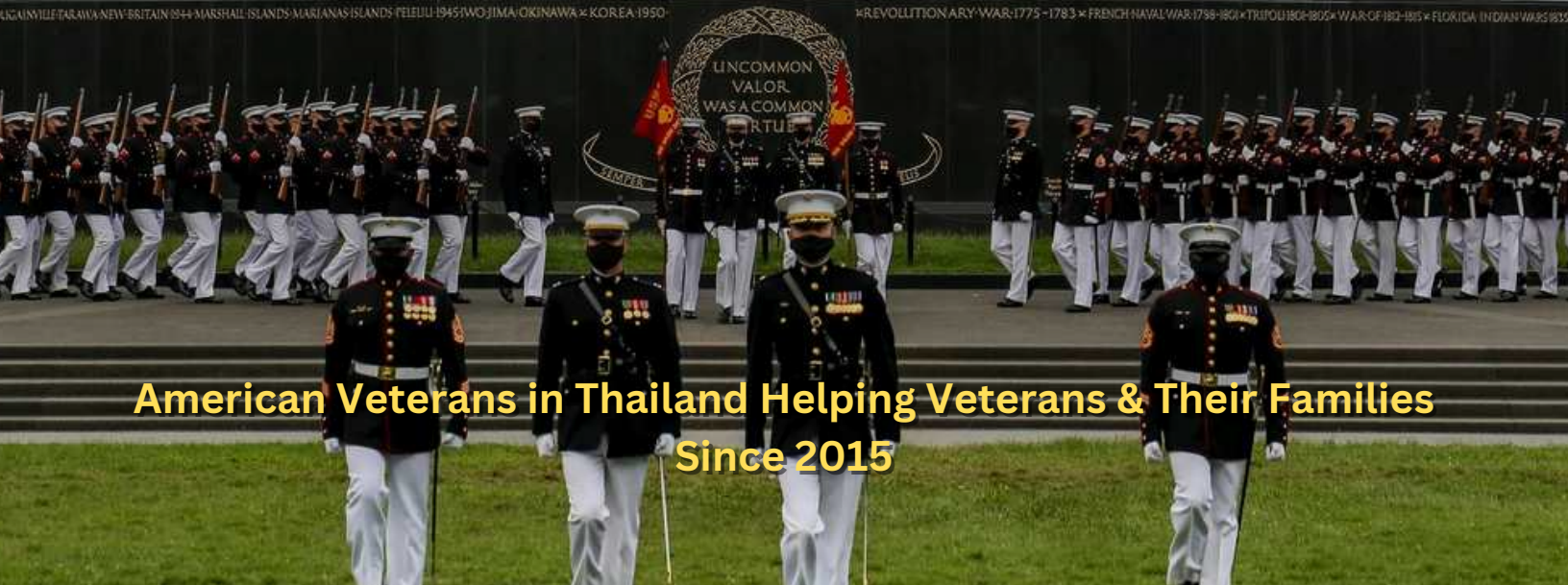
NEWSLETTER

November 2025

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01



KUAIKIN ILLU TARAWA NEW BRITAIN 1944 MARSHALL ISLANDS MARIANAS ISLANDS PELELIU 1945 IWO JIMA OKINAWA KOREA 1950 REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775-1783 FRENCH NAVAL WAR 1758-1801 TRISTOU 1804-1805 WAR OF 1812-1815 FLORIDA INDIAN WARS 1835



American Veterans in Thailand Helping Veterans & Their Families
Since 2015

DISCLAIMER

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01

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This newsletter is for American veterans, spouses and dependent children that are living in Thailand and elsewhere to keep up with current Post news.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



For God and Country

John Skabry
Commander, Post TH01

commander@americanlegionthailand.com



To all who took part—thank you for showing that Post TH01 stands firmly behind the POW-MIA motto:

“YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.”

Dear Comrades, Families, and Friends,

As we move through November, I am proud to share several important moments that highlight the strength, unity, and professionalism of Post TH01. This month brought significant achievements, meaningful ceremonies, and transitions within our leadership that reflect the heart of our Legion family here in Ubon Ratchathani.

Leadership Recognition & Transition

This month, we honor the exceptional service of Post Adjutant Jeffrey Ludwig, who will be stepping down after 11 years of dedicated service to Post TH01. Adjutant Ludwig has been instrumental in our Post's success, providing stability, organization, and unwavering commitment throughout more than a decade of growth. His professionalism and faithful service have played a key role in establishing Post TH01 as a respected and well-run organization.

