Publisher’s Corner

Darrell Brown, MMC (SS) USNR (RET)
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
HQ JUSMAGTHAI, Retiree Activities Office (Rm. D-114), 7 Sathorn Tai Rd.,
Bangkok 10120 Thailand
Email: raothailand@jusmagthai.org
Tel: 02-287-1036 Ext. 165
Twitter: @raothailand1

Questions About This Newsletter?
Please send your comments and questions to me, at:
raothailand@jusmagthai.org.

Most Recent Military Retiree Newsletters
DFAS: Retiree Newsletter for 4Q 2014
USAF: Spring and Summer 2014 Afterburner
USN: Shift Colors Winter 2014
USA: Army Echoes October 2014 – January 2015
USMC: Semper Fidelis October – December 2014
USCG: Evening Colors October – December 2014

Email Traffic
Selected emails are republished here at the publisher’s discretion. They may be edited for brevity.
TRICARE Webpage Updates

ALCON,

The latest update to the Bangkok TRICARE retiree webpage is published—a BIG Thank You to Khun Eddy! In addition to multiple URL updates and minor wording changes throughout the webpage, there were:

**Six (6) Significant Revisions:**

#1
(Added) *Mental Health Care* under *Covered Services*
http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#Covered

#2
(Revised) DD-2642 and DD-2527 URLs

#3
(Revised) VA FMP (General) URL, Email, Fax, and Mailing Address
http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#FMP
http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#Interest

#4
(Added) VA FMP (Claims Filing) information box under *Items of Interest*
http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#Interest

#5
(Added) Two (2) Addiction-related information boxes under *Items of Interest*
http://www.jusmagthai.com/medical.html#Interest

#6
(Revised) Six (6) Locally-Developed Info Products (URLs and Minor Wording Changes)
Claims Checklist & Helpful Hints Guide
FAQs – Thailand
How to File a TRICARE Claim – Thailand
Retiree Beneficiary Education Letter
Retiree Health Care in Thailand – Brochure
TRICARE Pay 100% Memo

**Important Reminder!**

Medicare Part B – General Enrollment Period is NOW (1 Jan-31 Mar 2015)! The relevance and importance of Medicare Part B and its link with TRICARE is explained here:

TRICARE.mil: http://tricare.mil/Plans/Eligibility/MedicareEligible.aspx

Retirees in Thailand are politely reminded to direct their TRICARE benefits questions to TRICARE Overseas, and TRICARE eligibility questions to DEERS.

Happy New Year,
BP
Bruce *BP* Postel
Former Director, Bangkok RAO
Webmaster, Bangkok TRICARE
Warden, U.S. Embassy (Bangkok)
TRICARE Automated Direct Deposit

From: Reuben Collier
[mailto:reubencollier@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, December 29, 2014 8:23 PM
To: raothailand4@jusmagthai.org
Subject: Automated direct deposits of Claims paid by TRICARE-Overseas

I received a paid claim (check) today and noticed the following statement on the back of my Explanation of Benefits.

"Automated direct deposit is coming soon. Once this feature is available, beneficiaries will be able to sign up to receive direct deposit by registering on the secured portal at www.tricare-overseas.com. After you have signed up, your TOP claims will be reimbursed in USD currency directly to your U. S. bank account through an Automated Clearinghouse (ACH). It’s quick, safe, and convenient. Contact your TOP Regional Call Center and press Option #2 for assistance. Please check the beneficiary portal in http://tricare-overseas.com for an announcement regarding when you can sign up for direct deposit.”

When this become effective we will be able to receive our claim payment within days of our claims being paid rather than the month or so it now takes the payment to arrive via mail. Also it will greatly reduce the number of lost and miss routed checked which I have experienced over the years. I currently receive several payment months using the ACH system through Bangkok Bank, New York City. There is a small banking fee, but in view of the time saved and security of receiving the payment it may will be worth it for many.

Not sure if you were previously aware of this, if so sorry for clogging up your e-mail.

-Rueben W. Collier
CWO3/PNCS(SS) USN-RET

Navy Retired Activities Website

Quick Retiree Reference Info
Have you ever needed quick access to some bit of information about your retirement that you don’t have?

Have you visited the Navy Retired Activities Branch website? The site—www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/retired_activities/Pages/default.aspx—offers a variety of documents and links to information and sources to answer many questions you may have. After clicking to the site, scroll to the bottom of the page and you'll find those links organized under sections such as – Survivor Benefits, –Retiree Toolbox, –Hot Links, –Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and more. In addition to those links, you will find contact information for the Retired Activities Branch, archived Retiree Council reports, and steps needed to get a new retiree identification card. You can also contact the Retired Activities Branch through the Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center. Call 1-866-827-5672 and ask to speak with the Retired Activities Branch. [Source: Shift Colors | Winter 2014 ++]
Happy Birthday to the United States Navy – 13 October 1775. This painting is of the USS Alfred, flagship of the first US Navy squadron. Courtesy US Navy.

