

## Port of Anchorage

We were grateful to receive a presentation from the Port of Anchorage Director, Mr. Stephen Ribuffo, at our last dinner social. He shared a wealth of information with us.

The port opened shortly after statehood, in 1961, and was the only deepwater port in southwestern Alaska to remain undamaged after the Good Friday earthquake and resulting tsunamis. It has reliably sustained the state through good times and bad since then. But age and corrosion have taken their toll and now Anchorage spends \$5M to keep it up; in spite of that spending, it would be unlikely to survive another major earthquake.

The Municipality is asking the State to put a \$290M general obligation bond referendum on the November 16 ballots to replace the main cargo terminals. Mr. Ribuffo noted there is no economic alternative here. The port cannot be reproduced and leverages \$600M worth of investment in port-related infrastructure, which also provides the jet fuel for Ted Stevens International Airport and Elmendorf Air Force Base.

If you would like a scanned copy of products provided by Mr. Ribuffo that provide more information, please let us know and we will e-mail those products to you.

## End of Season

Our thanks to everybody's support this season. It's May and the warming

season draws us to the lakes, streams, mountains and fields of our beautiful state. Please enjoy your summer, be safe and hold the ones you love. God Bless our Troops.

## Tentative September Event

We are discussing the idea of having the offered Anchorage Airport tour in September, and our first dinner social in October. We'll rest a bit, and work on this soon. We plan to have the first newsletter out on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> of September to let you know the details. If you have suggestions for social speakers, please let us know. Have a great summer.

## MOAA National Issues Beneficiary Change Open Season.

~May 19, 2016 (MOAA)

Lt.Col. Shane Ostrom, USAF (Ret) CFP®

DFAS has announced a window of opportunity to change your SBP beneficiary from a deceased former spouse to a current spouse. Here are the specifics for open season eligibility. All these points must apply to your situation:

- Deceased former spouse passed away before 25 November 2015.
- Remarried to current spouse on or before 25 November 2015.
- Must be currently married.
- Former spouse coverage must have been cancelled due to death. No other reason for discontinued former spouse coverage is eligible.

DFAS has identified retirees and notified by mail those they believe meet these eligibility standards. If you are eligible but did not get a DFAS letter, take action to notify DFAS yourself. Call, write or fax DFAS to let them know you meet the eligibility criteria:

*Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Retired Pay  
P.O. Box 7130  
London, KY 40742-7130  
Phone: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955  
Fax: (800) 469-6559*

Once DFAS receives your information, they will mail a package of information for you to apply for the beneficiary change.

An audit will be completed and all costs to include possible retroactive premiums will be calculated and explained in a follow on letter. A "final election form" will be included with your letter explaining the costs. If you want to continue with the beneficiary change and agree with the costs, mail the form back to DFAS prior to 24 November 2016.

All back premiums can be paid either in a lump-sum or over a period of no more than 24 months.

Your choice is irrevocable. Coverage amount will be the same level as your former spouse—no other coverage option.

SBP coverage with the current spouse is effective:

- The month after the first-year anniversary of the remarriage if the

remarriage occurred after the former spouse's death **OR**

- The month after the death of the former spouse if the remarriage was already past the first-year anniversary at the time of death.

The open season closes 24 November 2016. For more information, please go to: <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp/FS-SBP-open-season-16.html> or you can see more at: <http://www.moaa.org/SBPupdate/#sth> ash.lxhreZTJ.dpuf

### VA Information

#### **Airborne Hazards & Open Burn Pit Registry**

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is a database of health related information about Veterans and Servicemembers. Individuals may participate by completing an online questionnaire about their symptoms, health conditions, environmental and work-related exposures, and health care usage. Eligibility Any Veteran or Servicemember who served in:

- OEF/OIF/OND or in Djibouti, Africa, after September 11, 2001, or
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990.

*Note: The Southwest Asia theater of operations includes the following locations: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations. You can make a difference in*

*your health and the health of fellow Veterans and Servicemembers.*

Join the registry to:

- Become more aware of your health,
- Help VA learn more about the potential health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards,
- Help improve VA's deployment health programs, and
- Receive information about ongoing health studies and services provided by VA.

