



# COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

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May 2018

## UAVs not UFOs

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Darryl Abling

Our May speaker is Darryl Abling. He has a BS in Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He spent 8 years as an Air Force avionics technician. After the Air Force, from 1987 to 2016, he held several aviation technical positions in major aerospace corporations. In June 2016 he started his current job, Range Manager of the Pendleton Unmanned Aircraft System Range in Pendleton, Oregon.

A leader in the national effort to develop an integrated manned and unmanned airspace, the Pendleton Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Range (PUR) is a partner test site within the University of Alaska Fairbanks led Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex. The PUR offers both conventional and unconventional takeoff and landing capability from the Eastern Oregon

Regional Airport (KPDT). The airport can accommodate up to a Boeing 757.

We will return to the CG Public House, formerly the Country Gentleman, on Clearwater Ave for the meeting. The newsletter is coming out late; the meeting is next Tuesday, May 15. Please get reservations to Bob Allen by noon, Friday, May 11.

### Hq MOAA sends . . .

Many military beneficiaries are getting frustrated over unexpected and disproportional increases in their TRICARE service fees. The fee changes have been implemented across just about every fee category. However, TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries, a perennial target, are currently unscathed by the budget knife.

But just because DoD did not include any specific fees for TFL in its budget submission this year does not mean Congress will not try to slip some new fees into the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) during the markup process.

As recently as last fall, Congress raised pharmacy fees for everyone. Those increases reduced the amount of the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset for military widows. Essentially, the dramatic increase in pharmacy copayments is funding the reduction of SBP/DIC, also known as the widows tax. Compound these increases with DoD's end run of all the other TRICARE fee increases,

and well, you get the picture: Beneficiaries are funding and offsetting their own earned benefits. And you can bet Congress will again look for money anywhere they can get it.

This is why MOAA is on guard to prevent any attempt to establish a new enrollment fee for TFL. TFL beneficiaries already pay more for their health care coverage than any other uniformed service beneficiaries. And now they are paying much more for their medications, too, and will continue to do so with the planned increases in the out-years.

Congress was thoughtful in its establishment of TFL, enacted in 2001, deeming it a commitment of a grateful nation. Before TFL, TRICARE beneficiaries immediately lost their TRICARE coverage when they became Medicare eligible at age 65 (including those who were Medicare-eligible due to disability).

This positioned them at the same level of coverage as U.S. citizens who had never served the full 20-plus year careers in the uniformed services. However, Congress recognized health care coverage was an important benefit earned through decades of service and sacrifice - and one that should be sustained over the lifetime of the servicemember and their family.

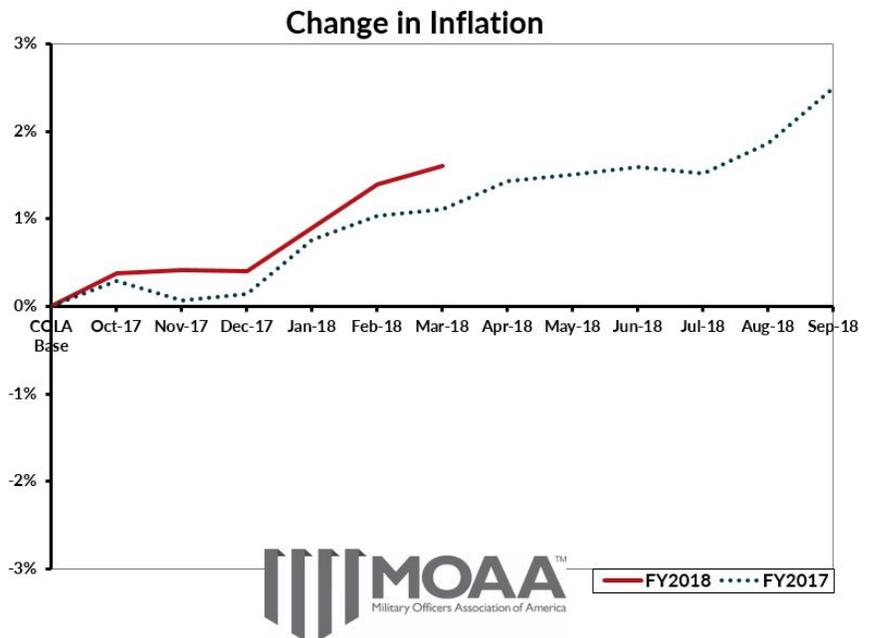
TFL, which has no enrollment fee, was set up to be the second payer after Medicare pays first. To be eligible, individuals must be TRICARE- and Medicare- eligible

and have purchased Medicare Part B coverage. Out of all of the TRICARE benefit plans, this one has been the most successful and is tremendously popular with the age-65-and-over beneficiary population.

The reality continues to be that personnel costs are not rising to be more than a third of DoD's budget. This has been consistent for the past several decades. And more specifically, TFL's costs have actually decreased or flattened.

#### **COLA Watch**

The March, 2018 CPI is 243.463, 1.6 percent above the FY 2018 COLA baseline.



## **May Meeting Tuesday, May 15**

CG Public House  
9221 W Clearwater Ave  
Kennewick

Social hour at 6:30  
Dinner at 7:00  
\$30.00 per person

A reservation made  
is a reservation paid.

Reservations by  
Noon Friday, May 11 to  
Bob Allen  
627-6226  
moaa.tricities@charter.net

### **Menu**

Tri-Tip with Demi Glaze  
and horseradish sauce  
Garlic mashed potatoes  
Brown gravy  
with creamy white sauce  
Fresh green beans  
with bacon and onion  
Green salad with two dressings  
Cole Slaw  
Rolls/butter  
Assorted dessert bars  
Coffee/water service