Happy Birthday to the United States Marine Corps. On November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress approved the resolution to establish two battalions of Marines able to fight for independence at sea and on shore. This date marks the official formation of the Continental Marines. Courtesy USMC

Happy Birthday to the United States Air Force. In 1947 President Truman signed the National Security Act which established this new defense organization, and along with it the creation of the US Air Force as an independent service, equal to the US Army and US Navy. The official birthday of the US Air Force is 18 September 1947.

JUSMAGTHAI General Information

RAO Website
Please check our RAO website as your first stop on seeking answers for many military retiree related questions. The website is full of valuable information. Most of your questions can be answered using the resources on this site. The website can be accessed here. http://www.jusmagthai.com/rao.html

Please let us know if you see any inaccurate, outdated information or if any of the links are broken.

Publishers’ note: Please report all broken links or bad phone numbers to the publisher at the email address provided above.
RAO Volunteers Still Needed!

1. RAO Volunteer Request. We have a great need for highly capable, dedicated, and dependable volunteers. Since none of the typical U.S. Federal benefits agencies have a presence in Thailand, the RAO has historically tried to fill some of the void by facilitating between beneficiaries and the respective federal agency—volunteer credibility and continuity is central to this effort.

2. In the U.S. an RAO volunteer is often able to help someone simply by picking up the telephone and phoning an agency during normal client service hours. With the exception of being able to phone the Social Security Administration (SSA) in Manila, telephoning the U.S. must be performed nighttime in Thailand. Therefore, an issue that may easily be resolved with a simple telephone call in the U.S. or a visit by a beneficiary to an agency’s local office, here in Thailand, resolution typically requires one or more letters, faxes, emails, and/or nighttime calls, all the while managing acute cultural and lingual differences—all time consuming, and requiring volunteers to work 12-15 hours per week. The RAO is a privilege that exists for retirees and their eligible dependents—the doors stay open and the lights stay on only when good people step-up to volunteer. Please note that RAO volunteers here in Thailand do not normally make night time phone calls for US military retirees. We provide the number for the retirees to call themselves. However, we do occasionally call on behalf of a Thai widow.

3. Our RAO functions to provide information and assistance to the retiree community and can only do so through the volunteer spirit and with credible, dependable volunteers. This RAO is almost always in need of a Casualty Assistance Officer and Benefits Advisor. The Casualty Assistance Officer can enjoy flex-time—use an appointment system to manage their time, and come into the office when needed. Both positions require solid integrity, reliability, patience and understanding, strong listening skills, self-motivation, attention-to-detail, strong computer skills, and a positive outlook! RAO history has proven that volunteers MUST be able to work well with others—team disharmony is not an option, therefore, new candidates only, please. For an upright military retiree, volunteering is a win-win for all. Please consider helping your fellow retiree!

TRICARE

Connect with TRICARE on Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/tricare and www.twitter.com/tricare.

Don’t Forget to Update DEERS

The lives of service members and their families are full of transitions. Whether it’s permanent change of station moves, retiring, going from Reserve status to active duty or something else, the one constant is change. The good news is that your TRICARE coverage can stick with you through these life changes, but you do have to make sure that your records in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) are
up to date with your latest life events. This means you should keep all your personal information – address, duty status, phone numbers, and email addresses – up to date.

For more information, visit: www.tricare.mil/UpdateDEERS100814.

Watch Your Inbox for Electronic Notifications
To reduce cost and increase efficiency, the Department of Defense (DoD) is moving away from mailing letters with update information. This means that instead of a letter, you will get email notifications when there are important changes to your DoD benefits, including TRICARE. The email will link you to milConnect, a secure DoD website, where your personal information will be posted.

The initial email you receive will give you an opportunity to “opt-out” of receiving emails and continue receiving paper notifications. Those who have not provided an email address or those who opt-out of receiving email notifications will receive a postcard stating that there is a change or update to their benefit. Even if you get a postcard you will still need to go to milConnect to read the letter because specific plan or protected health information (PHI) will not be printed on the postcard.

Replacing paper mail with email will mean faster notification of important information as well as convenient access anytime, anywhere you have Internet access.

