
Action Guide

Depleted Uranium/Gulf War Syndrome



Support Network for an Armed Forces Union

www.join-snafu.org ■ 212 633 6646



“People are sick over there already...”

As of May, 2002, 221,000 Gulf War I veterans were on medical disability, and 56,000 more were seeking such status. And the outlook for Veterans of the current war in Iraq doesn't look good either.

“People are sick over there already,” said Dr. Doug Rokke, former director of the Army's depleted uranium (DU) project. Asaf Durakovic, director of the Uranium Medical Research Center, conducted a three-week field study in Iraq in October of 2003. Durakovic, a former military doctor for the U.S. Defense Department who studied the health of veterans after the 1991 Gulf War, said tests show that the air, soil and water samples contained "hundreds to thousands of times" the normal levels of radiation. "This high level of contamination is because much more depleted uranium was used this year than in (the Gulf War of) 1991," Durakovic told The Japan Times.



The Pentagon used some 300 tons of depleted uranium during the Gulf War. Durakovic puts the amount used in the latest war on Iraq at 1,700 tons.

Rokke said today's troops have been fighting on land polluted with chemical, biological and radioactive weapon residue from the first Gulf War and its aftermath. In this setting, troops have been exposed not only to sandstorms, which degrade the lungs, but to oil fires and waste created by the use of uranium projectiles in tanks, aircraft, machine guns and missiles.

“That's why people started getting sick right away, when they started going in months ago with respiratory, diarrhea and rashes -- horrible skin conditions,” Rokke said. “That's coming back on and they have been treating them at various medical facilities. And one of the doctors at one of the major Army medical facilities -- he and I talk almost every day -- and he is madder than hell.”

The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide an introduction to Gulf War Syndrome and some suggestions for military personnel, dependents, and civilians who want to take action to obtain adequate care and compensation.

Much of the information contained here is taken from the Self-Help Guide published by the National Gulf War Resource Center (www.gulfwar.org/Resource_Center)

What is Gulf War Syndrome?

Gulf War syndrome is a widely used term to refer to the unexplained illnesses occurring in Gulf War veterans, civilian defense workers, and military families. Symptoms associated with the Gulf War include:

- Sleep Problems
- Mood Swings
- Signs or symptoms involving upper or lower respiratory system
- Neuropsychological signs or symptoms (including memory loss)
- Chronic Fatigue
- Signs and symptoms involving skin (including skin rashes and unusual hair loss)
- Aching Joints
- Headaches
- Abdominal Pain
- Sensitivity to Bright Light
- Blurred Vision/Loose Focus
- Menstrual disorders
- Gastrointestinal signs or symptoms (including recurrent diarrhea and constipation)
- Neurologic signs or symptoms (nervous system disorders which could manifest themselves in numbness in one's arm, for instance)
- Multiple Chemical Sensitivity
- Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS)
- Birth Defects in children whose parents were directly or indirectly exposed to hazardous materials like DU.

Possible Causes of Gulf War Syndrome

■ **Depleted Uranium**-- Weapons made with depleted uranium, an extremely dense metal used as a coating to improve the performance of shells and armor. Because it is a heavy metal it is poisonous. It is also radioactive. Used in shells, it burns on impact and the fine particles can be inhaled. These particles are especially dangerous when they lodge in the lungs. Over 300 tons of DU were left in the Gulf War region in the first war against Iraq. This is in addition to tons of DU that have been stored

