

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

NEWSLETTER

January 2026

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01



American Veterans in Thailand Helping Veterans & Their Families
Since 2015

The American Legion at Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

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BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS POST TH01

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Find Post TH01 & its members online.



Connect with
and find more
resources
from Post
TH01 at

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.



For God and Country

**John Skabry
Commander**



Fellow Legionnaires,

We are well into the dry season, and our Post—along with its members—has been engaged with our local communities more than at any time in recent memory. It is with great pride that I can announce that Post TH01 has reached 100% membership for the year, with our sights now firmly set on 103% by next month.

This milestone did not happen by chance. First Vice Commander Potyrala deserves particular recognition and respect for his sustained effort and commitment in making this achievement possible. His work reflects exactly the standard we are striving for across our leadership team.

Our broader objective remains clear: to ensure that The American Legion in Thailand, and specifically Post TH01, is an organization that veterans can feel genuinely proud to join and actively participate in.

Since last month, our Post has maintained a demanding but rewarding operational tempo. We helped make Christmas special for children at Nong Han Grace Church in Udon Thani. We hosted active-duty service members and veteran families at a joint The American Legion/Veterans of Foreign Wars supper in Chiang Mai.

We rapidly adjusted to a venue change for Children's Day in Ubon Ratchathani, distributing 7,500 cookies at the Ubon Zoo when our traditional event at Royal Thai Air Force Base Ubon Ratchathani was closed due to military readiness. In addition, for the first time, our Post also participated in Children's Day activities in Chiang Mai Province, expanding our reach beyond our

usual footprint.

We concluded the month with a successful General Post membership meeting through outreach in Mukdahan Province, hosted at Mookys Cafe, which was well attended by members and their spouses.

Looking ahead, we are now preparing for our fourth annual Tawanchai Children's Foundation donation, conducted jointly with VFW Post 10217. This effort supports children born with craniofacial deformities and cleft palates and will take place at Queen Sirikit Hospital. An outreach meeting is also being planned in conjunction with this event.

Finally, potential events at the U.S. Embassy Thailand, as well as participation in remains recovery operations with Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, are still under discussion and will be communicated as details are finalized.

Call to Action

Post TH01 continues to grow because our members choose to stay involved. I encourage every Legionnaire to attend meetings when possible, participate in outreach events, and reach out to eligible veterans who may not yet be members. If you see an opportunity to serve, step forward. If you have an idea that strengthens our mission, bring it forward.

This Post does not succeed because of any single individual—it succeeds because committed veterans stand together, support one another, and act with purpose. Your presence, your voice, and your service matter.

PAUL BEN-YEHUDA

**POST
ADJUTANT**



As members of the American Legion, we share a unique bond that transcends our individual experiences in service. Our collective mission revolves around supporting veterans, ensuring their needs are met, and fostering a sense of community among those who have served. An often overlooked yet critical aspect of enhancing our collective effectiveness is keeping accurate and up-to-date contact information.

Accurate contact information serves as the linchpin for effective communication within our organization. Whether it is receiving updates on local events, district meetings, or important legislative changes, having reliable contact details is essential for every member. It ensures that news reaches every corner of our community, fostering a well-informed membership that is engaged and active. When members can easily communicate with one another, it strengthens our camaraderie and empowers us to act collectively when immediate actions are needed.

Moreover, maintaining correct contact information is vital for facilitating efficient organizational operations. It allows our leadership teams to coordinate events, outreach efforts, and service opportunities effectively. For instance, if we are planning a fundraiser for a local veteran's charity or a community outreach program, having a current list of members and their preferred means of communication—be it phone, email, or social media—ensures that everyone receives prompt invitations and important updates. This not only reflects our commitment to service but also enhances the recruitment of new members who may be eager to join our efforts.

Furthermore, the importance of contact information goes beyond mere logistics; it plays a vital role in fostering solidarity among Legionnaires. By being

reachable, we reinforce the idea that we are not alone in our journeys. Members can easily connect for support, whether it is for those navigating the challenges of PTSD or those seeking job opportunities after military service. A correct contact list can serve as a powerful networking tool, connecting veterans with others who have faced similar experiences.

Legionnaires often rely on each other for support during times of need. If any emergency arises, whether personal or related to member services, having correct contact information can make all the difference. The quick ability to rally support, both physical and emotional, depends significantly on how well we stay connected with one another. Ensuring our contact information is up to date might encourage others to reach out during challenging times, knowing they have access to a reliable support network.

It is important for every member to regularly check and update their contact information. Many posts have set up procedures for keeping this information updated, and taking initiative in this area shows our commitment not only to ourselves but to our fellow veterans. Consider setting a reminder to review your contact information at the beginning of each new year or at the start of a new membership cycle.