Go to http://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil to sign up or update your email contact information. The milConnect website can be accessed anytime and anywhere for the most up-to-date account and DEERS information. Once you sign-up, you will receive up-to-date benefit information such as, primary care manager changes, eligibility changes due to age (for certain family members), and more. You can click on the “MyProfile” menu item to update your personal email preference. Please allow three days for revised settings to take effect.

Diabetes: Increase Your Awareness, Decrease Your Risks
When blood glucose levels rise and remain outside of the normal range, you can develop a disease called diabetes. Diabetes is a serious disease that can lead to other serious health risks. It is important for beneficiaries with diabetes to understand these additional risks and to highlight steps to prevent diabetes for those who don’t.

Many of the foods that we eat are turned into glucose, or sugar, that our bodies use for energy. Our bodies produce insulin which helps to get glucose into our cells. When sugar builds up in our blood and is not processed by insulin either because we don’t make enough insulin or because the insulin that we make is not effective, this can lead to diabetes. A person with pre-diabetes has a blood sugar level higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes.

When you develop diabetes, you are at a greater risk for heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and other serious illnesses. According to the Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention, diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

Beneficiaries with diabetes can manage their condition by remembering their ABCs. “A” stands for the A1C Test; it is different from daily blood sugar tests and measures average blood sugar levels over the past few months. Knowing this number and working with your provider to keep this number below certain levels can help you make sure this number doesn’t increase over time.

“B” is for blood pressure. Blood pressure is the force of your blood against the walls of your blood vessels. If your blood pressure gets too high, it makes your heart work too hard, can injure blood vessels and can lead to a heart attack or stroke, and can damage your kidneys and eyes.

“C” is for cholesterol. High-density lipoproteins, also known as good cholesterol, help remove low-density lipoproteins, or bad cholesterol, from your blood. Know what your cholesterol levels are, what they should be, and work with your provider to maintain those numbers. Working with your health care provider is the best way to manage your diabetes.

Even if you have prediabetes, you still have the power to prevent or slow the progression of this disease by taking care of yourself. The National Institutes of Health offers some helpful advice and tips; stop smoking, exercise more, make healthy food choices and lose extra weight.

TRICARE covers diabetic supplies through both pharmacy and medical benefits. You can get certain diabetic supplies from a military pharmacy, through home delivery or at any TRICARE network pharmacy. Additionally, certain diabetic supplies are covered as durable medical equipment. For details visit www.tricare.mil/diabeticsupplies.

Beneficiaries with diabetes can continue to live long and healthy lives. With information about your age, race and language, the National Diabetes Education Program offers publications tailored specifically for you to help you beat diabetes. TRICARE beneficiaries can also visit www.tricare.mil/livewell for advice on how to make healthy choices.

**TRICARE Prime enrollment fees for Fiscal Year 2015 announced**

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – TRICARE Prime enrollment fees are changing for Fiscal Year 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015) for retired service members and their eligible family members, survivors and former spouses. The annual fee for an individual beneficiary will be $277.92 and the annual fee for beneficiary family coverage will be $555.84. There are no TRICARE Prime enrollment fees for active duty service members and active duty family members. For details or more information, visit: www.tricare.mil/costs

**Nationwide Scam Affecting TRICARE Beneficiaries**

TRICARE is warning beneficiaries of the need to be aware of a tele-phone scam affecting beneficiaries older than 65 and on Medicare nationwide. A caller will usually identify them-selves as being an
official Medicare vendor, and will then offer to sell beneficiaries back braces. Do not give any personal identifiable information, such as birth date, Social Security number or banking information if you receive such a call. TRICARE representatives never ask beneficiaries for this information when calling for an official Department of Defense survey. Beneficiaries, who receive a call of this nature, can contact the Defense Health Agency Program (DHA) Program Integrity Office directly. For more information on fraud and abuse reporting, visit the TRICARE Fraud and Abuse web-site at www.TRICARE.mil/fraud.

Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA)

New ID cards for Vets enrolled in VA health care
by Hans Petersen, VA Staff Writer

VA is introducing a new, secure identification card called the Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC). VHIC replaces the Veteran Identification Card (VIC), which was introduced in 2004.

VA is committed to providing the high quality, safe and effective health care Veterans have earned and deserve, and part of this effort includes ensuring the personal security of Veterans.

