

# THE AMERICAN LEGION AT UBON RATCHATHANI, THAILAND



BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS

POST NUMBER TH01

Post Meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of Every Month, At 10:00 A.M.

Post Location: Peppers Restaurant and Bakery



May 2024

POST EMAIL: [COMMANDER@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM](mailto:COMMANDER@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM)

VOL. 7, ISSUE 06

## Inside this issue:

- Meet our new Commander
- Commander Bruce Templeman's Interment in the USA
- Post TH01 and TH02 helps a veteran in need
- VA surpassing 40% denial
- History: B-52 explodes in Utapao RTNAF taking out a helicopter.

## 2024 POST TH01 OFFICERS

Commander – Rob Davis

<mailto:Commander@americanlegionthailand.com>

1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander & Historian – Ted Potyrala

<mailto:1vice@americanlegionthailand.com>

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander – John Skabry

<mailto:2vice@americanlegionthailand.com>

Adjutant & Finance Officer – Jeff Ludwig

<mailto:adjutant@americanlegionthailand.com>

Service Officer – Larry Haynie

<mailto:larryjoedog@yahoo.com>

Sergeant-At-Arms – Sal Salzarulo

<mailto:salzy48@hotmail.com>

Judge Advocate – Paul Ben-Yehuda

<mailto:renegademarine@icloud.com>

Chaplain – Vacant

Public Affairs Officer & IT Dir.– Chris Lampert

<mailto:comms@americanlegionthailand.com>

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Member-at-Large – Wayne Wright

<mailto:waywright@outlook.com>

Member-at-Large – Larry Edmonds

<mailto:ldedmonds@aol.com>

Member-at-Large – VACANT

## Calendar for June

6 June	<u>WWII D-Day</u>
14 June	<u>Army Birthday</u>
14 June	<u>Flag Day</u>
16 Jun	<u>Fathers Day</u>
20 June	<u>American Eagle Day</u>
27 June	<u>National PTSD Awareness Day</u>

## **Post Commander Rob Davis**

A word from the Commander..

This is my first article as Commander, and I am looking forward to many more, supporting our American Legion family. I want to introduce myself. My name is Rob Davis. I've lived in Thailand for the past two years and spent 10 years prior to that in South Korea. I have three children and two stepchildren, and I am married to Jenjira Davis.

I spent 25 years in the U.S. Air Force stationed all over the world. I retired in 2009, in Montana (Not my choice) I took a job with the state as the Director of Motorcycle Safety. After three years I was offered a position with Scouting America (New Name) and have been doing that for the past 12 years.

My main goal for the Post is to ensure we grow upon the great things Bruce did for us. One of the ways he wanted to do this was to bring more of our members into the fold. This can be done by traveling and having meetings and social gatherings in different areas of Thailand, as we did in Khon Kaen.

Also to do whatever we can to take care of Americans in Thailand. Whether it's a veteran, his spouse or just any American in need. We should continue to do whatever we can to assist.

This Post also does great things for the community, and to continue this and grow would be amazing.

I am excited to share ideas and work with each and every one of you to make sure this Post continues to grow and be an organization veterans and Americans can count on.

The passing of Bruce Templeman, our Legion Post Commander who gave a lifetime of service to the Legion and other Veterans Organizations, has left a big hole in our hearts. Bruce unselfishly gave his time and energy to make Post TH01 the best it could be. I am sure that he would have asked each member to commit themselves for the betterment of his beloved Post.

He left some big shoes to fill, but we are confident with the officers in place and help from all our members, our Post will continue to grow and prosper for years to come. Bruce will have wanted it that way.

In closing, I look forward to supporting our American Legion family as we roll into the winter months. Thank you for all your support. Yours in Fellowship, Robert (Rob) Davis, Commander Commander@americanlegionthailand.com



## Membership Chair

By Ted Potyrala

We made it to 123% which put us securely in second place. Again this year we received a monetary award for reaching 102% by May 1st. We also achieved another Honor Ribbon. Many thanks to those of you that found members. We have come a long way since our beginning with 23 members.

Once again TH01 and TH02 led the way in the Department for recruiting new members. TH02 finished in first place with 129% and we finished in second with 123%. We can't sit back July 1<sup>st</sup> is a new membership year. We need to continue to look for new members. They are out there. Maybe you have a friend on Facebook or if you belong to Thailand Veterans Wall or Ubon Veterans. These are a good source to find potential members. Especially the two veteran's websites. They are all veterans.

