

Vets Views 17 April 08

First, some really good news if you doctor at the Fargo VA Medical Center (FVAMC) AND you receive travel pay. If you do, read this carefully. To honor America's veterans, the FVAMC is responding to veteran requests for private accommodations by providing lodging at local hotels. The Fargo VA Medical Center will cease all temporary lodging accommodations within their facility beginning **MAY 1, 2008**. The private hotel stay will be at VA expense, up to \$40 per night. They have a listing of several local hotels that will provide rooms for the price of the VA voucher. Now here's the catch--You must meet all of the following eligibility factors to be qualified for the hotel lodging:

- Eligible for travel benefits
- A scheduled appointment before 11:00 a.m. (Central Time) the following day
- Travel 120 miles or more to the Fargo VAMC

If you fit these requirements and you have an appointment coming up, you should call your team and ask about this list of accommodations. No, I don't have it yet, but will try to get it.

For you in-country or near-country Vietnam veterans, you should read this. There appears to be a possible link between exposure to Agent Orange (herbicides) and the development of Parkinson's Disease. A group of Minnesota veterans with Parkinson's have banded together to try to get VA regulations changed and have Parkinson's added to the list of Agent Orange caused presumptive conditions. This group is led by Mr. Steven Fiscus who has collected information that any veteran with Parkinson's may find of interest. He can be contacted by e-mail at: swfiscus@MSN.com. If you have Parkinson's, I'd sure contact this fellow right away. Some Agent Orange background-- Current law provides a list of service connected disabilities for which a Vietnam veteran exposed to Agent Orange may be eligible. To qualify for service connection for one of these conditions, the veteran must have served in Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975. Any veteran who did is assumed by law to have been exposed to Agent Orange. The list of conditions includes: Diabetes Type II,

prostate cancer, lung cancer and a short list of other cancers as well as a few other conditions. Currently, Parkinson's is **NOT** on this VA list.

For a veteran, the burden of proof is much less for disabilities that are on the presumptive list. However, it is not impossible to get service connected for Parkinson's. Several veterans have been given service connection because they *had very specific medical opinions* in regard to the probable cause of their disease. Each had a medical expert who rendered an opinion that the individual veteran's Parkinson's was most likely due to Agent Orange exposure. Expert medical opinions were the key to these successful cases. So, if you decide to look into this further, remember--the medical opinion must be from someone who is an actual expert in the effects of herbicide exposure. Might be worth it to check this out a bit more.

OK, for you Badger, Greenbush and Strathcona readers, be the first to call and answer this question (leave name, number and where calling from), and you'll win a nongift-wrapped prize! Question: What is the significance of May 8th?

Over and Out!