As part of a phased rollout, on February 21, 2014, VA began issuing the newly designed, more secure VHIC to newly enrolled and other Veterans who were not issued a VIC. Starting in April VA will begin a replacement effort to automatically mail the more secure VHIC to Veterans who have the old VIC. All Veterans who are enrolled and have the old card should have their new replacement card by July. To ensure receipt of the new VHIC, enrolled Veterans should make sure that VA has their correct mailing address. The new VHIC is distinguished by additional security features and will have a different look and feel. The Social Security number and date of birth were removed from the barcode and magnetic strip. Similar to a typical health insurance card, the VHIC displays the Veteran’s Member ID and branch of service emblem, as well as a Plan ID which reflects the Veteran’s enrollment in VA health care.

The VHIC is for use in VA medical facilities and does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA medical facilities.

Your Current Card is Good until You Receive Your New Card

Veterans can continue to use their current VIC card until their new VHIC is received as VA health care applications have been enhanced to read both the new VHIC as well as the old card. VA recommends Veterans safeguard their VIC as they would a credit card, and cut up or shred the card once it is replaced with the new VHIC.

If enrolled in VA health care, a Veteran who does not currently have a VIC can request a VHIC at their next VA health care appointment. In order to ensure your identity, you’ll need to present an appropriate form of ID, such as your driver’s license. And while you’re there make sure that your record is updated with your current address. Your VHIC
will be mailed to you, generally within 5-7 days.

If you are not enrolled with the VA and want to receive a VHIC, you will need to apply for enrollment. You can do that online (which is the fastest way to apply for enrollment) at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll. You can also apply by phone at 1-877-222-VETS (8387), by mail or in person at your local VA health care facility. Of course, you will need to go to your local VA to have your picture taken. Veterans who were issued a VIC do not need to return to their VA medical center to have a photo taken for the VHIC. Veterans find it is convenient to bring in their identification documents and get their picture taken for their VHIC at their first scheduled appointment. Be sure to bring an appropriate form of ID such as your driver’s license. Once your enrollment is confirmed, your new VHIC will be mailed to you, generally within 5-7 days.

For more information, you may contact us at 1-877-222-VETS (8387), you may visit your local VA medical facility Enrollment Coordinator or you may find more information online at: www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)

2015 Cost of Living Adjustment
Based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index, there will be a 1.7 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for most retired pay and Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. Retirees will see the change on their Dec. 31, 2014 payment and annuitants on their Jan. 2, 2015 payment.

DFAS Newsletter
The most recent DFAS Retiree and Annuitant newsletter has been published. In summary, it covers your 1099R, using myPay to manage passwords, updating your correspondence and email addresses, VA copayments, COLA, TRICARE contact info, plus other areas of interest. The Directors Message portion is detailed below. The rest of the newsletter can be accessed here.

Hello Everyone –

There are a lot of internal procedures we go through to close out our books and bring all our customers’ pay accounts up to date so we can issue tax statements. But the most important part of preparation for tax season is communicating with our customers. We want to get you your tax information as quickly as possible, and that means we need you to make sure your account is current.

There are a number of things you should do in preparation for tax season:

- Know when your 1099R becomes available online at myPay.
- Know when your 1099R will arrive in the mail.
- Know how to get additional copies of your 1099R if you misplace yours.
- Know where to look for updates and the latest news.
- Know how to contact us if you have any issues you need to discuss.
Please make sure you save a copy of this newsletter and keep it handy. It will be an important resource for you during tax season 2014.

Wishing you all the best!
Tom McKenna

**2015 Pay Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entitlement Month</th>
<th>Retiree Payment Dates</th>
<th>Annuitant Payment Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>January 30, 2015 – Friday</td>
<td>February 2, 2015 – Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>February 27, 2015 – Friday</td>
<td>March 2, 2015 – Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>April 1, 2015 – Wednesday</td>
<td>April 1, 2015 – Wednesday</td>
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<td>April 2015</td>
<td>May 1, 2015 – Friday</td>
<td>May 1, 2015 – Friday</td>
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<td>May 2015</td>
<td>June 1, 2015 – Monday</td>
<td>June 1, 2015 – Monday</td>
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<td>June 2015</td>
<td>July 1, 2015 – Wednesday</td>
<td>July 1, 2015 – Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>July 31, 2015 – Friday</td>
<td>August 3, 2015 – Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>September 1, 2015 – Tuesday</td>
<td>September 1, 2015 – Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>October 1, 2015 – Thursday</td>
<td>October 1, 2015 – Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>October 30, 2015 – Friday</td>
<td>November 2, 2015 – Monday</td>
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<td>November 2015</td>
<td>December 1, 2015 – Tuesday</td>
<td>December 1, 2015 – Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>December 31, 2015 – Thursday</td>
<td>January 4, 2016 – Monday</td>
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</tbody>
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**Frequently asked questions about child SBP coverage**

By Bill Hursh, Army Survivor Benefit Plan Program Manager

Retirement Services Officers (RSOs) receive many questions about Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) or Reserve Component SBP coverage for children. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions and their answers.

