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## Dinner Socials

The chapter enjoyed a dinner social at the Coast International Inn last month. Our speaker was Dr. Timothy Ballard (Col, USAF, Ret) who discussed his experience as the Director of the Alaska VA Healthcare System (AVAHS).



Dr. Ballard discussed the challenges he experienced since gaining that post, which included staffing and funding challenges to ensure proper care and oversight of the operation. He also discussed gaining hiring authority and improvement of operations, and recent successes in winning an award for excellent care.



We were glad to hear of his progress because we count on good medical care! Many thanks to everyone who attended! We appreciate your taking the time to join us!

Our next event will be March 28th at the Coast International Inn where we will hear from Dr. Anthony M. Hassan. Dr. Hassan is a 30 year veteran (enlisted and officer) of the US Army and Air Force. He is also the Chief Executive and President of the Cohen Veterans Network (CVN).



CVN is a \$275M not-for-profit philanthropic organization, serves veterans and military families by providing high-quality, accessible, and integrated mental health care.

Their goal is to establish 25 mental health clinics nationwide designed to improve the quality of life for post-9/11 veterans and their families by focusing on improving mental health outcomes, especially those associated with post-traumatic stress, through high-quality, free- or low-cost, and accessible mental health care.

Please save the date and join us!

- Speaker: Anthony M. Hassan, Ed.D, LCSW
- Topic: Veteran's Mental Care Clinics
- Date: March 28, 2019
- Time: 6:00 p.m.
- Location: Coast International Inn

**Alaska Legislative Initiative**  
*Transportable Spousal Investments*

One of our new members, 2DLT Andrew Brower (USAF), has brought forward an interesting initiative that we believe is very worthy and would like to propose chapter support. The succinct version is that military spouses, as we all know, are subject to the reassignment of their partners. As such, they can lose any matching funds or other retirement benefits on transfers of station. For our collective 1000+ years of service, this has been an issue and this proposal provides a mitigating concept.

This proposed legislative action would allow contributions by all private and public (county, borough, state, federal, other) agencies to the Thrift Savings Program (TSP) for the spouses/partners of eligible individuals. The idea is that in this way retirement accounts are not lost at reassignments, and can be put into the very popular, stable and well-run TSP program. This would add to the quality of life and long-term commitment to military families, with no federal investment of funds required. It simply requires the TSP program to establish a mechanism which can be accessed by organizations wishing to contribute to an account. An additional option, which would require federal expenditures (obviously would require a heavier legislative lift) would allow spouses to establish accounts with a federal match.

We would like to have some discussion of this at our next dinner social to receive input, and to develop a chapter consensus on a desired course. If the chapter concurs, we believe the

concept can be provided to MOAA National for support and also to our Alaskan Federal representatives. We look forward to the discussion!

### State Military Representatives

We have a number of military veterans in our State Legislature this session. We recently saw a photo of them where they gathered as a group with our junior federal Senator. Proud to see them participating in the legislative process and thanks to Representative Josh Revak for helping with attaching names to faces!



Left to right: David Eastman (R, 10), Laddie Shaw (R, 26), Steve Thompson (D, 2), Senator Dan Sullivan (R, AK), Ben Carpenter (R, 29), Sharon Jackson (R, 13), Joshua Revak (R, 25)

### Storming the Hill

Every year, our chapter supports MOAA National's efforts to educate, inform and guide our federal legislators. This annual "Storming the Hill" effort will happen this year on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

During this event, MOAA chapters and council representatives from across the country will meet in Washington. We are lucky to have federal representatives who are strong

supporters of the military, so while a lot of education at the prep courses and 'schlepping' across the Capitol, it is largely an enjoyable event. Not all of our comrades are so lucky!

MOAA has been noted (by The Hill) as the most effective military advocacy group and this support effort in which we bring actual constituents to Washington helps our national organization immensely. This year's topics will be SBP-DIC Offset, TRICARE, and military pay and benefits.

### JROTC Awards

The Annual Combined Interior JROTC Awards Ceremony is scheduled for 10 April 2019 and the Anchorage area JROTC Awards Ceremony is for 6 April.

This year the Captain Cook Chapter has committed to three scholarships statewide. Each awardee will receive \$250 payable to a college or vocational technical education school of their choice. We intend this to be an annual event and as our scholarship funds grow, we will increase the awards as they are sustainable.

Additionally, the Captain Cook Chapter of MOAA has funded, acquired and provided four ribbon and medal sets along with certificates.



### Scholarship Fund

At the dinner social, we auctioned off some bottles of wine for the scholarship fund. Thanks for the bidding and contributions!



We'll need to assess our remaining stock of Captain Cook pinots, merlots and cabernets and see if it's about time for another bottling event!

### ASYMCA

As you know, we often support the Armed Services YMCA of Alaska's annual Salute to the Military. Peter Goldberg (Col, USA, Ret) brought some pamphlets for this great organization and we always encourage support to other military oriented support or service organizations!

