

THE AMERICAN LEGION AT UBON RATCHATHANI, THAILAND



BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS

POST NUMBER TH01

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

Post Location: Peppers Restaurant and Bakery



August 2024

POST EMAIL: COMMANDER@AMERICANLEGIONTHAILAND.COM

VOL. 7, ISSUE 08

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Calendar for August 2024

14 August Post Monthly Membership meeting

2024 POST TH01 OFFICERS

Commander – Rob Davis

<mailto:Commander@americanlegionthailand.com>

1st Vice Commander & Historian – Ted Potyrala

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Adjutant & Finance Officer – Jeff Ludwig

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Service Officer – Larry Haynie

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Sergeant-At-Arms – Sal Salzarulo

<mailto:salzy48@hotmail.com>

Judge Advocate – Paul Ben-Yehuda

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Chaplain – Vacant

Public Affairs Officer & IT Dir.– Chris Lampert

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Member-at-Large – Wayne Wright

<mailto:waywright@outlook.com>

Member-at-Large – Ernest(William) Knowlton

<mailto:ewilliamknowlton65@gmail.com>

Member-at-Large – Douglas Palzer

<mailto:dpalzer@rojana.org>

Post Commander Rob Davis -- A word from the Commander..

I hope everyone in Post TH01 had the opportunity to spend the 4th of July with friends and family and celebrate the greatest country on earth. I was able to spend the time with my son (who did his time as a U.S. Army Medic(68W)), who has recently moved here to Thailand to teach English. So, it was great family time, and we were able to talk about history and milestones.

Speaking of milestones, we have some individuals in our Post that have reached some amazing milestones. First, let's give a warm welcome to our newest member, **Robert E. Lagroue Jr.**

The following members have reached Continuous Membership milestones:

10 Years

Gerald Churchill
Larry Edmonds
Don Ford
Maurice (Rocky) Hatzke
Steve Jacobs
Bruce Postel
Jeff Ludwig
Ted Potyrala

30 Years

Daniel Kelley

Thank you all for your dedication to post TH01 and the American Legion.

One last thing (I feel like Columbo). As we just celebrated the birth of our country, we all know one of our greatest rights is the right to vote and help move our Great Country forward. Please take advantage of this opportunity. I've always considered this more of a duty than anything else, and again I will cast my absentee ballot in the 2024 election. If we don't vote, we have no right to complain. Those of us here in Thailand can visit the link below to find more information.

<https://th.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/voting/>

Thank you all, for all you have done and for all we as a Post will do in the future.



Membership Chair

By Ted Potyrala

This month starts the 2025 membership drive. We are off to a good start with 37 members already renewed. That gives us an approximate 42% renewal rate. We are well on our way to meet the first target of 50% by September 1st.

This is a friendly reminder to renew. Like last year, if we meet or exceed the goals set for us, we will achieve monetary awards along with other awards. You can help the Post by renewing now. The easiest way to renew is online at <https://www.legion.org/renew>. Just click on "**RENEW TODAY**" Enter your membership ID and last name and follow the easy instructions.

If your credit card mailing address is different from your listed address with the address in myLegion.org, you can change the address by editing the billing address. It will not change the address you have with the Legion.

This year there is an option to renew for three years for \$150. If the rates go up during those three years, you will not have to pay the difference. Plus, we won't be bothering you to renew until the 2028 membership drive. Another option is to become a life member but depending on your age, it can be expensive.

If you would rather pay with a bank transfer, you can do that by transferring the payment to First Command Bank. Adjutant/Finance Officer Ludwig can provide you with the account number and routing number. If you encounter any problems, get with Adjutant Ludwig who will gladly help you out.

So why should you renew? Why should you pay \$50 to the legion and our Post? I think many of you want to help our fellow veterans. Whether it is assisting veterans in a time of need or helping spouses when their husband or wife passes. Also, paying forward on the benefits today that the American Legion has fought for in the past. You will be helping communities like in Ubon during the flood. It could be Youth activities like supporting the Tawanchai Foundation who provides free corrective surgery and care for children born with cleft palate and other cranial deformities.

Your money is not being spent on paying for a building or bar facilities. Members pay their own travel expenses. Officers and other members are all volunteers. We do this for fellow veterans, their family, and local communities. Because of Thai laws, we cannot hold fund raisers. Our main source of income comes from membership and personal donations.

If you have already renewed your membership, I thank you for doing so. I hope you continue to support your post. I cannot thank you enough.

