

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01



The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

# DISCLAIMER

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01

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# APRIL 2026

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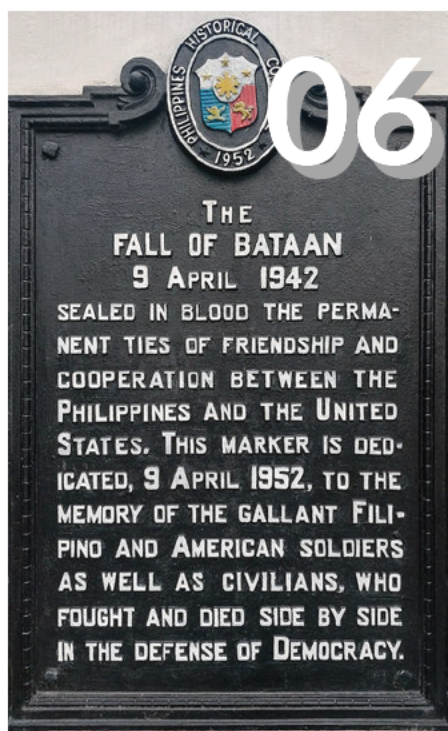
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Connect with and find more resources from Post TH01 at

[AmericanLegionThailand.com](http://AmericanLegionThailand.com)

*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**

Comrades,

As we close out April, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the strength of our Post and the values that guide us—especially our continued commitment to the democratic process.

Our Post elections have now been completed, and I want to thank all who participated. Your engagement ensures that our organization remains member-driven and strong. Next month, we will formally install our new slate of Post Officers.

There are several notable changes to highlight:

- Comrade Sowel will assume the role of 1st Vice Commander
- Comrade Salzarulo returns as Member At Large Officer, joined by Comrade Ooppapan in that role
- Comrade Potyrala will transition from 1st Vice Commander to Post Historian

I want to extend special recognition to Comrade Potyrala for his relentless commitment and leadership. His efforts have played a key role in growing our Post, with membership now exceeding 100% of our goals as we close the year strong.

At next month's General Membership Meeting, we will also be joined by a Thai attorney, at my request, to discuss the next steps in establishing our Post as either an Association or a Foundation under Thai law. This is an important step in securing our long-term presence and effectiveness here.

The future looks bright, Comrades. The coming year promises to be an exciting one as we continue moving forward together.

Thank you all for your participation, your service, and your continued dedication to one another.

# POST ADJUTANT



**PAUL BEN-YEHUDA**

## Essential Records to Compile for Families of American Legion Members

The American Legion stands as a pillar of support for veterans and their families across the United States. An integral part of this organization is ensuring that families are prepared for the inevitable transitions that come with life. In the unfortunate event of a Legionnaire's death, having the right documentation and records compiled can significantly ease the burden on surviving family members, helping them navigate through what can be a challenging time.

### **Here's a guide on vital records that should be assembled for loved ones.**

#### **1. Personal and Military Documentation**

Begin with a collection of personal identification documents. This includes:

- **Death Certificate:** A certified copy is essential for arranging funeral services and settling estates.
- **DD Form 214:** This document serves as proof of military service and contains vital information about a Legionnaire's discharge. Families need this to access veterans' benefits and commemorative honors.
- **Marriage Certificate:** If the Legionnaire was married, the marriage certificate will be necessary for spousal benefits and funeral arrangements.

Additionally, gather any military awards, commendations, and medical records that may be relevant. These documents can help families assess any benefits or entitlements.

#### **2. Insurance Policies**

Documentation pertaining to life insurance is critical. Make sure the following are compiled:

- **Life Insurance Policies:** Include all active policies and any beneficiaries listed. This ensures that families know what support they can expect.
- **Veterans' Insurance:** Families should check for any policies through the Department of Veterans (VA) that may provide additional benefits.

Sharing the locations of these documents and any contact information for the insurance companies will help families access benefits promptly.

#### **3. Estate Planning Documents**

Compile essential estate planning records, which include:

- **Will:** If the Legionnaire had a will, this document outlines how their affairs are to be handled after death.

- **Trust Documents:** If a trust was established, ensure that the documentation is accessible and understood. These documents are crucial for family members to execute the estate as per the wishes of the deceased.

