



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

May 2017

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Terrorism

What is terrorism? Why can it be effective? What is the difference between al Qaeda and ISIS? What are recent examples of US based terrorist and espionage activities? The Soviet Union collapsed so spies are no longer a threat? Why do people spy? Mark Hanneman, a 35 year counterintelligence veteran in the National Security arena will provide an entertaining and thought provoking presentation at our May chapter dinner."

Mark served as a counterintelligence agent during his time in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations and ran the counterintelligence program at the Richland DOE office. His topic is timely, as indicated by current stories in the press.

The meeting will be at the Clover Island Inn on Tuesday, May 16. Reservations to Paul Seipt by Thursday, May 11.

From the Fairchild Retired Activities Office

DHA: Transition to New Tricare Contract Delayed

During a recent meeting of the Military Health System (MHS) MSO/VSO Executive Council, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) announced the transition to the new TRICARE contract will be delayed from Oct. 1, 2017, to Jan. 1, 2018.

The new contract reduces TRICARE from three regions -- North, South and West -- to two, East and West. Humana Health

Insurance Company will manage the East and Health Net Inc., will manage the West.

The delay aligns the rollout of the new regions and contractors with the transition to TRICARE Select, which will replace TRICARE Extra and TRICARE Standard.

This alignment will reduce disruption of care for TRICARE recipients.

From the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

State Veterans Cemetery, Medical Lake

The State Veterans Cemetery at Medical Lake fills a need for veterans and families in eastern Washington and north Idaho. More than 4,000 veterans and family member have been interred here since opening in 2010.

In general, eligibility mirrors national veterans cemetery requirements: honorably discharged US veterans, spouses, and in limited cases, dependent children. The cemetery provides traditional in-ground burial and options for cremation inurnment: a columbarium niche, in-ground inurnment, and a scattering garden. Interment costs for veterans are paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs; \$300 is charged for spouses and dependent children.

HQ MOAA sends . . . Congress Mulls Changes to Post-9/11 GI Bill

Congress is considering a

proposal to require all new service members to contribute \$100 per month for 24 months in order to take advantage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Reservists would be required to pay \$67 per active duty month until reaching \$2,400 in contributions.

Currently, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is free for any veteran who served at least 90 days on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, providing recipients with a prorated benefit of up to 36 months of tuition and allowances for housing and books. Qualified service members can transfer their GI Bill benefits to a spouse or dependent.

Last year, in an effort to cut costs, Congress attempted to tweak the amount of money given to GI Bill beneficiaries using transferred benefits. After a political outcry, the proposal was dropped.

Proponents of the move to begin charging for the benefit state the money generated can allow lawmakers to expand GI Bill benefits to student veterans, such as giving them up to 48 months of tuition for degrees in STEM fields.

Opponents of the move to begin charging say it's inappropriate to change the benefit while the country is still at war. The Post-9/11 GI Bill was intended to serve as a wartime benefit. Any changes at this point would not be in line with the original intent of the benefit.

“On the surface, charging for the GI Bill is still a great return on investment: \$2,400 for a college degree for you, your spouse, or kid,” says MOAA's Director of Government Relations for National Guard and Reserve and VA Benefits, Lt. Col. Aniela Szymanski, USCMR. “However, this would be done at the same time as new entrants navigate a new retirement system and face new fees for TRICARE.

“There's the concern some folks with a strained budget, particularly junior enlisted, may feel like they have to choose between family health care now, education later, or retirement well into the future.”

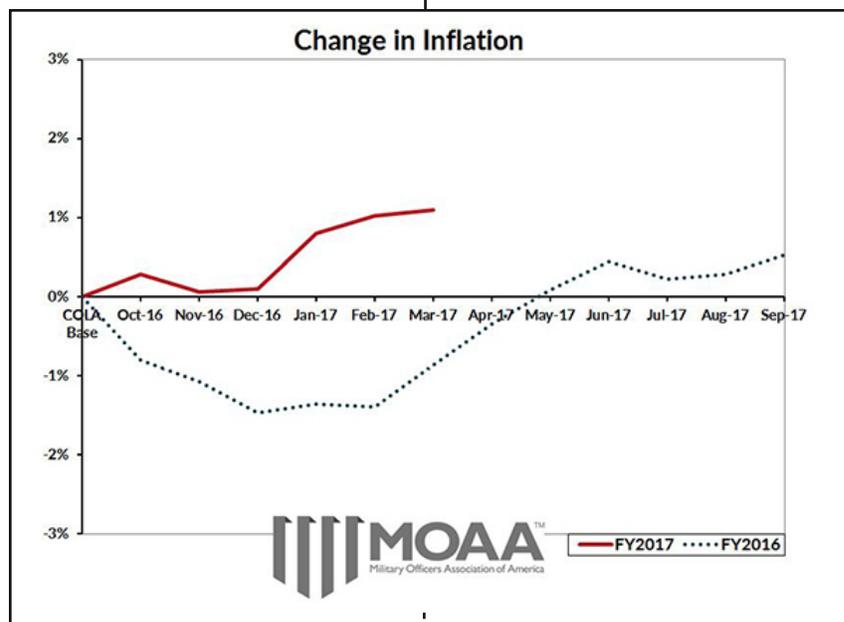
COLA watch

The March CPI is 237.477, 1.1 percent above the FY 2016 COLA baseline.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers from around the country for a market basket of consumer goods and services.

Collectively, the CPI is also used to adjust annuities for other federal retirees, survivors, and Social Security recipients.

Note: Military retiree COLA is calculated based on the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, not the overall CPI. Changes in the index may differ from figures reported elsewhere.



May Meeting Tuesday, May 18

Clover Island Inn
Clover Island
Kennewick

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

A reservation made
is a reservation paid.

Reservations by
Thursday, May 11 to
Bob Allen
627-6226
MOAA.TriCities@charter.net

Menu

Caesar Salad
Orzo Pasta Salad
Bread Sticks
Pasta Alfredo
Steamed Vegetable Medley
Stuffed Manicotti
Smothered in Sausage Marinara
Chicken Marsala
Tiramisu