



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

April 2021
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Calendar of Events for February

- **April 1** - New myLegion21 comes online
- **April 12** - Post Membership Meeting – Post Elections

2020/2021 Post Officers:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Email</u>
Bruce Templeman	Commander	<i>bruce.templeman@gmail.com</i>
Wayne Wright	1st Vice Commander	<i>waywright@outlook.com</i>
Billy Holland	2nd Vice Commander	<i>billybholland@gmail.com</i>
Ted Potyrala	Historian	<i>tpubon@gmail.com</i>
Maurice(Rocky) Hatzke	Service Officer	<i>mrhatzke3@gmail.com</i>
Hugh Mason	Chaplain	<i>htmmason@aol.com</i>
Jeff Ludwig	Adjutant/Finance Officer	<i>Jgludwig2@gmail.com</i>
Salvatore (Sal) Salzarulo	Sergeant at Arms	<i>salzy48@hotmail.com</i>
Larry Edmonds	Judge Advocate	<i>ldedmonds@aol.com</i>
Joe Reedy	Public Affairs Officer	<i>joereedy4@gmail.com</i>
Paul McDermott	Members at large	<i>paulny54@hotmail.com</i>
Dave Bell	Members at large	<i>davebell211@hotmail.com</i>
Kirby (Cosmo) Raines	Members at large	<i>cosmotyson@yahoo.com</i>

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Bruce Templeman



I was elated to be joined at the 3rd Department of France Executive Council by 2nd Vice Commander Billy Holland and Comrade John Skabry. This quarterly meeting is normally attended by 2 voting delegates from each Post within the Department to vote on matters that concern the Department, Posts, and members. Many policy initiatives and funding issues are discussed there. For the first time in the Department history, this meeting was made public to all via Facebook Live. I was unaware that this would happen until just prior to the meeting, so was happy that John Skabry was able to view. After some minor communication issues that were quickly remedied, much was discussed. I encourage all Post members to attend the next one that will be held in June. I will send out the date and time as soon as possible and all members may view via going to the American Legion Department of France Facebook Page and clicking on the Facebook Live link. I would like to highlight two discussions that got my attention and provoked some thought...

1. A motion for the Department of France to establish an American Legion Blood Donor Program **was withdrawn from consideration** at the 3rd Department Executive Conference. Although the motion was withdrawn, it's been my experience that the Red Cross Blood Donor Program is effective and rewarding. In Thailand alone, the need for blood, especially rare types, is staggering. I would like to have an energetic and compassionate Post member volunteer to research how our Post can assist the Red Cross with their Blood Donor Program. We can make noble and life-saving contributions to a great program.
2. Another motion **that was withdrawn** at the 3rd DEC was to establish an annual Department of France Friends of Scouting donation in the amount of \$500. This amount to be donated to the Boys Scouts of American - Transatlantic Council by the first day of January. Since this was withdrawn, it poses no conflict to the efforts or donations that we might provide for our Scouts here in Thailand that belong to the Far East Council. I am looking forward to the report of findings on our proposal to support Scouting BSA in Thailand.

I cannot emphasize enough to everyone to make sure that you have a plan to take care of your family should you become incapacitated. Moreover, I cannot emphasize enough that having a plan isn't worth spit if no one is privy to it. vLet someone in your family know what you have planned. vThe below link has a short summary of what would be most helpful should you or a loved one become incapacitated. Let's take care of each other through mutual education, support, and comradeship. Buddy Checks and Service to our Veterans are not just slogans. They're the reason for our existence as American Legionnaires.

[If Your Parents Become Incapacitated | Kiplinger](#)

I look forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting, 12 April 2021 at the Wing 21 Golf Driving Range or via Skype. We have a bright future and a bit of work ahead of us.



Post Adjutant Corner:

Jeff Ludwig

Post Elections:

Will be held at the April 12 Post meeting. It's not too late to nominate someone or to self-nominate yourself. What better way to get involved with the Post than to hold one of the Post positions? Nominations will be closed just prior to the start of the elections. We strongly encourage members to attend this meeting either in person or virtually via Skypes. As a reminder here are the Post positions up for election.



