



LEWIS AND CLARK CHAPTER  
TRI-CITIES, WASHINGTON



# COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

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May 2022

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## Firebase Pope battle and combat leadership

Our speaker this month is chapter member Mike Ballard, who will describe a battle he experienced in Vietnam and role of an Infantry Platoon and Company Commander.



Mike was drafted into the Army in 1966. After basic training he completed Officer Candidate School and Ranger School. After serving as an instructor at the Florida Ranger Camp, he deployed to Vietnam. He was in the battle at Firebase Pope, which took place on September 17, 1968. After leaving the military in 1969 he became a Seattle police officer.

Our meeting will be at the Clover Island Inn on Tuesday, May 17. This is a short turn-around, please make your reservations NOW.

## JROTC awards

Chapter president Ron Weed and VP George Stotz attended the Kennewick High School JROTC ball earlier this month. George presented two awards to outstanding Kennewick High School JROTC cadets.



Cadet Canan Almanza distinguished himself as the support squadron commander. He supervised officers that create volunteer and other activities. He also supervised the unit's recruiting team, logistics team, public affairs and the wings team that tracks all cadet accomplishments and participation. He returned to a pre-pandemic pace with multiple events per month and an award winning level of volunteer work of over 15 hours per cadet. He was also a key leader for the unit's highly successful headquarters inspection.



Cadet Steven Francis transferred to Kennewick High School half-way through his senior year from a unit in California where he was the unit commander and senior ranking cadet. Transferring into a new unit, he was appointed as the advisor to the Senior Aerospace Science Instructor, Curt Wichers. He took on many mentor roles here helping the drill team commander develop new routines, advising the senior staff in their planning with over a dozen events, and he led his class of 8 students to excel in all areas. He has a deep desire to fly as a military pilot. He will start off in community college with the intent to transfer to Embry-Riddle and pursue an ROTC scholarship and commission in the US Air Force.

## Hq MOAA sends . . . Where Could Your COLA Land in 2023?

The economic indicator responsible for setting the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retirees, disabled veterans, Social Security recipients, and others has edged even closer to record-setting territory. Frequent visitors to MOAA's COLA Watch page won't be surprised by this trend, but new figures point to an even larger adjustment in 2023 to combat ongoing inflation.

The March Consumer Price Index, a figure released in April, was 1.52% higher than the February number.

While the figures determining the annual COLA won't be set until later in the year, predictions point to a major uptick from last year's 5.9% COLA, perhaps as much as 8.9%.

If that figure holds, it would be the third-largest COLA since 1975, behind an 11.2% increase in January 1982 and a 14.3% boost the previous year. No other increases topped 10%.

### **COLA Challenges**

Why monitor this figure? Aside from financial planning purposes, racks these numbers for a very simple reason – after the COLA

hikes in the early 1980s, Congress attempted to claw back COLA from military retirees to boost other parts of the federal budget. Thanks in part to the efforts of MOAA (then TROA, The Retired Officers Association) and the coalition, Congress rejected a White House plan to eliminate COLA for military retirees in 1987. The move ended the immediate threat to the value of military retirement, though challenges would continue through the decades.

Now, as COLA reaches historic highs and budget pressures begin mounting, MOAA stands watch to protect your benefit from lawmakers or administration officials who may not appreciate the value of service – who may not understand a proposal to shave a percentage point or two from your COLA may look good on the bottom line, but could prove disaster to military retirees attempting to stretch their earned benefit as prices skyrocket.

## **May Meeting**

Tuesday, May 17

Clover Island Inn  
Clover Island  
Kennewick

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

*A reservation made  
is a reservation paid*

Reservations by  
**Thursday, May 12 to**  
Bob Allen  
(509) 554-6992 voice or text  
moaa.tricities@charter.net

## **Menu**

Sliced Prime Rib  
in Au Jus  
Baby Red Potatoes  
Steamed Vegetable Medley  
Tossed Salad  
Pasta Salad  
Warm Rolls  
Chef choice dessert  
Coffee, Decaf, Tea, Milk