

Happy New Year!

Blessings upon you and yours as we enter a new year which we hope will bring peace and satisfaction to you and yours.



February Social

We are taking a break from a social in January, so our next get-together will be at the 40th annual ASYMCA "Salute to the Military" banquet in February. When you log in, just ask to sit with other members of the MOAA Captain Cook chapter. Please join us and the Honorary Salute Chair, Senator Lisa Murkowski, on February 18, 2017 at the Dena'ina Center. Reservations may be made through the ASYMCA website.

Condolences and Prayers

We extend sorrowful condolences and prayers to Edie and Ben Grunwald as they wrestle with the recent and tragic loss of their beloved son David, and our heartfelt hopes that justice is fully served.

December Social

The chapter came together on December 15 at the home of Brenda and George Wuerch. A lovely evening was had by all and included a visit by Senator Dan Sullivan.



Sen Sullivan provided some of his thoughts on defense issues important to Alaska and the nation:

- The Arctic and Pacific region continues to grow in importance and requires continued vigilance and emphasis.
- Alaska is a significant strategic hub in both these regions for the U.S. (as noted by Gen Billy Mitchell, founder of the U.S. Air Force)
- Missile Defense and strategic access allowed by Alaska's location provide a significant advantage to the military considerations of three of our major combatant commands (PACOM, EUCOM, NORTHCOM).
- Tough Arctic training (from the individual level up to robust joint and combined training) is available and an important resource to our Nation's defensive capability.
- Peer competitors (China and Russia) are both active in regions accessible by

Alaska. North Korea continues to threaten, and is increasingly capable of, international ballistic missile activity.



We are most appreciative of the time and effort George and Brenda put into ensuring a wonderful evening of camaraderie and we also are very thankful that Senator Sullivan took time out of a busy schedule to spend the evening with us.

Spring Visit

Early notice – we've tentatively confirmed that we will have a visit from MOAA National in April or May. The President of MOAA, LtGen Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret) will join us. More to follow!

Annual chapter dues

It's that time of year - we ask that you submit your annual \$25 chapter dues as noted below (whichever is most convenient for you). On-line payment may be made at <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx> or a check payable to Captain Cook Chapter.



MOAA News

MOAA Responds to 2017 Defense Bill

Alexandria, Va. - President Barack Obama signed into law the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) issued the following statement in response to the president signing the annual defense bill in advance of the holidays.

“This is one of the most important and comprehensive defense bills passed in many years, and we are pleased with the broad consensus on compensation and healthcare,” said MOAA president and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins.

Acknowledging the congressional achievement, Atkins said, “We appreciate the magnitude of effort by the Armed Services committee members. Even in this tough fiscal environment, Congress found a way to treat military people fairly, resolving hundreds of differences between their respective versions of the bill, accommodating MOAA's and The Military Coalition's recommendations on most of them.

Atkins also pointed out, “MOAA believes the health care reforms required in the new law are positive steps toward our goal of improving beneficiaries' access to quality health care and elimination of administrative hassles beneficiaries have experienced too often. “All in all, the vast majority of NDAA issues reflect the positive outcomes of our advocacy,” Atkins concluded.

The 2017 NDAA puts into law new requirements spanning many of DoD's programs. Most notably, it will entail sweeping changes for the military health care system. This legislation puts into law a number of MOAA's advocacy priorities. Specifically, it:

- Secures a 2.1 percent military pay raise versus the 1.6 percent pay raise proposed by the administration. The 2.1 percent pay raise matches the average American's, as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Cost Index.
- Stops the force drawdown and actually increases manpower levels, especially for the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps.
- Requires an array of reforms to improve beneficiaries' access to timely and high-quality health care.
- Protects currently serving and retired beneficiaries from a variety of steep TRICARE fee increases proposed in the administration's budget.
- Rejects a Senate proposal to cut housing allowances by \$10,000 to \$30,000 a year for dual-military couples and other service members who share housing.
- Provides needed survivor benefit improvements: (a) extending the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) until May 2018 at \$310 per month, and (b) increasing Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities for survivors of reservists who die during Inactive Duty Training, to match benefits provided for active duty deaths.

The long list of health care improvement requirements are aimed at addressing the systemic and chronic problems MOAA and others have highlighted with beneficiary access (appointments and referrals), quality of care and safety and consistency of care. They include changes in contracting, appointment and referral processes and holding medical providers and commanders more accountable for productivity and consistency of beneficiary-centric care, especially in military facilities.