We are also proud to share that our Post Judge Advocate General, Comrade Paul Ben-Yahuda, has volunteered to train under Adjutant Ludwig to ensure a smooth and seamless transition. This mentorship reflects the strength and character of our leadership team. Both Comrades have my full gratitude, respect, and support. Thank you, Adjutant Ludwig, for your distinguished service, and thank you, Comrade Ben-Yahuda, for stepping up to lead.

Department of France Commander Owens – Visit to Ubon

We are honored to welcome Department of France Commander Owens to Ubon Ratchathani from 28 November to 03 December. This important visit strengthens our Post's relationship with Department leadership and provides an opportunity to showcase the professionalism and community spirit of TH01.

Commander Owens will meet with the Post Executive Committee on 29 November, and all Comrades are encouraged to attend. Please join us in extending a warm Ubon Ratchathani welcome and demonstrating the unity of our Post.

Veterans Day & Remembrance Day – TH01 Makes History

Post TH01 reached a historic milestone this month by participating in Remembrance Day ceremonies in two locations at the same time—a first for our Post.

Ubon Ratchathani Ceremony – POW/MIA Monument

Our Post continued its annual tradition at the POW-MIA monument, forming the largest group of foreign attendees at this year's ceremony. Our wreath-laying was conducted with dignity and received with respect by all present.

Chiang Mai Ceremony – Foreigner Cemetery

At the same time, Comrade Cook represented Post TH01 in Chiang Mai, placing a memorial wreath on behalf of our Post in coordination with VFW Post 12074 and the U.S. Consulate. His participation extended our Post's presence and honored our shared commitment to remembrance.



JEFFREY LUDWIG ADJUTANT, POST TH01
ADJUTANT@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM

Dear Members,

After nearly a decade of serving as your Post Adjutant and Finance Officer, I've come to a significant realization. While my tenure has been incredibly rewarding, I believe that my long-standing presence in these roles is no longer beneficial but rather detrimental to our Post's growth and vitality.

My reflection has brought to light disadvantages of long tenure in Post positions:

- **Creates "tunnel vision":** When the same members hold key positions for many years, they may struggle to see new possibilities or adapt to changing circumstances. This can cause the Post to continue with the same routines even when internal or external pressures, such as declining membership or new generations of veterans, require fresh approaches.
- **Discourages new members and volunteers:** A small group of long-serving officers can make a Post appear cliquey and unwelcoming to new members, who may feel their opinions and suggestions are not valued. New members may feel that there is no room for them to rise in leadership, decreasing their motivation to join. This can stifle enthusiasm among newer, potentially active members, leading them to disengage or leave.
- **Stifles fresh ideas and innovation:** A change in leadership brings new perspectives on how to attract and engage members, operate programs, and serve the community. Post leaders with excessively long tenure may resist new ideas, making it difficult for the Post to adapt to the needs of modern veterans. Older members may not be interested in or comfortable with modernizing the post, which can hinder its ability to use technology or adapt its programs to a younger demographic.
- **Lack of relevant programming:** Posts may become stuck on programs and events that primarily appeal to their older, long-term members, failing to create activities that attract a younger, more diverse membership.
- Long-term incumbents may be unwilling to train or mentor younger members, leading to a leadership vacuum when older members eventually leave or step down.
- It can cause stagnation of post activities and community involvement
- **Missed opportunities:** Stagnant leadership might miss opportunities to partner with new organizations or take advantage of new funding or program opportunities that could benefit the post and its members.
- **Erosion of purpose:** Over time, the post's programs and activities may lose their connection to the current needs of veterans and the community, weakening the post's overall purpose and impact.
- American Legion Posts face decline as younger veterans opt out
- **Concentrates power and causes division:** Without regular rotation, power can become concentrated in a few individuals or a small clique, leading to poor communication and resentment. This can result in members feeling ignored, creating division and negativity that detracts from the organization's mission.

To address these issues and foster a more dynamic and welcoming Post environment for both new and existing members, I have decided to step down from my position and take a step back for a while. This will create opportunities for others to contribute their unique perspectives and ideas, which I believe will ultimately strengthen our Post.

Thank you all once again for the privilege of serving you and our Post



U.S. MARINE CORPS



The United States Marine Corps was founded on November 10, 1775, when the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution establishing two battalions of Marines. These Marines were created to serve as naval infantry, capable of fighting both at sea and on land. This date is now celebrated every year as the Marine Corps Birthday.

