



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

MOAA.TriCities@charter.net

April 2024

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Ron Weed

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Flying the President

We've all seen images of the President on the south lawn of the White House returning from a trip on a helicopter. Did you ever wonder about those helicopters and the people who fly them? Our April meeting will be at the Clover Island Inn, and will feature a talk by chapter member Jon Ray.



VH-60N, Presidential Helicopter

Jon was born and raised in a small town north of Pittsburgh, PA. He attended Michigan State University on an athletic scholarship graduating in 1977. Jon was commissioned in the United States Marine Corps in 1978 and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1980. His multiple assignments in aviation included deployment to Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990, where he saw combat during his 6 month tour. He will discuss his assignment to Marine Helicopter One as a pilot for President Ronald Reagan, some administrative and contingency missions the squadron filled, and a couple of stories about the assignment.

Jon retired from the Marine Corps in 2000. He started a

construction company in SoCal and developed residential clientele in Beverly Hills and NW Los Angeles. His company also completed large commercial projects like the Air Force One pavilion at the Reagan Library in Semi Valley, CA.

In 2013 Jon moved to Richland, WA and was hired to fly DOE special mission aircraft nationally and internationally for PNNL. Jon retired from PNNL in 2023 and now has his own aviation company Rest On High, based at Richland airport. Jon and his wife, Eileen, live in Horn Rapids.

Marliese Gudrun Stotz

Gudrun Stotz passed away on March 21. She was hospitalized for 41 days and fought relentlessly, but it became too much for her immune system. She had been a regular attendee at our meetings and brought a lot of happiness to our members. Our condolences go out to George.

Dues

It's time renew memberships. Dues are \$25, unchanged since 2014, what a deal! Send your dues to

Paul Seipt
381 Clovernook St
Richland WA 99352

Make your check out to "L&C Chapter." Better yet, bring it to the April meeting. Those not renewing will be dropped as of May.

**HqMOAA sends . . .
TRICARE For Life Under
Threat: How MOAA Works to
Protect Your Benefit**

Credible threats to TRICARE For Life loom on the horizon. And while the recently released FY 2025 DoD budget request makes no mention of new TFL fees, MOAA is concerned that it's only a matter of time before DoD once again looks to TFL as the answer to addressing increased military health care spending.

That's why MOAA council and chapter members from across the country will make protecting TFL a key part of their work in Washington, D.C., on April 17 as they meet with their members of Congress during MOAA's Advocacy in Action (AiA) event. Preserving this benefit remains a top priority for MOAA members; that's why MOAA needs grassroots support from across its membership, and beyond, to send this clear message to lawmakers.

Aside from military retired pay, TFL is the most valued part of the military retirement package. It not only ensures access to affordable preventive and routine medical care, but it protects uniformed services retirees and their dependents and survivors from financial risk associated with unexpected costs for serious and unexpected illness or injury.

Nearly a decade has passed since DoD proposed – and MOAA

defeated – TFL enrollment fees in five consecutive administration budget requests (FY 2013-2017). But those victories aren't permanent.

The most recent version included a concept for a new annual TFL enrollment fee – \$575 per individual or \$1,150 per family. Another concept outlined cost sharing, including an unprecedented annual deductible – TFL would pay no Medicare cost shares until the beneficiary paid \$850 out-of-pocket for medical encounters.

Congress created TFL in the FY 2001. Congressional intent was clearly spelled out in the conference report accompanying the legislation: “While extending TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligibility to Medicare eligible

beneficiaries, the conferees direct the Secretary of Defense to refrain from using deductibles and copayments, in recognition of their participation in Medicare Part B as a condition of participation.”

The small percentage of citizens who handle 100% of our national defense have earned a high-quality, low out-of-pocket-cost health care benefit. Maintaining TRICARE is not only a national obligation but critical to ensuring military retirees – key influencers in the recruitment process – are not discouraged from recommending service to current and future generations.



Clover Island Inn
Kennewick

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

*A reservation made
is a reservation paid*

April Meeting
Tuesday, April 23

Reservations by
Thursday, April 18 to
Bob Allen
(509) 554-6992
moaa.tricities@charter.net

Menu

Pacific Northwest Salmon
Baby Red Potatoes
Steamed Vegetable Medley
Tossed salad with assorted
toppings & dressings.
Pasta Salad
Warm rolls with butter
Chef choice dessert
Coffee, Decaf, Tea or Milk