One major aspect affecting TRICARE Standard beneficiaries is a change to this program, effective Jan. 1, 2018, to a preferred provider organization called TRICARE Select. Another big difference is all non-Medicare-eligible retired beneficiaries will be required to formally enroll every year in either TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select, starting in 2018. Previously, only TRICARE Prime required a formal annual enrollment.

The Prime option, though largely unchanged, will be modernized such that the majority of referrals to specialists from primary care managers will no longer be required to go through a cumbersome pre-authorization process. Pre-authorizations for urgent care also will no longer be required. To learn more about the NDAA and how it affects you and your family, visit www.MOAA.org to stay current on the latest developments.



U.S. military ill-prepared for Arctic confrontation

by Shawn Snow (*Military Times*, 12/29)

The thawing Arctic, and its potentially vast deposits of minerals and natural gas, is opening the global community to intense competition among major geopolitical players, a competition that a former top U.S. military commander in Europe believes is vital to U.S. and NATO interests.

For the U.S., the Arctic is “absolutely vital — not only nationally but in the context of NATO — [as] all Arctic nations, save only Russia, are NATO members, and Russia is building real military muscle in the high north,” said retired Adm. James Stavridis in an interview with *Military Times*. “There will be strategic competition over resources — hydrocarbons and shipping routes, primarily — and global warming will exacerbate them by exposing those resources,” Stavridis said.

Stavridis, the current dean of the Fletcher School and a retired four-star admiral whose last command was Supreme Allied Commander Europe, believes the U.S. is far behind other competitors, namely Russia, in pursuing interests in the region. According to the former Europe commander, the U.S. only has two icebreakers and is generally ill-prepared for Arctic operations. To put it in context, Russia has 41 icebreakers in operation with plans to build more, according to reports from the Congressional Research Service.

Currently, the U.S. icebreaking fleet consists of one heavy icebreaker, *Polar Star*, and one medium polar icebreaker, *Healy*. The Coast Guard does have a second heavy polar icebreaker, *Polar Sea*. However, this vessel suffered an engine malfunction in 2010 and is out of service. To make matters worse, both *Polar Star* and *Polar Sea* are beyond their 30-year service life, having entered service in 1976 and 1978, respectively.

To remedy the situation, Congress has set aside \$1 billion in funds in the 2017 annual defense authorization bill, which was signed by President Obama last Friday. “Our FY2017 defense funding bill makes a critical investment in the long-delayed expansion of the U.S. icebreaker fleet,” Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., said. “We must take assertive action to provide the vessels needed to protect American national security and economic interests in the Arctic region. The United States needs the capability to have year-round access to Polar Regions.”

However, climate change is likely to accelerate tensions in the Arctic and construction of the new U.S. icebreakers will likely not conclude until 2020. In 2016, Greenland’s ice surface melt ranked second, after only 2012, over the 37-year period of satellite record, which spanned 1979 to 2016, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a government science agency focused on ocean and atmosphere research. Surface air temperature in the Arctic for 2016 was the highest since 1900, and new monthly record highs were

recorded for January, February, October and November 2016.

With record Arctic temperatures and ice melt, “literally a new ocean is transforming before our eyes, and, first and foremost, that increases commercial and human activity and that requires a significant increase in search and rescue capabilities, maritime domain awareness to track vessels, and to prevent oil spills,” Heather Conley, an expert in Arctic issues for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told *Military Times*.

“We have energy exploration in the Russian and European Arctic, so just the very fact the change in climate has so drastically changed the Arctic, which is allowing greater activity, it requires a pretty significant response in infrastructure,” she said. With the increased commercial activity and competition in the region, NATO has a significant role to play, as five of the six major Arctic nations are NATO countries, Stavridis said.



Photo Credit: Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tyler Thompson/Navy



Recently, the U.S. has stepped up its presence in the region. Over the summer, Secretary of State John Kerry and Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, visited Norway and Greenland to witness the impact of climate change and to reassure NATO allies that the issue was on America's radar. On the military front, U.S. soldiers and Marines have conducted extreme cold weather military training exercises in preparation for a potential military conflict in the harsh Arctic environment. Last November, 40 soldiers from U.S. Army Alaska's 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division participated in Operation Arctic Pegasus; and this February, U.S. Marines, as part of the Black Sea Rotational Force, completed an arctic-weather training package in Porsangmoen, Norway, alongside NATO allies.

