

AFTN VFW MEMORIAL POST 10249

UDON THANI, THAILAND



POST HISTORY

Established 08 January 1972, AFTN Memorial VFW Post 10249 in Udorn, Thailand, is named in memory of nine airmen killed on duty when a battle-damaged RF-4C Phantom aircraft crashed into the Armed Forces Thailand Network (AFTN) Udorn Radio-TV Station on 10 April 1970.

- TSGT Jack A Hawley, Wakeman, OH
- SSGT James A. Howard, Denver, CO
- A1C Andrew C. McCartney, Lakewood, OH
- SSGT Alfred N. Potter, Forest Grove, OR
- SGT John Charles Rose, Bloomfield, NJ
- TSGT Frank D. Ryan, Jr., Mercer Island, WA
- SSGT Edward W. Strain, Myrtle Beach, SC
- TSGT Roy Walker, Albuquerque, NM
- A1C Thomas L. Waterman, Roanoke, VA



AFTN Memorial Post 10249



- JACK ALLEN HAWLEY**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 117
- JAMES T HOWARD**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 117
- ANDREW C MCCARTNEY**
is honored on Panel 10W, Row 15
- ALFRED N POTTER**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 119
- JOHN CHARLES ROSE**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 121
- FRANK D RYAN JR**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 120
- EDWARD W STRAIN**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 120
- ROY WALKER**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 121
- THOMAS L WATERMAN**
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 12

AFTN AIRMAN 10 APRIL 1970

Full Name: JACK ALLEN HAWLEY
 Wall Name: JACK A HAWLEY
 Date of Birth: 12/7/1932
 Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
 Home of Record: NORWALK
 County of Record: HURON COUNTY
 State: OH
 Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
 Rank: TSGT
 Casualty Country: THAILAND
 Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Full Name: JAMES T HOWARD
 Wall Name: JAMES T HOWARD
 Date of Birth: 11/1/1942
 Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
 Home of Record: PANAMA CITY
 County of Record: BAY COUNTY
 State: FL
 Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
 Rank: SSGT
 Casualty Country: THAILAND
 Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Full Name: ANDREW C MCCARTNEY
Wall Name: ANDREW C MCCARTNEY
Date of Birth: 8/10/1949
Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
Home of Record: LAKEWOOD
County of Record: CUYAHOGA COUNTY
State: OH
Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
Rank: A1C
Casualty Country: THAILAND
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Full Name: ALFRED N POTTER
Wall Name: ALFRED N POTTER
Date of Birth: 10/15/1942
Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
Home of Record: NEWPORT
County of Record: NEWPORT COUNTY
State: RI
Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
Rank: SSGT
Casualty Country: THAILAND
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Full Name: JOHN CHARLES ROSE
Wall Name: JOHN C ROSE
Date of Birth: 7/29/1944
Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
Home of Record: BLOOMFIELD
County of Record: ESSEX COUNTY
State: NJ
Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
Rank: SGT
Casualty Country: THAILAND
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Full Name: FRANK D RYAN JR
Wall Name: FRANK D RYAN JR
Date of Birth: 9/25/1928
Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
Date of Death: 4/10/1970
Home of Record: YUBA CITY
County of Record: SUTTER COUNTY
State: CA
Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
Rank: TSGT
Casualty Country: THAILAND
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Funeral services will be conducted Monday in Yuba City for Air Force Tech. Sgt. Frank David Ryan Jr., who was killed Saturday in Thailand. He was the son of Sutter County Sheriff's Deputy Frank David Ryan, Sr. and Mrs. Thelma Ryan of Yuba City. Ryan, 41, and nine others were killed and more than 40 others injured when a US reconnaissance jet crashed into the Udorn Air Base, destroying several buildings, one of which Ryan was working in.

Serving with the Armed Forces Television Network, Ryan was working in the base's radio building when the crash occurred. The plane crash touched off fire which destroyed nine officer quarters buildings and a trailer housing other personnel. The plane's pilot and co-pilot ejected safely before their crippled plane, which had been hit by Communist ground fire, crashed into the base, located about 280 miles north of Bangkok.