Members are our life blood. Without you we do not exist.



Adjutants Corner

by Jeff Ludwig

It's elections time and our country couldn't be more polarized between the Political parties. While all Americans are gearing up for upcoming elections the issues and races are heating up. It is important to remember the American Legion's position on political parties and candidates.

I quote," Among American Legion members, there is no rank or prejudice, only purpose. A veteran is a veteran. And the purpose of veterans in The American Legion is to strengthen the United States of America through programs, services, compassion and actions that have proven vital, timeless and life-changing for over a century.

The American Legion values its independence and effectiveness on veterans' issues. This stance is best maintained by neutrality on all individual candidates or political parties. The American Legion, by legal definition, is non-partisan and supports "or opposes as necessary" only issues which impact the Four Pillars.

In Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion, "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment." Additionally the National Charter, approved by Congress, stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is never to help or endorse a candidate. However, you, as a private citizen and not speaking for the organization, can do whatever is legal and ethical to advance his/her candidacy."

Reminder:

As part of The American Legion's "**Be the One**" mission to end veteran suicide, they have joined forces with Columbia University to develop training for those who want to learn more about interacting and responding with veterans who may be in crisis. You can "Be the One" by taking the training.



UPCOMING ONLINE SESSIONS

September 5, 2024

5:30pm - 7:00pm Eastern

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



POST SERVICE OFFICER...LARRY HAYNIE

Sawadee Fellow Veterans;

My Fellow Comrades;

There are currently about 80,000 Americans living in Thailand. Of that number, many are retired military veterans. Many of those veterans are members of either the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the American Legion or both. However, many American military veterans living in Thailand, do not belong to any veterans' groups.

As of 12 June 2023, the US Embassy in Bangkok has discontinued issuing a printed copy of the Consular Reports of Death. This means that upon the death of an American Citizen in Thailand, the spouse or a family member must notify the US Embassy. They must also submit a copy of a Thai Death Certificate along with an English Translation of the Thai Death Certificate, and the passport of the deceased citizen.

Only then will the US Embassy send the spouse or family member a copy of the Consulate Report of Death. **NOTE:** The spouse or family member must provide an Email Address in order to receive the Consular Report of Death. The US Embassy does not notify the VFW or American Legion when a military member passes away.

When a military veteran passes away, it is up to the spouse or family member to contact a VFW or American Legion post. Spouses or family members may be eligible to receive VA benefits or compensation due to the veteran's military service, but the VA requires a copy of Consular Report of Death to begin the claims process.

It is the VFW or American Legion Post Service Officer (PSO) who can assist a widow or family members in obtaining VA Disability compensation payments, Veterans Pensions or other entitlements. That is why it is imperative that military veterans living in Thailand, ensure their spouses or family members are made aware of how to contact the VFW or American Legion, and seek assistance from a Post Service Officer. All Thailand VFW and American Legion posts have online websites.

“WE SERVE THOSE WHO SERVED”!!!!

Larry Haynie

Post Service Officer

TH01-Ubon, Thailand



As veterans we served to protect the rights of all American citizens including our own rights. That includes exercising our right to vote even if we live overseas. The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate General are here to help you exercise your right to vote and answer your voting questions. The Federal Voting Assistance Program and the US Embassy provide clear instruction to ensure your vote counts.

Here is the link to the US Embassy Bangkok website. [US Embassy Voting Assistance](#)

Voting from abroad is an easy **three-step** process that needs to be started early.

Step 1. Request an Absentee Ballot

Step 2. Receive and Complete Your Ballot

Step 3. Return Your Completed Ballots

In addition to the US Embassy, you can go to the [Federal Voting Assistance Program website](#). The website provides easy online instructions on requesting an absentee ballot. There is even a tutorial video showing you precisely what to do.

But you say that you no longer have a residence in the USA. Not to worry you always have voting residence as citizens residing outside the U.S.

What is a voting residence and why is it important?

You need a voting residence to vote by absentee ballot — even if you are only voting for federal offices. Your election office needs your exact voting residence address to determine which offices and candidates you are eligible to vote for — and to send you the appropriate ballot for your voting precinct.

Your voting residence is your address in the state in which you were last domiciled, immediately prior to leaving the United States. Simply your last residence in the USA.

This residence may remain valid even if:

- You no longer own property or have other ties to that state.
- Your intent to return to that state is uncertain.
- Your previous address is no longer a recognized residential address.

Voting in an election for federal offices often may not be used as the sole basis of determining residency for the purpose of imposing state and local taxes.