Last March, two Los Angeles-class submarines participated in Ice Exercise (ICEX), an exercise designed to test operational readiness of the submarine force while advancing scientific research. The exercise took place at U.S. Navy Ice Camp Sargo, a station located on top of an ice sheet in the Arctic. Currently, submarine patrols and exercises in the Arctic are routine for the U.S; however, air and surface ship patrols are nearly non-existent, due to the need for stronger hulls in the icy Arctic waters, as assessed in the U.S. Navy's Arctic Roadmap 2014-2030.

"We should work with allies for a balanced approach that begins with broad area surveillance, heightened

monitoring, intelligence/information sharing with allies, regular patrols of air and sea (including underwater), mapping and scientific research," Stavridis said. "At the same time, we need a dialogue with Russia that hopefully can make the Arctic a zone of cooperation not of conflict."

Top 10 Army Modernization Efforts in 2016

30MM CANNON FOR STRYKER - The first prototype Stryker infantry carrier vehicle, outfitted with a 30-millimeter cannon, features a new fully-integrated commander's station, upgraded drive-train componentry and hull modifications.



DOUBLING HOWITZER RANGE - A longer, newly modified M777A2 howitzer that has the potential to double the system's current artillery range (from ~30 to ~70 kilometers). The modification, called the extended range cannon artillery, or ERCA, adds six feet to the cannon but less than 1,000 pounds to the overall system. Mobility testing will be conducted at Aberdeen

Proving Ground, Maryland, in the near future.



LIGHTWEIGHT BALLISTIC SHIRT - A revolutionary approach focuses on the Soldier as an athlete, is the game-changing, ballistic combat shirt, a new lightweight body armor system. Instead of one panel, the deltoid section is three panels. It's contoured so it ... has an improved range of motion." The shirt weighs 35 percent less than the current interceptor body armor system components it replaces and is less bulky.

NEW HAND GRENADE - The first new lethal hand grenade in more than 40 years. The multi-purpose hand grenade design will provide both fragmentation and blast overpressure more effectively and safely than its legacy counterparts. When fielded, Soldiers will be able to select and use an ambidextrous hand grenade with different effects simply by flipping a switch.

JLTV DEBUT - For both the Army and Marine Corps, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle is a tactical wheeled vehicle with a chassis that offers protection from underbelly blasts and an "intelligent" suspension system that can be raised and lowered for off-road



conditions. It also touts greater fuel efficiency than current tactical vehicles. A total of about 100 of the JLTV production vehicles will be provided to the Army and Marine Corps for testing over the next year, at a rate of about 10 per month. The vehicles will undergo maneuverability and automotive testing at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona, and other sites around the country.

NEW TOURNIQUET - The "junctional tourniquet" can be applied to wounds in ways not possible with conventional tourniquets. It is essentially a belt with one or more inflatable air bladders that can be puffed up, somewhat like a blood-pressure cuff, to apply pressure to a wound to stop hemorrhaging in about 60 seconds.

ENTANGLED PHOTONS - At the Army Research Laboratory, scientists are looking at new ways to exploit the most fundamental or "quantum" component of light -- the photon -- to enhance communications, sensing and cryptography, and anything else they can think of.

NEW ARMORED VEHICLE - The Armored multipurpose vehicle (AMPV) is meant to replace the armored brigade combat team's M113 family of vehicles and addresses the M113's shortcomings in survivability and force protection, as well as size, weight, power and cooling. The AMPV has a brand new hull but maintains some of the Bradley legacy design, allowing for some compatibility efficiencies. Parts have a 60 to 70% commonality with existing ground combat vehicles, has space inside a

stronger hull to allow for the addition of new systems in the future, and comes with an improved power train.

IMPROVED TURBINE ENGINE - The improved turbine engine program (ITEP), will develop a completely new engine that will likely one day replace those currently in use by the AH-64 Apache and Black Hawk helicopters.



HYDROGEN-POWERED VEHICLE - The ZH2 energy-efficient hydrogen-fuel-cell electric vehicle prototype tactical vehicle uses much less fuel than traditional tactical vehicle, has an extremely low acoustic signature with a radically reduced thermal signature.

