



Brig. Gen. Robin Olds American Legion Thailand Post TH01

Bruce Templeman, Commander Jeff Ludwig, Adjutant



Post meetings held the 2nd Monday of each month at the
Wing 21 Ubon Royal Thai AB

Driving Range Club house at 10:00 a.m.

All members are encouraged to attend.

Post email address: amerilegionth01@gmail.com

June 2021
Volume 5, Issue 6

Calendar of Events for June

- **June 14** - Post Membership Meeting - via Skypes Go Meet
- **June 14** - Flag Day.

2020/2021 Post Officers:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Email</u>
Bruce Templeman	Commander	<i>bruce.templeman@gmail.com</i>
John Skabry	1st Vice Commander	<i>dive.safely@gmail.com</i>
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Kirby (Cosmo) Raines	Members at large	<i>cosmotyson@yahoo.com</i>

May 2021 Virtual Meeting and Installation of Officers

May's virtual meeting brought a number of firsts for our Post. Starting the with Department of France Judge Advocate and Asst. Department Adjutant, Jim Settle, attending our virtual meeting and presiding over the Installation of Officers Ceremony.



Another first, having the installation of Officers Ceremony conducted virtually via Skypes Go Meet. Thinking our of the box during trying times.

On behalf of the Post TH01, we thank the outgoing officers for their outstanding services during an especially difficult year. We would also



like to welcome the new incoming officers and look forward to your many accomplishments during this coming year.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Bruce Templeman



We're starting a new year with a fresh start. I thank the Department of France and Department Judge Advocate Jim Settle for attending our Post Installation via Skype and conducting the ceremony. We have several projects that need attention from all members. We will be tracking the progress of each project monthly to determine the effectiveness and take measures to get them done.

Our Post Historian, Ted Potyrala, sent out a request for members to submit a short bio on their military service and Post military career. To date, 10 out of our 62 members have responded. I would like to have everyone reply. We need this information to document the history of the Post of which you are a valued member. Please take a few minutes of your time and respond.

I will be sending out a survey to each of you soliciting your opinions on the health of our Post. This is an excellent way to submit new ideas, correct old issues, and participate in making us a more robust and effective Post. Please participate. We cannot afford to be losing out on your expertise and counsel.

The Post will be having its name recorded for posterity on a memorial plaque on the Wing 21 Air Base in Ubon Thailand. Several personal donations to the Post have helped defray the 20,000-baht contribution. If any members wish to further offset this cost, please feel free to do so. It's a small price to pay to create a legacy for Brigadier General Robin Olds Post TH01. If there are any other suggestions for legacy building, please share them with me.

Our Post is in a particularly sensitive situation with fundraising. We must be careful about possible violations of Thai labor and immigration law. However, we need to raise money for our Post to further fund our efforts to help our veterans and their families. Please let our Judge Advocate, Chris Lampert, know of any suggestions or ideas that you may have to raise money. He will make sure that we are in compliance with applicable laws in Thailand and the USA.

We are still pursuing the issue of getting involved with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) here in Thailand. We have a couple of obstacles to work around, but I'm confident that we can support the BSA as American Legionnaires have done since its inception.

Lastly, we will be holding training on how to use the new Legion.org website once all the issues have been resolved. The website has many resources for you to learn about and use. The myLegion.Org website allows you to effortlessly pay your dues. The website also offers several online courses, such as the **American Legion Basic Training Course**, which I encourage everyone to take. The Basic Training Course really puts what we believe and what we do into perspective. It's a motivating course and it's free. We will be incorporating some of its training during our Post meetings and may be able to hold training via Skype for those members that are still in the USA.

I wish for everyone to be safe, comfortable, and participate in our efforts to carry out the ideals of the American Legion.

John Skabry
1st Vice Commander
Membership Chairman



Comrades,

I want to take this opportunity and tell you how honored I feel. Having been elected as your 1st Vice Commander carries the overall responsibility of membership. Membership in my mind means retaining current members and molding our Post to meet our needs.

To that end, our Member at Large Officers have been reaching out to each of you through phone and email. We need your feedback and thoughts about what you like, and especially what you dislike about our Post. Don't worry if you were missed though, this is not your only opportunity to communicate with the Post. Reach out at any time to our Member at Large Officers or me at your convenience.



Recruitment during a global pandemic is a challenge: however, I have a few ideas. Ideas I will be sharing with you all in due course that should turn membership in TH01 into a no-brainer for any US veteran living in or traveling to the Kingdom of Thailand. Stay positive Comrades. These are challenging times, felt by all, we are not alone when we support each other.

