



**Brig. Gen. Robin Olds**  
 American Legion Thailand Post TH01  
 Email: amerilegionth01@gmail.com



Bruce Templeman, Commander      Jeff Ludwig, Adjutant  
 Post meetings held the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

May 2021  
 Volume 5, Issue 5

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

May 10      Post Meeting      10:00 a.m. Virtual via Skypes Go Meet

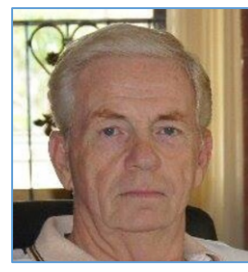
**Your 2021 Post Officers: Congratulations to all**



**Commander  
 Bruce Templeman**



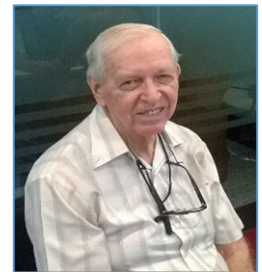
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice  
 Commander  
 John Skabry**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice  
 Commander  
 Larry Edmonds**



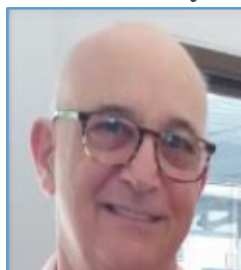
**Adjutant/Finance  
 Officer  
 Jeff Ludwig**



**Chaplain  
 Charlie Mason**



**Sergeant at Arms  
 Sal Salzarulo**



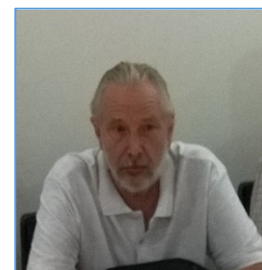
**Service Officer  
 Rocky Hatzke**



**Judge Advocate  
 Chris Lampert**



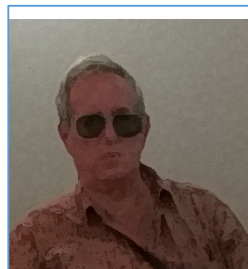
**Historian  
 Ted Potyrala**



**Publicity Officer  
 Joe Reedy**



**Member at Large  
 Paul McDermott**



**Member at Large  
 David Bell**



**Member at Large  
 Cosmos Raines**

## **COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**

**Bruce Templeman**



With a new slate of officers, we have another new beginning and a lot of work in front of us. Our big challenges this year are membership and being able to operate in the community with Covid-19 spiking. Due to the situation in Ubon Ratchathani, we will hold our meetings via Skype until further notice.

We will have the Installation of officers next meeting. Installation is a ceremony to notify every one of the new officers and the duties which they are to perform. We will endeavor to create an environment in which everyone supports and encourages each other to succeed.

Several objectives to accomplish this year are:

1. Establish processes in which we can help veterans to obtain help with VA. All our members should make themselves familiar with the programs that the VA can provide here in Thailand.
2. Have all members complete the American Legion Basic Training course. This course describes the purpose of the American Legion and what its members can do to further its goals.
3. Have the members-at-large conduct a few buddy-checks each month so all members are contacted at least once per year. These contacts should be documented with our membership chair to give to the adjutant for our consolidated report.

I look forward to tackling these issues with our Post. We all have work to do to make Thailand Post TH01 work for our veterans. Communication between us is the key to our success.

## **Adjutant's Corner**

Jeff Ludwig



First, let me express my congratulations to our 2021 Post Officers. You have a great opportunity to move our Post to a new level. Your accomplishments are limited only by your imagination, your drive, and your perseverance. We will need your imagination as we work to fulfill all our goals within the restrictions of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We will need your drive to meet the obligations of the 4 Pillars of the American Legion. We will need your perseverance to keep working despite roadblocks along the way. This promises to be a challenging year both here in Thailand and back home in the USA. More than ever our veterans, their families and our communities will need our help.

May is traditionally chocked full of activities including Memorial Day, Mother's Day, to Armed Forces Day, and Military Spouse Appreciation day. Unfortunately, with the recent COVID surges in Thailand we may have to curtail many if not all of these activities. At least in the normal sense. This is where we need to think out of the box. What can we do to support these activities while complying with the pandemic restrictions?