Recent National Military News

New T-X Request for Proposals Tees Up Major Fight Among Defense Primes. The battle to build the Air Force's \$16.3 billion T-X trainer officially kicked off Friday with the release of the final request for proposals. (Defense News, 12/31)

Middle East Now Without a US Carrier. The Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group chopped out of the European theater of operations Dec. 26 and

headed home to Norfolk after months of operating in the Arabian Gulf and the Mediterranean, where the strike jets of Carrier Air Wing 3 flew hundreds of missions against Islamic State group targets in Syria and Iraq. The homecoming is set for Dec. 30 -- two days shy of the Navy's stated goal of bringing the group home in seven months. US carrier groups regularly relieve each other in theater, often handing off duties within sight of the other in the Arabian Gulf or Arabian Sea. But this time, no carrier is in the Eisenhower's wake. (Navy Times & Defense News, 12/30)

Army's RCO Approves Strategy to Prototype Electronic Warfare Capability. The Army's newest outfit -- set up to quickly fill land forces capability gaps -- will make major headway in 2017, particularly in the realm of electronic warfare, an area where adversaries, such as Russia, have shown startling prowess in recent years. (Defense News, 12/31)



DARPA project could improve battlefield communications. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is working to develop a radio transmitter that could improve battlefield communications. The transmitter, dubbed A Mechanically

Based Antenna, or AMEBA, would use ultra-low-frequency and very-low-frequency bands to enable communications underwater and through soil, rock or metal, researchers say. (Army Times, 12/29)

New in 2017: Armored BCTs start new deployments to Europe. (Army Times) The Army will start deploying an armored brigade combat team to Europe in 2017. (Defense News, 12/30)



Trump considering plans for privatizing VA medical options. (Military Times) President-elect Donald Trump is evaluating a radical overhaul of veterans' health care options even before he finalizes his pick for the next secretary of veterans' affairs. (Defense News, 12/30)

DoD Health Experts Want Troops to Cut Back on Energy Drinks. (Military.com) U.S. military health officials are warning service members that chugging too many energy drinks can have harmful side effects. (Defense News, 12/30)

Navy repeatedly dismissed evidence that 'Fat Leonard' was cheating the 7th Fleet. The Navy allowed the worst corruption scandal in its history to fester for several years by dismissing a flood of evidence that the rotund Asian defense

contractor was cheating the service out of millions of dollars and bribing officers with booze, sex and lavish dinners, newly released documents show. (Washington Post, 12/29)

US Intel Images Suggest Another N. Korean Missile Launch Site. New reviews of satellite images suggest North Korea may possess another missile launching site at a village once suspected of having nuclear facilities. (Voice of America, 12/29)

USN considers options for replacing Zumwalt's LRLAP projectile. The Long Range Land Attack Projectile (LRLAP), originally designed for USS Zumwalt's (DDG 1000) Advanced Gun System (AGS), has become too expensive and the US Navy (USN) is exploring options to replace the round, sources told IHS Jane's. . (IHS Jane's 360, 12/29)

China Takes New Step to Downgrade the Dollar's Prominence. China took another step to degrade the dollar in defining the value of its currency (Ed note: the Yuan), in an effort that cuts against its rival's stubbornly strong hold on the global financial system. (Bloomberg, 12/30)



State Department approves Philippine radar sale. The Philippines has

requested two AN/SPS-77 Sea Giraffe 3D air search radars and related equipment, support and training for two Hamilton-class cutters acquired through the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program. The value of the sale is estimated at \$25 million. (C4ISRNET, 12/29)

China's second FC-31 fighter prototype makes maiden flight. Images posted on Chinese online forums show what appears to be the second prototype of the Shenyang Aircraft Corporation (SAC) FC-31 'Gyrfalcon' twin-engine, 'fifth-generation' fighter making its maiden flight. (IHS Jane's 360, 12/29)



CBO: Halting concurrent payments could save billions. Dropping concurrent receipt, a practice that allows veterans who meet certain criteria to collect both retirement pay and disability payments at the same time, could save the government nearly \$140 billion between 2018 and 2026, the Congressional Budget Office says. The recommendation awaits the response of the new Congress and administration coming into office next month. (Military Times, 12/22)

Navy changes course on eliminating job titles. The Navy has decided against



dropping dozens of job titles, citing sailors' complaints, and will look at other ways it can update job names. "Modernizing our industrial-age personnel system in order to provide sailors choice and flexibility still remains a priority for us," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said. (The Associated Press, 12/21)



PowerWalk device converts soldiers' movement into energy. Army officials say they are closing in on their goal of developing a means for soldiers on foot to recharge their many electronic devices simply by walking. (C4ISRNET, 12/29)

VA posts quality ratings for medical centers nationwide. The Department of Veterans Affairs posted on its website quality-of-care ratings and indicators of improvement or decline for 146 medical centers. Overall, 120 of the medical centers have improved since 2015, the VA said. (USA Today, 12/20)

US Air Force Awards Satellite Anti-jamming Contract to Raytheon. Raytheon has been awarded a \$37 million Air Force contract to support anti-jamming efforts for satellite

communications. (Defense News, 12/29)