A native of El Reno, Okla., Ryan was a 1948 graduate of Yuba City High School. He attended Yuba College and was a graduate of Southern Colorado State College. He was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. A 17-year service veteran, Ryan received the bronze star while on duty in Vietnam (1966-67).

Survivors in addition to his parents include his wife, Myrna, and daughter, Debra, both of Seattle, Wash.; and a sister, Mrs. Beverly Miller of Danville, Calif.

Services are set for 2 p.m. Monday at Ullrey Memorial Chapel. Chaplain W.H. Holby of Beale Air Force Base will officiate. Full military burial will be in Sutter Cemetery.

Full Name: EDWARD W STRAIN
Wall Name: EDWARD W STRAIN
Date of Birth: 7/17/1945
Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
Home of Record: STORY CITY
County of Record: STORY COUNTY
State: IA
Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
Rank: SSGT
Casualty Country: THAILAND
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Edward Strain was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 17, 1946. He attended and graduated from Marshalltown Senior High in 1963. He enlisted in the United States Navy and was trained in aircraft maintenance as well as studying through a college degree program.

He was stationed in Japan during his service where he met and married Lynn Brackett of Rock Hill, S.C. on February 28 1966 at the American Embassy in Tokyo. She was living with the family of her brother, who was stationed in Japan with the Air Force.

Sgt Strain was discharged from the Navy in 1966 and the couple settled in Story City where he worked for several months for his father in the local supermarket. Dissatisfied with civilian life, he re-enlisted in the Air Force in December 1966 and resumed a military career in jet aircraft mechanics.

In 1969, Sgt Strain was selected for special information program at Fort Harrison, Indiana where he received intensive training in programming and technical operations for radio and television. In August he was assigned to Udorn RT Air Force Base in Thailand where he served as program and news director the English language radio and TV stations of southeast Asia.

On April 10, 1970, SSgt Edward W. Strain worked for Armed Forces Thailand Network (AFTN) which supplied the troops with news, weather and music. A battle damaged F-4 returning to Udorn RT Air Force Base, Thailand crashed into the AFTN station killing all nine men, including Staff Sgt Edward W. Strain, working that day. SSgt Strain was scheduled to be transferred to Germany in August.

He was survived by his wife Lynn; a daughter 3, Tracy of Myrtle Beach, S.C.; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Max Strain, Story City; three brothers, Robert of Sacramento, CA., Max Jr. and Randy of Story City; a sister Mrs. Leroy Anderson, Wisconsin Dells, Wis., and his grandparents, Frank Bilek of Omaha and Mrs. Helen Bilek of Ames.

Funeral Services for SSgt Edward Strain 24, Story City will be Monday at 10 a.m. from S.S. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, southwest of Story City, with the Rev. Fr. Phillip McDermott officiating. Burial will be in the Story City Cemetery.

Full Name: [ROY WALKER](#)
Wall Name: [ROY WALKER](#)
Date of Birth: [10/3/1929](#)
Date of Casualty: [4/10/1970](#)
Home of Record: [TRENTON](#)
County of Record: [FANNIN COUNTY](#)
State: [TX](#)
Branch of Service: [AIR FORCE](#)
Rank: [TSGT](#)
Casualty Country: [THAILAND](#)
Casualty Province: [QUANG TRI](#)

Full Name: THOMAS L WATERMAN
Wall Name: THOMAS L WATERMAN
Date of Birth: 3/26/1945
Date of Casualty: 4/10/1970
Home of Record: ROANOKE
County of Record: CITY OF ROANOKE
State: VA
Branch of Service: AIR FORCE
Rank: A1C
Casualty Country: THAILAND
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



