

March Social

The Veterans Court in Alaska is a special court within the justice system that assists veterans living in the Anchorage Area who have VA-identified treatment issues who have been charged with treatment related misdemeanors. We have invited VA and Veterans Court representatives to share their experiences with us.

Please save the date and join us!

- Speakers:
 - Judge David Wallace, Vets Ct.
 - Mr. Jeremiah Newbold, VA, Outreach Social Worker
 - Ms. Desiree Sang, Vets Ct. Administrator
- Topic: Veteran's Court
- Date: March 26, 2020
- Time: 6:00 p.m.
- Location: Coast International Inn

Congrats!



Congratulations are in order for Colonel Edie Grunwald (USAF, Ret) who was just sworn in as the Alaska Selective Service State Director by U.S. Selective Service Director Donald M. Benton.

She was nominated by Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy and appointed by Director Benton. The ceremony took

place February 21 at the Anchorage Legislative Information Office.

In attendance were former LtGov Loren Leman, Major General Torrence Saxe, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard and Commissioner, AK DMVA; Mr. Heath Hilyard, for Representative Cathy Tilton, Alaska's 12th District; Colonel Catkin Burton, USMC (Ret.), Capt. Cook Chapter of the MOAA; Taylor Winston, Director for the State of Alaska's Office of Victims Rights; Amanda Price, Public Safety Commissioner; and representatives from The Alaska Native Veteran Council.

Colonel Grunwald replaces outgoing State Director Alan Ezzle in her role as liaison between the Selective Service System and the governor's office. She will represent the Governor and the Selective Service Director regarding Agency matters in Alaska.

Director Grunwald's stated goals are to improve Alaska registration rates and to increase local board membership.

More Congrats!



We would also like to offer congratulations to CDR George Tolbert, who received recognition for work done at Service High School JROTC and in particular their outstanding Color Guard!

MOAA (AK) Troop Support

During January and February, the Chapter led a military support effort to collect personal items to enhance the experience of our warriors on the battlefield overseas. We'd like to offer special thanks to Credit Union 1 who was a primary supporter as we worked with them in their noteworthy Champion Program (more on that below); Kim La Plante was our point of contact with them, and it was a wonderful relationship and we also can't thank her enough.



Many thanks to those helping hands and donors in the Anchorage area who provided significant volumes of donated items (over 16,000 items)! Also, many thanks to A.T. Publishing & Printing, Service Business Printing, Eagle River Printing and DG Signs who also provided pickup locations!

CU1 Champion Program

As noted above, we worked with CU1 and their COMMUNITY Champion

Program for our recent drive. We were so impressed with their community efforts, we wanted to provide a little more information on this noteworthy endeavor.

CommUNITY Champions is a new category for CU1 in their community impact efforts. The CommUNITY Champions are non-profits or causes that tend to make people uncomfortable to talk about. To raise awareness and work toward solutions and mitigation, Credit Union 1 is tackling these issues head on! The tenets CU1 uses for Community Impact are: Empower, Educate, and Enrich. They expressed satisfaction that our combined efforts were able to Empower and Enrich our deployed military members to be able to confidently do their jobs.

This year's CommUNITY Champions are Period Poverty and Suicide Prevention. For Period Poverty, CU1's 2020 goal is to raise and donate 100,000 feminine hygiene products to girls and women in our communities. We will be working with schools, homeless shelters and other like-minded organizations (such as our chapter!) For Suicide Prevention, CU1 is participating in the Out of Darkness walk, and providing volunteers for their annual fundraiser called A Taste of Hope. We will be working with the local Suicide Prevention non-profits to find other opportunities where we can be of assistance. As we know from many sad reports, suicide rates are high amongst military and former military, so there will be opportunities to work together in the future, and we look forward to it.

