



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

March 2020

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JROTC Update



The March meeting will be at Clover Island Inn on Tuesday, March 17. Our speaker will be Air Force Lt. Col. Curt Wichers (Ret.). As many of you know, Curt is running the JROTC program at Kennewick High School. Ron Weed has been the primary liaison between the chapter and Curt's program. Curt will give us an update and review of the JROTC's year.

Lt. Col. Wichers retired from the Air Force in 2014 after a 20-year career. He flew helicopters for his entire career. He served at Andrews AFB, Fairchild AFB, Kirtland AFB, and Royal Air Force Base Mildenhall in the UK. He served combat deployments to Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan and culminated his career as the Deputy Group Commander with the 58th Operations Group in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The JROTC program has focused on growing its culture so that it is distinct from a typical high

school environment. We have worked with the students to implement a number of quick but powerful tools to understand how to hold themselves and others accountable. We have emphasized the importance of pride in our appearance and actions in order to build trust in ourselves and then how to help others build trust in themselves. The students have developed a good sense of teamwork and they are wearing the uniform with pride. They have built a very detailed leadership structure that allows the students to create and execute a wide range of activities including a range of volunteering events participating in the West Richland Veteran's Day parade, and going to drill competitions to compete in drill, color guard, marksmanship and fitness. The result is a strong JROTC corps that Kennewick High School and Kennewick School enjoys showing off with pride.

Plan on attending this meeting and learn about local efforts to build character in today's teenagers and tomorrow's leaders. Reservations to Bob Allen by Thursday, March 12.

Membership renewals

Annual dues of \$25 were due in January. In the next few days, a "last chance" email reminder will go out to those who haven't renewed. Send renewal to

Paul Seipt
232 Somerset Street
Richland WA 99354

HqMOAA sends . . . These Military Medical Facilities Will Stop Seeing Retirees and Military Family Members

Approximately 84,000 active duty family members and 110,000 military retiree beneficiaries will be impacted by military treatment facility (MTF) downsizing proposed in a DoD report to Congress released Feb. 19.

When a beneficiary turns 65 or otherwise becomes eligible for Medicare (due to disability or certain diseases), they must sign up for Medicare Parts A & B to retain TRICARE. Once enrolled in Medicare, they automatically receive TRICARE benefits under TRICARE for Life (TFL).

As a TFL beneficiary, they are no longer eligible for TRICARE Prime and are disenrolled from their MTF. However, some MTFs offer TRICARE Plus to TFL beneficiaries.

The only Washington State MTF on the list as already limiting patients to active duty service members, or in the process of doing so, in realignments supported by the report is the Okubo Medical Home (JB Lewis-McChord).

Letter to President Trump From Veterans Groups Seeks

Clover Island Inn
Clover Island
Kennewick

Social hour at 6:30
Dinner at 7:00
\$25.00 per person

*A reservation made
is a reservation paid.*

Addition of 4 Presumptive Diseases to Agent Orange List

Seven veterans service organizations have united to call on President Donald Trump to add four scientifically connected presumptive diseases to the list of veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange. The four presumptives -- bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like symptoms, and hypertension -- affect at least an estimated 83,000 veterans. Congress is taking note of the impact on their constituents and a bipartisan bill was introduced in the House to address this issue. Rep. Josh Harder (D-Calif.) and Rep. Pete Stauber (R-Minn.) introduced H.R. 5610 to add the four presumptives.

From The Afterburner, for AF retirees:

REAL ID

Currently, all forms of military identifications issued with a bar code from the DEERS/RAPIDS programs are REAL ID Act compliant, allowing access to commercial aircraft and government buildings. Also, in Spring/Summer 2020, the Department of Defense will roll out the next generation of military retiree ID cards. This new ID will reflect a color photo of the card holder instead of the current gray-scale version, along with new

security enhancements to protect a person's identity.

Retirees need an 'Arrears of Pay' beneficiary

Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials remind retirees there are two ways they can prepare to leave behind money from their military retirement: by designating beneficiaries for the Survivor Benefit Plan and Arrears of Pay. Naming a beneficiary for SBP does not automatically entitle that person to receive AOP, they are separate benefits. AOP is a one-time payment, the prorated amount of the final month's retirement pay. Failing to designate an AOP beneficiary and keep their contact information current could delay the final payment. Unless otherwise noted, an AOP beneficiary will also be the person DFAS officials contact for assistance in closing the account, so it is important to designate a person the retiree trusts to handle their affairs. Also, designating a sole beneficiary in a will does not automatically make that person an AOP beneficiary.

For more information, visit the DFAS website, <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/aop.html> or contact a representative at the DFAS Customer Care Center by calling 800-321-1080

March Meeting

Tuesday, March 17

Reservations by
Thursday, March 12 to
Bob Allen
627-6226
moaa.tricities@charter.net

Menu

Sweet and sour pulled pork
Teriyaki pineapple chicken
Hawaiian rice
Steamed vegetable medley
Tossed green salad
with assorted dressings
Coconut bread
with pineapple butter
Pineapple upside down cake.
Coffee, Decaf, Tea