Tom and I were at Sheppard AFB in 1969, just prior to his assignment to Udorn, Thailand. He was the catcher on a ragtag baseball team of air force broadcasters. We had a ball that summer of 69' playing ball after work and even making it into the base baseball tournament. Soon, orders arrived with Waterman going to Thailand and myself to Seoul, Korea. I was in the AFKN newsroom the morning the story came across the teletype that a plane had crashed into the AFTN station at Udorn. My first and only thought was "Tommie's dead." Soon after, the list of air force broadcaster fatalities from the station came across. Tom would be the only one I knew and in fact, now over 35 years later, Tom's the only person I ever served with that I know who died in the war. When I went to see the "Wall" a few years ago I looked up his name and can't describe the flood of emotions that hit soon after as I toured the site with my family. Tom was a great friend and broadcaster. As my baseball catcher could handle any pitch I fired up there. He was a great husband to his wife who invited all us young airmen to their apartment for cookouts and parties often. For any of Tom's parents or relatives who may see this note, please accept my salute to a truly fine man. Thank you RD Ashurst, MSgt, USAF ret

POST LOGO

Design by Delbert Marohl



The red, white and blue color scheme was selected because these colors are representative of both flags of the United States and Thailand. The red symbolizes strength, the blue - loyalty and unity, while the white symbolizes peace. The nine stars represent the AFTN airmen that made the ultimate sacrifice giving their lives in service for their country for who the post was named. In addition to being a symbol of the protector and truth, the stars also represents that divine spark of freedom that shines in each of us.

AFTN was a subordinate unit of the Armed Forces Radio Television Service (AFRTS); roughly the same type of organization as today's FEN in Japan and AFFECT in Korea. It provided radio and TV services to military personnel stationed in Thailand, with

broadcast units located at all AF and Army bases in Thailand. All stations, each manned by 15-20 personnel, were assigned to AFTN-HQ Korat and attached to the Base Support Group. AFRTS-Los Angeles provided AFTN Udorn with records, tapes, and other operational materials. AFTN was downgraded in later years to a Broadcast Squadron with Detachments.

The fateful day, April 10, 1970, dawned as another beautiful Thai day. There was little wind, and only a few puffy cumuli dotted the blue sky. At exactly 1302, an RF-4C Phantom code-named Falcon 34 (tail number 65863) departed Udorn RTAFB for tactical reconnaissance of a line of enemy communications in northwestern Laos. Around 1330, after the aircraft climbed out of its first target run, its master caution light illuminated. A check revealed failure of the PC-2 hydraulic system; the pilot declared an emergency and headed back to Udorn. On the return trip the utility hydraulic system also failed. Around that time the navigator reported a hole 3 to 6 inches in diameter just forward of the spoiler in the right wing.

Official reports and witnesses of the subsequent accident at Udorn say that around 1400 hours the severely damaged recon aircraft began a long straight-in approach after the pilot confirmed with the Flight Safety Officer that he was able to maintain control. The landing was to be with no flaps and with barrier engagement, and on final approach the landing gear and arresting hook were down. At a point about one-quarter to one-half mile out, however, the aircraft began to roll to the right, and failed to respond to controls. The pilot initiated a go-around, but still could not stop the right roll. With total loss of control, the crewmembers elected to eject. The out-of-control plane subsequently hit the ground and careened through the housing area, spraying burning fuel in all directions and knocking off part of a 2-story barracks and a couple of officers' quarters. It destroyed nine buildings and a trailer, and came to a stop after piercing the AFTN Station. The impact and associated fire instantly killed everyone on duty inside the station except one airman who jumped from a window and later died from burns. (For more information and photos of the crash, see "Brass Button Broadcasters," by Trent Christman, published in 1992.)



During the Vietnam era, post membership was at an all time high with 1,500 plus members. The post home was located on ถ. ทหาร Tahahn Road or Military Highway, close to the Thai gate of the airbase.