Again, I would encourage you to sign up for the three-year membership program being offered at today's rates. You only have a few more weeks to take advantage of this savings. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the promotion ends and our 2025 dues are raised to \$50.00 or 1,800 baht. Hurry so you don't lose out! Just click on the website below.



Reminders about multiyear membership:

- Multiyear membership sign-up is only available on the national American Legion website ([legion.org/renew](http://legion.org/renew) and [legion.org/join](http://legion.org/join)). Current or potential members cannot renew or join for a three-year membership at the post level or through MyLegion.org.
- Payment for the three-year membership is upfront.
- There is not a discounted rate with the three-year membership.
- Membership cards will still be sent annually by Legion posts.

If you don't want to be bothered with reminders to renew, use the auto payment plan. You will never be bothered again and my life will be a lot easier.

Once again, I am looking for members to join the Membership Committee. It would be great if one of you that lives in the USA would come aboard. There is not a lot of work on your part. Basically, you find someone interested in our post and pass their name to our Adjutant Jeff Ludwig. He will take it from there.



## Adjutants Corner

by Jeff Ludwig

Congratulations to our newly elected officers and thank you all for stepping up to take an active role in the operation of our Post. This next year promises to be challenging as well as rewarding. I encourage other members to step up and volunteer for one of the committees. We need you to give us a fresh perspective as well as new ideas. The current committees include the following: Just let me know which committee or committees you are interested in and I will get with committee chairpersons.

- Membership Committee
- Americanism/Activities Committee
- Public Affairs and Communication Committee
- Graves/Registration Committee.

We are coming to the end of our American Legion year. The year starts in July and ends in June the following year. This is a great time to reflect on our successes and failures. It is a time for us to evaluate and look at what we can improve as a Post and individually as Post members. Remember our Mottos are "Veterans Strengthening America" and "Veterans Still Serving". Also, a newly adopted motto "Be the One" which focuses on suicide prevention.

It takes members to make a Post not the other way around. We need all our members to help us fulfill our obligations to the 4 Pillars of The American Legion both here in Thailand and back home in the USA. The 4 Pillars consist of Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation's veterans, its service members, their families, the youth of America and ordinary citizens.

One way to help veterans is to step up and support the "**Be the One**" Program. Today, the No. 1 issue facing the veteran community is suicide, according to the [National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#). It is estimated that between 17 and 22 veterans or servicemembers take their lives each day. That is more than 6,000 annually. The rate of suicide for veterans is more than 50% higher than that of non-veteran adults. As the Global War on Terrorism continues, there will be more veterans facing mental-health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

**What will "Be the One" achieve?**

At its core, The American Legion is activating a national platform to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. The "Be the One" campaign will:

- Destigmatize asking for mental health support, creating opportunity for those with mental health issues to speak freely and get the support they need.
- Provide peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities.
- Deploy FDA-approved therapeutics for veterans to identify issues and find resources for support.

As a Post we have the power to foster unity and camaraderie, and get support quickly to veterans in crisis. In non-emergency situations, we can also:

- Educate our members, other veterans and civilians about the campaign.
- Display resources at our post or in our community.
- Share events or success stories on **the [legiontown.org](https://www.legiontown.org) platform**

The stigma associated with mental health issues is a barrier to veterans seeking assistance. They fear loss of their job, think they can handle their situation themselves, or don't believe others can understand their situation. Family members may be the first to recognize the signs that their loved one needs help, but they may lack the knowledge of how to approach the situation. If you have a family member, friend, business associate or have another connection with someone who is a veteran, The American Legion encourages you to Be the One to:

- Ask veterans in your life how they are doing.
- Listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- Reach out when a veteran is struggling,

Our Buddy Check Program is an excellent tool to help us reach out to our fellow members and veterans in the area. It a good pretense to get to know our fellow members. We can encourage our members to:

- Talk with others about how they are feeling.
- Ask for help when they know they need it.
- Know there are millions of people ready to help them.
- Remember their family and friends care.
- Remind them they are not alone.