DOD System In the News ROGUE



A Marine field artillery chief inspects the position of the weapon systems during High Mobility Artillery Rocket System training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. A program to put a Marine missile launcher on a drone vehicle is under development. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Judith L. Harter)

Highlighted in the Department of the Navy's 2021 budget book, the Marine Corps is looking to pair existing vehicle designs, existing anti-ship missiles and a launcher to create the Ground-based Anti-ship Missile and Remotely Operated Ground Unit Expeditionary (ROGUE) Fires Vehicle.

As part of overarching theater plans which include close and continuing alignment with Navy goals in the Pacific, the Marine Corps is getting into the ship-killing business, and a new project in development is aimed at making their dreams of harrying the People's Liberation Army Navy a reality. Similar in concept to famed moved often) Australian "coast-watchers" during World War II (in which these intelligence assets, this effort would be significantly more robust and allow impacting foreign power naval activities in and around the littorals to degrade or deny freedom of maneuver and action. The logistics of supporting this concept are likely to be considerable and require new concepts in that area.

The Navy is requesting about \$64 million for the project, according to the documents; contractors involved in the program are Raytheon and Oshkosh. Plans for 2020 and 2021 include prototyping, launcher development and flight testing.

Arctic Communications

Will SpaceX and OneWeb help the military stay connected in the Arctic? (C4ISRNet) (Nathan Strout and Joe Gould)

The military wants to experiment with commercial satellites from OneWeb and SpaceX's Starlink mega-constellations to keep war fighters connected in the Arctic, but it will need extra funding to do so.



The military has been keen on leveraging the promising commercial capability of satellite internet providers such as SpaceX's Starlink and ONEWeb, and now one commander is seeking funding to experiment with using the satellites for Arctic communications. (Airman 1st Class Zoe Thacker/U.S. Air Force)

Those companies aim to provide internet access via proliferated constellations made up of thousands of small satellites in low earth orbit. The military has been keen on leveraging this growing commercial capability, and the Air Force has awarded contracts to test how the satellite broadband service can be used by war fighters.

Now the commander of the United States Northern Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command is expressing interest in using these commercial space internet services to provide communications in the polar regions, where satellite communications have traditionally been more limited. Gen. Thomas O'Shaughnessy is seeking \$130 million for the effort, which he has listed as his number one unfunded priority for fiscal year 2021.

In a Feb. 11 letter to Congressional defense committees, O'Shaughnessy explained the money will be used for polar communications experiments and the fielding of prototype terminals capable of utilizing Starlink and OneWeb satellites. Additionally, the commander expressed hope that these experiments will incentivize further commercial investments in satellite communications and internet in the Arctic. Full coverage will require an additional \$110 million in fiscal year 2022, the document notes.

OneWeb leaders have said they expect to have 24 hour coverage in the Arctic by early 2021. The request for polar communications funding was one of four unfunded priorities the commander sent to Congress. That funding is "focused on my most pressing needs of increasing our domain awareness and establishing a layered homeland defense architecture."

The full list includes \$20 million for a sentry radar, \$5 million for Persistent Elevated Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance and \$31 million for the COBRA Dane Service Life Extension Program.

Sentry radars are capable of mid-range detection, tracking and positive identification of low radar cross-section targets, including cruise missiles and drones, and the commander wants it to provide point defense of critical infrastructure and force deployment areas. Meanwhile, the \$5 million for Persistent Elevated ISR will be used to develop and prototype a radar capability for point defense locations within the continental United States.

COBRA Dane is a phased array radar based in Alaska that was initially deployed in 1977. The radar has since been updated and integrated into the Ballistic Missile Defense System, although it continues to provide intelligence and space situational awareness. Due to delays in bringing replacement radars in Hawaii and the Pacific online, COBRA Dane will need to continue operations past the end of its expected service life in 2030. The commander is seeking \$31 million to replace the transmitter group, travelling wave tubes and a mainframe computer.