In 1975, word came down that the American forces would be leaving Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base and in October the post held its final farewell

meeting. All funds and assets were sent to the Department of Pacific and AFTN Memorial Post 10249 was officially closed. Several of the post members (Kit Carson Price, John T. Pough and Thomas B. Smith) who elected to stay in Thailand after the war, decided to reorganize the post. They contacted previous members and recruited new members until they met the eligibility criteria to reopen the post.

In June 1976, John Donahue conducted the institution ceremony that reactivated Post 10249. With only a few members, no money, and no place to call home the post moved from one place to another to hold the monthly meetings. On occasion, Tom Smith would host the meeting at his home and treat everyone to a good home cooked meal.

In August 1986, the post moved to TJ's Steakhouse, which Tommy Thompson hosted as the post home until 2001. Almost immediately after it's rebirth, the post members became active helping the local community. Post 10249 has provided clothing, sports equipment and many other necessities to the Nong Khai Boys Home, the Udon School for the handicapped. Countless other schools and orphanages in a 200 km radius were also supplied with fans, student desks, chairs, water coolers, typewriters, storage cabinets, and sports equipment. In 1979, the post started making a quarterly rice donation to the Udon Thani Senior Citizens Home.

In 1999 Comrade Forest Williams rented a shop house and began to manufacture canes, walkers, and crutches he made out of PVC pipe. His program is called Project Crutch and it has benefited countless children and adults in the Udon Thani and Khon Kaen area. Several of the post members are volunteers to work as Wardens for the U.S. Embassy. For many years the post worked with the United States Consulate in hosting the annual Independence Day celebration and Post 10249 assumed this responsibility when the consulate closed in 1995.

When Internet service became available in Udon, website was published. Tommy Thompson pushed to have a membership page that resulted in obtaining many new members. It has also reacquainted many servicemen who were stationed in Southeast Asia.

In 2002 we moved our meeting place to the Charoen Hotel and we posted a new website. The post membership was @ 365 members of which about 70 live in Thailand. Post members working with the Thai-Laos-Cambodia Brotherhood, provided 12 area schools with approximately \$12,000.00 worth of needed items. Post members also traveled to Nakhon Phanom (NKP) to help the TLC-B dedicate a site for the first Southeast Asia Memorial to honor American, Thai and Allied Forces that served during the Vietnam War. Project Crutch opened operations in Udon and Comrade Forest Williams provided the drawings and technical expertise to help the Karl W. Richter Memorial Post 10217 in Korat, Thailand start their project crutch program.

Until 2005, the post also hosted annual celebrations (open to the public). Proceeds from these events are used to purchase rice for the Udon Thani Senior Citizens Home and the many needed supplies for local schools and orphanages. As the reputation of the posts charity work continued to grow, so does the list of schools and orphanages. To help as many needy recipients as possible, post members donate their time, money and the post continues to solicit the help of and initiate joint projects with several other organizations that do charity work in Thailand.

For the past couple of years members of post 10249 have been providing assistance to the Udon Handicap Association. You can find more information and pictures on our post website www.udonvfw10249.org

Today (2012) our support to the local community has been greatly hindered by our aging members. Because there are no longer any active duty military stationed in Thailand it is difficult to recruit new members and our current membership now stands at 267.

Forest Williams now 87, closed his Project Crutch workshop in Khon Kaen and donated his supply of PVC and wheel chair parts to several post members in Udon who continue to provide walking aides free of charge to anyone who needs them.

In 2012, we provided a few supplies to the Udon Thani Home for Girls. Located @ 9 km South of Udon on Hwy 2, it is currently home for approximately 400 orphans from 19 provinces in Northeastern Thailand. The children's ages range from infant to 18 years old.

Term 2012 – 2013 Commander - Ronald J. Sell,
Sr.Vice - Al Fitchett, Jr. Vice - Ken Falk

In June 2013, we provide the Udon Handicap Association with \$350.00 to purchase items needed to repair wheelchairs and other equipment. Ken Falk accompanied them to insure the money was spent for the intended purpose.

