

October Dinner Social

On October 24th, we had an excellent event where our guest of honor was the State of Alaska serving Lieutenant Governor, Kevin Meyer.

It was interesting particularly because of the events going on with the legislature and the oil revenue/expenditures discussion. He shared his observations and assessment of how the next session and years may develop. We are very appreciative of his taking time out of his busy schedule to spend some time with us. And of course, he was presented with the MOAA Oven Mitt – we hope that if things get hot in the capitol city, it will help him 'handle the heat!'



Christmas Social – Invite!

- Date: December 5, 2019
- Time: 6 – 9 p.m.
- Location: Pawlowski Home

**Main Dish Provided by hosts

****Bring a side dish, salad, dessert, drinks... **Bring a gift around \$20 value** for Gift Exchange Game (optional-if you would like to participate – super enjoyable!)

Enjoy the friendship! RSVP: E-mail: Justin.mills2@Ml.com

MOAA National News

'Medicare at No Cost to You!' Really?

By: Shane Ostrom, Nov 5, 2019

You gotta love the marketing pitches of those Medicare Advantage plans – the ones popping up online and on your TV at all hours during open enrollment season. You've seen their "\$0 premium" pitches, but these plans are not as "free" as they imply. Does that surprise you?

Those ads are really saying that the plan carries no "premium" cost above your Part B Medicare premium. You still have to pay Part B premiums. And the ads do not mention other possible costs, which could include:

- The higher cost of co-pays or co-insurance.
- The higher deductibles.
- The higher yearly limit on your out-of-pocket costs for all medical services.
- The fact that you'll have to go where they tell you go for services.

These companies are going to get their pound of flesh one way or another, or they wouldn't be in business.

Remember, Medicare comes in two flavors: Original Medicare is government insurance, but the government allows private health insurers to get in the game by offering Medicare Advantage plans. Advantage plans have to offer no less coverage than Original Medicare by law, but they can offer more. And they can charge as they wish for the extras.

These pitches are for Medicare Advantage plans. You can choose one if you want to get the extra services. The \$0 amount is how much extra premium they charge above the standard Part B premium.

Whether you go Original or Advantage plan, they all work the same with TRICARE for Life. All of them are considered Parts A and B Medicare by law, so TRICARE does not care which one you have. If you are wading through the ads as you shop for an Advantage plan, here's one final thing to keep in mind: Be careful of Advantage plans that come with Part D (drug) plans. You do not want one.

Having another drug plan messes with your TRICARE pharmacy plan. You won't be able to use the Express Scripts home delivery program, and you'll have to file manual claims with TRICARE.

The bottom line: Look at all the costs when comparing plans to determine what makes the best sense for you.

Space A Travel

Space-A refers to the practice of traveling when a military flight has unused or unassigned seats aboard, and is largely at no expense to the traveler. Some small overseas surcharges may apply (in the range of \$8). Here is some information that might be useful. As you can tell, it is a bit general. This is because the answers to your specific questions can vary depending on many factors. Please use these as general guidance and be prepared to

communicate with the Passenger Terminal you intend to use.



An authoritative source to start your search for information is at the following website:

<https://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page/>

Some information pulled from the above site:

1 - Travel Eligibility (Categories). The categories that determine your order of selection for Space A flights are:

- Category 1 Emergency leave.
- Category 2 Environmental Morale Leave (EML)
- Category 3 Ordinary leave.
- Category 4 Unaccompanied dependents on EML.
- Category 5 Permissive Temporary Duty and students.
- Category 6 Retirees

2 – Locations. Review common destinations offered at your nearest AMC Passenger Terminal by visiting their Social Media Page.

3 - Document Check. Ensure you have the required travel documents, such as your passport along with any required visas.

Customs and Immigration requirements may change, contact your departure passenger terminal for current documentation requirements or travel restrictions. Other information regarding travel documents may be found by visiting the U.S. Department of State International Travel website.

4 – Registration. You can register in-person at a local AMC Passenger Terminal by speaking directly with a passenger service agent or by FAX or E-mail.

5 - Flight Schedules. For specific travel information, please contact your nearest Passenger Terminal or check your Passenger Terminal Facebook Page for their 72-Hour Flight Schedule.

6 - Checking in. Check-in at the terminal counter to mark yourself present and review updated flight information. Ensure you do not exceed baggage weight limits and are not traveling with any prohibited items. Await your Space-A call and follow instructions given to you by the passenger service agents.

If any MOAA members use Space-A, we'd love a report on your travels. I came across a lovely article written by a military wife and if you are interested in her much more detailed (but a bit long) article, please let Tom Burton know and he'll push it to you!

Happy Travels!

