



Retiree Activities Office Newsletter

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HQ JUSMAG-THAI, Retiree Activities Office, 7 Sathorn Tai Rd, Bangkok 10120 Thailand
Tel: 02-287-1036-45 Ext. 165

September 1, 2009

Director's Corner

Lt Col Bruce Postel, USAF (ret)
Director, Retiree Activities Office (RAO)



First and Foremost; **Thank You John Dyste!** Thank you for serving over **30 years** as the RAO Director.

Thank you to Colonel Swanda, CDR Loschinkohl, USN (ret) and the JUSMAG staff for their continuing support. Also, **thank you** to SGM Jim Picha, USA (ret), and MSgt Wayne Harrison, USMC (ret), for staying on-board. Your expertise and counsel is very much respected and appreciated. (There are many more people to thank ... next time!)

New RAO Webpage. As part of our goal to provide helpful assistance to all of our eligible customers, our new webpage will be published in **October** at: <http://www.jusmagthai.com/rao.html>.

RAO Newsletter. Our new publishing dates will be January, April, July, and October, with our next issue being January 2010 (Happy Holidays!). We're also adding names to our newsletter email list.

Many APO box holders and mail recipients have asked to receive this newsletter via email instead of via hardcopy. We couldn't agree more!

Choose your delivery method: Hardcopy or Email. If you still wish to receive a copy in your APO box or via postal mail, do nothing! Email choosers, please email us at raojusmagthai@san.osd.mil with your full name and APO Box # (or address), and we'll add you to the list! *(Hint: If enough readers switch to email distro we can expand to six pages.)*

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RAO Volunteer Staff. We will never ask for, nor accept, any type of remuneration or compensation, nor give preferential treatment to any customer. Our ability to render the best possible assistance rests on us maintaining unassailable integrity.

Our Promise: Since your personal matters are no one else's business, we will do our level best to safeguard your dignity and your right to privacy.

RAO Customers. The only things we ask of our customers is to be truthful, respectful, and patient. Be honest when providing information, and be respectful to our staff and other customers by not entering an office unless invited to do so. Lastly, please be patient as many customers often have complicated issues that take time to work through.

Disabled RAO Customers. Disabled customers have queue priority so we kindly ask all other customers to remain patient while we assist them. Thank you in advance for your compassion and understanding.

RAO Benefits Discussions. Prior relationships are integrally linked to a factual, honest discussion of benefits. Please plan accordingly if discussing issues such as marriage, divorce, children, etc, may make you feel uncomfortable ... especially if your current significant other is present with you. ☺

JUSMAG–THAI Gouge

By JUSMAG–THAI Staff

What would you do if JUSMAG wasn't here?

Professionalism, Courtesy, and Respect. While most retirees and their dependents have been courteous and respectful, it has come to our attention that some have been much less than polite with our Postal Clerk, Khun Mai, and our TRICARE Advisors, Nurse Thida and Nurse Pranee. Please be advised, any behavior lacking in respect and courtesy towards any member of the JUSMAG staff is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Accordingly, you have every right to highlight an opportunity for improvement, just please be professional and respectful when doing so.

If you disagree with DoD policy governing APO use (e.g. 16-ounce limit or 30-day retrieval) it's your right to contact the Pentagon. The same applies to TRICARE policy (e.g. payment upfront) as you may contact TRICARE Pacific or TRICARE Management Activity. Questions about federal law? Contact your elected representatives. Politely remember, retiree access to JUSMAG is a privilege.

Consider this: A simple verbal or written **thank you** to any of our personnel goes a long way towards fostering a spirit of cooperation and teamwork.

Thank you for your service to our nation.
~Mr. Loschinkohl, x102.

*"...a simple verbal or written **thank you** to any of our personnel goes a long way..."*



The Chief of JUSMAG–THAI is the U.S. Defense Representative (USDR) in Thailand.

New JUSMAG Retiree ID Badges. These badges are a privilege to eligible personnel to facilitate entry into JUSMAG. The green-colored badges expire this month on Sept 30th. To get a new badge bring your Retiree or DVAPRM USUS ID Card and one (1) photo (1-inch by 1-inch) to Khun Eddy (Room E-206). Per Eddy, simply come see him the next time you visit JUSMAG.

TRICARE Access. Our TRICARE Advisors are contracted to help active duty (AD) and AD dependents **only**. They are not contracted to help retirees. However, we at JUSMAG have asked TRICARE to help retirees when possible. Nurse Thida and Nurse Pranee continue to go way above and beyond the call of duty to help retirees and retiree dependents even though they are not required to do so. Please kindly remember this the next time you approach them for assistance. ~Mr. Loschinkohl, x102.

APO Box Access. Mail in retiree APO boxes (including the U.S. Consulate, Chiang Mai) must be retrieved at least once every 30 days. We've had a rash of box holders not retrieve their mail for months at a time. Please be advised, we close APO boxes and return mail to sender when mail piles up and we're unable to contact you.

If you wish to keep your APO box you have three options: 1) Pick-up your mail at least once every 30 days; 2) Arrange for someone else to pick-up your mail (PS Form 3801), or; 3) Arrange for mail forwarding or holding if you plan to be away more than 60 days. ~TSgt Veney, x113.