Although Marine recruiting happened in several locations in Philadelphia, tradition holds that the first enlistments occurred at Tun Tavern, making it the symbolic birthplace of the Corps.

The first commissioned officer and "first Commandant" was Captain Samuel Nicholas: appointed by Congress to lead the first Marines, tasked with recruiting and organizing the new battalions and led early Marine operations during the American Revolution.

The original mission of the Marines included shipboard security and combat, amphibious raids, supporting naval operations, and landing parties and boarding actions.

One of the first significant operations was the Raid on New Providence (Bahamas) in 1776, led by Marines to capture military supplies from the British.

After the Revolutionary War, the Continental Marines were disbanded in 1783. The Marine Corps was reestablished on July 11, 1798 by an act of Congress. This permanent establishment placed the Corps under the Department of the Navy, where it remains today.

Over the 19th and 20th centuries, the Marine Corps evolved into a rapid-response expeditionary force, an expert in amphibious warfare and a key component of America's national security strategy.

Some of the major developments included the "Small Wars" era (Caribbean and Central America), World War I heroics at Belleau Wood, World War II amphibious mastery in the Pacific campaign, and the integration of aviation, armor, and specialized units in modern warfare.

THE FEW. THE PROUD.



1ST TO FIGHT

The mission of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is formally defined in Title 10 of the U.S. Code, Section 5063. In summary, the Marine Corps' mission is to be an expeditionary force in readiness — capable of responding rapidly to crises and conducting operations on land, at sea, and in the air.

Core Mission

"To be the nation's force in readiness, prepared to fight and win battles in any environment."

Specific Responsibilities

Under U.S. law and Marine Corps doctrine, the mission includes:

- Seizing and defending advanced naval bases and other land operations essential to naval campaigns.
- Providing forces for service with the Navy in the seizure or defense of bases, and for land operations essential to a naval campaign.
- Developing tactics, techniques, and equipment for amphibious warfare.
- Providing detachments and organizations for service on naval ships and security at naval stations and bases.
- Performing other duties as directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, such as humanitarian missions, embassy security, and counterterrorism operations.

Motto

"Semper Fidelis" — Always Faithful.

This motto reflects the Corps' commitment to loyalty, duty, and readiness to defend the United States at a moment's notice.



ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE





JEFF LUDWIG
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Home

Fire Safety - Quick Check List

- Smoke alarms: Install on every floor, inside sleeping areas and outside them; test monthly and replace batteries annually or when chirping.
- Escape plan: Two exits from each room, a designated meeting point outside, practice twice a year.
- Fire extinguisher: Have a multipurpose (ABC) extinguisher accessible in the kitchen and near high-risk areas; know the PASS method (Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep).
- Electrical safety: Replace frayed cords, avoid overloading sockets or long daisy-chains, unplug unused appliances.
- Cooking safety: Never leave cooking unattended; keep flammable items away from the stove.

SAFETY AWARENESS

Kitchen safety (highest risk area)

- Stay with cooking: If frying or grilling, stay nearby; if you must leave, turn off the heat.
- Grease fires: Never use water; cover pan with a lid and turn off heat, or use a dry powder/ABC extinguisher if safe.
- Appliance maintenance: Clean range hoods and ovens regularly to remove grease buildup.
- Safe storage: Store flammable liquids (kerosene, petrol) outside the house in approved containers.

Electrical and heating safety

- Certified installation: Use licensed electricians for wiring, new outlets, and major appliances.
- Appliance tips: Turn off fans, heaters, and air conditioners when unattended overnight; keep portable heaters at least 1 metre from combustibles.
- Circuit protection: Fit fuses or breakers sized correctly for each circuit; consider residual-current devices (RCDs) for outlets near water.
- Power strips: Use only surge-protected strips with a single high-current appliance per wall outlet.

Alarms, detection, and night-time habits

- Smoke alarms placement: Ceiling-mounted is best; avoid installing too close to kitchens or bathrooms where false alarms are likely.
- Interlinked alarms: If possible, use interlinked alarms so all sound if one detects smoke.

- Night routines: Keep bedroom doors closed at night to slow fire spread; keep a torch and keys near the bed.

