

## March Social Event

On March 24, Mr. John Parrot spoke to the chapter on issues relating to the Ted Stevens International Airport. Mr. Parrot discussed the economic benefits of money spent in the economy that flows through the airport (including myriad jobs) as a result of 5.4 million passengers per year, serviced by 15 domestic and 20 international carriers; 1 in 10 jobs in Anchorage are directly connected to the airport.

ANC averages over 238 total landings per day; its 488 wide-body cargo landings per week make it the 5th largest airport in the world in terms of cargo throughput (#1 Hong Kong, #2 Memphis, #3 Shanghai, #4 Incheon). With this significant traffic, the airport needs to expand the North-South runway and has land to trade to accomplish this, but will need municipal support and hope/expect to continue talks with Mayor Berkowitz.

He also talked about utilization for the North terminal and noted the importance of "location, location, location" and the competitive benefits which come with international travel. He also discussed the importance and standard of not closing the airport due to weather to avoid disruption to travelers and the community, and that the airport has not closed for snow in recent memory. He noted that generally, if a plane is diverted, it is due to other variables such as pilot's ratings, and other situations.

Lake Hood Seaplane Base is the world's largest and busiest floatplane base with over 300 float slips and 400 general aviation paved or gravel tie down spots.

During the Q&A period, he answered a question about Kulis (former air base) and that is not well situated to be used effectively or efficiently. Finally, he noted the benefits which accrue from their partnership with Fairbanks International Airport. In discussion, he offered a tour of the airport. If there is interest in this, please bring it to our attention during the next dinner social and we'll pursue this generous offer.

## April Dinner Social

Our next dinner social will be as noted below.

- Date: April 28, 2016
- Speaker: Mr. Stephen Ribuffo, Director, Port of Anchorage
- Time: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm.
- Location: Coast International Inn
- Address: 3450 Aviation Ave, Anchorage, AK 99502, USA
- Phone: 907-243-2233

The Port of Anchorage is Alaska's premier cargo import terminal. Every year it handles more than 3.5 million tons of food, building materials, cars, clothing, cement, fuel and other goods that Alaskans need and use every day to live, work and thrive in our state. Director Ribuffo will share the inside story of how this massive undertaking is accomplished! Please join us.

## F35s at Eielson

Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska is to receive the US Air Force's (USAF's) first operational Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters (JSFs) in the Pacific theater, the Pentagon announced on 4 April.



Base construction to prepare for the JSF is expected to begin in fiscal year 2017. The base is expected to receive two squadrons of F-35As beginning in 2020. The aircraft will join the F-16 Fighting Falcon aggressor squadron assigned to Eielson.

Eielson will become the first base outside of the contiguous United States in the Pacific area of operations to receive the new aircraft. The base's proximity to the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) was a significant factor in the choice of Eielson, according to USAF officials. "Alaska combines a strategically important location with a world-class training environment. Basing the F-35s at Eielson AFB will allow the Air Force the capability of using the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) for large force exercises using a multitude of ranges and maneuver areas in Alaska," Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee

James said in the press statement. "This, combined with the largest airspace in the Air Force, ensures realistic combat training for the [Department of Defense]." Proximity to the JPARC makes approximately 65,000 square miles of airspace available for realistic training.

The decision was arrived at following a three-year process of environmental impact reviews that examined impacts on such factors as air quality, noise, land use, and socioeconomics, according to the USAF. *IHS Jane's Defence Weekly*

*(Editor's Note: There is no doubt much credit to share, but we recommend an e-mail or phone call to our federal representatives congratulating them on their success! When you do, please let them know you're a member of the MOAA local chapter.)*

### MOAA National Issues

#### Congress Ramps Up Health Care Talks

March 18, 2016 (MOAA)

The Chairman of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee invited MOAA and a small handful of stakeholders to Capitol Hill on March 17 to discuss Pentagon proposals to reform the military's health care system (MHS). MOAA Government Relations Director Col. Steve Strobridge, USAF (Ret) told the panel in the year of TRICARE reform, DoD's plan contained only vague statements on needed program improvements, and focused mainly on adding several new beneficiary fees and raising a wide

range of others, especially for the retired community. He noted the proposed fee schedules were designed to push more care to military hospitals and clinics, which have been the primary sources of access problems.

"Our preference would be to ensure access is improved in the [military facilities] before implementing a fee structure intended to drive more care there," Strobridge said. He also expressed MOAA's hope the system would establish positive "carrots" to incentivize beneficiary choices rather than financial penalty "sticks."