Member message: Bruce Postel



Quality Assistance in Thailand (Part 3)

This article is Part 3 of 4. It primarily corrects some of the Department of Defense (DoD) benefits misinformation and substandard assistance that has been given locally. I use the term “benefits” to comprise entitlements, benefits and privileges.

The [DoD Office of the Actuary](#) reports there were 605 U.S. military retirees known to be residing in Thailand at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2019: Army - 187 | Navy - 147 | Marines - 34 | Air Force - 237. (FY 2020 statistics not yet available.)

Some information that may interest non-retired Veterans is the potential access to DoD Military Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities (where available).

- [DoD Expanding Access to Military Commissaries, Exchanges & Recreation Facilities](#)
- [Commissary & Exchange Privileges for Veterans](#)

Non-retired Veterans with certain VA service-connected ratings (100% disability or 100% unemployability) may be authorized to obtain DoD-issued military ID cards.

Question: *“I have 100% disability from the VA. How do I get a military ID card?”*

False: “Write the VA for one.”

Truth: DoD issues military ID cards, not VA. If your VA rating decision stipulates eligibility for DoD Military Commissary and Exchange privileges, Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) personnel can issue a military ID card (and ID cards for eligible dependents). If the rating decision does not stipulate eligibility for DoD Commissary and Exchange privileges, you’ll first need to request a letter from VA--see attachment 20 in the link immediately below for a sample VA letter:

(August 2017) Identification Cards, Attach. 20, p. 347: https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-3026v1_ip/afi36-3026v1_ip.pdf

❖ **JUSMAGTHAI DEERS/ID Card Section | Email:** jusmagthai@state.gov
(DoD military ID card issuance requirements and to make an appointment.)

The two main DoD benefits topics I cover today (applicable to U.S. military retirees) are TRICARE and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). These had the most local DoD errors.

Question: *“How do I enroll in Medicare Part B so I can keep TRICARE at age 65?”*

False: “Medicare Part B registration are (sic) handled by DEERS.”

Truth: The Social Security Administration manages [Medicare Part B enrollment](#), not DEERS. **Important Note:** Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipients are eligible for Medicare beginning the 25th month of receiving disability payments. To remain [TRICARE eligible](#), you must enroll in and continue paying Medicare Part B premiums.

Medicare & TRICARE: <http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#Medicare>

Question: “Which hospitals in Thailand provide TRICARE direct billing?”

False: “The TRICARE Office (JUSMAGTHAI) approves all local direct billing.”

Truth: Direct billing is strictly a health care provider’s private decision to make.

Learn More: http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#Up_Front

Protect Yourself: Self-Educate. Don’t fall prey to incorrect TRICARE information published and disseminated by unofficial third-party sources. Official Info: TRICARE.mil | TRICARE-Overseas.com | [JUSMAGTHAI TRICARE for Retirees](http://JUSMAGTHAI.TRICARE.for.Retirees).

• TRICARE News/Updates: http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#News_Updates

Question: “I’m getting divorced. Do SBP premiums automatically stop?”

False: “Yes.”

Truth: “If your divorce decree contains no language mandating you to elect Former Spouse coverage, then you have complete freedom to either have the former spouse removed from the plan or to voluntarily continue the coverage.” Therefore, if you wish to suspend premium payments, and there’s no court order mandating Former Spouse coverage, submit [DD Form 2656-6](http://DD_Form_2656-6), divorce decree and settlement agreement to DFAS to request suspension of SBP premium payments.

Learn More: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/provide/sbp/change/>

Question: “I’m getting married soon. When and how can I sign up my new wife for the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)?”

False: “You have to wait until after your first-year wedding anniversary before you can enroll her in SBP. Contact DEERS for more information.”

Truth: **NO!!!** Firstly, direct SBP eligibility questions to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), not DEERS. If a newly acquired spouse is an SBP eligible beneficiary, a member must elect SBP “within 1 year of acquiring an eligible beneficiary” (submit [DD Form 2656-6](http://DD_Form_2656-6); read the documentation and mailing instructions). Spouse coverage is effective on the first anniversary of the marriage/remarriage or birth of a child of that marriage/remarriage, whichever is earlier.