Escape planning and practice

- Family plan: Draw a simple floor map showing two escape routes from each room and the outdoor meeting point.
- Practice drills: Time your drills, practise low crawling under smoke, and rehearse helping children, elderly, or pets.
- Locked doors/windows: Keep keys easily reachable; ensure window bars have quick-release mechanisms.
- If trapped: Seal gaps with wet towels, signal from a window, and shout to attract attention rather than opening doors to smoke.

Special situations and recovery

- Children and smoking: Never leave lighters or matches where children can reach; discourage indoor smoking.
- Gas and fuel safety: Store and handle LPG cylinders per vendor guidance; install and maintain gas leak detectors where appropriate.
- After a fire: Do not re-enter until authorities declare it safe; photograph damage for insurance and contact your insurer promptly.
- Local help: Know the local emergency number and nearest fire station; keep contacts written and saved on every phone.

**RENEW YOUR
AMERICAN
LEGION
MEMBERSHIP,
NOW:
[LEGION.ORG](https://www.legion.org)**

**Ted Portyrala 1Vice Commander, Historian
& Membership Chair, Post TH01
1vice@americanlegionthailand.com**

I wish I could say that we are at 100% or even 86% but cannot. This last month has been disappointing. We are down to 13 members needing to renew. That does not mean that they won't renew. For a lot of us, renewing our membership is not at the top of our priorities. We intend to but something else comes up and we tend to forget about it. Even though reminders are sent out or phone calls are made, it still slips our minds. If you are reading this newsletter and happen to be one of the 13, let's make an effort and get it done. You will also be hearing from the committee again.

As I have said before, members are our life blood. You have a good post. We're one of the few that does not have a base of members all located in one area. We are spread-out all-over Thailand and

the US. Still, we manage to reach out to members when they need help. Our service officer, Larry Haynie, has taken a course all on his own to learn how to assist veterans when needed. Just recently the post held Military Honors for a veteran who passed away here in Ubon, he was not a member of our post. This is the second time we have done this for a nonmember. It is because we believe it is right and necessary to show support for all veterans. But to do this we need support from you, our members.

So, get on your laptop, tablet, go to **[Legion.Org](https://www.legion.org)** and get it done. All you need to get started is your last name and membership number. Don't know your number? Send me or Jeff an email and we will provide it.



LOOKING BACK

Courage Under Fire

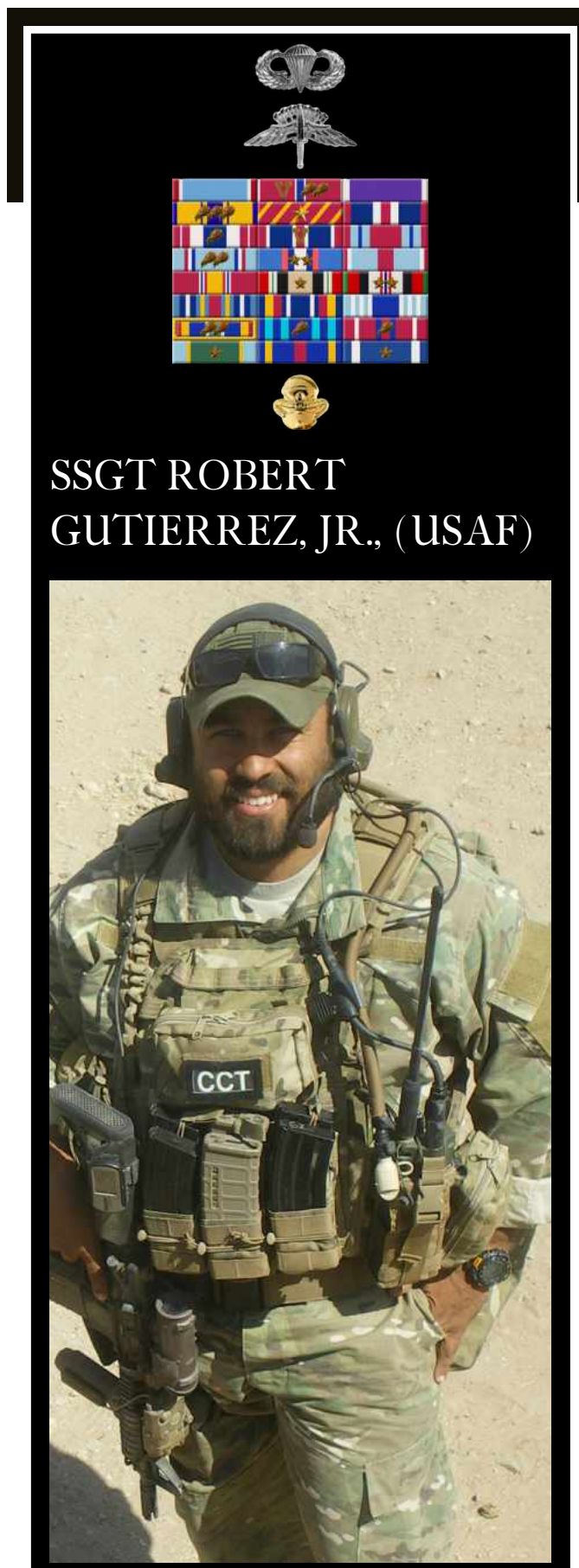
On a high-risk raid in Herat Province, Afghanistan, on October 5, 2009, Combat Controller SSgt Robert Gutierrez Jr. faced an impossible situation. His team was pinned down by a superior enemy force, and SSgt Gutierrez was shot in the chest by an armor-piercing round, resulting in a collapsed lung and severe injuries.