On this occasion, he notes the opportunity to assist with the Welcome Center at the airport, which is open as volunteers are available to support.



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He also shared an opportunity for you golden warriors to rise again in the upcoming National Veterans Golden Age Games, to be held here in Alaska on June 5-10, 2019.

Alternatively, you can volunteer to help with the many tasks associated with running the games.



We are attaching the notice for the games to this month's newsletter as a separate pdf file. Open it and see if there's a sport for you!

### Alaska Veterans' Concern

We queried Representative Josh Revak about ongoing legislative issues and we will try to bring those in the future, although current fiscal concerns and other political events may make veterans' issues somewhat rare in this session. However, as a note, he has a concern that the State isn't properly taking care of the Veterans Memorial near Byers Lake (snow plowing, lighting, possibly other issues). He noted that he will be looking into this and we applaud his efforts. As you see the opportunity to support him, we commend your efforts as well!

### DoD Systems F-35



U.S. developed aircraft are at the cutting edge of aviation technology. The F-35 is an example of that and are in the news in the Asia Theater. Singapore has recently joined two other allies (Japan and Australia) in announcing the purchase of these systems, adding to the already credible force projection capability in the region by these valued allies and the United States. Other allies (Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and Israel) also have pilots and maintainers either fully trained or at some point in the training process. Suppliers in all of the program's partner countries are producing F-35 components for all aircraft, not just those for their country.

The F-35 is optimized to be a multirole fighter, with the ability to perform air-to-air, air-to-ground and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. While the F-22 is superior to the F-35 in air-to-air missions, the F-35's air-to-air capability is superior to all other fighters.

The Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II is a family of single-seat, single-engined, all-weather stealth multirole fighters.

The fifth-generation combat aircraft is designed to perform ground-attack and air-superiority missions. The F-35 costs approximately \$89M each during low rate initial production. Each can carry up to two AIM-9X (heat-seeking air-to-air and surface-to-air) missiles on its wings and four AIM-120 AMRAAM (medium range, beyond visual range) missiles internally. Three variants of the F-35 will replace the A-10 and F-16 for the U.S. Air Force, the F/A-18 for the U.S. Navy, the F/A-18 and AV-8B Harrier for the U.S. Marine Corps, and a variety of fighters for at least ten other countries.

### MOAA National News

**MOAA Survey: Satisfaction with TRICARE Costs Keeps Falling; By:** Capt. Kathryn M. Beasley, USN (Ret), Director of Government Relations, Health Affairs (Note: Edited for brevity)

We asked, and you answered: Over 8,000 military beneficiaries responded to MOAA's most recent health care survey, which ended in January. And we heard an earful! The trends noted in last year's survey have shown even greater increases and continue to indicate TRICARE beneficiaries are dissatisfied with certain aspects of the TRICARE program. Of those who responded to the survey, 68 percent received their care with a civilian provider and 16 percent through a military treatment facility.

Key findings include:



- A notable decrease in overall program satisfaction experienced by beneficiaries using both TRICARE Select (a decrease of 10 percent) and Prime (a decrease of 12 percent). TRICARE for Life beneficiaries continue to maintain high levels of satisfaction.

- Most beneficiaries continue to be less satisfied with the cost of their care. TRICARE Select beneficiaries lead the way with 45 percent of respondents indicating some level of dissatisfaction. Changes to the TRICARE Pharmacy program have also impacted beneficiaries' satisfaction with the cost of their medications. All beneficiary categories show significant decreases.

- Active duty families were more likely to defer or cancel appointments and medications due to cost concerns than average. While 90 percent of respondents had never canceled an appointment or prescription, 81 percent of active duty families had. MOAA has surveyed the military beneficiary population for over a year. Analyzing the data shows a majority of beneficiaries view their TRICARE benefit as one for which they are paying more and receiving less. Forgoing needed medical care and medications is not the health care benefit they thought they were getting.

These surveys allow MOAA to accurately portray the effects these policies will have on beneficiaries. MOAA will continue its outreach and continue pressing for changes, while fighting any new disproportionate cost shares.

### JBER!



*Army paratroopers huddle over a mock casualty to protect it from the rotor-wash of a landing UH-60 helicopter during medical evacuation exercises at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska, Feb. 20, 2019*

### Defense News

**African terrorist groups 'aren't necessarily a threat to the homeland,' AFRICOM leader says** (Military Times) U.S. Africa Command's counter-terrorism mission is facing some troop cuts, which has lawmakers wondering how that will impact the safety of the American homeland from terrorist groups like al-Qaida and the Islamic State.

**Indo-Pacific Command: Beijing's military activity in South China Sea is 'not reducing'** (South China Morning Post) The U.S. has observed a rise in Chinese military activity in the South China Sea area over the last year, according to the top American military officer in the region.