(April 2021) DoD FMR Vol. 7B, Ch. 43, para. 430202, p. 43-4 and para. 440201, p. 44-3: https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/documents/fmr/Volume_07b.pdf

• DFAS News & Events: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/newsevents/>

Bad News: Among VA, Social Security and DoD benefits, the topmost potentially costly error that’s been repeated time and again is giving out incorrect SBP election deadline information. If you miss the election deadline, SBP could be irretrievably lost.

Good News: The VA Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) dollar-for-dollar offset to SBP has finally been repealed (phased elimination began January 2021).

I hope you found this useful. None of the errors I addressed today are associated with the American Legion in Thailand. To close out this four-part series, Part 4 in the next newsletter will discuss some local Social Security issues. Stick around!

You may reach me at: still_serving@outlook.com. Have a Great Day!

Post Adjutant Corner:

Jeff Ludwig



On June 14 we will observe and celebrate **Flag Day**.

Many Americans celebrate **Flag Day** by displaying the Red, White, and Blue in front of homes and businesses. The day commemorates the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States. The Stars and Stripes are much more than just our national flag. It stands as a symbol to millions of people around the world that hope and dream of someday attaining the freedoms and opportunities we enjoy in America. For veterans, Old Glory holds a special place in our hearts. It



represents the values that we swore to defend against all enemies foreign and domestic. It reminds us of our comrades who gave the ultimate sacrifice to keep us free and to keep our flag flying high. We show our honor at the beginning of the Day with the raising of the flag and at the end of the day with the lowering of the flag. When a veteran dies, we honor their devotion to service and sacrifices by draping the flag over their coffin. We also honor the family left behind by ceremoniously folding the flag and presenting it to them to show the appreciation of a grateful nation. Lest we forget, on patriotic days like Memorial Day, we often place flags on the graves of our departed veterans.

We as members of the American Legion and Post TH01 have an obligation and responsibility to know and utilize proper flag etiquette. We need to become proficient in ceremoniously folding the flag and understanding the meaning of each fold. We need to know how to properly display the flag and properly post the colors at various functions. This Month we will try to have a virtual meeting to provide training on these issues. Fortunately, there are countless resources at our fingertips to help us in this endeavor. YouTube has many great videos on flag etiquette. Here is a good video that goes over general flag etiquette, [What Is Proper Flag Etiquette](#). To learn how to properly fold the flag, check out these videos: [Two-man Flag Fold Detailed Techniques](#), [How to: Ceremonial Flag Folding](#), and [How to Fold an American Flag](#). What does each fold of the flag represent, check out this moving video: [Ann M. Wolf, Flag- Folding Ceremony - Meaning of each fold](#).





Safety Topic

Jeff Ludwig



NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

In 1996, the **National Safety Council** established **June** as **National Safety Month**, aiming to increase awareness of the leading **safety** and health risks and ultimately decrease the number of unintentional injuries and deaths in the United States. So in the month of June in Thailand, what is the single most factor in that contributes to property damage, injury, and death? **MONSOONS!**



The annual Monsoons are probably the last thing people think about when it comes to safety in the month of June. However, the monsoons contribute to broad spectrum of safety issues including: automobile accidents, drownings, electrocutions, and damage to personal homes and property. Here are some tips to prepare you and your family for heavy rain and flash flooding:

Driving in Rain

Wet pavement contributes to nearly 1.2 million accidents per year. Prepare your car in advance of a rainstorm by making sure windshield wipers are in good working condition. Tire treads should also be the proper depth to provide good traction on wet roadways.

In a rainstorm, be sure to:

- Turn on your headlights. Rain impedes visibility. By turning on your headlights, other drivers are more likely to see your car.
- Turn off your cruise control. When roadways are slick, cruise control impairs your ability to adjust speed quickly. You should be in full control of your car when the rain falls.
- Slow down to avoid hydroplaning. At speeds as low as 35 miles per hour, tires can lose contact with the roadway during a rainstorm.
- If you begin to skid, avoid hard braking or turns, which can also contribute to hydroplaning. Try to remain calm and continue looking and driving in the direction you would like the car to go.



Preparing Your House for Rain

A little preparation goes a long way to take care of your home during heavy rains. Here are some tips to keep your home safe and dry:

- Get your roof and gutters inspected to ensure good condition before the rain falls. Remove leaves or debris from gutters throughout the year.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC

- Check the inside of the house to be sure there are no signs of water leaks—mold, water rings, or paint discoloration. Make any necessary repairs.
- Check doors and windows to ensure they seal properly.
- Purchase hurricane socks, which can absorb a gallon of water at a time, for a leak-prone garage.
- Prune dead branches from trees in your yard, which can fall on or around your house during a storm.
- Have sandbags on hand for low areas of your house to keep water at bay during a flood.
- In a flood, move furniture to higher floors to prevent water damage.