**Question:** How long are my children covered by SBP?

**Answer:** Until age 18, or 22 if an unmarried full time college student; or for life if unmarried and totally disabled while eligible for SBP. A full time student, whose twenty-second birthday occurs before July 1 or after August 31, is considered to be 22 on the first day of July after that birthday. Marriage at any age makes a child ineligible for SBP coverage, even when the marriage ends.

**Question:** My child was 17 when I retired and was joining the Army as soon as he turned 18 and graduated from high school. I did not elect SBP for him, but now I have newborn child. Can I now elect SBP for the new child?

**Answer:** No. When you had an eligible child at retirement and did not elect child SBP coverage, you closed SBP for that child and any future child. You may be able to elect child SBP during an SBP open enrollment period. Since 1972, Congress has only authorized five SBP open enrollment periods and none are pending. If Congress did authorize an open enrollment period in the future,
the details will be published prominently in the Army Echoes.

Question: I have Children Only SBP for five children ages two to 14. How much will each child receive when I die?

Answer: The SBP is 55 percent of the amount of your retired pay you elected to cover for SBP. That 55 percent is divided equally between all of the eligible children. As each child loses eligibility, SBP is redivided among the remaining children until there is no eligible child left and SBP stops.

Question: I have SBP-eligible children from both my current and previous marriage. I don’t have a good relationship with the children from my previous marriage and do not want to cover them under SBP. Can I select the children I want to cover?

Answer: No. When you elect spouse and children or children only SBP, you must cover all eligible children.

Question: I did not have an eligible child when I retired, but I just had my first child. Can I take SBP for her now?

Answer: Yes, as long as you do it within one year of gaining the child. If you do not elect SBP within one year, you close SBP for that child and any future child. To add the coverage, submit a DD Form 2656-6 to the Defense Finance And Accounting Service (DFAS) with supporting documentation (birth certificate, adoption decree, or guardianship decree). The address is on the DD Form 2656-6. The child SBP election is effective and premiums start on the first anniversary of acquiring the child.

Question: When I retired, I took former spouse and children SBP. Now I’ve remarried and had a child. Is the child from my current marriage covered?

Answer: No. Only your children from your marriage to your former spouse are covered by SBP.

Question: I have child SBP for my 12-year-old. My 20-year-old child lost eligibility at age 18 when he graduated from high school. He never married and just started college as a full time student. Is he eligible for SBP again?

Answer: As a 20-year-old full time student who never married, your child is eligible for coverage under your SBP election. After age 18, an unmarried child can lose and regain child SBP coverage as they lose and regain full time student status.

Question: I had SBP for my child who turned 18 and joined the Army two years after I retired. My SBP premiums for the child coverage stopped when I notified DFAS. I recently notified DFAS of my new child’s birth to add her to my existing child SBP coverage. Why I am now paying higher SBP premiums for this child than I did for my previous child?

Answer: Child only SBP premiums are computed from actuarial tables based on your age and the youngest child’s age. If you had an eligible child when you added this new child, your SBP premiums would not have changed. However, you had no SBP eligible children, so the child premium was recalculated. When you retired, your child was 16 and the child could collect SBP for about two to six years. You are now older and the newborn child could
collect SBP for 18 to 22 years. These actuarial factors increased the SBP cost.

Question: I elected RCSBP for my children who are now all grown and married. Now that I am receiving retired pay, why am I paying premiums for these children?

Answer: The law requires you to pay RCSBP premiums for child RCSBP even when you do not have a child. The premium is for the RCSBP coverage you previously received but did not pay for. The RCSBP premiums are collected only after you start to receive retired pay.

RAO notes:
The above questions and answers are from the most recent edition of Army Echoes, which can be accessed here.

DFAS is the source you should go to for additional SBP questions. You can access the relevant section here: http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp.html

Military Retirees and Annuitants of Military Retirees,
myPay has gotten easier to use! Password requirements have been reduced from 15 to 9 characters. Once you have established a password, it will remain current for up to 150 days. Update your account now so you have easy access in tax season!

For more information on creating a myPay password, check out: http://www.dfas.mil/mypayinfo/password.html

The link will offer you detailed instructions and video support. Having problems creating your password? For additional help check out: http://www.dfas.mil/dfas/mypayinfo/tipandtricks.html

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

It is that time of year again. If you need to use a tax preparer, I suggest you visit the US Embassy webpage for a list of preparers at the Tax Preparers/Consultants link provided below. http://photos.state.gov/libraries/thailand/231771/acs/tax_consultants.pdf

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) – 2013 Tax Year Income Tax Filing Deadline is April 15, 2015.

