



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

September 2023

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Renew friendships, meet an officer candidate

Welcome back, hope everyone had a good summer. We start off the year with our new president, Aaron Pickett, leading us. We will return to the Clover Island Inn for our kick-off meeting on September 19. Please get your reservations to Paul Seipt by Thursday, September 14.

Our speaker will be Richard Callahan, who has been working as a Masters Intern at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for 3 years. He just got picked up for Navy Officer Candidate School as an Information Professional Officer. We hope for some interaction with our members on what it means to become an officer--keeping in mind that today's Navy is probably different from what we remember.

Hope to see everyone there and catch up with friends and colleagues.

Hq MOAA sends . . .

Tricare drug benefits at risk

Congress attempted to streamline the Tricare pharmacy benefit by decreasing the number of network pharmacies from 50,000 to 35,000, allowing Express Scripts to build a narrowed network. For those getting maintenance drugs by mail order, there was no impact, but it limited options for the occasional immediate need.

With both Walgreens and CVS currently in network, most healthy families in metro areas can still access medications for their occasional prescription needs, but those in rural areas with non-chain pharmacies may need to drive long distances to find a network source in a big city.

Both the House and Senate addressed this MOAA top priority in their mark-ups of the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Language in both versions requires reporting on the beneficiary impact of the narrowed network, which shrank by nearly 25% in the last 12 months.

The Senate's committee report included directive report language for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on TRICARE's pharmacy network cuts. While this language is not legally binding, agency officials generally regard it as a congressional mandate and respond accordingly.

Tricare for Life Fees?

Written testimony submitted by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to a recent Senate subcommittee hearing on DoD personnel includes several proposals threatening service-earned benefits, such as the introduction of TRICARE For Life fees and minimum out-of-pocket requirements.

- Proposed TRICARE For Life enrollment fees would cost Medicare-age beneficiaries \$575 a

year for individual coverage or \$1,150 for family coverage.

- Proposed cost-sharing measures would include an \$850 deductible, meaning TRICARE For Life would not cover any of the first \$850 of a beneficiary's Medicare cost-sharing.

- After the deductible, the proposed cost-sharing plan allows TRICARE For Life to cover only 50% of the next \$7,650 in Medicare cost-sharing, meaning beneficiaries would pay up to \$4,675 in cost-sharing per year.

MOAA encourages members to write their legislators opposing these fees.

COLA watch

The July 2023 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), released Aug. 10, was 2.7% above the FY 2023 baseline. The next CPI-W release is set for Sept. 13. The CPI-W figures from the end of this fiscal year (July, August, and September 2023) will be compared to the FY 2023 COLA baseline to calculate the 2024 COLA. The purpose of the COLA adjustment to retired pay is to maintain the purchasing power of that pay over a retirement starting up to 20 years earlier than typical pension plans. [Note: AARP estimates the COLA for Social Security and military

retirement in January 2024 will be 3%.]

Military Anniversaries on September 19

1777: During the Revolutionary War, American soldiers won the first Battle of Saratoga, aka Battle of Freeman's Farm (Bemis Heights). The battle began when British General John Burgoyne moved some of his troops in an attempt to flank the entrenched American position on Bemis Heights. Benedict Arnold, anticipating the maneuver, placed significant forces in his way. While Burgoyne did gain control of Freeman's Farm, it came at the cost of significant casualties. Skirmishing continued in the days following the battle, while Burgoyne waited in the hope that reinforcements would arrive from New York City. Militia forces continued to arrive, swelling the size of the American army. Disputes within the American camp led Gates to strip Arnold of his command.

1864 – Union General Philip Sheridan routs a Confederate force under General Jubal Early in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. T

1912 – Marines participated in the Battle of Masaya during the Nicaraguan Campaign

1918 – American troops of the Allied North Russia Expeditionary Force received their baptism of fire

near the town of Seltso against Soviet forces.

1927 – Battle of Telpaneca, Nicaragua.

1943 – American land-based Liberator bombers attack the island of Tarawa.

1944 – The Battle of Hürtgen Forest is the name given to the series of fierce battles fought between U.S. and German forces during World War II in the Hürtgen Forest, which became the longest battle on German ground during World War II, and the longest single battle the U.S. Army has ever fought.

1945 – Kim Il-sung arrives Port Wonsan onboard the Soviet warship Pugachev and begins to organize the Workers' Party of Korea

1957 – The United States conducted its first underground nuclear test, in the Nevada desert.

2002 – President Bush asked Congress for authority to "use all means," including military force if necessary, to disarm and overthrow Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein if he did not quickly meet United Nations demands to abandon all weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri appeals to the U.N. that his country is free of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

Clover Island Inn
Clover Island
Kennewick

Social hour: 6:30
Dinner: 7:00
\$32.50 per person

*A reservation made
is a reservation paid*

September Meeting

Tuesday, September 19

Reservations by
Thursday Sept 14 to
Paul Seipt
(509) 521-3478
pama227@charter.net

Menu

Sliced Prime Rib
Baby Red Potatoes
Steamed Vegetable Medley
Tossed salad with assorted
toppings & dressings
Pasta Salad
Warm rolls with butter
Fresh cookies
Coffee, Decaf, Tea or Milk