On another subject, the new online system myLegion.org was launched in April. Overall, it's been very successful transferring millions of records from the old platform to the new robust platform. Fortunately, our records were transferred to the new platform without a glitch and our Post personnel roster is current and correct. As with any new system there are issues and bugs that need to be worked out. Unfortunately, we cannot do any updates online just yet. In the meantime, the Department of France and the National IT Department will work with us to update any required changes. The IT folks continue to work tirelessly to correct the system and hope to have it fully functional very soon. I will keep you post in the coming months.



## Member message: Bruce Postel

### Quality Assistance in Thailand (Part 2)

First and foremost, being that Memorial Day is this month, I solemnly salute our fallen fellow warriors and raise a glass to absent friends. <*A moment of silence*>

Today, I briefly cover Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation claim assistance followed by local benefits misinformation and some local examples of substandard Veteran/Survivor assistance. The misinformation and assistance shortfalls I write about are not associated with the American Legion in Thailand.

Seek credible assistance. Pertaining to VA Disability Compensation, [VA-accredited representatives](#) are trained to give specific claims (and appeals) advice and assistance. Since I'm not a VA-accredited service officer, claims agent or attorney, I am not authorized by [USC Title 38](#) to provide specific disability compensation claims (or appeals) assistance. However, I can, and do, provide publicly available general information and gladly answer hypothetical questions. While [VA.gov](#) has greatly improved, VA still does not yet do a fully thorough job connecting all the dots on disability claim development. I help Veterans connect those dots.

Protect yourself. If you've filed, or are thinking about filing, a [VA disability compensation claim](#), the plain truth is that no one cares more about your claim than you! It behooves you to self-educate, especially understanding the evidence requirements. You must also be proactive and manage your own claim. Veterans that try to dump their claim on their accredited representative to manage are placing themselves at increased risk for receiving an unfavorable claim decision. Claims are not fire and forget. Help your accredited representative to help you!

The following local VA misinformation is a snap shot and is not all inclusive:

**Question:** "How can I get certified copies of my DD-214s in Thailand?"

**False:** "Only a VA-accredited Veteran Service Officer can certify DD-214 copies."

**True:** Certified copies of DD-214s can also be obtained from U.S. Citizen Services (ACS) free of charge when needed to apply for a federal benefit.

**Paragraph 543.3:** <https://fam.state.gov/fam/07fam/07fam0540.html>

**Question:** "Does VA 100% permanent disability really mean permanent?"

**False:** "Contact the VA and ask them."

**True:** VA will ask for your claim number. If you are rated "Permanent & Total" conventional wisdom says it's unwise to unnecessarily ask VA to look in your claims file (c-file) and thereby risk your disability rating being reviewed for accuracy.

**Protected Ratings:**

[https://www.benefits.va.gov/warms/docs/admin21/m21\\_1/mr/part3/subptiv/ch08/m21-1mrii\\_iv\\_8\\_secc.docx](https://www.benefits.va.gov/warms/docs/admin21/m21_1/mr/part3/subptiv/ch08/m21-1mrii_iv_8_secc.docx)

**Question:** "I have VA disability for \_\_\_\_\_. Will VA pay for treatment overseas?"

**Partially True:** "Yes, the VA Foreign Medical Program (FMP) will pay 100%."

**True:** VA FMP will indeed reimburse for service-connected conditions but there are a number of [exclusions](#). The exclusion most cited in complaints from Veterans is that FMP had denied reimbursement for medication that is not [USFDA-approved](#).

**FMP:** <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/fmp/index.asp>

**Question:** "The Veteran seems unable to care for himself and manage his own finances. Does he have a fiduciary for his VA and other monthly benefits?"

**False:** "VA doesn't use fiduciaries overseas."

**True:** VA certainly does use fiduciaries outside of the U.S.

**Fiduciary Program:** <https://www.benefits.va.gov/fiduciary/>

**Question:** "My husband died. Can I get big VA (DIC) money like my friend?"

**False:** "You're not eligible for VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) because you have/make too much money."