1. Post Commander
2. Post 1st Vice Commander
3. Post 2nd Vice Commander
4. Post Finance Officer
5. Post Chaplain
6. Post Judge Advocate
7. Sergeants at Arms
8. Public Affairs Officer
9. Three Members at Large

Membership:

Comrades we have reached 100% of Departments membership goal! Congratulations to all for making this happen. This makes the fourth year that we have reached 100% of departments goal. However, we don't have to stop there we can still achieve a monetary award if we get two more members to renew. We have six members who have not renewed their membership. Also, new members offset those who do not renew. So, my fellow comrades let's roll up our sleeves, get to work, and make this happen.

1.

Post Finance Officer

Jeff Ludwig



Taxes!

Well, it is tax time again. If you're one of the few who already filed your taxes congratulations. If you haven't yet filed or are contemplating if you need to file, here are some tips and tidbits to help you.

First some important tax related dates for 2021. The Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service announced that the federal income tax filing due date for individuals for the 2020 tax year will be automatically extended from April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021.

RMDs: The Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act changed the age when individuals must begin taking withdrawals from their retirement accounts. Someone born on or before June 30, 1949, was required to start getting Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for the year they reached the age of 70½. However, under the SECURE Act, if a person's 70th birthday is July 1, 2019, or later, they do not have to take their first RMD until the year they reach age 72. Individuals who reached age 70 ½ before 2020 and were still employed, but terminated employment in 2020, would normally have a 2020 RMD due by April 1, 2021, from their workplace retirement plan. This RMD is also waived as part of the CARES Act relief. Roth IRAs do not require withdrawals until after the death of the owner.

2021 RMDs Individuals who reached 70 ½ in 2019 or earlier, did not have an RMD due for 2020. For 2021, they will have an RMD due by Dec. 31, 2021. Individuals who did not reach age 70 ½ in 2019 will reach age 72 in 2021 will have their first RMD due by April 1, 2022, and their second RMD due by Dec. 31, 2022. To avoid having both amounts included in their income for the same year, the taxpayer can make the first withdrawal by Dec. 31, 2021, instead of waiting until April 1, 2022. After the first year, all RMDs must be made by Dec. 31

Tax Resources: So, what is the best resource for preparing and filing your taxes? The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reminds taxpayers that its website, **IRS.gov**, continues to be the first and best place for people seeking information and assistance on their federal taxes.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that [IRS Free File](#) is a great option, especially if they are looking to save money on tax preparation. [Filing electronically](#) and choosing [direct deposit](#) is the safest and easiest way to file an accurate tax return and the fastest way to get a refund. Just go to <https://apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile/> and choose the service that is right for you.

Here are some facts about Free File programs:

- IRS Free File is available on IRS.gov and features brand-name tax software providers.
- First-time filers can [browse the offers](#) to find the product that's right for them.
- Each Free File partner sets its own eligibility standards. These are generally based on income, age and state residency. All taxpayers whose adjusted gross income was \$72,000 or less will find at least one free product to use.
- Some Free File products are available in Spanish.
- MilTax online software is also available to service members and their families, regardless of income, and is offered through the Department of Defense.
- Free File is a great option for those who don't normally file but are filing this year to claim the recovery rebate credit. If someone is eligible for a recovery rebate credit – and either didn't receive Economic Impact Payments or received less than the full amounts – they must file a 2020 tax return to claim the credit even if they don't usually file.
- People filing only to claim the recovery rebate credit should use the browse feature to find a product that requires no minimum income. Taxpayers should review the recovery rebate credit FAQs for more information.
- Free File providers also offer state tax return preparation, some for free and some for a fee.
- Taxpayers can use their computer, smartphone or tablet to do their taxes. They just need to go to the Free File page of IRS.gov on their device. All Free File products can be used on mobile devices.
- Some of the free file software is available for taxpayers who have foreign addresses, including taxpayers residing in Thailand.

