



WE HONOR VETERANS
Hospice Professionals on a Mission to Serve

Service Related Diseases, Illnesses, and Conditions

Military History Toolkit

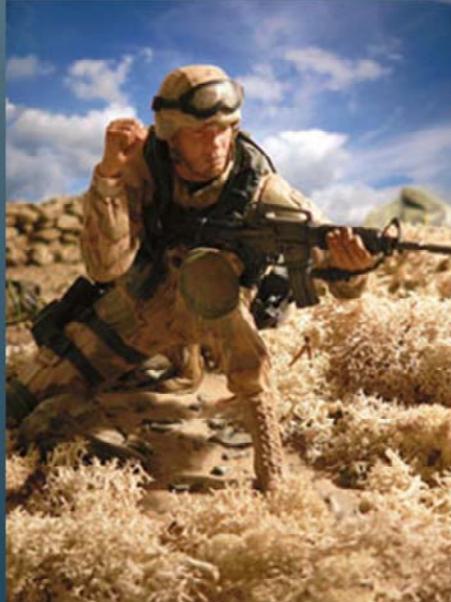
Produced by the
Veterans Advisory Council
A Taskforce of the National Hospice and
Palliative Care Organization

National Hospice and Palliative Care
Organization



PART III

Gulf War



The 1991 Gulf War was considered a brief and successful military operation with few injuries and deaths of U.S. troops. The war began in August 1990, and the last U.S. ground troops returned home by June 1991.

Although most Gulf War Veterans resumed their normal activities, many soon began reporting a variety of unexplained health problems that they attributed to their participation in the Gulf War, including chronic fatigue, muscle and joint pain, loss of concentration, forgetfulness, headache, and rash.

Reference: Institute of Medicine - <http://Veterans.iom.edu/> and search keyword "Gulf War"

Image: http://www.als-mda.org/publications/als/images/als11_7_desert_soldier.jpg

Gulf War

- It's important to understand that there were, and continue to be:
- Many concerns about the association between the illnesses and symptoms Veterans report and:
 - their exposure to toxic agents
 - their exposure to environmental and wartime hazards
 - the preventive medicines and vaccines they received

In 1998, in response to the growing concerns of the ill Gulf War Veterans, Congress passed two laws: PL 105-277, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act, and PL 105-368, the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act.

Those laws directed the secretary of Veterans affairs to enter into a contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review and evaluate the scientific and medical literature regarding associations between illness and exposure to toxic agents, environmental or wartime hazards, and preventive medicines or vaccines associated with Gulf War service and to consider the NAS conclusions when making decisions about compensation.

Those studies were assigned to the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

Reference: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/

Gulf War

- Outcomes Based Primarily on Symptoms or Self-Reports
- No unique syndrome, unique illness, or unique symptom complex in deployed Gulf War Veterans
- Multi-symptom-based medical conditions reported to occur more frequently among deployed Gulf War Veterans include fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and multiple chemical sensitivity
- Deployment places Veterans at increased risk for symptoms of psychiatric illnesses, particularly post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression and substance abuse

Gulf War and Health

VOLUME 4

HEALTH EFFECTS OF SERVING IN THE GULF WAR

Committee on Gulf War and Health: A Review of the Medical Literature Relative to the Gulf War Veterans' Health

Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

The charge to this IOM committee was to review, evaluate, and summarize peer-reviewed scientific and medical literature addressing the health status of Gulf War Veterans.

The study was to help to inform the VA of illnesses among Gulf War Veterans that might not be immediately evident.

Reference:

http://www1.va.gov/environagents/docs/IOM_Summary_Lit_Review_Vol_4.pdf

Gulf War



Studies of returning Gulf War Veterans with at least one commonly reported symptom (fatigue, memory loss, confusion, inability to concentrate, mood swings, somnolence, gastrointestinal distress, muscle and joint pain or skin or mucous-membrane complaints) demonstrated poorer performance on cognitive tests than by returning Gulf War Veterans who did not report such symptoms.

Image: <http://www.f16viper.org/CaptMikeDonnelly.jpg>

Gulf War

Among studies that examined pulmonary outcomes in associations with specific exposures in the Gulf War Theater, exacerbation of asthma associated with oil-well fire smoke has been indicated.