TRICARE Preventive Health.

DoD is putting into effect the Congressional ordered waiver of co-pays for some preventive services for beneficiaries who use TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra. (Not TRICARE For Life). The services are: 1) Colorectal Cancer Screenings; 2) Breast Cancer Screenings; 3) Cervical Cancer Screenings; 4) Prostate Cancer Screenings; 5) Immunizations; 6) Well child visits for children under the age of 6 years, and; 7) The medical visit if it is for one of the items listed above. If a patient has more than one of the listed services provided during the visit (and who wouldn't) then those other services are subject to co-pays and deductibles.

The law went into effect on 14 Oct 08, as part of this year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) but it will not be implemented until 1 Sep 09. So if you have had any of these services preformed since 14 Oct of last year and paid co-pays and/or deductibles retain or try to collect records to submit after 1 Sep for reimbursement. The 2009 NDAA said that DoD could include TFL recipients under this program; but they were not compelled to do so. And not surprisingly, they did not.

TRICARE – End of Fiscal Year 2009.

The end of the fiscal year is rapidly approaching. Why is this fact important? October 1, 2009 begins the new fiscal year (FY10), and a reset of your annual deductible and catastrophic cap to zero. Starting October 1st, you must meet your annual deductible and catastrophic cap all over again. Although there were previous efforts to increase TRICARE fees for retirees, your annual deductible (\$150 individual, \$300 family) and catastrophic cap (\$3,000) remain unchanged for FY10. Moreover, medical services billed on or before September 30, 2009 are applied to FY09, so plan accordingly. Contact Nurse Pranee (x511) or Nurse Thida (x512) for more information.

Health Care Reform. President Obama offered assurance 4 Aug to those receiving medical care through TRICARE or the VA: Your benefits are safe. Eligibility for health care under VA or TRICARE "will not be affected by our efforts at broader health-care reform," Obama told military reporters.

"Eligibility for health care under VA or TRICARE "will not be affected by our efforts at broader health-care reform..."

VA Claims Backlog. Poised to hit a milestone of 1 million claims to process (400,000 backlog!), the VA is scrambling to hire and train new claims processors, which can take two years.

(Care to guess which VARO services Thailand?)

The **Pittsburgh regional office is the fifth-worst** of the 56 regional offices in the Veterans Benefits Administration. More than 27% of the 4,850 claims pending at the office are at least six months old.

"The VA inspector general report confirmed allegations that employees deliberately delayed processing some claims in order to obtain \$300 performance bonuses."

DFAS – Designation of Beneficiary.

Retired military members must make certain their Designation of Beneficiary paperwork is up to date and on file. Further, if a retiree designates an estate, they must have the proper notarized and sealed, court-recognized estate papers. Living Wills and Letters of Testamentary are not eligible documents and will not be considered. The official Designation of Beneficiary Form DD 2894 can be sent by mail, by calling toll free 1-800-321-1080 or commercial (216) 522-5955 (Mon-Fri, 7am to 7:30pm ET) or: <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2894.pdf>

Colonel Edward A. Swanda
Chief, JUSMAG-THAI

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Mr. Victor J. Loschinkohl, YC-03
Deputy Chief, JUSMAG-THAI
(RAO Coordinator)

HQ JUSMAG-THAI
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
7 Sathorn Tai Road
Bangkok 10120 Thailand

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HQ JUSMAG-THAI
MAGTJS-RAO
APO AP 96546-5000

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Tel: 02-287-1036~45 x165

Fax: 02-285-6228

Email: raojusmagthai@san.osd.mil

Web: *Coming Soon!*

Hours: Monday-Friday, 0930-1430

Motto

Integrity - Service - Excellence

- HQ JUSMAG-THAI -

- **TRICARE Health Benefits Advisors** (Room J-202)
Wed & Thurs, 0800-1100 & 1300-1500; Fri, 1300-1400
Email: nursetida.th@san.osd.mil (x512)
Email: nursepranee.ctr.th@san.osd.mil (x511)
Web: www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html



- **USUS ID Card Issue & DEERS Update** (Room E-206, x180)
Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday, 0800-1100
- **Aerial Post Office (APO)** (Rm. C-109) (x168; After 1300)
Monday through Friday, 1030-1200 & 1300-1600



- **American Citizen Services, U.S. Embassy, Bangkok**
Mon-Fri, 0730-1100, 1300-1400 (Closed Last Friday of Each Month)
Tel: 02-205-4049 / Email: acsbkk@state.gov
Web: <http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/service.html>



- **American Citizen Services, U.S. Consulate, Chiang Mai**
Monday through Friday, 0730-1630 (By Appointment)
Emergency Tel: 05-310-7777 / Email: acschn@state.gov
Web: <http://chiangmai.usconsulate.gov/service.html>

- **2009 COLA:** CPI-W **unchanged** in July (seasonally adjusted).
- **US Embassy & JUSMAG Holidays 2009:** 7 Sep, 12 Oct, 23 Oct, 11 Nov, 26 Nov, 7 Dec, 10 Dec, and 25 Dec (Happy Holidays!)
- **JUSMAG Comp Days:** None at this time.

HQ JUSMAGTHAI
MAGTJS-RAO
APO AP 96546-5000

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