**POST SERVICE OFFICER...LARRY HAYNIE**

Greetings My Fellow Veterans;



According to a recent Stars & Stripes news report, the Veterans Administration is surpassing a 40% denial rate for new VA Disability claims. Most of the claims are pertaining to Gulf War, PACT ACT medical issues. The article stated the reasons for most of the claim denials were for "errors or omissions". This correlates to veterans either making mistakes such as typing errors, or not adding relevant information that supports or substantiates their claims.

However, the VA is now mandated by Congress to "streamline" the claims process. For claims that have been denied, a veteran should then initiate the appeal process. The current VA Appeal Process is a 3-tiered system that gives veterans choices as to how they wish to appeal:

- Supplemental claim: This is a claim that introduces new evidence that was not initially submitted on the first claim.
- Higher Level Review: Request a higher VA level review, but new evidence can not be submitted.
- Board Appeals: A veteran can appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals and request a Veterans Law Judge review your case.

In any of the above cases, your Post Service Officer is ready to assist you in any step of the claims process. I can also help you with the appeals process as well, should a Disability Claim be denied.

Stay safe and stay cool to!!!!

Larry Haynie  
PSO, Post TH01  
Ubon, Thailand



Commander Bruce Templeman's internment  
by Past Commander Larry Edmonds

The internment of Commander Bruce A Templeman was held on 23 May 2024 at 09:45 hours at the Maryland Veteran Cemetery, Cheltenham. The services were attended by members of his family and many close friends. Post members Past



Commander Larry Edmonds, Joe Brown, and Peter Ritzel were also in attendance. Bruce was given Military Honors including a Flag Folding ceremony, 21 Gun Salute, and the playing of TAPS. After the services, everyone went to the Lions Club facilities across the highway to



further celebrate Bruce's life. Commander Templeman will be greatly missed by his family and friends, but also by post members of Brig Gen Robin Olds American Legion Thailand Post TH01 and the Korat Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10217.



**American Legion Posts Helping a Veteran in Need.** By Jeff Ludwig

Last week an 82-year-old Veteran from Roi Et was in dire need of assistance. He had fallen and broken his hip. He wanted to fly to the USA to have surgery done on his hip. Airlines refused to let him fly without a Certificate to Fly from a doctor. To compound that his visa was expiring. He contacted his son in Iowa who in turn contacted the US Embassy in Bangkok which indicated they could do nothing for him. The Veteran's son desperate to help his father turned to his congressional leaders for help. The Congressperson went to the State Department who in turn contacted the American Embassy in Bangkok. The American Citizens Services (ASC) turned to our American Legion Post TH02 in Pattaya for help.

Mike Chitwood the Adjutant of Post TH02 contacted the Veteran and reassured him we would help him get back home. Mike then contacted us to provide assistance for the Veteran. We contacted him and reassured him that we were there help him get home. Our personal contact eased a lot of anxiety and worry in the old veteran.

We then advised him to get with the local Doctors to see about getting the Certificate to Fly. We suggested he take his wife along as interpreter. The next step was to get him a visa extension. Having Post members who dealt with the Immigration Office in Roi Et, we were confident that given the circumstances they would be willing to accommodate him as best they could. The result; the veteran received a Certificate to Fly and he got his visa extension with all fines waived.

We then assisted the 82-year-old veteran in making reservation to fly to Bangkok. We reached out to Mike Chitwood who had a taxi waiting for the veteran when he landed in Bangkok. We assisted the veteran finding hotel accommodations while waiting on his flight back to the USA.

The result. The 82-year-old veteran is now in the USA with family. He has undergone hip surgery and is well on the road to recovery. Both Posts TH02 and TH01 demonstrated that we are ready and willing to help our vets in need. This also demonstrated the great cooperative effort of our Posts to help the veteran. It is simply who we are as American Legion members – Still serving!



## Safety Message: June is National Safety Month

By Jeff Ludwig

The National Safety Council declared June National Safety Month, (NSM). It is the annual observance to encourage us to keep other safe from needless injuries in the workplace and home. Since 1996, NSM has provided a month's worth of free safety resources to highlight leading causes of preventable injury and death.

One way to protect your family in the home is to create a Home Safety Plan. Consider some of these main points when creating a safety plan for home:

- **Fire Safety**

This is a critical point in safety, starting with preventative measures such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers and moving on to an evacuation plan in case of a fire, including identifying two meeting places in case of an emergency.



