

## Dinner Socials

The chapter enjoyed an end-of-season, start-of-summer dinner social at the Coast International Inn on May 23rd. Our guests were Senator Mike Shower, Representatives Sharon Jackson, Laddie Shaw (new Chairman of the House Military & Veterans Affairs Committee), and Josh Revak who discussed legislation and the current state of affairs in Juneau at the time. Our thanks to them and all in attendance!



## Next Dinner Social

Our next event will be October 24th at the Coast International Inn where we will hear from the serving Lieutenant Governor, Kevin Meyer.

Please save the date and join us!

- Speaker: Kevin Meyer, LtGov, SOA
- Topic: Government activity
- Date: October 24, 2019
- Time: 6:00 p.m.
- Location: Coast International Inn

## Legislative Liaison News *Agent Orange Claims*

**New Law authorizes VA to process Agent Orange claims for Viet Nam Era Blue Water Navy and Korean DMZ Veterans.**

With approval of Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for "Blue Water Navy" Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

The new law affects Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans. In addition, the Act also recognizes potential exposure while serving in the Korean DMZ during the period of September 1967 to August 1971. To qualify, under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e). While the law goes into effect, January 1, 2020, many organizations, including MOAA have asked for more timely implementation of the act for the benefit of those impacted by Agent Orange. For detailed information please visit:

<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/>.

## MOAA National News *Annual Meeting of the Membership*

The 2019 MOAA Annual Meeting of the Membership is nearing, and all members are invited to attend. After the meeting, attendees will have an opportunity to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony and open house at the newly renovated headquarters building.

During the 9 a.m. meeting, which follows a continental breakfast, MOAA members and the Board of Directors will hear briefings on MOAA's current



(L to R: Rep. Laddie Shaw, Rep. Josh Revak, Rep. Sharon Jackson, and Senator Mike Shower)

programs and legislative initiatives. Members will have an opportunity to ask questions of MOAA's president and senior staff. The meeting is expected to last approximately one hour, after which a shuttle will take members to the renovated HQ at 201 N. Washington St. BoD Chair Adm. Walter F. Doran, USN (Ret), and MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), will cut a ribbon and welcome annual meeting and public attendees at 10:30 a.m.

## **DOD**

### **Commissary/Exchange Consolidation**

*(Editor's note: This article has been edited for space requirements from the original Military Times article by Karen Jowers).*

Deputy Secretary of Defense David L. Norquist has given the green light to consolidation of military commissaries and exchanges — pending changes in law that would allow that consolidation.

Norquist's Aug. 19 memo marked his official agreement with the recommendation to consolidate the Defense Commissary Agency, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, the Navy Exchange Service Command, and the Marine Corps Exchange into one entity.

That merger was recommended by DoD's chief management officer, following a business case analysis. The cost of running the commissary operations have regularly been the subject of proposed budget cuts because they are operated with about \$1.4 billion a year in taxpayer dollars to

allow the stores to sell groceries at a discount. Concerns have been raised about where the savings will be going in this consolidation — and whether the money that's been used to fund morale, welfare and recreation programs would be used to underwrite the cost of commissaries.

There have been 12 studies between 1989 and 2015 that studied the idea of consolidating all the military exchanges and the commissary agency, but this is the first time DoD officials have had agreement from all the military services about consolidation.

House lawmakers also asked GAO to look at the extent to which DoD addressed the concerns of the service secretaries and service chiefs about consolidation. By law, as commissaries have been undergoing reforms, they must still be able to maintain the savings level baseline, determined at the global overall average in 2016 of 23.65 percent, compared to local commercial grocery prices. If the savings decline, DoD will use taxpayer dollars to shore up the benefit.

A DoD task force which began its work a year ago determined that "the benefits from consolidation outweigh the expected costs of consolidation." The task force projected cumulative savings of \$700 million to \$1.3 billion over the first five years, with \$400 million to \$700 million in recurring annual net savings afterward. The cost of implementing the consolidation in the first year is estimated at \$75 million,

doubling in each of the three years after that.

But advocates, long concerned that this consolidation may pose a threat to the stores' future, are concerned that DoD is moving too quickly.

In March, the National Military Family Association (NMFA) was among a group of 27 groups in The Military Coalition, who wrote a letter to House and Senate armed services committee leaders expressing their concerns that the consolidation will cost more than anticipated and fail to result in projected savings in operational costs.

If those predictions are accurate, they said, the defense resale system may be unable to provide the low-cost groceries and support for morale, welfare and recreation programs that service members, their families and survivors rely on.

Current law prohibits consolidation of commissaries and exchanges. The move comes as the House and Senate armed services committees are in the midst of conference about the fiscal 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. A provision in the House version of the bill would delay any military store consolidation until the Government Accountability Office has conducted a review of DoD's business case analysis.

## **DOD**

### **Defense News**

**The Gate Runner: How a bizarre breach at Mildenhall transformed base**

**security across the Air Force:** (Air Force Times) It was about 1 p.m. when the odd man with a teddy bear strapped to his chest showed up at the main gate to RAF Mildenhall in England. He was from the Secret Service, he said, as he attempted to show the guard a British passport as identification.

**Turkish president threatens to allow Syria refugees to leave unless 'safe zone' created with US:** (The Associated Press) Turkey's president on Thursday threatened to "open the gates" and allow a flood of Syrian refugees to leave Turkey for Western countries unless a so-called "safe zone" is established inside Syria soon in negotiations with the Americans.