Image (top):

<http://media.portland.indymedia.org/images/2004/11/304516.jpg>

Image (bottom):

http://msnbcmedia4.msn.com/j/msnbc/Components/Photos/060912/060912_gulfwarone_hmed.hmedium.jpg

Gulf War



On September 23, 2008, Veterans' Affairs Secretary, Dr. James B. Peake, announced that ALS will become a presumptively compensable illness for all Veterans with 90 days or more of continuously active service in the military.

Image (left): http://images.usatoday.com/news/_photos/2003/09/22-als-inside.jpg

Image (right):
<http://documents.clubexpress.com/clubs/619358/photos/thumbnail/49138846.jpg>

Gulf War

Unique Health Risks:

- Exposure to smoke
- Chemical or Biological Agents



Reference: <http://www.va.gov/oa/pocketcard/>

Image:

http://msnbcmedia3.msn.com/j/msnbc/Components/Photos/061110/061110_gulfwar_hmed1p.hmedium.jpg

Gulf War



A military nurse vaccinates a U.S. Army soldier.



Unique Health Risks

Immunizations

Infections

Depleted Uranium (DU)

Reference: <http://www.va.gov/oaa/pocketcard/>

Image (left): http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/images/july-dec02/army_cap.jpg, posted 12/13/02

Image (right):

http://www.freecomputerdesktopwallpaper.com/new_wallpaper/B1_bomber_USAF_military_aviation_freecomputerdesktopwallpaper_p.jpg

Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)



Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States responded by deploying military personnel in Southwest Asia.

By January 2002, more than 30,000 active duty were involved.

Additional reserve personnel continue to be called to duty.

Currently, as part of OEF, U.S. troops are on the ground in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and neighboring countries of the former Soviet Union.

Reference: "Enduring Freedom Veterans: Information for Veterans Who Served in Afghanistan and For Their Families", Veterans Health Administration, December 2004

(<http://www1.va.gov/environagents/docs/EnduringFreedomVeteransNewsletterDec2004.pdf>)

As a result of Iraq's refusal to comply with United Nations' mandates, U.S. began deploying troops to the Gulf region in late 2002.

Coalition forces subsequently won a decisive victory against the forces under the regime of Saddam Hussein, during April 2003, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Coalition forces remain in Iraq today as part of ongoing peacekeeping/nation-building activities.

"Iraqi Freedom Veterans: Information for Veterans Who Served in Southwest Asia in 2003", Veterans Health Administration, May 2003

(<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/IraqiFreedomMay21.pdf>)

Image: <http://www.behindthebadge.net/bloodstripes/memory/images/marines.jpg>

OEF/OIF

- Unique Health Risks:
 - Infectious disease
 - Cold injury
 - High altitude illnesses
- Environmental Hazards:
 - Exposure to sewage
 - Exposure to agricultural and industrial contamination of water and food
 - Air pollution
 - Severe sand and dust storms

Reference: <http://www.va.gov/oaa/pocketcard/>

OEF/OIF Additional Risks

- Combined penetrating, blunt trauma, and burn injuries (blast injuries)
- Traumatic brain or spinal cord injury
- Vision loss
- Traumatic amputation
- Multi-drug resistant acinetobacter
- Leishmaniasis (sandfly-transmitted infection of the skin)
- Depleted uranium (DU)
- Mental health issues

Reference: <http://www.va.gov/oaa/pocketcard/>

Haunted by combat...