MOAA National Issues

Please find the following synopses of issues/articles currently available at the MOAA Home Page (www.moaa.org):

Report: Dozens of Military Medical Facilities Will Stop Treating Families, Retirees: As a result of congressional direction, the Defense Health Agency's plan to move approximately 200,000 military family members, retirees, and their families and survivors into the TRICARE civilian

network. As part of this effort, DoD will eliminate care that doesn't contribute to the readiness mission and develop civilian medical centers partnerships. Under this plan, 50 hospitals and clinics will be impacted (locations are TBD). Approximately 200,000 beneficiaries (about 10% of the total) will transition to civilian providers in the TRICARE network. TRICARE Prime retirees and their family members transferred to TRICARE network care would face out-of-pocket cost increases since they would now incur copays for most care until they hit the \$3,000 annual catastrophic cap (i.e., maximum out of pocket) for covered services.

MyCAA Eligibility, Uses Expanded by New Law: Previously, the My Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) program was available only to spouses of service members of certain ranks, excluded the Coast Guard entirely and could be used to fund education in only 13 specific fields and 170 careers. The new change eliminates the restriction on fields and career types, and extends the benefit to spouses of Coast Guard members. Further, once accepted into the program, qualifying spouses will not be blocked from benefits when their service member is promoted out of eligibility.

Troops Get 3% Pay Raise in 2021 Budget Request: The proposed military pay raise for fiscal 2021 in the Defense Department's budget request, released Monday, is 3%, the second-highest pay raise for troops since 2010. The 3% raise, following 2020's 3.1% bump, ensures that the troops will be "well compensated" and underlines DoD's

recognition that military and civilian personnel "are our most valuable resource." The raise is part of an \$8.7 billion increase over the fiscal 2020 budget for wages and benefits, DoD said, and is expected to survive protracted and heated negotiations on the overall budget between Congress and the White House. If passed, the raise would go into effect next Jan. 1. Retirement pay is based on the last year of service, and Cost of Living Increases (COLA) increases for retired personnel are then based on the Consumer Price Index, Merry said.

MOAA Supports World War II Flyover: Nearly 100 vintage warplanes will fly along the Potomac River and across the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on May 8 during the Arsenal of Democracy 75th WWII Victory Commemoration Flyover.



A U.S. Army Air Force Curtiss P-40E Warhawk of the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio (USA).

The event (supported by MOAA) will include the P-40 Warhawk, P-39 Aircobra, P-38 Lightning, P-51 Mustang, P-47 Thunderbolt, F4U Corsair, B-25 Mitchell, and B-17 Flying Fortress flying in 24 formations, representing major battles of the war and marking Victory in Europe (V-E) Day. The flyover will be part of a broader two-day event that

will include a ceremony for veterans at the World War II Memorial. The Eisenhower Memorial dedication will be held the same day.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Improvement Act of 2019 (S. 1047): The new law (if approved) would increase the DIC amount for survivors whose veteran died with a 100% VA rating. All other survivors stay at their current amount. This Act currently only accounts for survivors after the new law passes.

The bill is likely to be discussed after military and veterans service organizations get a chance to testify before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. MOAA anticipates the opportunity to participate. Passing this year is possible, but in light of recent successes in eliminating the widow's tax (the dollar-for-dollar reduction of military survivor benefits from DIC) – many lawmakers feel relatively satisfied with the current state of VA survivor benefits. MOAA will continue to advocate for passage along with partners in the Military Coalition.

DOD

Other Defense News

Trump clinches \$3 billion military equipment sale (Reuters) U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that India will buy \$3 billion worth of military equipment, including attack helicopters, as the two countries deepen defense and commercial ties in an attempt to balance the weight of China in the region.

US and South Korean may scale back joint military exercises over coronavirus fears (Military Times) Secretary of Defense Mark Esper told reporters at the Pentagon Monday that some command post joint exercises with South Korea could be scaled back due to precautions being taken over the rapidly spreading coronavirus. (Ed Note: In a separate article, US Forces Korea raises the command risk level to high as dependent (a widow of a retired soldier) contracts coronavirus.)