#### **4. Financial Records**

Financial preparedness can help alleviate stress during times of grief. Include:

- **Bank Account Information:** Document all financial institutions where accounts are held, including account numbers and contact information.
- **Retirement Accounts:** Information on pensions or retirement savings, such as 401(k) plans or IRAs, helps survivors understand their financial standing.
- **Tax Returns:** Include the last few years of tax returns to provide a comprehensive financial picture.

Having this information readily available can assist in managing finances and fulfilling any tax obligations.

#### **5. Funeral Arrangements**

Pre-arranged funeral plans can significantly ease the burden on surviving family members. If any arrangements have already been made, ensure all documents and agreements are organized and accessible.

- **Burial Preferences:** Note any desires outlined by the Legionnaire regarding military honors, burial sites, and service details.

#### **Conclusion**

Compiling these records is a labor of love and foresight. It provides peace of mind that, in the wake of loss, families will have the necessary resources to navigate their next steps with clarity and support. As members of the American Legion, it's critical to carry this responsibility not only for our Legionnaires but also as a service to their cherished families. Establishing these records will reflect the commitment to honor their legacy and provide comfort during difficult times.

As a member of American Legion Post Gen Robin Olds TH01, you should be away the Post online documents available called, "What Family Members Should Know" . This document can help members compile and collect the information needed.

Our Past Commander, Bruce Templeman, who helped create this document, used it extensively to the benefit of his family after his passing. His family's burden was greatly eased with this document, and it should encourage all members to utilize it.

# REMEMBERING THE FALL OF BATAAN: A TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

On April 9, 1942, one of the most significant and heartbreaking chapters in the history of World War II unfolded as Bataan fell to Japanese forces. This date serves as a somber reminder of the sacrifices made by the valiant servicemen who fought under the most trying circumstances. Among those who played an integral role in defending this vital region was Battery C of the 4th Marine Regiment, alongside many other brave American soldiers.

The Battle of Bataan was characterized by fierce combat and an unwavering spirit among the defenders. These men faced overwhelming odds, as they were outnumbered and outgunned but fought tenaciously to protect their positions. From the outset, the soldiers of Battery C displayed extraordinary courage and commitment to their mission. They were not just any soldiers; they were brothers in arms, united by a common purpose: to defend their country against the encroaching threat posed by the Japanese military.

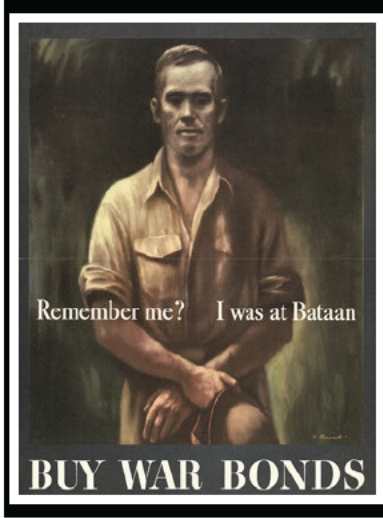
As the battle wore on, it became increasingly clear that the situation was dire. The defenders of Bataan endured relentless attacks, dwindling supplies, and harsh environmental conditions. Despite their resolve, the Japanese forces pressed on, utilizing superior numbers and resources to encircle and isolate the American and Filipino defenders. The stalwart resistance displayed by the troops at Bataan became emblematic of a larger struggle: the fight for freedom and the will to endure against tyranny.

On that fateful day, the surrender of Battery C and the 4th Marine Regiment marked not just a military defeat but also a deeply personal loss for the soldiers and their families back in the United States. The surrender signified a moment of profound vulnerability, as the thousands of men who had fought valiantly were forced to yield to an enemy that had demonstrated its brutality in the wake of their victory.

What transpired next became a harrowing chapter in American military history. The forced march of the surviving soldiers, known infamously as the Bataan Death March, stands as a testament to the resilience and endurance of the human spirit in the face of unspeakable hardship. Thousands of men were subjected to extreme conditions, with little to no food or water, and many perished along the way. Those who survived the march faced a long and arduous road as POWs, living through unimaginable challenges under harsh captivity.