Despite believing he had only minutes to live, the severely wounded Gutierrez refused medical evacuation. As the sole Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC), he knew his role coordinating air support was the only way to save his team.

In an incredible display of heroism, he ignored his catastrophic wounds and directed three "danger close" A-10 strafing runs, with rounds impacting just 30 feet from his position. After a medic performed an emergency procedure to re-inflate his lung, he continued to control airpower.

SSgt Gutierrez's unwavering focus and precise control of firepower saved the lives of his teammates and allowed them to successfully escape the kill zone. His actions earned him the Air Force Cross, the service's second-highest award for valor. His story remains a powerful testament to the extreme courage and selfless dedication of our Combat Controllers.

"Staff Sergeant Robert Gutierrez Jr. Air Force Cross Recipient." National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. Air Force Museum Foundation, n.d. https://www.reddit.com/r/ArtHistory/comments/shh7g5/does_anybody_know_how_to_cite_a_museum_visit_for/.



SSGT ROBERT
GUTIERREZ, JR., (USAF)

THAI DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL



Ted Portyrala 1Vice Commander, Historian & Membership Chair, Post TH01
1vice@americanlegionthailand.com

I recently had to renew my Thai driver's license which expired while I was in the US. I was concerned that because it expired, I would have to be required to sit through a movie or take a driving test. I went to the website and looked up the requirements for renewing the license. I found out that you have one year to get it renewed before any penalty. All I needed was my passport, medical certificate, proof of residency, expired license and a short test that can be taken online.

I looked up the test, took it and at the end they gave a QR Code which you need to show when applying for your renewal. Five years ago, to get my residency letter, I had to go to the tourist police but this time it was immigration. My next step was to make an appointment online. Could not do. So, I did a walk in at the Transportation office in Ubon. They said December 19 was the earliest date that was available. They also said that I can get this done anywhere, even outside of Ubon province. I was going to Mukdahan anyway, so today I went to the office. I walked right in. No lines. Great! When they asked for the QR Code I proudly showed it to them.

Unfortunately, when I took a photo of it, I didn't notice the date was at



the bottom and missed it when I took the photo. She asked me what my password was when I took the test and of course since I took the test five days ago, I couldn't remember. She was able to find the date so we pressed on. Next, I took the color test and brake test and passed with no problem. Then a big problem. When I got my current license, I used a passport that has since expired. The number on the license was from my old passport. My new passport has a different number so when she noticed that she asked me for the old passport. That passport expired 4 years ago. I was going to destroy it but for some reason, I kept it. The problem was it was at my home which is a 2 ½ hour drive from Mukdahan. So, I drove home to get it and drove back to Mukdahan. Tomorrow morning, I should get my license. I was told that driving on an expired license could get me in trouble with the police even though I couldn't get an appointment until Dec 19. The penalty is a 2,000 baht fine.

So, if any of you will be renewing your license, be sure that the number on the new license will match the number on the expired license. Otherwise, you will need your old passport or a photo of your old passport. I believe you can renew a license 6 months before it expires.



Four guys were out playing golf. When they got to the sixth hole which was next to a road, a funeral was passing by. One of the golfers stopped, took off his cap and stood

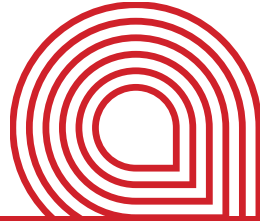
there with this cap held over his heart until the funeral procession passed. His fellow golfers were impressed by the show of respect he was giving to the deceased and told him so.

