

Gulf War Syndrome

Gulf War Syndrome, which is also known as “Desert Storm Disease” or “Gulf War Illness”, is a collection of symptoms reported by veterans of the first Gulf war since August 1990. The VA latest report from 2014 states that as many as 250,000 veterans have suffered life-threatening illness due to their exposure in the Gulf War. This number is about to get drastically larger.



It has been recently reported that 700,000 troops sent to Iraq and Kuwait were exposed to nerve gas and other chemical agents. It has been reported by the USA Today that the Department of Defense and CIA launched a campaign of lies and concocted a cover-up that continues today. During January and February 1991, when the U.S. bombed Iraq’s weapons plants and storage sites, poisonous plumes floated across the desert to thousands of U.S. Troops based on the Saudi border. Also later in the war when chemical weapon stock piles were discovered and destroyed these chemical poisons drifted more than 300 miles from its origins. Chemical alarms sounded daily, but officers in charge announced it was a false alarm. Some even went as far as stating that they saw on the TV that the bombings were nowhere near them and there was no way they could be exposed. Yet they, and so many more U.S. troops, were exposed.

Soldiers who complained of any illness were told that it was the heat, even though in some areas the temperature was about 85 degrees. A lot of veterans were treated for the basic symptoms but the not the real illness, being told you will be fine it will go away. Many years later we are now seeing this is not true and the illness and deaths are piling up. The VA currently states they do not have a mortality rate on Gulf War Syndrome due to lack of data.

Currently the VA recognizes the following as presumptive for Desert War Syndrome;

- **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**, a condition of long-term and severe fatigue that is not relieved by rest and is not directly caused by other conditions.
- **Fibromyalgia**, a condition characterized by widespread muscle pain. Other symptoms may include insomnia, morning stiffness, headache, and memory problems.
- **Functional gastrointestinal disorders**, a group of conditions marked by chronic or recurrent symptoms related to any part of the gastrointestinal tract. Functional condition refers to an abnormal function of an organ, without a structural alteration in the tissues. Examples include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), functional dyspepsia, and functional abdominal pain syndrome.
- **Undiagnosed illnesses** with symptoms that may include but are not limited to: abnormal weight loss, fatigue, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual

disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders, and sleep disturbances.

As you can see they are very vague on what these issues are. One because they don't know exactly and two because it is easier to deny a claim due to lack of proven evidence. The problem with these VA presumptive is that it does not come close to cover what veterans are complaining about due to their exposure. The VA's registry exam only takes the complaints of the veterans does a through exam and states what they have. There is little confirmation on what caused the problems and if it was due to their exposure. Civilian doctors are worse in that they do not want to get involved and will charge an exorbitant amount of money just to do proper testing to determine what the veteran has and been exposed to.

I recommend to all veterans to contact their congress person and demand better investigation and studies into the cause and effect to the exposure in the Gulf War. Also it is imperative that you get a veteran advocate to file your claim and work with you to get the healthcare and compensation you deserve.