**True:** VA DIC is not means-tested. VA Survivors Pension is.

**DIC:** <https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/>

**Survivors Pension:** <https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension/>

Additional local VA benefits misinformation and substandard assistance includes:

1. Assisting at least eight Veterans to file frivolous Aid and Attendance claims.
2. Continuing to advise Veterans to read the outdated 2016 edition of the local "VA Compensation & Pension Exam Tips". (There have been four updates since 2016.)
3. Two widows lost over \$30,000 combined in survivor benefits due to late claims.
4. A number of survivor benefits claims were needlessly delayed many months. One widow in particular with a slam-dunk DIC claim incurred a six-month delay.
5. A widow that had her monthly Death Pension (since renamed Survivors Pension) suspended went 14 months without pay. Normal restart time is 3-4 pay periods.
6. Two known Veterans (one now deceased) were each criminally charging widows a fee for assistance with survivor benefits claims. One case involved Stolen Valor.
7. Evidence prejudicial to a widow's DIC claim was willfully omitted from her claim.

While most Veteran assistance in Thailand has been spot-on there has still been too much subpar assistance and bad information dispensed over the years. Being that the American Legion in Thailand is still relatively new, it's starting with a clean slate and has the golden opportunity to set the standard for proper Veteran assistance!

- Inquiries for Pending VA Compensation Claims | Email: [PCU.VBAPIT@VA.GOV](mailto:PCU.VBAPIT@VA.GOV)
- VA General Benefits Inquiries | Email: [OMSCJAPANOK.VBAVACO@VA.GOV](mailto:OMSCJAPANOK.VBAVACO@VA.GOV)
- Create an ID.me account on VA.gov: <https://www.va.gov/sign-in/>
- Stay Informed: <https://www.va.gov/opa/socialmedia.asp>

This article is Part 2 of 4. I hope you found it interesting and informative. Parts 3 and 4 in the next two newsletters (respectively) will, in part, discuss some of the known Department of Defense and Social Security benefits issues. Stay tuned!

You may reach me at: [still\\_serving@outlook.com](mailto:still_serving@outlook.com). Have a Great Day!

## **SAFETY MESSAGE:**

Jeff Ludwig



In the USA the month of May signals the start of warmer weather. In some areas such as Florida, Arizona and other southern areas the temperatures can range from the 80s to the high 90s degrees Fahrenheit. The during the month of May in Thailand the temperature stays in the 90-degree range. In simple terms it is hot! The month of May is heat illness prevention month. On average, extreme heat is the deadliest type of weather in the U.S. During 2004–2018, an average of 702 heat-related deaths (415 with heat as the underlying cause and 287 as a contributing cause) occurred in the United States annually.

According to the Mayo Clinic you can take a number of simple precautions to prevent heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and other heat-related illnesses. When temperatures climb, remember to:

- **Wear loose fitting, lightweight clothing.** Wearing excess clothing or clothing that fits tightly won't allow your body to cool properly.
- **Protect against sunburn.** Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool itself, so protect yourself outdoors with a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses and use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Apply sunscreen generously, and reapply every two hours — or more often if you're swimming or sweating.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Staying hydrated will help your body sweat and maintain a normal body temperature.
- **Take extra precautions with certain medications.** Be on the lookout for heat-related problems if you take medications that can affect your body's ability to stay hydrated and dissipate heat.
- **Never leave anyone in a parked car.** This is a common cause of heat-related deaths in children. When parked in the sun, the temperature in your car can rise 20 degrees Fahrenheit (more than 6.7 C) in 10 minutes.



It's not safe to leave a person in a parked car in warm or hot weather, even if the windows are cracked or the car is in shade. When your car is parked, keep it locked to prevent a child from getting inside.

- **Take it easy during the hottest parts of the day.** If you can't avoid strenuous activity in hot weather, drink fluids and rest frequently in a cool spot. Try to schedule exercise or physical



**Never leave kids or pets in a hot car.**

It only takes a few minutes for the inside of a car to heat up in warm weather.

114° after 30 min	124° after 30 min
104° after 10 min	110° after 10 min
92° after 5 min	100° after 5 min

80° 90°

Reduce the number of deaths from heatstroke by remembering to ACT.

**Avoid** heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you're not in it so kids don't get in on their own.

**Create** reminders by putting something in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. This is especially important if you're not following your normal routine.

**Take action.** If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

State Farm  
Source: Weather.gov | SafeKids.org | NHTSA

labor for cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or evening.