The golfer responded by saying, well she was a good wife.

*Jesus
Zamarripa*

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2Vice Commander & Americanism &
Activities Chair,
Post TH01



Fellow members, heading into the month of November, you can't help but think about Thanksgiving and having the family together for a feast and give thanks for the ability to gather and share a meal. The American Legion's Family Week takes that into consideration as it embarks on this year's celebration.

"For more than 45 years, the week of Thanksgiving has been proclaimed National Family Week. A guiding principle of The American Legion's Children & Youth programs is maintaining the integrity of the family. Nov. 24-30 will mark this year's National Family Week where the American Legion Family is encouraged to promote and celebrate healthy families and communities."

I would like to focus on two key words in this statement. Family and healthy. Some of us are in the states and can celebrate with family in normal fashion. Those of us in Thailand are sometimes constrained by just, being in Thailand. To do American things sometimes is hard being away

from America. I would ask for us keep those celebrations alive in our hearts and in our lives. Gather your family and cherish every moment. Have a meal and give thanks for the ability to do so. If you wish to cook on your own here in Thailand, there are places such as [Tops Online](#) or [Villa Market](#) that have the items needed for a traditional Thanksgiving. There are also many hotels and restaurants around Thailand that offer a Thanksgiving buffet. The Pullman Hotel in Khon Kaen does this every year. There are also many turkey farms that can dispatch, clean, dress and deliver a turkey for you to cook at home. Cost is much less than at Tops or Villa Market.

Being healthy and promoting fitness is also a focus in the Legion's Family Week theme. The holidays are synonymous with good food and drink and pledges afterwards to be better and get fit. Being active pays dividends for people at our age. Let's get motivated and get moving for a better healthier lifestyle.



DATES TO REMEMBER

10 Nov 25

US Marine Corps Birthday

11 Nov 25

Veterans Day (Ubon Commemoration)

7 Dec 25

Pearl Harbor Attack

20 Dec 25

Space Force Birthday

24, 25 Dec

Christmas Eve, Christmas Day

27 Dec 25

Nong Han Grace Church Christmas Event (Udon Thani)

10 Jan 26

Thai Children's Day



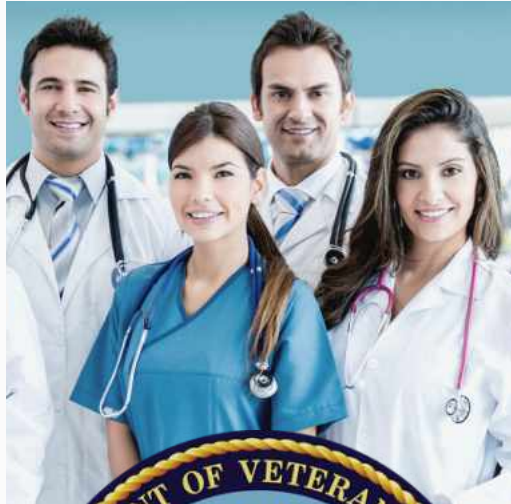
WE SERVE THOSE WHO SERVED

SERVICE OFFICER SUPPORT

SERVICE OFFICER, POST TH01

LARRY HAYNIE

SERVICE@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM



MY FELLOW VETERANS;

As your Post Service Officer, I also serve in the capacity as an “Advocate”. This means I will assist all veterans and their family members as an advisor on all matters pertaining to VA Claims for service connected medical issues and veterans benefits, and for VA spousal benefits and compensation after a veteran has passed away.