DOD

Strategic News

Training Event Postponed to Encourage North Korea to Return to Negotiations

NOV. 17, 2019 | BY JIM GARAMONE

The U.S. and South Korea are postponing a combined flying training event that was scheduled to start tomorrow in South Korea, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said yesterday.

"The reason we're doing that is to give the North Koreans an opportunity to reconsider some of their recent provocations and come back to the negotiating table," Army Gen. Mark A. Milley told reporters traveling with him. Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper and South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo made the official announcement of the postponement during a meeting of defense ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Bangkok. Both nations discussed postponing the training event during recent talks in Seoul. President Donald J. Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in approved the postponement.

The flying training event is a wing-sized event with aircrew from the United States and South Korea. President Donald J. Trump cancelled the predecessor event — Exercise Vigilant Eagle — in 2018.

All nations want North Korea to give up nuclear arms and the means to deliver

them. Trump has met twice with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to fully denuclearize the peninsula. North Korea has been needlessly provocative launching short-range missiles.

"The military stands firmly in support of diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation on the ground peacefully," Milley said.



Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper walks with South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo at the 51st annual U.S.-South Korean Security Consultative Meeting in Seoul, South Korea, Nov. 15, 2019.

DOD
Defense News

The Pentagon completed its second audit. What did it find? (Defense News) For the second year in a row, the Pentagon has officially failed its audit. And for the second year in a row, that result was expected.

Esper says South Korea, which paid 90 percent of costs for Camp Humphreys, needs to increase 'burden-sharing' to keep US troops in South Korea. (Military Times) Secretary of Defense Mark Esper is turning up the heat on South Korea to increase how much it is contributing in host-nation support, a move that comes after South Korea already boosted its financial

contribution in host-nation support earlier this year.

Partnership with Kurds against ISIS still strong, says US coalition general. (The Associated Press) A senior U.S. coalition commander said Friday the partnership with Syrian Kurdish forces remains strong and focused on fighting the Islamic State group, despite an expanding Turkish incursion into areas under Kurdish control.

China aircraft carrier fleet passes near rival Taiwan; says American and Japanese ships followed. (The Associated Press) A Chinese aircraft carrier fleet passed near Taiwan on Sunday, prompting the self-governing island to scramble ships and jets to monitor the situation.

U.S., South Korea resume defense cost-sharing talks amid protests of 'robbery'. (Reuters) South Korean and U.S. officials resumed talks on Monday to narrow a \$4 billion gap in how much they want Seoul to pay for the cost of hosting the American military amid public protests of "highway robbery" against sharply increased U.S. demands.

Soldier from Mississippi identified from remains returned by North Korea. (The Associated Press) A Mississippi family will hold a funeral next month for a soldier who died during the Korean War.

Watchdog: SWO ship-driving test scores continue to lag. (Navy Times) While the Navy has invested heavily in ship-driving training in the wake of two fatal collisions in 2017, surface warfare

officer test scores haven't improved and officials still can't track whether safety reforms are working, according to a federal government watchdog report released Thursday.

Last survivor of the Hindenburg disaster dies at age 90. (The Associated Press) The last remaining survivor of the Hindenburg disaster, who suffered severe burns to his face, arms and legs before his mother managed to toss him and his brother from the burning airship, has died.



Coasties rescue 78-year-old trying to cross ocean in homemade boat. (Navy Times) Low on food and water and two months overdue in his quest to journey across the Pacific Ocean in a homemade sailboat, a 78-year-old man was rescued early Thursday by the Coast Guard cutter Robert Ward near California's Channel Islands.

Military academy athletes can now delay service, go pro. (The Associated Press) Defense Secretary Mark Esper has opened the door for athletes at the nation's military academies to play professional sports after they graduate, and delay their active-duty service.

Esper says US forces combating ISIS in Libya 'continue to mow the lawn'. (Military Times) U.S. airstrikes targeting Islamic State fighters in Libya in September knocked out nearly one-third of the group's fighters, but U.S. officials aren't sweating over a massive ISIS resurgence in the country.

SOCOM is working on a mechanical 'third arm' that may tout a drone-killing weapon system. (Task & Purpose) U.S. special operations forces could eventually deploy with an articulated mechanical 'third arm' that could potentially detect, track, and classify incoming unmanned aerial systems, Task & Purpose has learned.

Army tests out drone that can fire grenades into enemy hideouts. (Military.com) U.S. Army weapons officials are testing an experimental drone armed with a multi-shot, 40mm grenade launcher to destroy enemy targets hiding behind cover.

Navy beginning tech study to extend Trident nuclear missile into the 2080s. (USNI News) The Navy's Strategic Systems Program this fiscal year will begin looking at what new technologies it will need to develop to sustain and modernize its nuclear weapons so they can operate on the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines through the 2080s.