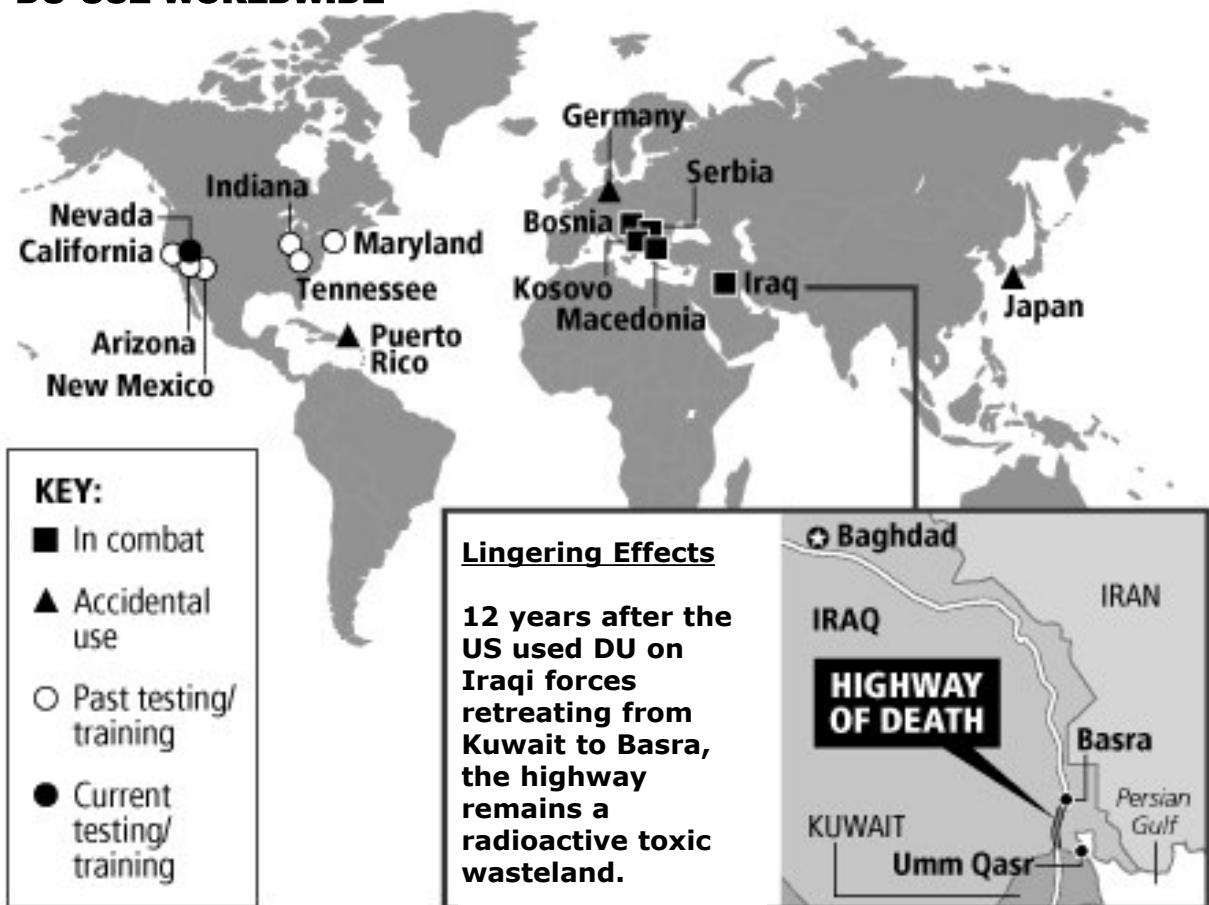
and tested at bases in the US.

■ **Experimental Vaccines**-- Adverse reaction to untested vaccines that were supposed to protect troops from illness and from chemical weapons. In December 1990 the Food and Drug Administration agreed to issue a waiver to the Department of Defense allowing the military to issue experimental drugs and vaccines to U.S. personnel in the Gulf without first obtaining informed consent for use of those drugs. Though U.S. law and the Nuremberg Code require informed consent from the patient, the military did not explain possible side effects

DEPLETED URANIUM USE

Scientists and others are expressing concern that the side effects of depleted uranium (DU) munitions - still a major part of the US arsenal - will result in serious illnesses or deaths to a new generation of US soldiers and Iraqi civilians.

DU USE WORLDWIDE



Source: P-I research

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

or obtain informed consent.

■ **Viruses**-- Exposure to mycoplasma incognitus, a usually harmless micro-organism which some say was genetically altered by the U.S. biological-weapons program to make it virulent.