- **Emergency Kit**

Keeping everyone safe in an emergency is important. This could include natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods or wildfires. Be sure to have an emergency kit and stockpile available, including supplies like a flashlight with extra batteries, fresh drinking water, shelf stable foods, first aid kit and many other important items.



- **Get Smartphone Alerts**

Today it is easier than ever to be notified in case of an emergency in the local area! Set up alerts on a smartphone that indicates the exact type of emergency and how likely it is to impact the particular location.



- **Prepare the Kids**

Education and knowledge is the best way to help everyone keep their cool and know what to do in an emergency. Practice the plan with the kids, make sure they have important phone numbers memorized and go over every scenario to train them about what they need to do. This same training may also be needed for aging loved ones.



## History

by Ted Potyrala

I was thinking about what to write for a History article for June but couldn't really come up with anything. Granted the Normandy Invasion on June 6, 1945 is a historical event but I was looking for something not known to everyone. I could not find anything so I thought I would write about something I was involved in while stationed in Ubon. I was assigned to Det 3 AARS which is an Air Rescue Detachment. We had three HH-43 helicopters. I was a crew chief on one of them.



One day we got word that Utapao was in need of a helicopter. I don't know why but we were told to give them one of ours. It wasn't my helicopter that went but I went along as the crew chief. We flew from Ubon to Korat where we spent the night. My job was to transfer fuel while we were flying. Since we did not have inflight refueling, we carried a 55 gallon can of fuel which was connected to the fuel tank. At the proper time, I used my crescent wrench and opened the valve to let the fuel gravity feed into the tank. Real high-Tech. We did not have the doors on so between the smell of JP 4 and exhaust it was not enjoyable. The next day we left for Utapao, arriving without incident. We turned the chopper over and caught a ride to Ubon on a C-130.

About one or two weeks later we learned that a B-52 aborted take off and caught on fire. He was fully loaded. The helicopter responded. It carried a fire suppression kit which the firefighters would use to make a path to the aircraft. The chopper would hover over the burning aircraft forcing the flames to flatten out. Before the helicopter would go in, the pilot would confirm if any of the crew was still inside the aircraft. In this case I believe all of the crew were accounted for except for one individual. There was a problem communicating with the people on the ground and it could not be confirmed if the individual was safe. The motto of ARRS is "That Others May Live." It was decided to assume the individual was still inside. As the helicopter got closer, the B-52 blew up taking out the helicopter and most of the crew. It turned out that the missing individual was picked up and in a truck. Because of the communication problem the helicopter crew never knew. It has been 55 years since that happened. This is how I remember it.



If you have a story you would care to share, send it to me. Don't worry about writing, I can get with you and we can create a story.

*Chaplain's Prayer – Post*

**I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb of God!  
The King of Kings and Lord of lords**

**JESUS IS**

**The Creator of the United States of America**

**The Creator of the Family**

**My Loyalty is to God, Family and Country in that order!**

**The Allegiance to the Flag of the United States is unwavering as it is to my faith to God and My Family!**

**The 13 stripes represent the 13 original states.**

**The red stripes represent the blood & Valor**

**The white stripes represent purity!**

**The blue field represents the honor of the Union**

**The stars represent each state.**

**Each symbol has a religious representation to me.**

**13 stripes are 12 apostles and Jesus the King**

**The red is for the Blood of the Lamb of God Jesus Christ**

**The white stripes are for the Bride of Christ**

**The blue field is the King of kings Jesus Christ**

**The 50 stars are for the Angels that watch over the states**

**When the Flag is flying it means as much to God as it does us.**

**@TheMmiSoldier on Twitter @SoldierMil**

## June Birthdays:

- James Boyd
- Darwin Dennis
- Carl Fletcher
- Kevin Glover
- Robert Lason
- Carl Manchester
- Peter Ritzel



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**<https://americanlegionthailand.com>**

**Facebook**

**<https://www.facebook.com/americanlegionthailandpostth01>**

**YouTube**

**<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC74pEhMUgz5KmGcs7RMEXyA>**

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**\$1.00 USD to 36.57 THB**

**<https://www.x-rates.com/calculator/?from=USD&to=THB&amount=1>**