"Particularly for retirees, we believe the proposed fee increases - in the range of \$500 to \$1,200 a year - are disproportional," Strobridge said. "Further, the incentives seem structured as different-sized sticks, with the biggest sticks proposed for the TRICARE Standard group that, ironically, costs DoD the least money. "Retirees in TRICARE Prime who use military facilities, as DoD wants, would see a 24 percent enrollment fee increase plus other increases in cost-shares and pharmacy copays.

Families who elect to stay with TRICARE Standard - which costs DoD less than Prime - would incur a new \$900 annual enrollment fee, plus a \$600 deductible for using out-of-network care, in addition to their existing 25 percent cost share for all services. If a military family has a choice, a higher deductible for using out-of-network care might make sense. But DoD acknowledges the

network system will only cover 85 percent of the population. "MOAA believes the 15 percent of beneficiaries who have no choice other than using out-of-network providers shouldn't be charged an extra \$1,200 in enrollment fees and extra deductible for having no other option," Strobridge told the panel.

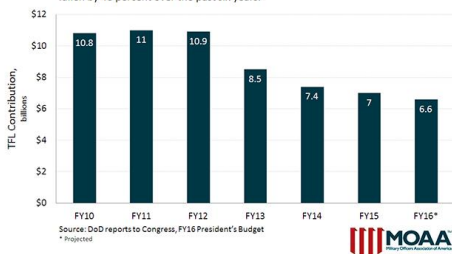
*(Editor's Note: Alaska might very well be even more disproportionately affected, with its high per capita military population, plus a potentially large out-of-network population for those veterans away from population centers.)*

MOAA believes there should be no enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard or TFL, as neither plan guarantees access to a network of providers, as TRICARE Prime does. "MOAA particularly disagrees with the proposal to means-test the TFL enrollment fee by making it a percentage of retired pay," Strobridge said. "No other federal or civilian employer means-tests its retirees' service-earned health coverage, since it would penalize longer and more successful service."

"We urge against any enrollment fee for TFL for three additional reasons: First, these older retirees already pay more for their health care than any other military beneficiaries. Second, DoD only pays 20 percent of their health costs, because Medicare is first payer. Finally, DoD costs for TFL have dropped 40 percent over the last several years." (See chart below):

## DoD TFL Costs Spiraling - Downward

Despite cries of health care "eating the DoD budget alive," costs for TFL have fallen by 40 percent over the past six years.



## May Dinner Social

May 26 will be our final dinner social of the year. Vice-President Burton (Catkin!) will provide a recap of the MOAA annual Storming The Hill event which is going on now, as well as any tidbits she picks up from her visits to our federal representatives. We also need to have a formal vote to retain current board members or to bring on new or additional personnel. We won't strong arm you, we promise!

## Board Service

If you are interested in serving on the board or in a support role, please let us know, so we can have a formal vote by the chapter present at our last session. If you are interested, but would prefer to spend a year working with the current incumbent, we are happy to accommodate that as well. Positions which are either filled or gapped where you could help us include:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

- Communications (newsletter)
- Social coordinator (dinners)
- Legislative liaison
- Surviving spouse liaison
- Special events and tour coordinator (special events such as cruises or golf tournaments)
- Scholarship coordinator & JROTC awards coordinator

## Chapter Website

We are proud to announce that the chapter has a new website! Secretary Grunwald (Edie) has once again gone above and beyond the call of duty and taught herself how to build a website and to coordinate with MOAA to have them connected. You can visit the website at: [www.MOAA-AK.COM](http://www.MOAA-AK.COM)

Since it's new, it's a bit content-light at the moment. We'd love input on both what would make it useful for you, design suggestions, etc., and it will continue to evolve as we work on it.

## General Interest: Superfortress Restoration



Doc is a B-29 Superfortress and one of 1,644 manufactured in Wichita during World War II. Since 1987 when Tony Mazzolini found Doc on sitting and rotting away in the Mojave Desert, plans have been in the works to restore

the historic warbird to flying status to serve as a flying museum.

After a long winter of not being able to run the engines on this historic B-29, the restoration crew recently successfully started and tested all four engines. The engine starts and testing were part of the overall Federal Aviation Administration inspection to receive an Airworthiness Certificate. If you're an aviation buff and want to know more about Doc, (*Ed note: and I'm sure they wouldn't mind a contribution!*) you can visit their website at <http://www.b-29doc.com/docs-story/>.