US on Track for Record Foreign Weapon Sales. The State Department has cleared \$45.2 billion in sales in just three months. (Defense News, 12/29)

NK hackers could disable US Pacific Command: report. A cyberattack by North Koreans could potentially knock out the computer network for the US Pacific Command, warned a report by a state-run agency for the analysis of defense technology. (Korea Herald, 12/30)

New in 2017: New cammies arrive in the fleet. By the time the calendar year closes out, sailors in boot camp will start being issued the green Type III cammies, which officially became the Navy's working uniform in October 2016. (Navy Times, 12/28)

Russia to Launch 2 Nuclear Subs in 2017. The Russian Navy is expecting to launch two new nuclear-powered submarines in 2017, according to the Russian Navy Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice-Admiral Viktor Bursuk. (The Diplomat, 12/28)

Correcting the Course of Future Defense Spending. In short, three measures: 1. Tax reform that generates economic growth, 2. Restraint in non-essential government spending, and 3. Fraud prevention could produce budget space for more defense spending some 500-1000 percent greater than needed to keep the deficit from worsening. (Real Clear Defense, 1/4)

North Korea's claim on ICBM test plausible: experts. North Korea has been working through 2016 on developing components for an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), making the isolated nation's claim that it was close to a test-launch plausible, international weapons experts said on Monday. (Reuters, 1/3)

New in 2017: Donald Trump vs. Sequestration. Donald Trump has promised to do away with the federal spending caps known as sequestration, rollbacks that have hit the Defense Department particularly hard. Now he has to figure out how to make that happen. (Military Times, 1/4)

Pentagon to Accelerate Rail Gun Projectile Weapon - Fires From Army Howitzer. The Navy is accelerating developmental testing of its high-tech, long-range Electro-Magnetic Rail Gun Hyper Velocity Projectile -- such that it can fire from existing weapons platforms such as an Army Howitzer. (Scout, 1/4)

Easier medical care access for military families expected via defense bill. The defense bill passed by Congress will provide easier access to urgent care and primary care for military families, with out-of-pocket expenses staying about the same for those already enrolled in Tricare. However, fees and copayments will be charged for those entering military service or signing up for plans after Jan. 1, 2018. (Military Times, 12/20)



Congress OKs more money, gets serious about laser weapons in defense bill. The U.S. military is set to see a 51 percent increase in funding to develop and procure laser weapons, a technologically-advanced "game-changer" as troops prepare for new and growing asymmetric threats around the world. (Defense News, 12/31)

**Little Known (facts about!)
American Heroes**

Captain John Paul Jones



The first well-known American naval officer, Paul Jones is still regarded as one of the finest naval men in history. He was a turncoat; formerly serving as captain of a number of British ships, he ultimately defected to America in 1775.

He led a direct attack against England and Ireland, severely undermining morale, and his successful campaigns on the American east coast led to him being one of the signers of the Treaty of Alliance with France, which formally recognized an independent American republic.

His escapades were so international that he had his own flag, the "John Paul Jones flag," which was necessary for when he was previously captured sailing under an "unknown flag." He's also known for his famous taunt when a British captain asked whether he was ready to surrender, to which he simply replied: "I have not yet begun to fight!"

Medal of Honor



U.S. unknown recipients include the Unknowns of World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

The Vietnam Unknown was later identified as Air Force 1st Lt. Michael J. Blassie through the use of DNA identification. Blassie's family asked for his Medal of Honor, but the Department of Defense denied the request in 1998.

According to Undersecretary of Defense Rudy de Leon, the medal was awarded symbolically to all Vietnam unknowns, not to Blassie specifically.



2016/17 Calendar of Events

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

- Feb 18: ASYMCA Salute to the Military
- Mar 23: Dinner Social
- April 11-14: MOAA Storming the Hill
- Apr 27: Dinner Social
- May 25: Dinner Social
- Jun 14: Army Birthday
- Aug 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- Sep 18: Air Force Birthday
- Sep 21: MOAA First Dinner of Season
- Oct 13: Navy Birthday
- Oct 26: Dinner Social
- Nov #: USMC Birthday Celebration
- Nov 10: Marine Corps Birthday
- Dec 1#: Christmas Social
- Jan 25 (2018): Dinner Social 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
- 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

*President: Catkin Kilcher Burton
Vice-President: Clyde T. (Tom) Burton
Secretary/Treasurer: Edith M. Grunwald
Legislative Liaison: Bob Pawlowski*