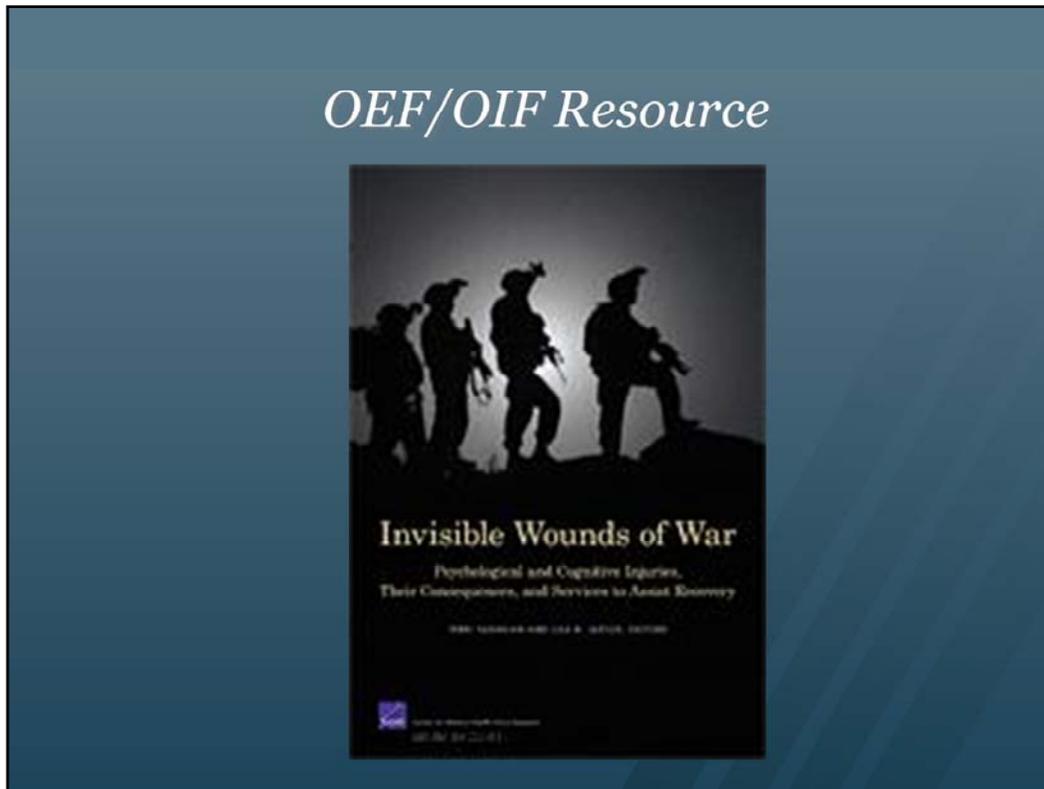
"War means something different to those of us that have looked through the sights of a rifle at another human being's face. Collateral damage means something different to those of us that have seen the lifeless body of a 9-year-old girl caught in the crossfire. Or for those of us that have struggled to save the life of a 7-year-old boy. I've only mentioned a fraction of what still haunts me from Iraq. I've been diagnosed with PTSD..."

– An Iraq Veteran from New Jersey (Meagher, 2007, p. xix)

Image:

http://debbyestratigacos.mu.nu/archives/GI%20and%20dying%20Iraqi%20girl%20_22_450_baby.jpg

Moving a Nation to Care: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and America's Returning Troops. Ilona Meagher, IG Publishers, (2007) ISBN 0977197271



Edited by Terri Tanielian and Lisa H. Jaycox

Since October 2001, approximately 1.64 million U.S. troops have been deployed for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) in Afghanistan and Iraq. Early evidence suggests that the psychological toll of these deployments — many involving prolonged exposure to combat-related stress over multiple rotations — may be disproportionately high compared with the physical injuries of combat. In the face of mounting public concern over post-deployment health care issues confronting OEF/OIF Veterans, several task forces, independent review groups, and a Presidential Commission have been convened to examine the care of the war wounded and make recommendations. Concerns have been most recently centered on two combat-related injuries in particular: post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. With the increasing incidence of suicide and suicide attempts among returning Veterans, concern about depression is also on the rise.

The study discussed in this monograph focuses on post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression, and traumatic brain injury, not only because of current high-level policy interest but also because, unlike the physical wounds of war, these conditions are often invisible to the eye, remaining invisible to other service members, family members, and society in general. All three conditions affect mood, thoughts, and behavior; yet these wounds often go unrecognized and unacknowledged. The effect of traumatic brain injury is still poorly understood, leaving a large gap in knowledge related to how extensive the problem is or how to address it.

Reference: www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG720/

Image: <http://www.ccebook.cn/upload/1208593424.gif>

*Honoring Veterans preferences at
the end of life...*



What's so special about the Veteran's end-of-life experience?

- Military culture and training influences a soldier's life and death (Battlemind)
- War may leave men and women with physical and mental wounds
- Posttraumatic stress symptoms may surface at end of life
- Military experiences and relationships may also be a source of strength and comfort

Image: http://www.wolfhounds.net/Admin/Images/fallen_flag.jpg