



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

April 2017

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An unusual career

Our speaker in April had an unusual Air Force career. LtCol. Bob Nelson served for over 21 years in the U.S. Air Force after receiving a direct commission upon completion of his Bachelor's Degree in Radiation Biophysics from the University of Kansas in 1968. He immediately was assigned to continue his education, earning a Master's degree in the same subject, and a PhD in the mid-1970s. His assignments focused on various aspects of radiation and health, including assignments at Brooks AFB in San Antonio, Wiesbaden Germany, and Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1990, he worked for both the Department of Energy and DOE contractors. In Richland, he supported Tank Farms, K Basins and the Waste Treatment Plant at Hanford; farther afield, he worked on recovery at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and the establishment of a new Environmental Management Office at Los Alamos National Laboratory. As he puts it, "I have the unusual experience of starting at production reactors and ending at waste disposal and cleanup and all aspects of weapons in between."

Our meeting will be on Tuesday, April 18, at the recently remodeled Country Gentleman, now called the CG Public House, on Clearwater, west of Columbia Center Blvd. Reservations to Mark Hanneman by Thursday, April 13.

Dues notice

Is this your last newsletter? I'll be sending a separate notice to those who have not renewed their dues; non renewers will be dropped from the chapter as of next month. To avoid that notice, send your dues to

Paul Seipt
232 Somerset St
Richland WA 99354

HqMOAA reports . . .

Supreme Court hearing on division of retired and disability pay on divorce

A case involving the Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA), a controversial 1982 law, is being heard before the Supreme Court. The law allows divorce courts to treat military retirement pay as community property, subject to division. The case will determine the extent of a state court's legal authority to divide military retired pay in a divorce where the former service member waives a portion of military retired pay in favor of VA disability compensation.

In the current case, a family court granted the former spouse 50 percent of the service member's retirement pay. Years later, the retiree received a VA disability rating and waived a portion of military retired pay to receive the tax-free VA disability compensation instead. As a result, the service member's military retirement pay was reduced; the former spouse took the retiree to

court to get her portion of that - in this case, \$152 a month - back.

The attorney for the veteran says disability pay is paid to the veteran for injuries suffered in service and to compensate for lost earning potential.

Previously, a lower-level court in Arizona held that, even though the reduction in retired pay was the result of a VA disability, the retiree still had to pay the \$152 per month to the former spouse. The court reasoned that the former spouse had a “vested interest” in the retired pay and had come to rely on the full amount.

The justices asked questions aimed at the implications of how varying legal interpretations of USFSPA will affect those who have come to rely on the income provided by a portion of their former spouse's military retirement.

“How consequential is the issue before us?” Justice Ginsburg asked. “Because if you're right, then in all future divorce settlements, they won't say half of the military retirement pay. They'll give a dollar amount which is equal to what the military retirement pay is before any disability payment kicks in.”

Chief Justice John Roberts was more direct in his skepticism. “You have a law that says you can't divide disability pay, and yet, you say it's

okay to say, 'Well, I'm not going to divide it, but I'm just going to award you an amount equal to what it would be if I divided it.' ... That's the sort of thing that gives law a bad name. It makes a charade out of the statute.”

The court is expected to rule on the case later this year. When a decision is issued, MOAA will provide an update.

Are vets healthier than non-vets?

On Nov. 10 MOAA and United Health Foundation released the 2016 Health of Those Who Have Served Report. The report compares selected health measures of veterans with those of non-veteran civilians in the same age and demographic groups.

The sample included nearly half a million people, of whom nearly 60,000 self-identified as veterans. The analysis addressed 24 indicators of health behaviors, health outcomes, and utilization of key health care services.

Key findings include:

People who have served report better overall health, but face higher rates of chronic health challenges

Veterans are more likely to report being in very good or excellent health compared with

civilians. However, men and women vets report higher rates of several chronic diseases and unhealthy behaviors compared with their civilian counterparts. For example, veterans have a 13-percent higher rate of cancer, 62-percent higher rate of coronary heart disease, and 67-percent higher rate of heart attacks. Veterans 18-39 years of age have lower rates of chronic conditions such as diabetes, but they sleep less and smoke more than non-vets.

Men and women vets are more active at all ages

Physical inactivity was 22 percent less prevalent among people who have served in the military compared with those who have not. That was true across all ages. Physical inactivity is 38 percent lower among 18-39 year old veterans than non-vets, and 21 percent lower among veterans over 80 years of age.

Veterans are more likely to have health insurance coverage and use preventative services.

Over 90 percent of veterans have health insurance, compared to 82.8 percent for non-vets. Those who served used more preventative services and reported fewer unmet health needs compared to non-vets.

April Meeting Tuesday, April 18

CG Public House
(Country Gentleman)
9221 W Clearwater
Kennewick

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

A reservation made
is a reservation paid.

Reservations by
Thursday, April 13 to
Mark Hanneman
628-1862
olddrummer55@gmail.com

Menu

TriTip Beef
Bow Tie Pasta
w/ roasted red pepper sauce
Scalloped Potatoes
Green Beans w/bacon & onion
Broccoli-Bacon Salad
Green Salad
Rolls & Butter
Cookies, Brownies