IRS Publication 54
Tax Guide for U.S. Citizen & Resident Aliens Abroad

It’s the same old story, just a new year. The requirements from last year are basically the same, with some highlights of interest presented below. Some new changes this year include: increase in exclusion amount for foreign earned income (note: this does not include your USG pension); housing expense calculation methodology and limit change; increase in the amount of income received to require income tax filing; self-employment tax rates, and expansion of the IRA deduction.
**Excerpt from IRS Pub 54 – Filing Requirements**

If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, the rules for filing income, estate, and gift tax returns and for paying estimated tax are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad.

**When to File & Pay**

If you file on a calendar year basis, the due date for filing your return is April 15 of the following year. In general, the tax shown on your return should be paid by the due date of the return, without regard to any extension of time for filing the return.

**Extensions**

You can get an extension of time to file your return. In some circumstances, you can also get an extension of time to file and pay any tax due. However, if you pay the tax due after the regular due date, interest will be charged from the regular due date until the date the tax is paid.

**Automatic 2-month extension**

You are allowed an automatic 2-month extension to file your return and pay federal income tax if you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, and on the regular due date of your return: You are living outside of the United States and Puerto Rico and your main place of business or post of duty is outside the United States and Puerto Rico.

**How to get the extension**

To use this automatic 2-month extension, you must attach a statement to your return explaining which of the two situations listed earlier qualified you for the extension. (See the full text in IRS Publication 54, or contact the IRS or a tax professional.)

**IRS Main Site**


**IRS Forms & Publications**


**IRS – U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad**


**American Citizen Services, U.S. Embassy, Bangkok**

http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/acs_taxes.html

**Tax Preparers/Consultants**

http://photos.state.gov/libraries/thailand/231771/acs/tax_consultants.pdf

**American Citizen Services, U.S. Consulate, Chiang Mai**

http://chiangmai.usconsulate.gov/service/u.s.-taxes.html

**Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)**

During the process to apply for an ITIN, the IRS requires foreign documents to be certified (legalized) by the foreign authority that issued the documents, hence, Thai documents must first be legalized by the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on Chaeng Wattana Rd. in Bangkok. Once you’ve accomplished legalization, visit American Citizen Services (ACS, U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate) and have your documents authenticated (notarized) by ACS. The
ACS fee for notarization is $50 per document. Neither ACS nor RAO track the MFA legalization fee. Contact MFA to learn more: http://www.mfa.go.th

International Services
The IRS does not provide in country tax assistance in Thailand. You may contact the IRS by mail or telephone as described below.

Taxpayers located outside the U.S. may contact the IRS by mail at:
Internal Revenue Service
International Accounts
Philadelphia, PA 19255-0725
Or you may telephone or FAX the Philadelphia Service Center office at:
Tel: 267-941-1000 / 267-941-1000
Fax: 267-941-1055
Phone service available from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm (EST) M-F

Other items of potential interest

International Taxpayer Advocate
To request Taxpayer Advocate help, call:

Worldwide: Puerto Rico office
Tel: (Spanish) 787-622-8930, (English) 787-622-8940
FAX: 787-622-8933

The below HTTP links you to the IRS website section for international taxpayers. It contains useful information on many topics of interest to expatriates. http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Social Security Announces 1.7 Percent Benefit Increase for 2015
Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 64 million Americans will increase 1.7 percent in 2015, the Social Security Administration announced today.

The 1.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that more than 58 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2015. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2014. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Some other changes that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to $118,500 from $117,000. Of the estimated 168 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2015, about 10 million will pay higher taxes because of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2015 is available at www.Medicare.gov.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.
Social Security’s Disability Program Can Help Veterans

Did you know that many disabled veterans and wounded warriors may qualify for Social Security disability benefits, in addition to their Veterans Affairs benefits? To assist veterans and members of the public to better understand the Social Security disability process, the SSA has created a seven-part YouTube video at:

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGSYaZN04xzFCoEqDIY3n7xgLh55vDh

Earlier this year, the SSA also launched a disability education and awareness campaign, The Faces and Facts of Disability at:

http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityfacts/, to share information about the disability program and the people it helps. Through this campaign, the SSA hope to educate the public about the Social Security Disability Insurance program and dispel common misconceptions.

For more information, please go to www.socialsecurity.gov.