If you cannot remember the address where you last physically resided, check old tax records, passports, or family correspondence. Sometimes election offices can help identify your address if you were previously registered.

To claim a new legal residence or domicile, consult legal counsel as there may be other factors to consider, such as tax implications.

Voting residence and the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

It is important to remember that your voting residence address listed on the FPCA must be an address in the United States. **Placing an overseas address in Section 2 of the form may automatically disqualify you.**

New Social Security Login:



From the Social Security Administration, soon you will no longer be able to sign in to your online Social Security account using your Social Security username and password. To access Social Security online services, including *my Social Security*, you will need to create a Login.gov or ID.me account.

This change simplifies your sign-in experience and aligns with federal authentication standards while providing safe and secure access to our online services.

If you are one of the millions of account holders who already use Login.gov or ID.me account to sign in, you do not need to take any action.

To transition your account, please go to “Sign in” at the top of our website and select “Sign in with Social Security Username.” After successfully signing in you will be asked to create an account with Login.gov. Login.gov has 24/7 customer phone and chat support to answer your questions and, if needed, help you with creating your account.

After you successfully link your Social Security username with your new Login.gov account, you will see a confirmation screen and be directed to the service you were attempting to access. You can start using your new Login.gov account to access Social Security online services immediately. Your old Social Security username will no longer be available.

Prepare for VA’s Secure Sign-In Changes

[A simpler, more modern sign-in](#)

In 2025, you’ll need to start using a **Login.gov** or **ID.me** account to sign in to VA websites and apps, including My HealtheVet. Find out what you can do now to prepare.





Safety Message:

By Jeff Ludwig

Safety Driving Through Flood Water According to the Thailand Safety council

In the rainy season, flash floods usually occur when heavy rainfall exceeds the ability to drain. In case you need to drive through the flood waters, how to drive safely and prevent a stalled engine during traveling? Here are some tips.

Check the water level

If heavy rain occurs while you are driving and the roadways start to fill with water, the first thing to consider is the water depth. The safe water depth is less than 30 centimeters. It can be estimated by comparing the water level with the curb height. Normally the curb height is around 10 - 20 centimeters. If the water level is higher than the curb, it is recommended to avoid that way. Otherwise, you can compare the height of the water to the tire. It is okay to continue driving with the water level below half of the tire height. Nevertheless, a water level that is as high as the door level is too dangerous to drive because the water may get in and cause a short-circuit and the engine could stall.



NEVER drive through fast moving water crossing a highway! You could easily be swept away.

Choose the higher-level lane

Avoid a higher water level lane and change to another lane with lower water level. This will reduce the risks of water getting into the engine



Drive slowly

If it is necessary to drive through the flood, drive slowly because fast driving may cause you to lose control. Drive slowly and steadily less than 1,500 -

2,000 rpm. It is suggested to drive with the second gear for manual cars and the L gear for automatic cars.

Turn off the air-conditioner

Turn off the air-conditioner to reduce the possibility of splashing water in the engine because the air-conditioner fan will induce the water into the engine and may cause the engine to stall. Also, avoid the floating garbage that may stick with the cooling engine fan.



Drive more slowly in the two-way traffic

The water level caused by each car will create a higher wave that may get in the engine and electrical system

Keep 2 - 3 times of safe distance

The efficacy of braking cloth is lower when driving through the flood and causes the unstoppable car. The safe distance is around 2 -3 times of the normal one.



Do not immediately stop the engine when you arrive at the destination: Idle parking for a while to let the water evaporate from the exhaust system

Repeat your brakes or clutch to let the water out

For automatic cars, repeat stepping on your brakes to let the water out of the system. For manual cars, repeat your clutches to prevent a slipper clutch

Do not restart the engine if it is stopped

Find help or get the car out of the high-water level area. The water level should not be higher than a half tire level. If you restart the engine in the high-water level area, the water may get in the engine and electrical system and cause more damage.

These will help keep you safe when driving through the flood waters and reduce the risk of a stalled engine. The most important thing is any abnormality that occurs afterward whether at the engine, electrical or brakes system, you should contact and have the car check at any service center. It's for your own safety.



History

by Ted Potyrala

Nicholas Winton
19 May 1909 - 1 July 2015

Nicholas Winton was a British stockbroker that was responsible for the rescue of 669 children, mostly of Jewish descent, from Prague, Czechoslovakia.