In conclusion, the importance of proper contact information for American Legion members cannot be understated. It serves as a bridge that connects us, enhances our operations, and strengthens our community. As we embody the values of loyalty, brotherhood, and service, let us ensure that we are easily reachable for one another. An updated contact list is not just a set of names and numbers; it stands for our commitment to being there for each other, ensuring that the spirit of the Legion continues to thrive long into the future.

PAUL BEN-YEHUDA

HELMET & RIDING GEAR SAFETY UNDER SCRUTINY AFTER TRAGIC SCOOTER FATALITY



A tragic accident this week has renewed calls for motorcycle and scooter riders to not only wear helmets – but to wear them properly.

My wife's aunt lost her life after setting out on what was meant to be a short trip to the bank on her scooter. Although she placed a helmet on her head, it had not been securely fastened. During a collision, the helmet came off, and she sustained injuries that tragically took her life.

Our family believes this accident was preventable, and we share this story in the hope that others may learn from this heartbreaking loss. It serves as a reminder that wearing a helmet – and wearing it correctly – are two very different things.

Safety experts also remind riders that helmets are only one part of responsible riding. Proper protective clothing – including sturdy boots, long pants such as jeans, and long-sleeve outerwear – can significantly reduce the severity of injuries in the event of a fall. Even at city speeds, serious skin and muscle injuries can occur in just seconds when riders are not wearing appropriate gear.

Riders are encouraged to wear full protective gear on every ride and to remain vigilant at all times. Even the safest and most experienced riders face risks from distracted or inattentive drivers on the road.

So enjoy the ride, the wind, and the scenery – but please do so safely. We don't want anyone lost too soon or transferred to the Post Everlasting.

RIDE SMART: HELMET & GEAR SAFETY CHECKLIST

Helmet – Every Ride

- Helmet fits snugly and sits level on your head
- Chin strap fastened securely – two fingers max between strap and chin
- No cracks or visible damage
- DOT/ECE-approved helmet recommended
- Replace any helmet involved in a crash

Protective Gear

- Long-sleeve jacket or protective riding shirt
- Long pants (preferably reinforced or riding jeans)
- Sturdy boots that cover the ankle
- Gloves with grip and protection
- Reflective or high-visibility elements when possible

On the Road

- Assume other drivers may not see you
- Keep extra space between you and traffic
- Slow down in intersections and busy areas
- Stay alert – every second counts

This article is intended to promote general safety awareness and does not replace official rider training or government motorcycle laws.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2026

RENEW YOUR AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP, NOW: MYLEGION.ORG



Ted Portyrala
1st Vice Commander,
Historian & Membership Chair

Comrades,

I am delighted to announce that we have reached 100% of our membership goal! We now stand at 82 members, surpassing our target of 80.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to the membership committee—Jeff Ludwig, Mike Cook, Larry Haynie, Larry Edmonds, Jesus Zamarripa, Wayne Wright, John Skarby, Paul Ben-Yehuda and Sal Salzarulo—for their dedication and hard work in achieving this milestone. We should be receiving a bonus of \$240 from the department as a result

However, this is not the time to stop recruiting. Members are the lifeblood of our post, and with an average age of 70, recruitment is increasingly vital. New members are out there, and we must continue to reach them.

When a veteran joins our post,

it is very important to make them feel welcome. Offer them the chance to get involved in either becoming a post officer or joining in with community activities. Ask them about themselves. Show an interest in them.

Excellent sources for new members include the Facebook groups "Expats Americans in Thailand," "Ubon Expats," and "Ubon RTAFB Memories." Perhaps you know someone who worked in the same shop or served alongside you. If half of our current members recruited just one new person, we would add 41 members to the post!

One of the simplest ways to promote the post is to wear your Legion cap. If someone asks you about the post, please collect their NPE (Name, Phone, Email) and forward this information to myself or any committee member. We will take it from there.

Thank you again for your continued support.





Ted Portyrala
1st Vice Commander, Historian & Membership Chair



In December, Commander Skarby attended Bike Night representing the American Legion Rides in Amnot Charon.

Social Dinner before Post Membership Meeting



In January, we took the show on the road to Mukdahan and held a social dinner the day before our Post monthly membership meeting.



The meeting was held at Mooky's cafe.

Remembrance Day



In November, Post TH01 took part in annual Remembrance Day ceremonies around Thailand: (1) the annual Remembrance Day ceremony at Thung Sri Muang Park in Ubon. This is held in honor of the service men from WWII who were held prisoner at a POW camp located north east of Ubon. Honor was also held for a Thai woman and her daughter who, at the risk of death, smuggled food to the prisoners. The post has attended this event since the formation of the post. & (2) Mike Cook represented Post TH01 at the annual Chiang Mai ceremonies.