As we honor the memory of those who fought at Bataan, it is essential to reflect on the broader implications of their sacrifices. Veterans like those in Battery C have shaped our understanding of courage, resilience, and the cost of freedom. Their legacy is a reminder of our responsibility to support and honor all veterans who have served.

In remembrance of April 9, 1942, let us pay tribute to the brave souls who stood resolutely in defense of their country and comrades. Their sacrifice should never be forgotten, and their stories must continue to inspire current and future generations. It is through remembrance and acknowledgment of their experiences that we can truly understand the values of service, sacrifice, and patriotism that define our nation.



USS Bataan (LHD-5)



Death March Memorial

## 1ST VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

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### **Ted Portyrala** **1st Vice Commander,** **Historian & Membership Chair**

*Dear Members,*

*After serving as your 1st Vice Commander for the past four years and 2nd Vice Commander for three years prior, I have decided it is time to step back and allow new leadership to bring fresh ideas and goals to our post. While I will continue to serve as Historian, a role I have held since our post's inception, I believe this transition is essential for our continued growth.*

*I have found great satisfaction in serving as an officer, including my time as interim commander following the passing of Bruce Templeman. However, the role of 1st Vice Commander requires a significant time commitment, particularly in chairing the membership committee and leading recruitment and renewal efforts.*

*I am confident that Comrade Joe Sowels has the enthusiasm and commitment necessary to lead this committee effectively. I ask that you provide him with the same support you gave me, as this work cannot be done alone. I encourage you to join the membership committee or help with recruitment in any way you can. We are all recruiters, and your involvement is vital to ensuring our post continues to serve our members and all veterans.*

*I wish Joe the very best and look forward to serving on his committee. Thank you for the honor of serving as one of your officers.*

RENEW YOUR AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP, NOW: [MYLEGION.ORG](http://MYLEGION.ORG)



**Ted Portyrala**  
**1st Vice Commander,**  
**Historian & Membership Chair**



Comrades,

I am pleased to report that we currently have 86 members, reaching 106% of our goal. Out of 29 posts in the Department of France, we are one of only ten to reach 100% and one of six to exceed it. We also have three prospective members waiting until July to join for the 2027 membership drive.

While the 2027 goals have not yet been set, I anticipate a target of approximately 95 members. Although this will be a challenge, I am confident we can succeed, given our gain of nine new members this year.

As we look toward the 2027 term, I will be stepping down as 1st Vice Commander and Membership Chair. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this role, but I believe it is time for new leadership to take over. I plan to remain on the committee as a member to fully support the next 1st Vice Commander during this transition.

# TAWANCHAI FOUNDATION DONATION, 10 MARCH 2026

We recently completed our fifth annual donation to the Tawanchai Foundation in Khon Kaen, where we were received with great warmth. For those who may be unfamiliar, the Tawanchai Foundation provides essential treatment for children born with cleft palates, lips, and other cranial deformities. These life-changing services are provided entirely free of charge to patients and their families.

The generosity of our members has made this an annual tradition. We contribute \$1,000 yearly, and for the past four years, VFW Post 10217 in Korat has generously joined us with matching funds. Notably, 100% of these donations go directly to the foundation, with no deductions for administrative costs.

Without this intervention, many of these children face a difficult future, often experiencing ridicule or missing out on an education and a normal life. The Tawanchai Foundation gives them a real chance. Beyond surgery, they provide comprehensive care through adulthood, including counseling, education, and employment services. Many former patients even return to the foundation as volunteers to help others.