I was on a plane flying back to Thailand and watched a film titled "One Life" which was about his efforts to rescue children from the advancing German army. Back in 1938, he was scheduled to take a skiing vacation but instead he went to Prague after being invited by Martin Blake who was an associate of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia. Blake asked him to assist in Jewish welfare work.



When he went to these refugee camps, he was shocked by the conditions the children were living in and more shocked by knowing the fate that awaited these children if they were not rescued. He would say "I can not unsee what I saw". Winton with the help of his mother, convinced the British Government to accept the refugees under the age of 17 provided that they had a place to stay and a guarantee of 50 pounds was deposited for each person to be used for their eventual return.

Winton had to convince the parents of these children that this was a way of saving their children. He also had to find British families that were willing to pay the 50 pounds and take them in until it was safe for them to return. This was no easy task. The trains carrying the children had to cross through the Netherlands but the borders were closed to any Jewish refugees. Also any Jewish refugees found were returned to Germany even though it was known what their fate would be. Because of the agreement he had with the British government, he was able to get passage for the trains. After the first of 8 trains passed through, the rest went smoothly. A total of 669 children, mostly Jewish, made it to safety. Unfortunately, many of their parents perished in Auschwitz concentration camps.

The last group of children to leave on 1 September 1939 was unable to leave when the Germans invaded Poland. Of the 250 children due to leave on that last train, only two survived the war. Winton wrote to politicians from other countries to take in more refugees but the only country besides Britain was Sweden.

In 1988 Winton's wife told a friend and a Holocaust survivor about a scrapbook her husband kept. The story made its way to a British consumer

affairs tv program called "That's Life". Winton was invited to attend the show but what he did not know was the producers arranged to have one of the children, who was now an adult, to sit beside him. The two shared an embrace. He was invited to a second show. This time, the presenter addressed a full studio audience, saying, "Can I ask, is there anyone in our audience tonight who owes their life to Nicholas Winton? If so, could you stand up please?" Everyone seated in the front five rows stood, as Winton and Grete, Winton's wife, looked back in awe.

I found it to be a very emotional moment. It just goes to show you how one person with determination and doing what is right can make a difference. Everyone in the organization thought his idea was impossible to accomplish. If you get the chance to watch the movie "One Life" you should do it.

A statue of Winton was erected in Prague at the train station. He never stepped in Prague again. When the team making the movie was in Prague, they were at the statue in the train station when they heard a commotion with police presents and crowds followed by a trainload of refugees arriving from Ukraine.



Move the September Post Membership meeting to Khon Kaen.

Fellow members, the Activities Committee brought a recommendation to the Executive Committees proposing to move the September Monthly Membership Meeting to Mark Faralli's house in Kohn Kaen. The Executive Committee discussed the proposal and voted to approve the move. The meeting will still be online for those who cannot attend in person. This move is part of an initiative to get out to all our members to interact personally. What we need from you the members is to send an RSVP to the Activities committee or the Activities Chair John Skabry before the August 14 meeting. John's email is <mailto:2vice@americanlegionthailand.com>. We just need to know if you are attending and how many guests. The meeting is on September 11, 2024 and will start at 10:00 a.m.

This is Patriots Day a time to reflect on the tragedy of 9/11 and commit to our vigilance on never letting it happen again.



Chaplain's Prayer

Almighty and loving God, we turn our hearts and minds toward You this day and humbly ask You to grant our Nation the gifts of peace and unity.



Root out the violence and hatred from our communities and political life by rooting out the violence and hatred from our hearts.

Help us to see one another not with fear and dehumanizing animosity, but instead with kindness, empathy, and curiosity—a curiosity that, upon encountering someone with whom we disagree, spurs us not to condemn and attack them, but instead to want to learn more about them and why they believe what they do.

Help us to be good to one another, to care for one another, and to love one another so that all hatred and dissension might end.

We entrust all these prayers to You this morning, and we commend all victims of violence and their families to Your infinite mercy and compassion. Amen.

Written by [Reverend Chris Kellerman, SJ](#)



August Birthdays:

- Ben-Yehuda, Paul
- David Burns
- Joe Brown
- Larry Edmonds
- Charlie Mason
- Bruce Postel
- David Reis



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WEBSITE

<https://americanlegionthailand.com>

Facebook

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

YouTube

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

LINKS CONCERNING ISSUES OF GENERAL EXPAT INTEREST IN THAILAND

US DOLLAR TO THAI BAHT EXCHANGE RATE (AS OF 15/03/24)

\$1.00 USD to 36.57 THB

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