**The Army's killer drones: How a secretive special ops unit decimated ISIS** (Yahoo News) As the Islamic State's physical caliphate shrinks to nothing after an almost five-year campaign led

by U.S. special operations forces, military insiders say one small unit has killed more of the extremists than any other: the company of Gray Eagle drones in the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

**Lawmakers to DoD: You knew about water contamination. Why haven't you done more?** (Military Times) The Pentagon's decision not to take action to protect military families from decades of exposure to cancer-causing chemicals until a 2016 Environmental Protection Agency warning did not sit well with members of Congress, who questioned Defense Department leadership on the issue at a hearing Wednesday.

**Alaska to send National Guard troops along US-Mexico border** (The Associated Press) Alaska will send 10 National Guard members for aerial patrol operations along the U.S.-Mexico border.



**\$2 billion cost to clean up water contamination at military bases, defense official says** (The Associated Press) Cleaning up and protecting U.S. drinking water from a class of toxic chemicals used in many household items could cost in the tens of billions of dollars nationally, including \$2 billion for the Department of Defense alone, witnesses testified Wednesday before a

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House panel urging the federal government to move more quickly on the cleanup.

**Arizona senator reveals she was raped by a superior officer while in the Air Force** (Military Times) Arizona Sen. Martha McSally, a former Air Force colonel and one of the first female combat veterans elected to Congress, revealed she was raped by a superior officer during her military career but kept the attack secret out of fear of reprisal.

**More lethal aid to Ukraine?** (Military Times) The U.S. has been providing lethal aid in the form of Javelin anti-tank missiles to Ukraine since May, and Russian armor is reportedly deterred by the investment.

**Top US general in Europe wants to keep China out of 5G networks** (C4ISRNET) With Europe in the early stages of developing their 5G networks, the Pentagon's top general in the region issued a stark warning March 5: Allies need to keep China out or risk losing the ability to integrate with America's military.

**Stratofortresses fly sorties over South China Sea, first since November** (Air Force Times) Two B-52H Stratofortress bombers flew a mission over contested islands in the South China Sea Monday, U.S. Pacific Air Forces said in a statement this week.



*The B52H Stratofortress (also known as the BUFF, or Big Ugly Fat Fellow) has a weapons payload of more than 70,000 lbs.*

**Defense Department pushing ahead to merge commissary and exchange systems** (Military Times) Defense officials are a step closer to merging the three military exchange systems and the commissary system into one "defense resale enterprise."

**The F-22 is back at Tyndall Air Force Base — well, kind of** (Air Force Times) Hurricane Michael last fall pushed F-22 Raptor training and operations out of Tyndall Air Force Base, but pilots from the 43rd Fighter Squadron will be periodically returning to Tyndall for repairs to the Raptor's stealth coating, the squadron commander said.

**Top US general in Europe: Don't give Turkey F-35 if they buy Russian system** (Defense News) The top uniformed officer in NATO and the head of American forces in Europe said Tuesday that if Turkey goes through with its decision to buy a Russian air defense system, he would recommend the Pentagon refuse to give Ankara its planned purchase of the F-35 joint strike fighter.

**DARPA inks a contract for hypersonic weapon research** (C4ISRNET) Raytheon has inked a contract with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to work on its hypersonic tactical boost glide weapon.

**A plan to end Afghanistan War: Declare victory and give \$2,500 bonuses to vets** (Military Times) Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul is proposing giving all Iraq and Afghanistan veterans a one-time \$2,500 payout and declaring victory in Afghanistan in what he is billing a cost-saving move for America.

**China to raise defence spending by 7.5%, lower than 2018** (Agence France-Presse) Beijing is working to provide the two million-strong People's Liberation Army with state-of-the-art hardware, spending heavily on stealth warplanes, aircraft carriers and other weaponry.

#### 2019/20 Calendar of Events

Membership meetings are generally on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month.

- Mar 28: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- April 6: Anchorage Area JROTC Awards
- April 10: Interior JROTC Awards
- April 10: MOAA Storming the Hill
- April 25: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- May 23: End of Season Social (Meeting)
- Jun 14: Army Birthday
- Aug 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- Sep 18: Air Force Birthday
- Sep 26: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Oct 13: Navy Birthday
- Oct 24: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Nov 10: Marine Corps Birthday
- Nov 21: Dinner Social (Meeting)
- Dec ##: Christmas Social
- Jan (2020): Dinner Social (Meeting)



# Captain Cook Chapter



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Feb ##: ASYMCA Salute to the Military

Feb 27: Dinner Social (Meeting)

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

*President: Catkin Kilcher Burton*

*Vice-Pres/Comms: Clyde T. (Tom) Burton*

*Secretary: Justin Mills*

*Treasurer/Webmaster: Edith M. Grunwald*

*Scholarship Cmte: George Tolbert*