■ **Insecticides**-- Exposure to insecticides like DEET, which in combination with some of the vaccines can be even more toxic.

■ **Dangerous Nerve Gas Drugs**-- Pyridostigmine Bromide, used as a nerve agent pre-treatment drug, is only effective in relation to exposure to soman nerve gas; it actually increases adverse effects to exposures to sarin.

Who Has Gulf War Syndrome?

Veterans

As of May, 2002, 221,000 Gulf War I vets were on medical disability, and 56,000 more were seeking such status. Reports from the current conflict indicated that military personnel are already suffering symptoms consistent with Gulf War Syndrome.

Civilian Participants

Civilians, including media personnel, DoD contractors, Red Cross workers, and Iraqi and Kuwaiti civilians who were in the Persian Gulf region during the war were exposed to many of the same hazards as military personnel.

Civilian Non-Participants

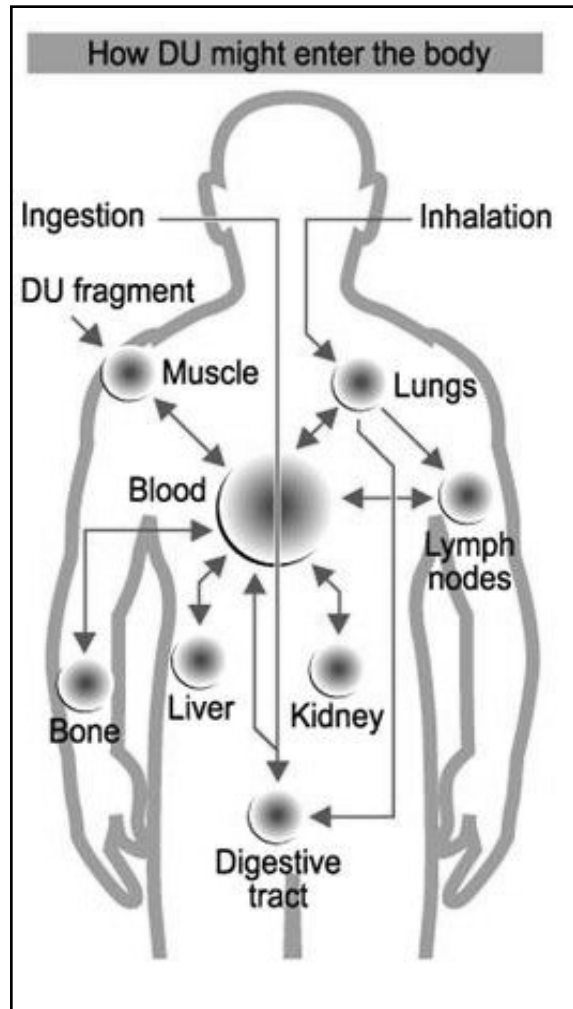
Illness consistent with Gulf War syndrome has been reported among civilians who came into contact with equipment and personnel that had potentially been exposed to hazardous elements.

Families & Close Living Contacts

One survey of approximately 1,200 ill veterans performed by Senator Reigles staff found that 77% of spouses, 68% of children born after the war, and 25% of the children born before the war are either experiencing similar symptoms to those of the ill veterans or have

birth defects. A survey of 10,051 ill veterans performed by Operation Desert Shield / Desert Storm Association found that 51% of spouses were ill and 22% of children. Female spouses have reported a high rate of miscarriages, menstrual and reproductive problems, and burning semen during sexual intercourse.

A Mississippi study proved a 300% increase in birth defects over the average military person. Other studies have observed a 200% to 300% increase in birth defects of GW veterans.



How to Document Your Case

- Make sure you get copies of all records.
- Keep a diary of all vaccines received, all possible exposures to hazardous materials, doctor visits, etc. Note the names of treating physicians. If you are sick, make note if any other personnel stationed with

you experience similar symptoms. Keep a copy of this diary somewhere else (like with a family member or partner).