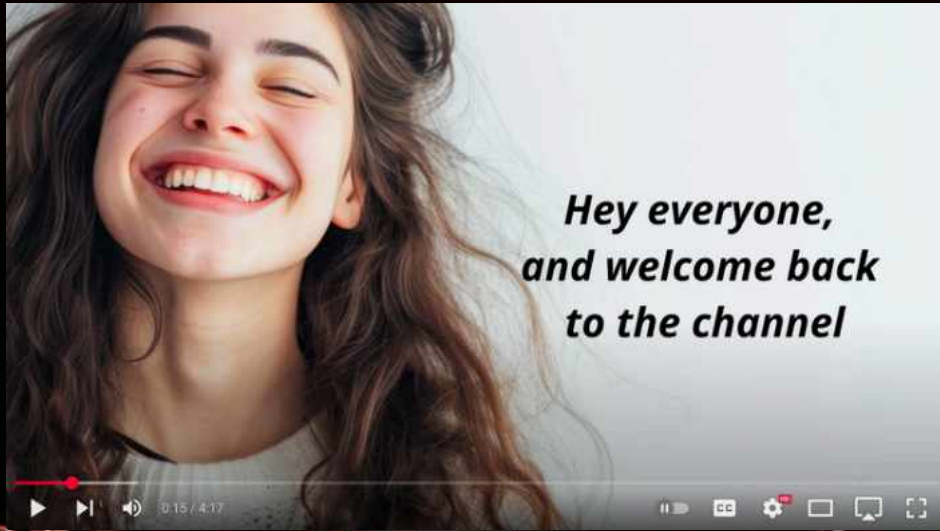
Many retired veterans are either hesitant or even reluctant to file VA Disability Claims. This is mainly due to a veteran believing that medical issues that develop years after retirement, are not related to their military service, but to advanced aging.

Vietnam War Era veterans who served in Vietnam or Thailand, may have been exposed to Agent Orange in those countries. Gulf War veterans who served in Middle Eastern countries or Afghanistan, may have also been exposed to Burn Pits or other hazardous chemicals in those regions as well. Agent Orange was also used in South Korea and was also stored on other Pacific Islands, where US military personnel were stationed.

As the Service Officer I do not have all the answers to all your questions about the VA and other matters. However, I will work tirelessly to find the information you seek, in order for you and your spouses to make correct choices and informed decisions.

!!!CLICK ON 1 OF THE MOVIES TO WATCH!!!

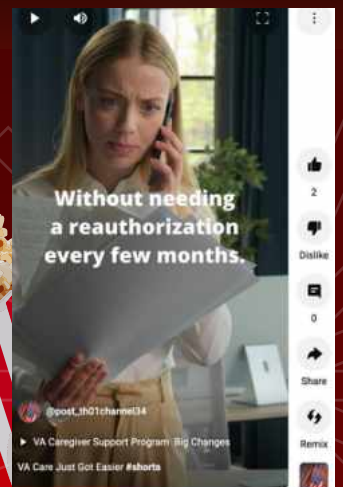
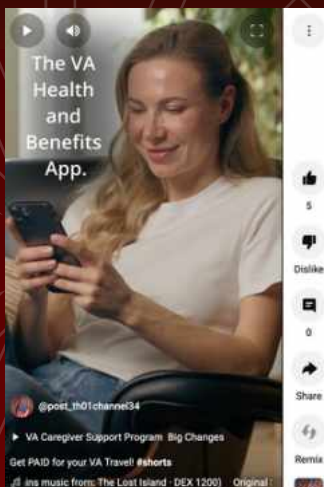
The VA Benefits You're NOT Using



MOVIE night

VA Care
Just Got
Easier

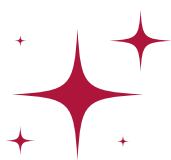
Get Paid for
Your VA
Travel!



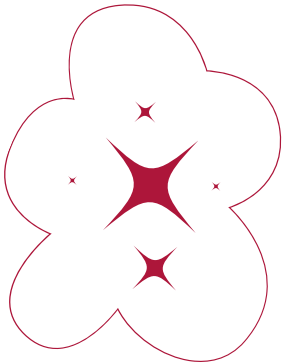
No Veteran
Should Have Their
Healthcare Disrupted

AMERICAN LEGION | POST TH01 | YOUTUBE CHANNEL

 [@post_th01channel34](https://www.youtube.com/@post_th01channel34)



HAPPY BDAY



CHRISTOPHER LAMPERT
KELVIN MARSHMENT
PAUL MCDERMOTT
JOHN SKABRY

LET'S HELP WISH
POST TH01 MEMBERS
A HAPPY BIRTHDAY
FOR THE MONTH OF
NOVEMBER

POST TH01 MEETS ON THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH



FACE-TO-FACE

**1/5 HUAI WONG NONG RD.
NAI MUANG SUB-DISTRICT,
MUANG DISTRICT,
UBON RATCHATHANI 34000**



VIRTUAL

**MONTHLY MEETINGS
CAN BE ATTENDED
ONLINE/REMOTEY VIA
GOOGLE MEET**

ONLINE

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www.AmericanLegionThailand.com

AMERICAN LEGION

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