Standard Deduction: In tax year 2020, the IRS is also raising the standard deduction to \$12,400 for individuals (from \$12,200) and to \$24,800 for married joint filers (from \$24,400). The standard deduction has become more important than ever since 2018

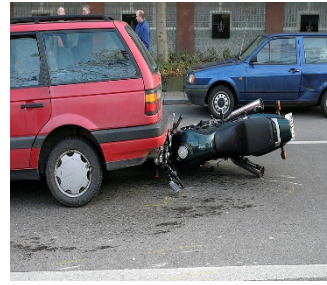
The Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers that the most convenient way to check on a tax refund is by using the **Where's My Refund?** tool at IRS.gov or through the **IRS2Go** Mobile App.

These are just a few of the tips to help you pay your taxes. If you have any questions you can always call me. If I don't know the answer, I can refer you to someone who does.



Safety Topic

Jeff Ludwig



Just Drive

April is **Distracted Driving Awareness Month**. Though traffic has dropped significantly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our roads in Thailand have only gotten more dangerous. According to the Bangkok Post of the 21 million motorcycles registered in Thailand, half the operators do not have a driver license. It's no wonder Thailand has one of the world's worst traffic records. On average over 24,000 people die on Thai roads every year. According to the Ministry of Transportation, over 80% of the deaths are motorcyclists.

On any given day you can experience motorcyclists talking on their cell phone or even texting while driving. Coupled that with drivers running stop signs, going the wrong way on the road, passing on the right and left side of the vehicle and you can see why even a few seconds of distracted attention can lead to disaster.

One of the leading cause of accidents is distracted motorist. Talking on a cell phone – even hands-free – or texting or programming an in-vehicle infotainment



system diverts your attention away from driving. Keep yourself and others around you safe and **just drive!** The life you save may just be your own.



Member message: Bruce Postel



Quality Assistance in Thailand (Part 1)

All Veterans deserve to receive quality assistance! I'm retired Air Force and have been volunteering in Thailand in various capacities assisting the Veteran community with assorted benefits for 15 years. One of the many things I've learned along the way is that assisting fellow Veterans takes a team effort. I hold certain pieces to the puzzle while other pieces are held by others. I'm a big believer in sharing information and is one of the reasons why I offered to start writing some articles for our Post newsletter. The Post Service Officer is Comrade Hatzke. I am an additional information resource. I don't know everything but I do have a knowledge base.

A question that's often asked is "*How many U.S. military Veterans live in Thailand?*" In short, there are an estimated 4,125 Veterans residing in Thailand. "*Why only *estimated*?*" Being that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is unable to determine U.S. military Veteran population numbers in foreign countries, the estimated number is determined by extrapolation. As I write this, the U.S. population currently stands at 330,151,000 with 18,000,000 Veterans comprising 5.5 percent of the population. There are 75,000 U.S. citizens known by Thai Immigration to be legally residing in Thailand: $75,000 \times .055 = 4,125$ (estimated).

I'm certain that all normal-thinking Veterans will agree that when you request assistance, the assistance given should be of excellent quality. As for me, when I'm asked a general benefits question, I include the official source in my response when an official source is readily available. Sometimes only the benefits source can answer it. If I don't know the answer, I will give you the courtesy and respect of telling you I don't have that puzzle piece, and I will advise you whom to contact for further assistance. Veterans deserve correct information, period.

Quality assistance is a two-way street. Veterans also have the personal responsibility to act professionally when seeking assistance. For instance,

while I share many of the same benefits frustrations as other Veterans, I have always resisted the urge to openly rant and rave, especially in my past interactions with VA. Lashing out doesn't help your cause and will only delay issue resolution. As well, we may not always like an official answer we've been given but we must also recognize that the United States is a nation of laws. Only elected officials can change laws.

To wrap up, if your general benefits question has gone unanswered elsewhere, or if you'd like a second opinion, please feel free to email me. Conversely, if you feel you need a second opinion for information I've given you, I encourage you to seek it. I'm not a snowflake with easily hurt feelings. It's more important to me that you have total confidence in the information you've been given. You deserve it!