- If you are to receive a vaccine, make sure to ask what it is you are being given and who is administering the vaccine.
- Families should also keep a diary in order to document symptoms.

Women: Be Proactive

- Get a General checkup if you have symptoms.
- Obtain early prenatal care.
- Have regular breast exams, pap smears, and gynecological exams.
- Be aware that symptoms have occurred, not only among women who were in the military, but among spouses and children of military personnel as well.

Note:

Experience has shown that VA hospitals are reluctant to diagnose Gulf War Syndrome, and have a tendency to diagnose DU-related symptoms as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Be aware that they may try to categorize your DU-related symptoms as PTSD and treat it with tranquilizers. The Veterans Administration has too often helped to cover up problems like Depleted Uranium and Agent Orange.



Together We Can Win:

Although the VA may be reluctant to cooperate, with perseverance it is possible to get your claim approved. While the process may seem difficult now, we know that from past experience it is possible to fight and win compensation for your disability. Veterans who suffered from Agent Orange and fallout from Atomic Testing won compensation and recognition after struggling with the VA. The VA is required by law to test you and provide compensation. It is important that everyone affected by DU file claims with the VA; **working together** we can break through the cover-up and force the VA to recognize

this problem.

Contact us at SNAFU (212) 802-4459 or du@join-snafu.org for more information.

About VA Disability

Disability compensation and pension are VA entitlements that make up for your loss of income when you become disabled.

Service connected compensation is available for disabilities that were incurred during, or aggravated by, military service. Compensation is payable based on the degree to which you are disabled by the service connected condition. Effective 12/1/95, the benefit rate for a 10% disability is \$91; for a 100%, or total, disability, it is \$1870. Veterans who are rated at 30% or greater for service connected disabilities may receive additional compensation for dependents.

How to File

Step 1: Get Help. Contact a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) in your area. VSOs are trained by various service organizations (VFW, DAV, etc.). They are often located at the VA regional hospitals.

Step 2: File a Claim. Get the appropriate forms from your VSO and be careful in completing them. DO NOT wait until you are very ill to file a claim.

Step 3: Get Records. File a Request Pertaining to Military Records, Standard Form 180. Records of treatment at VA facilities are available for free by filing a VA Form 70-3288 with the VA medical facility. Also, compile your own records of symptoms, doctor visits, vaccinations, etc. (see above section "How to Document")

Step 4: Put facts together. Work with your VSO to put together your claim. Help your VSO by writing out a list of health problems in the order they occurred.

Step 5: Cooperate with the VA. Make sure you make

all appointments scheduled and promptly supply any additional information requested. When writing to the VA, make sure you include your claim number and the VA's reply number on all correspondence.

Step 6: Be prepared to wait. The backlog on claims is enormous and the wait may take more than a year.

If Your Initial Claim is Denied:

Step 7: Immediately file a notice of disagreement (NOD) and request a copy of the rating decision. The NOD must be postmarked within one year of the date on your denial letter. The VA will respond with a statement of case (SOC), describing the laws applying to your claim and why your claim was denied..

Step 8: Once you have filed a NOD, you can request a hearing in front of a VA hearing officer at the regional office. If the hearing officer determines that you have presented new and relevant evidence, he or she can make a new decision.

If Your Hearing is Unsuccessful:

Step 9: File an Appeal. Along with your SOC, the regional office will send you a VA Form 9, the Substantive Appeal Form. You should complete this and return it to the VA. You have 60 days from the date on the SOC or the remainder of one year from the date the VA first denied your claim, whichever is later, to file the VA Form 9.



Non-diagnosed Illnesses

The VA has issued a regulation to compensate veterans of the Gulf War for illnesses that have not yet been diagnosed. (See Appendix C for a copy of the VA Regulations.) Congress has never before directed the VA to pay compensation benefits for illnesses that can not be diagnosed and for which a specific cause has not yet been identified. This regulation is called Compensation for Certain Disabilities Due to Undiagnosed Illnesses. This regulation applies only to illnesses that cannot be diagnosed. If your condition has been completely and adequately diagnosed, the rules explained below do not apply to you.