Space A Travel

My Personal Space A Travel

In October and November, I traveled round trip to the US via Japan. I left RSAF Paya Labar, went to Yokota AB, then to Travis AFB. I rented a car on base at Travis, then drove to Texas and returned five weeks later to Travis, then flew back to Singapore with stops in Hawaii and Japan. Overall the trip went OK, except for a five day delay in Japan due to a typhoon.

There is no Space A to or from Thailand. You have to go commercial to Singapore or Japan and then make your Space A connection. I left Bangkok in late October and flew commercial to Singapore’s Changi airport. I arrived in the early afternoon and checked in to the Hotel Jen. It is a decent hotel in a good location, about 20 minutes from the airport and 20 minutes from RSAF Paya Labar by taxi. The hotel rates are around $140 US a night. Cheaper lodging is available in Singapore, but I cannot speak for the quality of those rooms. Both my taxis were in non-peak travel hours. Morning or evening rush hour may take longer. The taxi fares, if I remember right, were around 25 Singapore dollars for each ride. The taxis are clean, always metered and the drivers are polite and speak good English. There is one DoD hotel in Singapore, known as The Sling Inn. I have never stayed there. I tried making a reservation once. The front desk person said the rooms were and are usually full. In addition, it is reportedly a long trip for a taxi to RSAF Paya Labar.
After spending one night in the hotel, I took a taxi to the AMC Pax Terminal. As I have written before, the taxi must drop you off in the parking lot just outside the gate. RSAF Paya Labar is a Singaporean military facility, and the gate is staffed by uniformed and armed Singaporean military personnel. The PAX terminal lies approximately 75 yards inside the gate, on the left. You should have no problem getting through the gate. I processed through in about 20 minutes, spent about a half hour in the waiting room, then took the bus to a waiting chartered Boeing 757. It took us to Yokota AB near Tokyo, Japan. The flight was fine, not crowded, and took around eight hours. Please access this link for detailed information on lodging, transportation and dining and shopping information at Yokota. I have stayed there several times and it has always been a good experience. As mentioned previously, I did have to wait for five days, because of a typhoon. When flights resumed, I was manifested on a C5A to Travis AFB. When I and the other Space A travelers reported early in the morning for our flight, we were greeted by a young Senior Airman who informed us that our aircraft destination had been changed from Travis AFB to Joint Base Lewis McChord in the state of Washington. We had five minutes to decide if we wanted to go on this flight or wait for another Travis bound plane. All of us decided to take the JBLM flight as we had been waiting for so long for the typhoon to pass. The flight was full. About seven hours into the flight, we were informed by the flight crew that the destination had been changed back to Travis AFB, due to bad weather en route. We were jubilant. That was where we wanted to go and we had heard that JBLM was not a full service Space A facility.

We arrived at Travis AFB around 0400. It was a brilliant night, with stars all around and a full blood moon. We were met by a professional USAF ground crew and a customs agent. Processing went quickly, and we were taken by bus to the PAX terminal. I was a bit concerned about lodging, as we were late unexpected arrivals. It was a short walk from the terminal, so I decided to go to the hotel. It was a nice cool early morning walk to the Westwind. I checked at the front desk. They had plenty of rooms. During non-peak travel (summer months, Christmas, and mid-April) there are usually rooms available. Front desk staff informed me two weekends every month the Inn is full, because of USAF reserve weekends. During the week, there is usually no problem, as long as the kids are in school.

The next afternoon, after I woke up, I walked down to the BX. The walk took about fifteen minutes. Just ask at the front desk how to get to the BX. The first thing I did was get a prepaid sim card from AT&T. It cost 60 dollars for one month for a full service plan. Then I went to the Enterprise car rental office in the BX. I rented a VW beetle for a month and went about my travel.

One month later, I was back at Travis. I left my VW in the long term parking lot across the street from the PAX terminal, dropped the keys in the Enterprise key return box just outside the terminal door, and caught a C5A to Hawaii.
We arrived at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam (JBPH-H) around 1400. I had about fourteen hours to kill before our flight to Japan, so I rented a car at the onsite Enterprise car rental office and toured Oahu. I came back returned the car, and we left on a C5A for Yokota AB. The flight was routine. I spent one day at Yokota and caught a C17 to Singapore.

Overall, the Space A trip was a good one, typhoons notwithstanding.