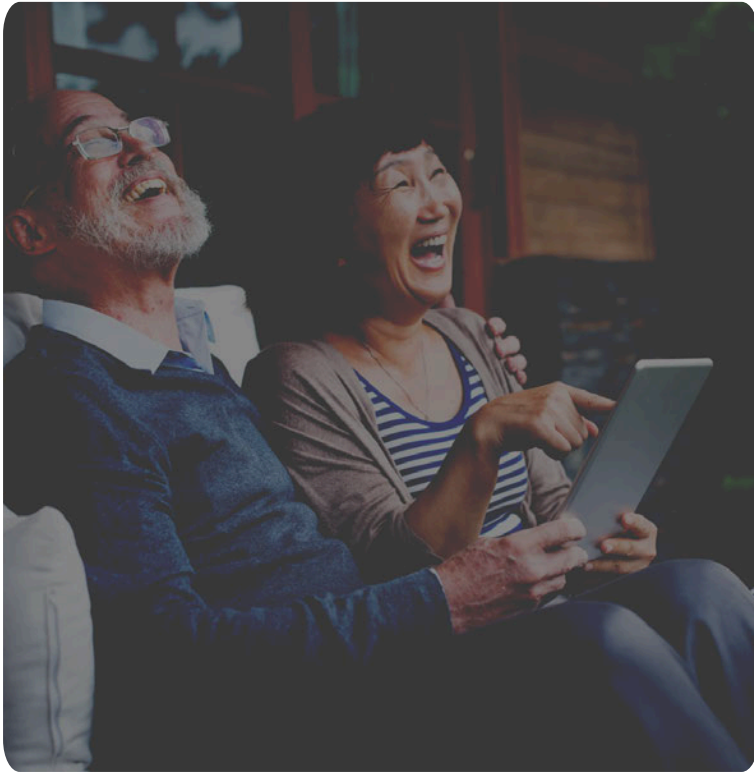
If you would like to support this worthy cause, you may donate via the following accounts:

US Bank Transfers: Bank: First Command Bank  
Account Name: American Legion Thailand Post TH01  
Account Number: [REDACTED]  
Routing Number: [REDACTED]  
Swift Code: [REDACTED]

Thailand Bank Transfers: Bangkok Bank  
Account Name: John Skarby  
Account Number: [REDACTED]

Please include a note indicating that the funds are for the Tawanchai Foundation. Additionally, please notify the Adjutant at [adjutant@americanlegionthailand.com](mailto:adjutant@americanlegionthailand.com) of your donation amount and purpose so that a receipt can be issued for tax purposes.





Fifty-one years ago, Herman James, a North Carolina mountain man, was drafted by the Army.

On his first day in basic training, the Army issued him a comb. That afternoon the Army barber sheared off all his hair.

On his second day, the Army issued Herman a toothbrush. That afternoon the Army dentist yanked seven of his teeth.

On the third day, the Army issued him a jock strap. The Army has been looking for Herman for 51 years.

# AMERICAN ARMY SOLDIER YARN

## WHAT IS AMERICANISM?



Greetings all!

Another year has passed us by and as always, our committee has been very busy in supporting the many events and communities around Thailand. We are spread out from Chiang Mai to Korat, Khon Kaen to Ubon Ratchathani. But as spread out as we are we find ways to support our communities and out post.

The month of February had been deemed Americanism and Activities Month in which we are meant to refocus ourselves and stress the importance of celebrating America. As you all may know, our country is celebrating its 250th Birthday this coming 4th of July. 250 years since our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence. In light of this, The American Legion created the USA250 Challenge in which participants

*Jesus  
Zamarripa*

**2nd Vice Commander &  
Americanism & Activities  
Chair**

can sign up for a fee and promote physical fitness, mental wellness, and community service by accomplishing certain goals. There is still time to accomplish these goals. You can also support someone who is signed up by pledging to the cause. Donations will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF). For more information please go to <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge>

We also urge all members to celebrate our Nation in their own way even though we are away from the USA. Get together for some burgers and hot dogs and your favorite refreshments. Celebrate proudly but responsibly.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**10 Mar 2026**

Tawanchai Hospital Donation (Khon Kaen)

**15 Mar 2026**

American Legion 107<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**25 May 2026**

Memorial Day (event in Chiang Mai)

**14 June 2026**

US Army Birthday and Flag Day

**4 Jul 2026**

American Independence Day (250<sup>th</sup>)

**14 Jul 2026**

BG Robin Olds Birthday

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**8 DECEMBER 2026**

**END OF YEAR PARTY, UBON RATCHATANI, PEPPERS**



**WE SERVE THOSE WHO SERVED**

# **SERVICE OFFICER SUPPORT**

**SERVICE OFFICER, POST TH01**

**LARRY HAYNIE**

**[SERVICE@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM](mailto:SERVICE@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM)**



When an American military veteran passes away in Thailand, what does the veteran's family need to do? Reporting the death is usually done at the local Municipal Thai Government Office. A copy of the Thai Death Certificate is normally given by the medical examiner or hospital, if the veteran dies while being hospitalized.