The new regulation permits the VA to pay compensation benefits for a disability caused by chronic illnesses or symptoms (that exist for at least six months) and that cannot be diagnosed (identified). Before the VA will grant you compensation benefits as a Gulf veteran with undiagnosed illnesses, you must:

- Show that you served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War (8/2/90 - 11/30/95);
- Show you have a chronic, undiagnosed illness;
- Show your undiagnosed illness can be documented by a doctor or by statements from friends or family members; and
- Show the signs and symptoms of your illness revealed themselves during your service in the Gulf War or;
- Show the signs and symptoms of your illness revealed themselves within two years after the date you last served in the Persian Gulf and they were severe enough to warrant at least a 10% VA disability evaluation within those two years.

VA Registry

In 1992 the VA established the Persian Gulf Registry Health Examination Program. Every Gulf War veteran who has health concerns related to their service in the Gulf is entitled to a free exam. If you have already taken the medical exam, you can set up an appointment to update the registry entry. The exam consists of a fairly extensive medical history questionnaire, a physical exam by a medical provider, a chest X-ray and certain laboratory tests. In June 1994 the VA made its

examination guidelines the same as the DoD guidelines to ensure consistency. The Registry exam is free and does not require a means test (an examination of your income level to determine eligibility). The names and certain data about those who take the exam are added to the Persian Gulf Registry.

Most family members and civilians are not eligible to be on the Registry or have exams. However, the VA has recently implemented a program of limited registry exams for spouses and children of ill veterans. Call the VA hotline to Register. VA Hotline: 800-PGW-VETS

DoD Registry

The DoD Registry is very similar to the VA Registry. It includes questionnaires and a CCEP exam (see below). DoD Hotline: 800-796-9699 The DoD Hotline answers general questions, allows you to register your name and refers individuals to a medical center.

The DoD instituted a program in 1994 called the Comprehensive Clinical Evaluation Program (CCEP). It is supposed to provide an in-depth medical evaluation at one of 13 DoD medical centers to all eligible beneficiaries who have experienced health problems since the Gulf war.

The DoD has established a specialized care center at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC to provide therapeutic care after the CCEP exams. The center attempts to provide intensive programs directed at improving the functional status of patients experiencing disabling symptoms involving pain and fatigue. However, reports from many veterans who have participated in this program do not give it a high rating.

Social Security Programs

The Social Security Administration offers both disability compensation and supplemental security income benefits. The amount is well below VA compensation levels and you must be unemployable (unable to work 40 hours per week) to qualify for benefits. In some cases, veterans can receive both SSA and VA disability compensation. Some veterans who were denied VA benefits have been able to secure SSA benefits. SSA claims can take several years to process so, as with VA claims, begin the process as soon as possible.

Family members and civilians who have Gulf War Syndrome, or birth defects related to the Gulf War, are not eligible for VA programs and thus need to explore other options. Contact the NGWRC for further

assistance.

Discharge

If you become ill while on active duty and are unable to return to active duty, there are several options: You can be discharged as not fit for duty with disability severance pay if the degree of disability is rated at 30% or less and you have less than 20 years service. Severance pay is a lump-sum payment based on your basic military pay. The VA must offset your severance pay before it can pay you compensation benefits for the disability that caused your discharge.; You can be placed on the Temporary Disability Retirement List (TDRL) with a temporary disability rating that will be evaluated later for permanency; You can be medically retired (disability retirement), which gives you many of the benefits that are available to other military retirees. If you are medically retired, you will be paid between 30% and 75% of your basic pay for the rest of your life. You are also eligible for VA benefits, and are entitled to the same health care benefits as other retired military personnel.

If you become ill while on active duty you may be compelled to make very important long-term decisions at a time of great anxiety. It is very important that you understand that waiving some of your rights for any reason may not serve your long term interests. Never waive a right without the advice of informed counsel.