This article is Part 1 of 4. Parts 2 through 4 in future newsletters will, in part, discuss some of the VA, Department of Defense and Social Security benefits misinformation that has been dispensed locally over the years.

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

Historian
Ted Potyrala



How the Lee's regained ownership of Arlington. Part One

The reason the Federal Government was able to take possession of Arlington was because in 1862, congress passed a law that empowered commissioners to assess and collect tax on real estate in insurrectionary districts. If the taxes were not paid in person, commissioners were granted authority to sell the land.

A tax of \$92.07 was levied on the estate. Because of the fighting and ill health, Mrs. Lee was stuck in Richmond. She sent her cousin to pay the tax but when he arrived, he was told they accept payment from only Mrs. Lee. Thus, declaring the estate in default and put up the property for sale.

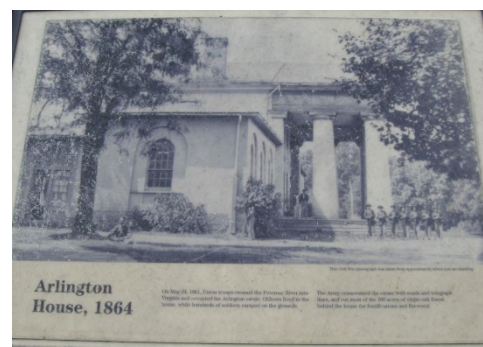
An auction was held. The only bidder was the Federal Government. They offered \$26,800 for a property that was worth \$34,100.

While Mrs. Lee was outraged about what had happened to her estate, Gen. Lee had plans to get the estate back, He kept them hidden from all but a



few friends and advisors. He himself took no part in this attempt but did encourage his lawyer to research his case and report to his legal advisor, Francis L. Smith. Gen. Lee confided to his brother that he wanted to regain ownership of the estate and to stop the burial of the dead. This could only be done if he got the property back.

To see if this was even possible, Smith made a clandestine visit to the estate. He determined that it was possible to make it habitable if a wall was built blocking the view of the graves. Unfortunately for him, he told the cemetery supervisor of his plan. The supervisor reported this to Gen. Meigs. Remember, Gen. Meigs was the architect of



the cemetery. This didn't sit well with him and he asked Sec. of War Statton, to make sure the government had clear title to the land. Gen. Lee died in October 1870. The ownership was still unresolved.

Gen. Lee's widow was still obsessed over the loss of her property. She petitioned congress to examine the Federal Governments claim to the land and to estimate the cost of removing the graves. Her petition was bitterly opposed by the senate and was defeated by a vote of 54-4. In June 1873, Mrs. Lee visited Arlington for the last time. What she seen was enough for her to say she did not want to go back and was content to sign over her rights to it. She died 5 months later.

Mrs. Lee's eldest son, George Washington Custis Lee took over the cause. In April 1874, he went to congress with a new petition. All he asked for was an admission that the property was taken unlawfully and requested compensation for it. His petition died in committee.



Custis Lee might have given up but there were signs that the hard feelings between the north and south were softening. Rutherford B Hayes was elected president on his promise of healing the scars of the war. Custis Lee revived his attempt to get Arlington back. This time he went to the courts. Next month find out what happened in the court.

**Credit to the Smithsonian Magazine.

Chaplain's Message:



God of hope, in these times of change, unite our nation and guide our leaders with your wisdom.

Give us courage to overcome our fears, and help us to build a future in which all may prosper and share; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



TAPS: On a sad note, Comrade Paul Godinet has transferred to Post Everlasting. Most of you did not know Paul as he lived in Merritt Island Florida. Unfortunately, because of his health, Paul was never able to make it over to Thailand and our Post. However, he was an avid supporter of our Post. When he heard of the good things we have done here in Thailand, he was adamant about becoming a member and supporting our Post any way he could. Having known Paul for many years, I can honestly say he was one of the nicest people I have ever met and will miss him.

Jeff Ludwig, Post Adjutant

April Birthdays:

- Bob Brill
- Doug Bull
- Jerry Churchill
- Bill Rutherford
- Sal Salvatore
- Ed Sostack



A very happy birthday to all