- **Get acclimated.** Limit time spent working or exercising in heat until you're conditioned to it. People who are not used to hot weather are especially susceptible to heat-related illness. It can take several weeks for your body to adjust to hot weather.
- **Be cautious if you're at increased risk.** If you take medications or have a condition that increases your risk of heat-related problems, such as a history of previous heat illness, avoid the heat and act quickly if you notice symptoms of overheating. If you participate in a strenuous sporting event or activity in hot weather, make sure there are medical services available in case of a heat emergency.

Historian Archive:  
Ted Potyrala



## **Custis Lee vs. the U.S. Government**

After failing to get satisfaction from congress, Custis Lee went to the Circuit Court of Alexandria, Virginia asserting ownership of the mansion. He asked the court to evict all trespassers that were occupying the property. When U.S. Attorney General Charles Devens heard about the lawsuit, he asked that it be transferred to federal court where he thought the government would get a fairer hearing. In July 1877, the lawsuit landed in the lap of Judge Robert W. Hughes of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

After months of legal maneuvering and arguments, Judge Hughes ordered a trial by jury. Custis Lee's team was led by Francis L. Smith who worked with General Lee years before. Their argument was based on the legality of the 1864 tax sale. After six days of hearings, the jury found for Custis Lee. The court said that by requiring the tax to be paid in person, the government had deprived Custis Lee of his property without due process of law. If legal, any property owner could lose his property if he was unable to pay the tax in person.

Of course, the government appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. On December 4, 1882, Justice Samuel Freeman, who was appointed by President Lincoln, wrote for the 5-4 majority that holding the tax sale was unconstitutional.

The Lees had taken back Arlington.

Now this left the government in a difficult position. Technically they were trespassing on private property. They could abandon an army fort that was located there, disinterred 20,000 graves and move a village that was also located on the property. Or they could buy the property if Custis Lee was willing to sell it.

Turns out he was. Custis Lee and the government agreed on a fair market price of \$150,000. Custis Lee signed the papers on March 31, 1883. The man that formally accepted the title was Robert Todd Lincoln son of the president that was tormented by Custis Lee's father.

Now if you remember Montgomery Meigs the creator of Arlington Cemetery. He had to resign because of age from his Quartermaster position the same year Custis Lee got Arlington back. He was a frequent visitor to Arlington where he buried his wife in 1879. Many of his family members are buried there. He joined them in January of 1892. His flag draped caisson crossed the river to Arlington passing Mary Lee's garden. After TAPS, he was lowered into the ground at the heart of the cemetery that he created.

\*\*Credit to the Smithsonian Magazine

## Chaplain's Message

*“Eternal Father, who alone rules the destinies of nations and who has deemed that men should live in freedom and not fear, awaken in us a new appreciation of our land that we may apply ourselves to the great work of keeping alive a sense of freedom. Grant us your spirit as we honor those who have fought a good fight and finished the course. On Memorial Day we call to remembrance those who served in far off places and have laid down their arms to march into that land of eternal peace. We remember the sufferings, the fears and the horrors of what they endured.*

*It is a time for us to realize that much of our best blood has been spilled—all over the world—so that we might live free and unchained! May they, and those who suffer wounds for peace, as well as their families who valiantly and silently also serve, receive rest from their struggles and a "well done" from you, Captain of their souls. Permit us never to forget our comrades-in-arms from whose fallen hands we have taken up the sacred cause of freedom. On Memorial Day we consecrate unto you the debt of our national gratitude which is their rightful due. Keep sacred their sacrifice in our hearts. Keep holy our course in your sight.*

*Enkindle within us a flame of selfless unwavering devotion to duty that we may never be found wanting in those qualities of spirit and mind which alone are able to preserve hearth and home, the peace of our nation, and the tranquility of the world. We earnestly implore your providential care as we face the grim and great task which lies ahead. May the day soon come when we can lay down arms and more earnestly worship you.”*

. Memorial Prayer by CAPT T. Randy Cash, CHC, USN, Retired Past National Chaplain of the American Legion.

**TAPS:**

None



**May Birthdays**

- Don Badtram
- Joseph Cardeiro
- David Monninger
- Richard Rees
- Henry Witmer
- Wayne Wright



A very happy birthday to all!

**Upcoming Events in June:**

- a. Flag Day – June 14
- b. Father's Day – June 20
- c. Army's Birthday – June 14