## Other Recent National Military News

**Milley says Army may not be ready to deal with emerging threats** The Army may not be ready to respond to any new large conflicts from emerging threats, according to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley. "On the 'high military risk,' to be clear, we have sufficient capacity and capability and readiness to fight counterinsurgency/counterterrorism. My military risk refers specifically to what I see as emerging threats and potential for great power conflict, and I am specifically talking about the time it takes to execute the task ... and the cost in terms of casualties," he told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday. *Defense News (4/8)*

**Firing on Islamic State militants an everyday occurrence for Marines** The more than 100 Marine artillerymen at a firebase southeast of Mosul, Iraq, fire every day on Islamic State militants holding the city, a Pentagon spokesman



says. "They fire anything from high explosives to suppress the enemy, to smoke to screen friendly movement, to illumination rounds to help patrol in the evenings. So they are fully engaged," said Army Col. Steve Warren, who is based in Baghdad. Officials say more bases like Firebase Bell could pop up soon to aid Iraqi forces. *MarineCorpsTimes.com (4/7)*

**US said to be pondering shift of troops in Sinai Peninsula** US and international troops stationed in the northern Sinai Peninsula in Egypt may move south because of a growing threat from the Islamic State, according to reports. The move reportedly is being discussed with Egypt and Israel because it could affect a peace deal the two nations signed in 1979 that requires placement of an international force to monitor compliance. Pentagon officials wouldn't confirm or deny the report. *Defense News/Agence France-Presse (4/5)*

**Panel may suggest closing all VA health care facilities** The VA Commission on Care is considering a plan that would close all Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities over the next two decades and transfer veterans' health care to the private sector. The plan would make the VA a payer similar to Medicare. VA officials and several veterans' advocacy groups have expressed dismay at the proposal. *Military Times (4/1)*

*(Ed Note: It is an interesting dichotomy to see how on one hand our government seems to be ramping up military*

*involvement while simultaneously looking for cost cutting measures in the area of taking care of those who have served; this underscores the importance that MOAA National brings to the table in keeping faith with those who served, as well as the importance in our support for them in their efforts.)*



**Plans for more US ground troops in Iraq coming together** Plans to send more US ground troops to Iraq to help local forces retake the city of Mosul from Islamic State militants are being finalized. Commanders of Iraqi and US forces have cited specific ways US troops can help the Iraqi operation, and the Pentagon will soon send the plan to President Barack Obama for approval. *Military Times (3/31)*

**Nervous Poland asks NATO for additional troops** Polish President Andrzej Duda, unnerved by Russia's actions in Eastern Europe, wants more NATO troops stationed in his country. "It [the troops] may be of the rotational nature, but I would like to make sure that it is so intensive as to avoid such days on which there are no NATO forces in the territory of Poland," he said. The US has been beefing up its presence in

Eastern Europe to allay allies' fears. *Defense One (4/1)*

**US, allies decry missile tests by Iran** The US, the UK, France and Germany have sent a letter to Roman Oyarzun Marchesi, Spain's UN ambassador, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon criticizing Iran's recent test-firing of nuclear-capable missiles, which they say defies a UN Security Council resolution. However, officials say the launches don't violate the landmark nuclear agreement made with Iran last year. The most likely consequence to Iran is a public chiding from the Security Council, diplomats say. *Reuters (3/29)*

**US military families told to leave areas of Turkey** Family members of US military and diplomatic personnel have been ordered out of some areas of Turkey, including the Incirlik air base, as a security precaution. No specific threat was tied to the move, which had been under consideration for some time. The action will affect about 670 dependents of military personnel. *Reuters (3/30)*

**Overdue Middle East strategy report met with criticism** The White House's Middle East strategy report outlining the Obama administration's plan for dealing with the Islamic State has been sent to Congress. The report was supposed to be delivered by Feb. 15. "[T]he seven page document fails to provide much new information and fails to address all the elements required by law, such as identifying which groups must be engaged to counter violent extremism," said House Armed Services

Committee Chairman Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas. *The Hill* (3/25)

**Expert: Presidential candidates should make defense plans now** Presidential candidates should already be planning for national security, one defense expert says. "Republican and Democratic nominees should each empower a team to begin working, even before the election, to assess the national security environment, develop a strategic framework and set of guiding principles, and articulate a clear set of priorities that will inform the administration's early actions on national security," according to Michele Flournoy, CEO of the Center for a New American Security. *Military Times* (3/29)

**Coast Guard's icebreaker timeline worries lawmaker** The timeline for the US Coast Guard to receive a new icebreaker ship could harm the US' ability to keep up with Russia in the Arctic, according to Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif. "It is clear countries like Russia, with a large fleet of heavy icebreakers, understand the importance of a strong presence in the Polar Regions," he said in a letter to Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft. "Regrettably, the Coast Guard's current plan of action has a high likelihood of leaving our country without this important capability for at least several years." *The Hill* (3/24)

**US Air Force handles majority of airstrikes against Islamic State group** More than 50% of the coalition airstrikes against the Islamic State group

in Iraq and Syria have been handled by the US Air Force, striking approximately 25 locations and assets a day, according to military officials.



