



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

March 2011

Cold Memories

Our March speaker will take us south, far south, all the way to the South Pole. Bruce Roberts, now working at PNNL, was a naval aviator serving from 1971 to 1991. Before retiring as a Lt Commander, he had three deployments to Antarctica, along with duty as a flight instructor, anti submarine patrol operations, VIP operations, and test and evaluation support. During his career, he flew P-3s, LC-130s, and T-28s.

We will return to O'Callahan's at the Shilo in Richland. Everyone enjoyed the food there last time; the menu this month looks enticing. The meeting will be on Tuesday, March 15. Please make **reservations by Thursday, March 10.**

Last Chance for Dues

Members not renewing by the end of March will be dropped. If there is an X next to your address, Paul's records don't show your payment. If you think this is an error, please contact Paul. And if you haven't paid, bring your dues to the March meeting or send your check for \$15 made out to "Lewis & Clark Chapter," to:

Paul Seipt
232 Somerset Street
Richland WA 99354-1964

MOAA HQ reports ...

Yes, Virginia, There Will Be a COLA

After more than two years in the hole, the CPI finally crept back above zero in January. Inflation rose 0.5% for the month and now stands

at plus 0.3% for the fiscal year. Barring another implosion of the economy, retirees will see at least a modest COLA increase in 2012.

Pentagon Backtracks on TRICARE Fee Hikes

In 2007 and 2008, Defense Secretary Robert Gates shocked the military community by proposing major TRICARE fee increases. Congress rejected the proposed hikes.

For the first two years of the Obama administration, Secretary Gates proposed no TRICARE fee hikes, but in recent months he had been telling every audience he spoke to that the FY2012 budget would propose "modest" TRICARE fee increases for "working-age retirees".

Under Secretary of Defense Dr. Clifford Stanley met with MOAA leaders on Feb. 14 to outline the TRICARE fee proposals included in the new FY2012 Defense budget.

The new plan entails no changes for TRICARE Standard or TRICARE For Life, and no means-testing of fees. It proposes "modest, gradual" changes in TRICARE Prime enrollment fees, and would exempt military disability (chapter 61) retirees and survivors from those changes.

Specifically, the plan calls for:

- Raising the 2012 Prime enrollment fees by 13% – from \$230 single/\$460 family per year to \$260/\$520 (survivor and chapter 61 retiree fees would remain at current rates)
- Indexing those fees in 2013 and beyond to a medical inflation index (based on a measure of Medicare cost growth projected to rise at 6.2% per year)

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- Changing TRICARE pharmacy copays.

MOAA is encouraged that the new proposal avoids the draconian TRICARE fee increases proposed in the past. While some areas warrant additional adjustment, it makes a better effort to recognize that career military people pre-pay a very large price for their lifetime health coverage up front – through decades of service and sacrifice.

However, MOAA objects strongly to the proposed annual

adjustment methodology that would inappropriately tie fee increases for nondisabled military beneficiaries aged 38 to 64 to healthcare cost growth for a more elderly and disabled Medicare population. MOAA believes, in recognition of military beneficiaries' lengthy service and sacrifice, any such adjustments should be capped closely to the percentage increase in their military compensation.

MOAA also continues to believe there are many opportunities for streamlined operations and pur-

suit of additional cost-saving measures within the Department of Defense to improve service to beneficiaries at lower cost.

In the weeks and months ahead, we look forward to working with DoD and congressional leaders to address these and other concerns in ways that help ensure long-term stability of military health care programs in ways that are fair for both military beneficiaries and the Nation.

Lewis and Clark Chapter
 Military Officers Association of America
 106 Hills West Way
 Richland WA 99352-9446

O'Callahan's at the Shilo
 50 Comstock (off George Washington Way)
 Richland

Social hour at 6:30
 Dinner at 7:00
 \$25 per person

A reservation made is a reservation paid.

March Meeting

Tuesday, March 15

Reservations by
Thursday, March 10

Bob Allen
 627-6226
 MOAA.TriCities@charter.net

Menu

Honey Roasted Pork Loin
 w/Caramelized Apples
 Chicken Dijon
 Gorgonzola Au Gratin Potatoes
 Green Bean Almandine
 Sweet Biscuits w/Honey Butter
 Mixed Salad Greens w/Dressings
 Orzo Pasta Salads
 Fresh Fruit And Berries Display
 Assorted Desserts (Chef's Choice)
 Coffee, Decaf And Herbal Teas