The Thai Death Certificate then needs to be translated from Thai to English. The English Death Certificate should then be sent to the American Embassy in Bangkok, who then completes a US Embassy Death Certificate. That Death Certificate is Emailed to the veteran's family or next of kin.

If the spouse or family member intends to file a VA Claim for Burial, DIC, or Widow's Pension, the US Embassy Death Certificate must be filed along with the relevant VA Claim form. Any American veteran who has been discharged with other than a Dishonorable Discharge, is entitled to a VA Burial allowance, depending on the circumstances surrounding

their death.

Many spouses of deceased veterans do not have knowledge or experience with the VA Claims system. This is where membership with the American Legion or VFW is important, especially for veterans living in Thailand. Knowing who your Post Officers are can be critical, especially in times of crisis or emergencies.

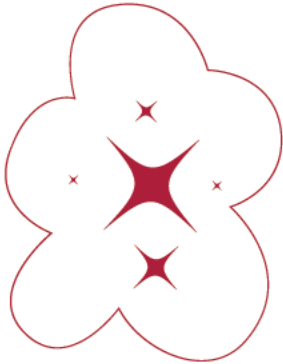
In the case of VA Burial benefits, a veteran who passes away from a service connected medical condition is eligible for up to a \$2000 burial allowance. However, a veteran who passes away from a non-service connected medical condition, may also be eligible for up to a \$978 burial allowance.

To apply for deceased veterans Burial Allowance, it is advisable to contact an Accredited Service Officer and submit a VA Form 21P-530EZ (Application for Burial Benefits), along with a VA Form 21-22a Power of Attorney, to expedite the claim process. Contact your Post Service Officer for assistance.

**MY  
FELLOW  
VETERANS;**



# HAPPY BDAY



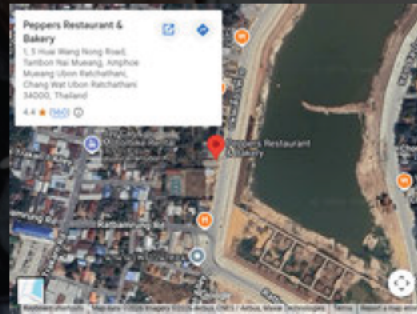
ROBERT BRILL  
 BRUCE BULL  
 GERALD CHURCHILL  
 WILLIAM RUTHERFORD  
 SALVATORE SALZARULO  
 EDWARD SOSTACK

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

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

# MEETS ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01



## FACE-TO-FACE

1, 5 Huai Wang Nong RD.  
Tambon Nai Mueang,  
Mueang Ubon Ratchathani District,  
Ubon Ratchathani 34000 Thailand



## VIRTUAL

Monthly Meetings can be  
Attended Online/Remotely via  
Google Meet

ONLINE

 AMERICAN  
LEGION

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

# DISCOVER & CONNECT WITH POST TH01 ONLINE

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01

## CLICK THE FOLLOWING LINKS

Post TH01 Facebook Page



Post TH01 YouTube Channel



Post TH01 Instagram Account



Instagram

Post TH01 Website

[www.AmericanLegionThailand.com](http://www.AmericanLegionThailand.com)

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

# 2026 ELECTED OFFICERS, APPOINTED OFFICERS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01

**COMMANDER** - John Skabry  
commander@americanlegionthailand.com

**1st VICE COMMANDER** - Joe Sowel  
1vice@americanlegionthailand.com

**2nd VICE COMMANDER** - Jesus Zamarripa  
2vice@americanlegionthailand.com

**FINANCE OFFICER** - Doug Palzer  
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**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS** - Wayne Wright  
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**JUDGE ADVOCATE** - Paul Ben-Yehuda  
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**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER** - Chris Lampert  
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**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE** - Mike Cook  
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- Sal Salzarulo  
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tpubon@gmail.com

**IT DIRECTOR** - Chris Lampert  
comms@americanlegionthailand.com

**ASSISTANT FINANCE OFFICER** - Wayne Wright  
waywright@outlook.com

**ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE CHAIR AND**

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**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR AND**

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**ASSISTANT COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR** - Mike Cook  
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**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR** - Joe Sowel  
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