*How to participate:*

<https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/ABurnPitRegistry/>

*Learn more:*

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov> or  
Call 1-877-222-8387

### **Other Recent National Military News**

**USNS Mercy heading up disaster-relief prep mission in Pacific** The USNS Mercy hospital ship will lead the Pacific Partnership disaster-relief preparation mission. The 4½-month mission will include civilians and military personnel from the US, UK, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea as they hold symposiums and participate in projects and disaster-relief drills. [Stars and Stripes](#) (5/16)



*A rainbow arcs over MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy anchored off of the coast of Jolo City, Philippines. Chief Mass Communications Specialist Edward G. Martens, photo*

### **"Wingman" drones, other autonomous systems may be in Air Force's future**

High-tech autonomous systems that can sense their surroundings and make decisions may soon be a reality, says Greg Zacharias, chief scientist for the Air Force. "There's clearly been a lot of interest in autonomous systems. We could transform many Air Force missions depending on the level of autonomy we could develop," he said. One possibility is a "wingman" drone that could fly alongside and assist manned aircraft by the 2020s. [Military Times/Air Force Times](#) (5/17)

### **Debate renewed over privatization of commissaries**

The debate over privatizing commissaries is heating up again. A pilot program that would test privatization has been added to the Senate Armed Services Committee's fiscal 2017 defense policy bill, but Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., has promised to fight it. "There are too many unknowns as to whether privatization could directly impact a military member's ability to provide for their families as well as the potential for it to affect

retention," he said. Army Times/Military Times (5/17)

**DARPA shows off latest inventions, designs** The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency showed off some of its advanced designs last week at DARPA Demo Day, offering a glimpse into the future of the US military. Among the items and ideas featured were a robotic arm that picks up nerve signals from the brain, a soft exo-suit that helps reduce fatigue, an unmanned submarine-hunting vessel and engine-filled aircraft wings. Military Times (5/16)

**US special ops troops quietly battle militants outside Iraq, Syria** Small teams of US special operations troops are quietly going on missions in the Middle East and Africa to take on Islamic State and al-Qaida militants outside Iraq and Syria. "We are attempting to identify opportunities to expand [special operations'] global presence, forward access and relationships to leverage opportunities short of crisis," said Gen. Raymond Thomas, US special operations commander. Missions are taking place in Somalia, West Africa, Yemen and Libya. CNN (5/12)

**Kremlin criticizes US missile shield in Romania** The Kremlin is not happy about a US-backed missile shield being activated in Romania, calling it a threat to Russia's security. "Measures are being taken to ensure the necessary level of security for Russia," said Dmitry Peskov, a Kremlin spokesman. He added

that Russian President Vladimir Putin "has repeatedly asked who the system will work against." Reuters (5/12)

**Air Force's Robinson first woman to lead top-tier US combat command** Air Force Gen. Lori Robinson is the first woman to head up a top-tier US war-fighting command. She is chief of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and US Northern Command in Colorado as of today. The Associated Press (5/13)

**Senate panel suggests 1.6% pay increase for troops** The Senate Armed Services Committee supports a 1.6% pay raise for troops in its draft of the defense authorization bill, laying the groundwork for a fight with House members who say that isn't enough. Little has been released about the Senate's draft bill, but some of its provisions, including the pay increase, were marked up publicly by the panel's personnel subcommittee. Military Times (5/10)

**Event planned for 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor attack** The number of survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor is dwindling, but organizers of the 75th anniversary event are confident some of them will attend. The event will include 11 days of memorials and programs. "This is a special tribute. If you were 18 on Dec. 7, 1941, you'll be 93 when we celebrate this commemoration, so our effort is very clearly to honor our greatest generation," said retired Adm. Tom

Fargo, who leads the commemoration committee. Stars and Stripes /The Honolulu Star-Advertiser (5/10)

### 2016 Calendar of Events

General dates of interest are noted below. Membership meetings are generally on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month except as noted.

- Jun 14: Army Birthday
- Aug 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- Sep 18: Air Force Birthday
- Sep ##: Tour of Ted Stevens International Airport
- Oct 13: Navy Birthday
- Oct 27: Dinner Social (Speaker TBD)
- Nov 10: Marine Corps Birthday
- Nov 24: Dinner Social (Speaker TBD)
- Dec ##: Christmas Social
- Jan 26 (2017): Dinner Social TBD
- Feb ##: ASYMCA Salute to the Military
- Mar ##: Dinner Social (Speaker TBD)
- April 11-14: MOAA Storming the Hill
- Apr ##: Dinner Social (Speaker TBD)

### Contact Information

Please share this newsletter with active duty, Guard, Reservist and retired Officers you know and encourage them to join. Contact information below:

- E-mail: [c2burton@gci.net](mailto:c2burton@gci.net)
- Phone: (907)644-6202
- 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.
- Chapter site: [www.MOAA-AK.COM](http://www.MOAA-AK.COM)



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