Term 2013-2014 Commander – Delbert N. Marohl, Sr.Vice – Ronald J. Sell,
Jr. Vice - Ken Falk, Quartermaster – Al Fitchett

In July 2013, we placed VFW emblems on the graves of our departed comrades that lie in peace at St. Mary's Cemetery.

October 2013, Commander Marohl was appointed National Aide-de-Camp to VFW Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien.

November 2013, many of our fellow comrades in the Philippines lost almost everything they owned when Typhoon Haiyan devastated the homes. In response Post 10249 along with several personal contributions from our members made a donation to assist them in their time of need.

December 2013, the post delivered Holiday Meals to our homebound veterans.

February 2014, we made a donation of educational toys, books, games and day care products to a Nursery School located in Non-Sung @ 22 km south of Udon

February 2014, Post members made another donation of 200 ea. Lunch trays to the Ban Bung Gaew School located @ 85km South East of Udon

April 2014, Post members donated 96 Sq. Meters of floor tile to a nursery school in Ban Non Suwan located @ 90km south east of Udon.

April 2014, Post elected officers for the 2014 - 2015 term

May 2014, Post 10249 hosted the District V Convention and on Memorial Day we paid tribute to our Departed Comrades.

June 2014, Post 9876 Pattaya, hosted the Department Convention. Thanks to Al Fitchett's hard work and dedication, this was the first time in 10 years that post 10249 was able to achieve 100% in membership.

Awards Presented: All State Commander - Delbert Marohl
All State Quartermaster – Al Fitchett

Term 2014-2015 Commander – William E. Merrit, Sr.Vice – Jacob Thomas,
Jr. Vice – Robert Spittler

July 2014, Cooties of Post 10249 made a donation of educational toys and books to the Ban Bung Gaew Pre-School located @ 85 Km SE of Udorn.

November 2014, Post 10249 made to the Batohm Udomsombun School located in Nong Phon Village Donation included five (5) ceiling fans, hot/cold water cooler (drinking fountain) notebooks, pens and pencils for 220 students.

May 2015, Post members approved the War Veterans Organization of Thailand Project. 100,000 THB will be donated to their scholarship fund to help educate the children of disabled or deceased Thai Veterans.

Term 2015-2016 Commander – Edward D. Moore, Sr.Vice – Jacob Thomas,
Jr. Vice – Von Virivong

July 2015, Post 10249 became a Partner to the Vietnam War Commemoration.

August 2015, Saipan was devastated by a typhoon. VFW Post 10249 made a cash donation to help with the relief efforts.

October 2015, Al Fitchett and Bert Marohl passed out lapel pins and a certificate to our Vietnam Veterans. 53 Vietnam Veterans were recognized for their service. We also travelled to local area hospitals and homes to recognized our home bound comrades.

November 2015, Post 10249 hosted the District V Meeting at the Charoen Hotel @ 35 members were in attendance.

December 2015, Members delivered \$628.00 worth of needed supplies to the Udon Thani School for the Deaf. This school serves as both home and educational facility to @ 270 children ages 6 to 18 years of age. Children and staff were very grateful for our generous donation.

At the Department Convention, Post 10249 won a free Legacy Life Membership. At our January meeting it was decided to award a Bronze Memorial Legacy Life Membership to Thomas B. Smith. Tom was instrumental in keeping post 10249 alive when the base closed in 1975. The plaque and certificate was presented to his wife at our February meeting.

February 2016, At the Annual Thai Veterans Day Celebration, we donated 100,000 Thai Baht @ \$2,800.00 to the War Veterans Organization of Thailand Scholarship fund to help educate the children of deceased or disabled Thai Veterans in the Udon Area.

Also in February, we purchased Scout Uniforms to 12 students whose parents could not afford them. Presentation was made at the That Phon Thong Wittayakhom School located @ 12km east on Highway 22.

April 2016, Post members elected new officers and delegates for the 2016-2017 VFW Term.