"We have conducted 67% of the nearly 11,000 airstrikes. From F-15s to F-22s to A-10s to B-1s to [remotely piloted aircraft], we use all of the aircraft to meet" mission demands, said Lt. Gen. John Raymond, Air Force operations deputy chief of staff. *Military Times* (3/24)

**Civilian hiring freeze kicks in at DOD** A civilian hiring freeze has begun at the Defense Department, affecting all vacant civilian positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Defense Agencies and Field Activities, effective March 20. Congressional pressure to reduce the Pentagon's headquarters staff may be related to the freeze. "We have instructions, both internal and from the Congress, to hold down civilian [jobs] commensurate with draw down in the military, and we recognize that mandate," said Mike McCord, the Pentagon's comptroller, in congressional testimony this week. *Defense News* (3/24)

**US will boost presence at Philippine bases** A deal with the Philippines will establish a bigger US presence on five Philippine bases as tensions simmer over China's moves in the South China

Sea. The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement will allow the US to deploy conventional forces to the Philippines' Antonio Bautista, Basa, Fort Magsaysay, Lumbia and Mactan-Benito Ebuen bases. China voiced questions about the deal Monday. *The Washington Post* (tiered subscription model) (3/21)

### Early Medals of Honor



### Signalman 1/C Douglas Munro

The Medal of Honor is awarded to those who serve and act far above and beyond the call of duty. The only Coast Guardsman to be awarded the Medal of Honor (Navy, posthumous) was Signalman First Class Douglas Munro.

On September 27, 1942, during the Second Battle of the Matanikau, part of the Guadalcanal Campaign, Munro was in charge of a detachment of ten boats which landed U.S. Marines at the scene.

After successfully taking combatants ashore, he returned his boats to their previously assigned position and almost immediately learned that conditions ashore were different from what had been anticipated, and that it was necessary to evacuate the Marines immediately. Munro volunteered for the job and brought the boats to shore under heavy enemy fire, then proceeded to evacuate the men from the beach. When most of them were in

the boats, complications arose in evacuating the last men, whom Munro realized would be in the greatest danger. He accordingly placed himself and his boats such that they would serve as cover for the last men to leave.



Among the Marines evacuated that day was Lt. Col. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, USMC, a giant in Marine Corps lore who would later rise to the rank of Lieutenant General. During this action—protecting the men after he had evacuated them—Munro was fatally wounded. He remained conscious sufficiently long only to say four words: "Did they get off"?

### Little Known American Heroes Molly Pitcher

Molly Pitcher was a nickname given to a woman said to have fought in the American Battle of Monmouth, who is generally believed to have been Mary Ludwig Hays, although there is evidence this may have been a composite of a number of women with similar stories. Nonetheless, Molly Pitcher earned her nickname from carrying water to infantry troops on hot days. "Molly" was a common name for women named

Mary during the time; thus: "Molly! Pitcher!" She also baked delicious food, washed clothes and blankets, and cared for sick and injured soldiers.

Famously, at the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778, Pitcher's husband collapsed from heat exhaustion next to his cannon. She seized control of the cannon and continued to clean, load, and fire it.

As her husband was carried off the battlefield, Mary Hays took his place at the cannon. For the rest of the day, in the heat of battle, Mary continued to "swab and load" the cannon using her husband's ramrod. At one point, a British musket ball or cannonball flew between her legs and tore off the bottom of her skirt. Mary supposedly said something to the effect of, "Well, that could have been worse," and went back to loading the cannon.



Her bravery was ultimately rewarded by General George Washington, who made her a non-commissioned officer; she was thereafter known as "Sergeant Molly," a moniker she used for the rest of her life.

### 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.

- April 11-14: MOAA Storming the Hill
- Apr 28: Dinner Social (Steve Ribuffo, Dir, Port of Anchorage)
- May 26: Dinner Social (Speaker TBD)
- Jun 14: Army Birthday
- Aug 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- Sep 18: Air Force Birthday
- Sep 22: MOAA First Dinner of Season
- 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

### 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)

*President: Clyde T. (Tom) Burton  
Vice-President: Catkin M. Kilcher Burton  
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