You need to understand your rights and how your service will arrive at its decision.

Where to Get Help and More Information

Depleted Uranium Education Project

<http://www.iacenter.org/depleted/du.htm>

National Gulf War Resource Center

www.gulfwar.org/Resource_Center

Desert Storm Justice Foundation - www.dsjf.org

National Veterans Legal Services Project (NVLSP)

2001 S Street NW, Suite 610 Washington, DC 20009
(202) 265-8305 Email: NVLSP@aol.com NVLSP assists some veterans with appeals at the Court of Veterans Appeals and publishes a wide variety of documents and



guides that can be of assistance to veterans. NVLSP is a nonprofit law firm which serves as a national support center in the area of veterans law. National Organization of Veterans Advocates P.O. Box 42334 Washington, DC 20015

National Veterans Legal Services Program -
www.nvlsp.org

Association of Birth Defect Children
(800) 313-ABDC www.birthdefects.org/

CFIDS Association of America <http://www.cfids.org/>

MCS Referral and Resources <http://www.mcsrr.org/>

Military Toxics Project - The Military Toxics Project has a Depleted Uranium Citizens Network that provides information on DU contamination and exposures.
<http://www.miltoxproj.org/>

Center for Women Veterans
<http://www1.va.gov/womenvet>

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) The DAV's largest endeavor is the National Service Program. The DAV employs a corps of approximately 260 highly trained National Service Officers (NSOs) and 25 Transition Service Officers (TSOs) who represent veterans and their families with claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other government agencies.
<http://www.dav.org/veterans/index.html>

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) 1224 M Street NW Washington, DC 20005 (202) 628-5881

Chronic Illnet - www.calypte.com Chronic Illnet is sponsored by Calypte Biomedical, a private medical research firm located in Berkeley, CA. This site provides a place for medical professionals, researchers, and others to exchange of information and access articles on various chronic illnesses. It has specific information for those with Gulf War Syndrome, and resources, research, and discussion about many other chronic illnesses.

DoD GulfLink - www.dtic.dla.mil/gulflink This is the DoDs presence on the internet, with extensive declassified documents relating to chemical exposures in the Gulf.

Veterans Due Process, Inc. P.O. Box 68237 Portland, OR 97268 (503) 659-9912
Veterans Due Process is a private organization that advocates on veterans legal issues.

VA Hotline: 800-PGW-VETS

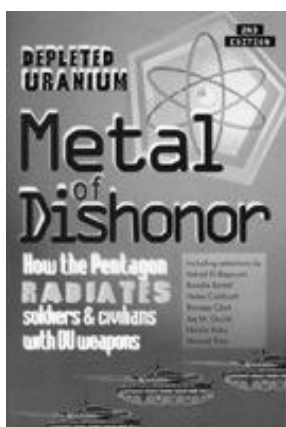
UMRC- the Uranium Medical Research Centre
UMRC
3430 Connecticut Avenue – 11854
Washington, DC 20008
USA
E-mail: info@umrc.net
Phone: (001)-416-465-1341
Fax: (001)-416-465-5961

Have you been exposed to Depleted Uranium?
Are you suffering from symptoms consistent with Gulf War Syndrome?
Together, we can obtain justice and compensation for the victims of this
tragedy.

The victims of the Atomic Tests and Agent Orange were lied to and
denied compensation for years. Through organizing, sharing information,
and putting public pressure on the Pentagon, soldiers and their families
defeated the government coverup and obtained
the compensation owed to them.

We can do the same.

**Contact us at 212-633-6646
or du@join-snafu.org**



In May, 1997, the International Action Center published a book of essays and lectures on depleted uranium: the contamination of the planet by the United States military. In addition to exposing the deadly duplicity of the Department of Defense, the book documents the genocide of Native Americans and Iraqis by military radiation, the connection between depleted uranium and Gulf War Syndrome, the underestimated dangers from low-level radiation, the legal ramifications of DU Production and Use, and the growing movement against DU.

To order: www.leftbooks.com



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