**ISIS weakened, finds new bombers:** **Cows wearing explosive vests:** (New York Times) The Islamic State has been reluctant to use humans to carry bombs because of the group's reduced numbers, so it has tried out a new tactic: Bovine suicide bombers.

**Killing programs is 'like working out,' says acting US Army secretary:** (Defense News) The U.S. Army's program-killing project known as "night court" will continue and become more aggressive in the coming years as demands for the service's modernization effort increase, the Army's acting secretary said Wednesday.

**The Army wants to send its newest units worldwide, but the top watchdog in Afghanistan says it's struggling to find enough troops to do the job:** (Business Insider) Senior Army leaders said again on Wednesday that the

service is considering sending its new Security Force Assistance Brigades, which have only been sent to Afghanistan, to other hotspots around the world, but the top watchdog in Afghanistan has said the units haven't been able to get enough troops to do their jobs.

**US says it's ready to resume nuclear talks with North Korea:** (The Associated Press) The United States is ready to restart nuclear negotiations with North Korea, a senior U.S. diplomat said Wednesday, a day after U.S. and South Korean militaries ended their regular drills that North Korea calls an invasion rehearsal.

**Turkey's Patriot offer dead after S-400 delivery:** (Al-Monitor) The Trump administration automatically rescinded a \$3.5 billion deal to sell Raytheon-produced Patriot missile defenses to Turkey after it received the Russian S-400 system in July, Al-Monitor has learned. The cancellation had previously not been reported.

**Houthi rebels claim to down Reaper drone in Yemen, US investigating:** (Military Times) U.S. Central Command has opened an investigation into reports that Houthi rebels in Yemen shot down a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper late Tuesday, according to a Wednesday news release.

**South Korea to withdraw from military intelligence sharing pact with Japan:** (Stars & Stripes & Defense One) South Korea will withdraw from a key military intelligence sharing pact with Japan due to an escalating trade spat between the two U.S. allies, the government said

Thursday. The Pentagon is on edge after Seoul ends an intelligence-sharing agreement with Tokyo. The biggest winner of the Japan-South Korea dispute? China

**U.S. will aggressively enforce sanctions over Iran tanker:** (Reuters) The United States will aggressively enforce its sanctions to prevent the private sector from assisting an Iranian oil tanker that is traveling through the Mediterranean and that Washington wants seized, a State Department official said on Thursday.

**European military exercises like the Army's massive Combined Resolve XII are crucial:** (Army Times) The United States needs more than words to bolster its relationships with European allies as Russia seeks to undermine such alliances, says Air Force Maj. Gen. Kirk Smith, commander of Special Operations Command Europe.

**The Army's first smaller, nimbler combat hospitals roll out at Camp Humphreys:** (Stars & Stripes) The 549th Hospital Center is the first unit out of 10 in the active-duty Army to reconfigure itself into smaller components that include two mobile field hospitals and their supporting units.

**Travis Air Force Base produces first certified 3D-printed aircraft parts:** (Air Force Times) Travis Air Force Base's 60th Maintenance Squadron is now armed with a Stratasys F900 3D printer — meaning some aircraft parts can be produced more efficiently.

**Pentagon 'very carefully' watching China, it's 'No. 1 priority':** (Fox News)

China is the Pentagon's "number one priority," and the United States is watching Beijing "very carefully" in order to safeguard America, Defense Secretary Mark Esper told Fox News in an exclusive interview Wednesday.

**Australia joins US-led mission to protect Persian Gulf shipping:** (The Associated Press) Australia has joined Britain and Bahrain in signing onto a U.S.-led maritime security mission to protect international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz amid tensions with Iran, the prime minister said Wednesday.

### DoD Systems

#### RQ-21A Blackjack



Marines lift an RQ-21A Blackjack unmanned aerial system onto a launcher before flight operations aboard the USS John P. Murtha in the Arabian Sea, July 31 2019.

The RQ-21A Blackjack, a Group 3 UAV, is the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps' Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System. This system allows the commander to assess the fight without putting warfighters at risk with real-time monitoring and analysis to provide actionable information on the ground or at sea.

The RQ-21A is modular, versatile and multi-mission capable, providing rapid

transitions between land and maritime environments. The UAV payload is up to 39 lbs and can remain aloft for up to or over 16 hours per day depending on different variables. It uses electro-optic/infrared (EO/IR) payloads to support real-time monitoring for imaging and threat warnings with a line of sight range of 55 nautical miles (or 102 km).

The system achieved Full Rate Production in October of 2016 and is currently flown by Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 and 2 (VMU-1 and VMU-2) supporting expeditionary operations worldwide.

### DOD Innovation

#### UAV Delivery



Recently, III MEF (Marine Expeditionary Force) reports they are experimenting with a small drone for logistics delivery of small items to forward, hard to reach units. Items may include medical supplies, communications cable or other relatively high-impact but modestly sized cargo payloads.

The specific drone being tested is called Zipline. Zipline is an American medical product delivery company headquartered in South San Francisco, California, that designs, builds, and operates small drone aircraft for delivery of medical products, with a

focus on providing services in Africa. Zipline has proved the effectiveness of their products by delivery of platelets, fresh frozen plasma, and cryoprecipitate.

### 2019/20 Calendar of Events

- Oct 13: Navy Birthday
- Oct 24: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Nov 10: Marine Corps Birthday
- Dec ##: Christmas Social
- Jan (2020): Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Feb ##: ASYMCA Salute to the Military
- 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

### Contact Information

Please share this newsletter! Contact information provided below:

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- 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](http://www.MOAA-AK.COM)

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 Vice-Pres: Ty Moore  
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