

## Vets Views 15 Feb 08

Another good news flash! WASHINGTON-Over a million eligible veterans will see their mileage reimbursement more than double starting 1 February 2008, for travel to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities. The 2008 appropriations act provided funding for VA to increase the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile. While increasing the payment the VA also equally increased (as mandated by law) the deductible amounts applied to certain mileage reimbursements. The new deductibles are \$7.77 for a one way trip, \$15.54 for a round trip, with a maximum of \$46.62 per calendar month. However, these deductibles can be waived if they cause a financial hardship, so let me know.

Gulf War veterans, listen up! Do you think you may have been exposed to depleted uranium during the first Gulf War? Read on. Modern warfare since the Gulf War in 1991 has employed weapons (offensive or protective armor) that contain Depleted Uranium (DU). For the curious out there, an M-1 Abrams tank round, for example, contains about 9 pounds of DU. When a vehicle that has been constructed using DU is damaged or a weapon containing DU explodes, small bits ignite and release particles that may be chemically toxic and radioactive. There are medical community concerns that residual particles from these weapons/machines could cause future health problems for military personnel. Exposure to DU can occur in three ways:

1. Ingestion—eating or drinking contaminated food or water.
2. Inhalation—breathing contaminated air.
3. Skin contact—contaminants enter through wounds and breaks in the skin.

Veterans eligible for lab tests to detect DU exposure include those who have served in: Iraq; the neutral zone; Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, Oman, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Waters of the Persian Gulf; and the Arabian and Red Seas. So, if you are a veteran and are concerned about DU exposure, call me and set up an appointment, and we'll both get smarter on this.

Hello Al, how are things in Chanhassen? Keep up the good work!

While on the subject of toxic things, here's a reminder for you Vietnam veterans. If you were in-country, and have any of the following medical conditions, you best be calling me very soon! To qualify for service connection for one of these conditions, you must have served in Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, and if so, the government concedes (by law) that you were exposed to Agent Orange. Cut this out and tape it somewhere in your house. The list includes:

1. *Chloracne--must occur within 1 year of exposure to Agent Orange*
2. *Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma*
3. *Soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)*

4. *Hodgkin's Disease*
5. *Multiple myeloma*
6. *Respiratory cancers, including cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea and bronchus (no time limit)*
7. *Prostate cancer*
8. *Acute and sub-acute transient peripheral neuropathy--which must occur within 1 year of exposure to Agent Orange and must resolve within 2 years of the date of onset*
9. *Type 2 diabetes*
10. *Chronic lymphocytic leukemia.*
11. *Spina bifida-in children of Vietnam veterans (except spina bifida occulta)*
12. *Certain other birth defects in the children of female in-country Vietnam veterans.*

Were you in Korea in 1968-1969? Read this! The Pentagon has confirmed that Agent Orange was used from April 1968 through July 1969 to defoliate the fields of fire between the front line defensive positions and the south barrier fence. The size of the treated area was a strip of land 151 miles long and about 350 yards wide, from the fence to north of the civilian control line (they don't admit to spraying herbicides inside the DMZ itself). Although restrictions were put in place to limit the potential for spray drift, run-off and damage to food crops, government records indicate the effects were sometimes observed as far as 200 yards down wind. So, if you were there, and can prove it (your unit's location), you'd better give me a call.

Ok, so that leads me into this: PLEASE, if you want/need to see me, call the office at 463-3308 (or cell phone 242-0886) and leave your name and number, and I WILL call you back and set-up an appointment. Believe it or not, some days are so busy, if you don't have an appointment you'll have to stand in line until midnight, and you know how we veterans feel about standing in line...

Over and Out!