Here's what DoD wants states to do to help military spouses with their occupational licenses (Military Times) Some states have made progress in making it easier for military spouses to transfer their occupational licenses from one state to another, but there's still a lot of work to be done, according to a new report issued by the Defense Department. (Ed Note: As you probably recall, MOAA raised this issue at our annual Storming The Hill events).

Senators seek SECDEF support to add names of 'Lost 74' to Vietnam Memorial Wall (Navy Times) In the early morning hours of June 3, 1969, the Australian aircraft carrier Melbourne collided with the American destroyer Frank E. Evans (DD-754) during a training exercise in the South China Sea, splitting the ship in half and causing the drowning deaths of 74 American sailors.

Proposed VA Budget Would Increase Funding for Cancer Treatment (Military.com) The Department of Veterans Affairs' \$243.3 billion budget request for next fiscal year includes a \$75 million increase for cancer treatment so the VA can "deliver the

most up-to-date care as close to the patient's residence as possible."

Esper lays out Chinese aggression in Munich | Defense News Weekly Extra (Defense News) At the Munich Security Conference, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper lays out recent Chinese aggression and the threat it poses.

Want to tell the Navy what you think about future exercises in the Gulf of Alaska? (The Associated Press) The U.S. Navy will collect public comment about its proposal for permits to again use the Gulf of Alaska for training exercises, a spokeswoman said.

Trump expresses optimism for US peace deal with Taliban (The Associated Press) President Donald Trump said Sunday he's ready to sign a peace deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan if a temporary truce holds in America's longest war. "Time to come home," he said.

US can't continue tolerating Russian 'noncompliance' on Open Skies, says Esper (Defense News) The U.S. has yet to make a determination on whether to remain in the Open Skies arms control agreement, but Defense Secretary Mark Esper is warning that America "can't continue" to tolerate Russian "noncompliance" with the treaty.

Pompeo warns Iran must be held accountable for Baghdad attacks (Bloomberg) U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said Iran must be held accountable for its proxies' attacks on American forces in Baghdad, warning that such violence can't become routine.

New joint ventures hint at 'burgeoning relationship' between Israel and India

(Defense News) Israel and India are deepening defense industry ties as Israeli companies seek long-term partnerships through India's efforts to encourage products to be locally produced under joint ventures.

US warship boards small boat and seizes Iranian anti-tank guided missiles among other advanced weaponry (Military Times) On Feb. 9 a U.S. Navy warship boarded a small ship in the Arabian Sea and seized advanced weaponry including Iranian manufactured anti-tank guided missiles, U.S. military officials announced Thursday.



The crew of the guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60), in accordance with international law, seized an illicit shipment of advanced weapons and weapon components, which held 358 surface-to-air missile components and "Dehlavieh" anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM), intended for the Houthis in Yemen, aboard a stateless dhow during a maritime interdiction operation in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of operations, Feb. 9, 2020. (Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael H. Lehman/Navy)

Former DIA analyst pleads guilty to passing Top Secret information to journalists (Military Times) A former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst has pleaded guilty to sharing top secret information with two reporters and

now faces up to 10 years in federal prison.

On tour, Pompeo courts Africa, to counter China (New York Times) Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on his first visit to sub-Saharan Africa, promotes partnerships with American companies, but finds China's presence pervasive.

While US worries about China, Europe stays focused on Russia (The Associated Press) China and its increasingly sophisticated and far-flung military sit atop U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper's list of international security worries, but in Europe a bigger concern is closer to home: Russia.

US Indo-Pacific Command leader hopes Philippine security pact can still be saved (The Associated Press) The move by the Philippines to end a security pact that allowed U.S. forces to train in the country potentially "challenged" future American operations with Filipino forces, a U.S. admiral said on Thursday.

NATO plans expanded training mission in Iraq (Defense News) NATO is to expand the Western alliance's training mission in Iraq, partly in response to U.S. calls do more in the Middle East.