Staying Safe During a Flash Flood

Emergency preparedness is the best way to keep you and your family safe during a flood. The following tips will help you prepare for the worst:

- Listen to local weather stations during storms for possible flood warnings.
- If there is a flood in your area, get to higher ground and stay there until it's safe to return.
- Steer clear of flood water. As little as six inches of moving water can sweep you off your feet. Keep children away from flood water too.
- If approaching a flooded road by car, turn around. Cars can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water. If you cannot turn around and water is rising around you, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground.
- Homeowner's insurance doesn't usually cover flooding. Know the flood risk in your neighborhood and buy additional insurance if necessary.
- Assemble an emergency supply of food, water, and other necessities. For a list of suggested supplies to have on hand during a flash flood, visit redcross.org.



This portions of this article first appeared in the November 2015 edition of the HealthPerks newsletter.

Historian

Ted Potyrala



WHAT IS FLAG DAY

In the beginning of the American Revolution, the colonists were not fighting under a single flag. Most regiments were using their own flag. In June of 1775, the Second Continental Congress met. They were hoping they could create a unified colonial fighting force. This led to the creation of what was essentially the first “American Flag”, the continental colors also called the “Grand Union Flag”



In June of 1776, the Second Continental Congress met again and passed a resolution stating that “the flag of the United States have 13 stripes, alternate red and white” and that “the Union be 13 stars , white in a blue field representing a new constellation”.



In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson, marked the anniversary of that decree by officially establishing June 14 as Flag Day

A few little-known facts about “Old Glory”.

Bernard Cingand, a Wisconsin teacher, originated the idea for a Flag Day

There is no historical evidence that Betsy Ross had any involvement in contributing to “Old Glory’s” creation.

In the 1950’s, when it was certain that Alaska was to become the 49th state, designers began retooling for the flag. A seventeen year old Ohio student named Bob Heft, borrowed his mom’s sewing machine and disassembled the family’s flag. Bob knew that Hawaii was also about to join the union so he designed a fifty-star flag. He handed it in to his teacher for a class project. Heft then sent the flag to his congressman, Walter Moeller, who sent it to President Eisenhower. The president selected Heft’s design and on July 4, 1960, they both stood together witnessing the first raising of the new flag.

From the History Channel

Chaplain's Message:

A tribute to our Flag.



I AM THE FLAG

I am the flag of the United States of America.

My name is Old Glory.

I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.

I stand watch in America's halls of justice.

I fly majestically over institutions of learning.

I stand guard with power in the world.

Look up and see me.

I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice.

I stand for freedom. I am confident.

I am arrogant. I am proud.

When I am flown with my fellow banners,

My head is a little higher,

My colors a little truer.

I bow to no one!

I am recognized all over the world.

I am worshipped - I am saluted.

I am loved - I am revered.

I am respected - I am feared.

I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years.

I was flown at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Shiloh and Appamatox.

I was there at San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, in the Argonne Forest, Anzio, Rome and the beaches of Normandy.

Guam, Okinawa, Korea and KheSan, Saigon, Vietnam know me.

I was there. I led my troops.

I was dirty, battleworn and tired,

but my soldiers cheered me and I was proud.

I have been burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries
I have helped set free. It does not hurt for I am invincible.
I have been soiled upon, burned, torn and trampled in the streets of my
country.
And when it's done by those whom I've served in battle - it hurts.
But I shall overcome - for I am strong.
I have slipped the bonds of earth and
stood watch over the uncharted frontiers of space from my vantage point
on the moon.
I have born silent witness to all of America's finest hours.
But my finest hours are yet to come.
When I am torn into strips and used as bandages for my wounded
comrades on the battle field,
when I am flown at halfmast to honor my soldier,
or when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving parent at the grave of
their fallen son or daughter,

I am proud.

I am the flag of the United States of America.

**Originally entitled, *My Name is Old Glory* by Howard Schnauber
© 1994 the author [Mr. Schnauber has given permission to the public to use this poem for program
or publishing purposes. Please [credit the Fort Collins Public Library](#) Local History Archive, Oral
History Interview of Mr. Howard Schnauber, the author.]

TAPS: None



June Birthdays:

- Darwin Dennis,
- Jim Gilmore,
- Carl Manchester,
- Peter Ritzel
- Ken Sebring



A very happy birthday to all