A Look Back at Post TH01 Operations in 2025

2025 ended on a high note for TH01 with us meeting the membership goal of 80 members plus two more for 82 members. We were fortunate to not have a member pass on although we held Military Honors for a non member veteran. Our long standing adjutant Jeff Ludwig stepped down after serving ten years starting with the beginning of the post. Jeff will help with training his replacement, Paul Ben-Yeuda.

DFR Commander Visits Post TH01

In November, Department of France Commander, Dennis Owens, visited our post. He was here to listen to concerns we have, being assigned to the Department of France. Our post along with Post TH02 submitted a resolution to National to allow us to leave the Department of France and be assigned to a department in the Asia/Pacific area.



READ MORE ON THE NEXT PAGE

2025 YEAR END REVIEW

What Post TH01 Did Throughout 2025



January: The Post was involved with Children's Day held annually in January throughout Thailand, handing out over 3,750 cookies at Ubon RTAFB.



March: Our annual support of Tawanchai was held in Khon Kaen where we, with VFW Post 10217, donated \$1,000 each to help children born with cleft palates and other cranial deformities. This was our 3rd year making such a donation. It was very rewarding to see the patients that had surgery done. The surgeons did an amazing job and the nursing staff and support staff were all very professional. All care they receive is free of charge.



While in Khon Kaen, we had a social dinner and held our monthly membership meeting at Mark Faralli's home. Mark was a gracious host, allowing us to hold the meeting for a 2nd such time. After the meeting, he provided a very good luncheon. He is a great cook and makes delicious pickles.

April: We held our post elections. John Skarby was elected as Post Commander, Ted Potyrala: 1st Vice Commander, Jesus Zamarripa: 2nd Vice Commander, Doug Palzer: Finance Officer, Wayne Wright: Sergeant-at-arms, Dave Burns: Chaplain, Paul Ben-Yehuda: Judge Advocate, Chris Lampert: Public Affairs Officer, and Sal Salzarulo: Member-at-large.



May: Mike Cook represented our Post by attending Memorial Day in Chiang Mai at the Chiang Mai Foreign Cemetery, placing flags on the graves of veterans. It was hosted by VFW Post 12074.



July: Distressing news came in about Thailand and Cambodia getting into an armed conflict, causing over 300K Thais having to leave the border area for shelters that were set up for them. Our Commander toured the shelters and reported the situation to the Post. The Post responded by donating money and supplies.

August: American Legion Legacy Run. Robert Rositer donated to help fund the Veterans and Children Foundation. Jesus Zamarripa and his wife Premruthai attended a ceremony at Kanchanaburi paying respect to the fallen who built the Death Railway. The ceremony was held at Don Rak Cemetery.

What Post TH01 Did Throughout 2025



October: The post held Military Honors at a funeral for a non-member veteran. This isn't the first time the post has done this. We are here for all veterans, whether they are a member or not.



November: There was a Thanksgiving dinner held at the Post's home location, Peppers Restaurant.



December: Jesus and Premruthai Zamarripa & Robin and Thippawan Barker represented the Post by giving donations to Nong Han Grace Church in Udon Thave.

[READ MORE ABOUT NONG HAN GRACE CHURCH EVENT ON PAGE 13](#)



TAKING CARE OF FAMILY

An old lady was living by herself. Her family was concerned about her being alone so they asked her if she would like to live in a retirement center. She agreed, so her family arranged to move into one.

The nurse showed her to her room which was very nice. They gave her breakfast eggs and toast which she enjoyed. The nurse sat her down in front of a window overlooking a garden full of flowers. She enjoyed the beauty.

About ten minutes later the nurse noticed she was leaning to the right. She rushed in and straightened her up. Ten minutes later she was leaning to the left. Again the nurse ran in and straightened her up. This would go on all morning.

Later the next day her family came to visit. They asked her if she was enjoying herself. She nodded and said the garden was nice and the food was good.

She then whispered into her son's ear. But one thing I don't like is that they won't let me fart.



Jesus Zamarripa

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

Greetings all!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and brought in the New Year safely. Happy 2026!!

We all had a busy time during these holidays, but I do hope that family was part of your festivities.

I would like to highlight an event that we had on 27 December, 2025 in Udon Thani. The Nong Han Grace Church has their annual Christmas Program in which they celebrated the holidays by giving out presents to needy kids. Our post, thanks to our members' generosity, was able to support the Church in making this happen.

My wife and I, along with Robin Barker and his wife Thippawan, were able to attend and help give out those gifts. It was a wonderful time. One that we hope becomes an annual event for the post.