Malaysia taps American fund to convert transport planes for maritime surveillance role (Defense News) Malaysia will convert two Indonesian-built CN-235 transport aircraft into maritime patrol platforms using U.S. funding set aside for regional nations to improve maritime security, a top general confirmed.

Pentagon tit-for-tat with Iran goes on (Al-Monitor) The Pentagon announced that a rocket struck an Iraqi base

housing American troops today and that US forces had intercepted a Yemen-bound dhow carrying Iranian-designed weapons days earlier, extending the ongoing military tit-for-tat with pro-Iranian forces.

Are heavy ground combat units better than light forces and airstrikes? (Army Times) In recent years, the Army has stationed more troops in Europe to balance against Russia and also increased temporary Pacific rotations, while the Marine Corps is throwing much of its weight into highly mobile, distributed units to counter China.

Top Marine general wants a new class of 'light' amphibious warship (Military.com) The sea services have laid out potential requirements for a "light" amphibious ship, the top Marine general said this week, raising the possibility that the Navy's upcoming force-structure assessment will include new types of vessels. (Ed Note: The Commandant has noted that the sea services are going to need more ships that move frequently as they face distributed operations in the vast Pacific theater, where China is militarizing man-made islands.)



Liberty ships in WWII were small cargo ships that provided rapid mobility and were numerous enough and cheap enough to provide significant impact to the war effort. Perhaps analogous to Marine Corps/Navy requirements?

NATO eyes boosting Iraq army training, still needs Iraq's OK (The Associated Press) NATO is ready to expand its military training effort in Iraq, the alliance's top civilian official said Wednesday, but the Iraqi government is not yet ready to approve the move.

US sends three aircraft along Taiwan Strait after back-to-back Chinese drills near Taiwan (Stars & Stripes) The Air Force flew two B-52 bombers and an MC-130J Commando II tanker along the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense.

Record breaking US airstrikes pushing al-Shabab fighters into urban areas (Military Times) A recent UN report said that record breaking airstrikes targeting al-Shabab militants in Somalia is forcing the group to move from rural areas to urban centers to mitigate American air power.

GAO: VA must improve plans for providing long-term care to aging veterans (Military Times) Veterans are increasingly relying on the Department of Veterans Affairs for long-term care as they age, and with the cost expected to double in the next 20 years, the department must be prepared, the Government Accountability Office has warned.

Turkey edges towards direct conflict with Russian-backed Syria (Reuters) Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday a military operation by his forces to push back a Syrian government offensive against rebels in northwest Syria was now "a matter of time" after talks with Russia failed to halt the assault.



Uncommon valor was a common virtue.

2020/21 Calendar of Events

- Mar 26: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- April ##: JROTC Awards
- April ##: MOAA Storming the Hill
- April 23 Dinner Social (Meeting)
- May 28: End of Season Social (Meeting)
- Jun 14: Army Birthday
- Aug 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- Sep 18: Air Force Birthday
- Oct 13: Navy Birthday
- Oct 22: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Nov 10: Marine Corps Birthday
- Dec ##: Christmas Social
- Jan (2021): Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Feb ##: ASYMCA Salute to the Military

Contact Information

Please share this newsletter! Contact information provided below:

- E-mail: c2burton@gci.net
- Phone: (907) 570-1027
- Address: 1143 M Ct.
Anchorage, AK 99501
- Annual chapter dues: \$25; on or about January of each year, on-line payment may be made at:

<https://chapterdues.moaa.org/MemberShip.aspx> or a check payable to Captain Cook Chapter. Thank you for your support!

- Chapter site: www.MOAA-AK.COM

President: Catkin Kilcher Burton
Vice-Pres: Ty Moore
Secretary: Justin Mills
Treasurer: Vacant (please volunteer!)
Webmaster: Edith M. Grunwald
Communications: Clyde T. (Tom) Burton
Scholarship Committee: George Tolbert
Legislative Liaison: Bob Pawlowski