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**American Citizen Services and Consular Affairs**

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**Consular Outreach Dates for 2015**

Dear American Citizens,

The American Citizen Services section of the American Embassy in Bangkok is pleased to inform you of our upcoming Embassy consular visits in 2015. Consular staff will be available to provide services in many locations across Thailand on the following dates:

- Friday, January 16, 2015, Pattaya
- Friday, January 23, 2015, Khon Kaen
- Friday, January 30, 2015, Phuket
- Friday, April 3, 2015, Pattaya
- Friday, April 17, 2015, Udorn
- Friday, April 24, 2015, Phuket
- Friday, July 10, 2015, Pattaya
- Friday, July 17, 2015, Khon Kaen
- Friday, July 24, 2015, Phuket
- Friday, October 9, 2015, Pattaya
- Friday, October 16, 2015, Udorn
- Friday, October 30, 2015, Phuket

The following consular services will be available:

- Passport renewal applications
- Notarial services
- Embassy registration and/or address change for on-line information
- Social Security, VA or other federal benefits questions

NOTE: Applications for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad cannot be accepted during consular outreach trips.

The venue and hours of each visit will be announced individually a few weeks before each date.

Appointments are not needed for consular services during outreach visits. If you have any questions, please email acsbkk@state.gov or call the American Citizen Services Unit at 02-205-4049.

We look forward to seeing you during our outreach visits.

Sincerely,

American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy Bangkok
### 2015 US Embassy Bangkok Holiday Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>New Year’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Special Public Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Presidents’ Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Chakri Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Songkran Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Songkran Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Songkran Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Coronation Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Memorial Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Substitute day of Independence Day, Saturday July 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Her Majesty The Queen’s Birthday</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Columbus Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Chulalongkorn Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Veterans Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Substitute day of His Majesty the King’s Birthday, Saturday December 5th</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Constitution Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>New Year’s Eve</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For after hours emergency assistance, please contact the Embassy operator at 66-2-205-4000.

See [the Recent Public Announcements and Emergency Messages](#) issued by the American Citizen Services section of the Embassy in Bangkok.
Command Staff

Colonel Desmond “DES” Walton
Chief, JUSMAGTHAI

Mr. Victor J. Loschinkohl, GS-14
Deputy Chief, JUSMAGTHAI
RAO Coordinator

Services Contact
Information

HQ JUSMAGTHAI
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)
Integrity – Service – Excellence

HQ JUSMAGTHAI
MAGTJS-RAO
APO AP 96546-5000

Tel: 02-287-1036 Ext. 165
Fax: 02-285-6228
Email: raothailand@jusmagthaio
Web: http://www.jusmagthaio/rao.html
Hours: Tues-Wed-Thurs, 0930-1430

JUSMAG
TRICARE Health Benefits Advisors
(Rm. J-202, Ext. 512)
Retiree Hours: Tuesday-Wednesday-
Thursday, 0800-1100
Email: nursetida.th@jusmagthaio
Web: http://www.jusmagthaio/medical.html

JUSMAG – DoD ID Card Issue &
DEERS Updates
(Rm. E-206, Ext. 180)
Retiree Hours: Tuesday-Wednesday-
Thursday, 0800-1100

Email: jusmagthai@jusmagthaio.org /
JUSMAG: DEERS & DoD ID Cards

JUSMAG - Unit Mail Room
(Rm. C-109, Ext. 168 – Please Call after
1300)
Hours: Monday through Friday, 1030-
1200 & 1300-1600 (Retiree Policy)

American Citizen Services, U.S.
Embassy, Bangkok
Mon-Fri, 0730-1100, 1300-1400 (By
Appt.) (Closed Last Friday of Month)
Tel: 02-205-4049 / Emergency After-
Hours, Tel: 02-205-4000
Email: acsbkk@state.gov /
Announcements:
http://tinyurl.com/2vbja6l
Web:
http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/service.html
(Closed Holidays)

American Citizen Services, U.S.
Consulate, Chiang Mai
Mon-Fri, 0730-1630 (By
Appt.) (Closed
Last Friday of Month)
Emergency Tel: 05-310-7777 / Email:
acschn@state.gov
Web:
http://chiangmai.usconsulate.gov/service.html
(Closed Holidays)
Other Federal Services

- **DFAS:** Customer Inquiry, Tel: 1-216-522-5955 or 1-800-321-1080
- **SSA Manila:** Email: FBU.Manila@ssa.gov, Tel: +63-2-301-2000 (Ext. 9)
- **TRICARE Overseas:** Email: sin.tricare@internationalsos.com, Tel: +65-6339-2676
- **VA:** General Inquiry: https://iris.custhelp.com/, Tel: 1-800-827-1000
- **VA Pension Management Center:** Inquiry: IRIS, Tel: 1-877-294-6380

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HQ JUSMAGTHAI
RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO)
7 SATTHORN TAI RD.
BANGKOK 10120
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

JUSMAGTHAI
UNIT MAIL ROOM
BOX-R RECIPIENTS