The latest backlog at the VA: Whistleblower complaints. (Military.com) Members of Congress expressed concern and curiosity about the reason for a "significant" backlog in

resolving the Department of Veteran's Affairs' whistleblower complaints.

New K-9 legislation would provide federal funding for retired military working dogs' medical expenses. (Military Times) It costs an average of \$3,000 per year to pay for retired military working dogs' medical expenses, according to Rep. Ron White.

Lawmakers under pressure to pass benefits fix for military families. (The Hill) Lawmakers and stakeholder groups are pushing for legislation to be enacted this year that would help families of deceased military members have more money in survivor benefits.

Stealthy Lockheed F-35 breaks down too often, Pentagon says. (Bloomberg) The Pentagon's chief weapons tester said the next-generation F-35 jet continues to fall short of full combat readiness targets and, despite some progress on reliability issues, all three versions of the fighter are breaking down "more often than planned."

World War II

Navy verifies lost sub rediscovered
By: The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A team of ocean explorers say a U.S. submarine with 80 sailors on board when it disappeared in 1944 has been discovered in Japanese waters. (Navy Times editor's note: With eight battle stars, Grayback was one of the great boats in Navy history, credited with sinking 14 enemy vessels and 64,835 tons of shipping during World War II.)

The "Lost 52 Project" announced Sunday that the World War II submarine Grayback was found in June after it had disappeared in February 1944 during its final combat mission. The U.S. Navy officially verified the discovery of the submarine that was located about 50 nautical miles south of Okinawa by the group of ocean explorers.



*The Tambor-class submarine Grayback in 1941.
(U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command)*

The group says in a release that this is the 5th WWII submarine discovery for the team led by undersea explorer Tim Taylor using robotics and other underwater technological methods and vehicles. The project's objective is to find the 52 U.S. submarines that were lost in WWII.

But let's talk about Grayback's 10th and last war patrol. The boat left Pearl Harbor on 28 January 1944 for the East China Sea. On 19 February, Grayback attacked Japanese convoy TAPA 02, sinking the enemy army cargo ship Taikei Maru southwest of Formosa. When sister transport Toshin Maru retrieved the survivors, Grayback sank it, too.

By then, Grayback was down to two torpedoes and was ordered home. On 26 February, however, Japanese naval

aircraft operating from land bases located and attacked the sub in the East China Sea, damaging the boat.

That didn't stop Grayback from sinking the naval transport Ceylon Maru the next day. Hours later, a Japanese plane spied an American submarine operating on the surface and attacked, later reporting that the boat "exploded and sank immediately." Japanese antisubmarine vessels then salted the East China Sea with depth charges. Air bubbles and then a telltale trail of heavy oil gurgling to the surface seemed to mark where Grayback went on eternal patrol.

The Navy didn't know the fate of Grayback and later mistranslated the intercepted Japanese transmissions about where a sub had been attacked, which led to decades of confusion about where it finally rested. Grayback failed to reach Midway as expected by 7 March and was listed as overdue and presumed lost 23 days later.

On 2 July 1957, the Navy's second Grayback (SSG-574) was launched at the Mare Island Navy Yard in Vallejo, California. The boat's sponsor was Mrs. John A. Moore, the widow of the final commander of the first Grayback. The lead ship in its class, Grayback was the first Navy guided-missile submarine to carry the Regulus II sea-to-surface missile. But it soon became outdated, thanks to the advent of cheaper Polaris missiles.



At the launching party for the submarine Grayback on 2 July 1957, Mrs. John A. Moore, sponsor (widow of the last skipper of the first GRAYBACK); Rear Adm. M. J. Lawrence; Mrs. R. L. Mayo, matron of honor, at Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, California. (National Archives)

After nine patrols and 20 months at sea traveling more than 130,000 on strategic deterrent strike missions, the second Grayback was decommissioned at Mare Island on 25 May 1964. She was recommissioned as an amphibious transport submarine four years later (LPSS-574) and one of its missions included Operation Thunderhead in 1972, a tragic attempt by Navy SEALs to rescue American prisoners of war trying to escape North Vietnam. It was decommissioned a dozen years later for the second time and was returned to the sea in a 13 April 1986 SINKEX.

Movie Weekend?

Go see Midway this weekend. (Washington Examiner) You should go and watch Midway, the newly released

Roland Emmerich movie celebrating the June 1942 U.S. victory at the Battle of Midway. I give it an A grade.

2019/20 Calendar of Events

- Dec 5: 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
- Oct 13: Navy Birthday
- Oct 22: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Nov 10: Marine Corps Birthday

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

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