We have the Thai Children's Day holiday coming up on the 9th of January 2026 with events scheduled for Ubon Ratchathani and Chiang Mai. It is our hope that post members participate in and support both events.

We have had a very busy year. We could not have done this without the support of all our members.

From monetary donations to donating their time and effort, it is all greatly appreciated. We have another full year of events scheduled and would like to leave you with a few dates to remember.

Again, we appreciate the support and encourage others to continue the charge to assist our communities in time of need.



NONG HAN GRACE CHURCH

Jesus Zamarripa, his wife Premruthai along with Robin Barker and his wife Thippawan, attended the Nong Han Grace Church Christmas Program on 27 December 2025 in which they got to give some gifts away to needy children. Everything from jackets to soccer cleats were given. Even fishing poles.

Their wives also graciously donated some snacks for the children. It was an awesome event.

The day started as always with some prayer then on to the meaning of Christmas. The kids were so excited and very happy. There were groups that came up to sing and dance as part of the program. This year it seemed as if there were far more children than last year. This was because the Church had grown and neighboring villages also participated. All were very excited to receive any gifts but were also very shy about it. To be expected. That is until they got outside to play with their gifts.

It was a very wholesome event that filled our hearts with joy. One event that should be supported fully in the future and considered as an annual event. The pastors send their gratitude for our continued support to the church and its programs.



DATES TO REMEMBER

9 Jan 26

Thailand Children's Day (Ubon)

10 Jan 26

Children's Day Event (Chiang Mai)

10 Mar 2026 (tentative)

Tawanchai Hospital Donation (Khon Kaen)

15 Mar 2026

American Legion 107th Birthday

26 May 2026

Memorial Day (event in Chiang Mai)

14 June 2026

US Army Birthday and Flag Day



WE SERVE THOSE WHO SERVED

SERVICE OFFICER SUPPORT

SERVICE OFFICER, POST TH01

LARRY HAYNIE

SERVICE@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM



**HELLO
MY
FELLOW
VETERANS;**

First, let me express my sincere wishes to all my fellow veterans and your families, for a very Happy and Prosperous New Year!!! I wish you all continued happiness and good health in 2026.

As a retired US Air Force Security Police, I was also a Military Working Dog Handler, and served with the 635th Security Police Squadron at U-Tapao Air Base, from 1975-1976. I am also honored to be a Lifetime Member of the Vietnam Dog Handlers Association (VDHA).

The VDHA has accepted an article I recently wrote for their "Dogman" March 2026 newsletter. The article was about my fellow veteran dog handlers and their possible exposure to Agent Orange (AO) while serving at bases in Thailand. However, exposure to AO also applies to ALL US military personnel who served in Thailand, and their Thai

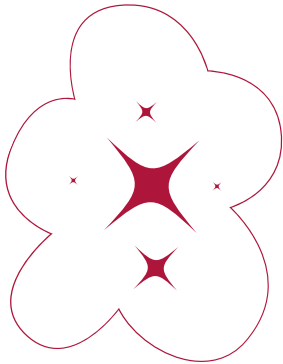
wives as well.

Many Thailand veterans and their wives may now be experiencing medical problems associated with exposure to Agent Orange. The Veterans Affairs (VA) department publishes a list of medical conditions that may affect veterans who may have been exposed to Agent Orange, but many US military veterans also married Thai women who could also have been exposed as well, as many lived and worked around US military bases.

I can not stress the importance for my fellow veterans to apply for Disability benefits that are listed under the PACT ACT Veterans Affairs website. If you have any questions concerning veterans benefits or would like to know more about the PACT ACT program, please contact me at our American Legion Post TH01 website or at our Facebook webpage as well.



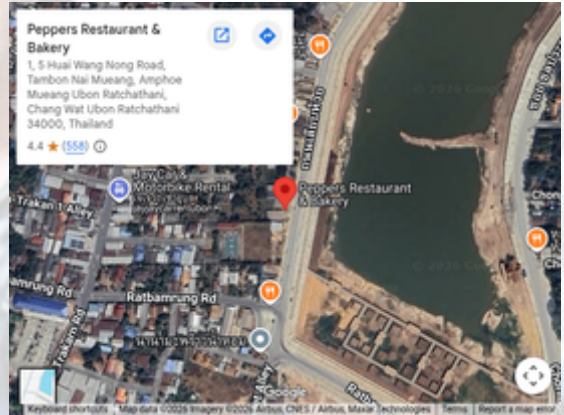
HAPPY BDAY



**GARY CHRISTOPHERSON
JOHN DUSTMAN
MARK FARALLI
JC MOLETTE, JR.
RICJARD MONTGOMERY**

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

POST TH01 MEETS ON THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH



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

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www.AmericanLegionThailand.com

AMERICAN
LEGION

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