

## **PERSIAN GULF VETERANS & June 2023 Petition to reclassify Gulf Veterans as “War Time Service”**

- Our Government is grateful for the dedicated service of all Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans, including those who served in the Persian Gulf from 1990 to 1991.
- Service in all conflicts, operations, and deployments since Korea, including all current deployments, are designated by Order of the Minister of National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, as Special Duty Service under the *Veterans Well-being Act*.
- This classification does not signal lesser respect for the service of modern-era members and Veterans, nor is it indicative of a lesser degree of risk on the part of those deployed.
- Public recognition of serving CAF members and Veterans across all eras and conflicts holds profound significance for Canadian society.
- And, our Government is dedicated to acknowledging the service of modern-era Veterans.

- By engaging in ongoing consultations, my Department will gather perspectives from Veterans organizations and individual Veterans to ensure their voices are heard in shaping the most effective and meaningful ways to recognize the service and sacrifice of Canada's [modern day] Veterans.

## **WHEN PRESSED:**

### **Q1 – Why are Persian Gulf Veterans not recognized as War Veterans?**

Service during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War are included in the *Pension Act* as service during war. Service in all other conflicts, operations, and deployments in which Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans have taken part, including all current deployments, are designated by Order of the Minister of National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, as either a “Special Duty Area” or “Special Duty Operation” – commonly called “Special Duty Service” - under the authority of the *Veterans Well-being Act*.

### **Q2 – Will Veterans Affairs Canada declare service in the Persian Gulf as War Service like Korean War Service?**

In accordance with sections 69 and 70 of the *Veterans Well-Being Act*, the Minister of National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, has the authority only to designate a “Special Duty Area” or “Special Duty Operation”. Applying these categories is not meant to signal greater or lesser respect for the service of members and Veterans, nor are such categories indicative of a lesser degree of risk on the part of those deployed. For example, in addition to the Persian Gulf, service in the Balkans and Afghanistan have been classified by Order of the Minister of National Defence as “Special Duty Service”.

Moreover, changing the categorization of those who served in the Persian Gulf from “Special Duty Service” to “Wartime Service” would not necessarily result in any change to offered benefits, as these Veterans are eligible for the highest level of benefits through Veterans Affairs Canada for any injuries arising from such service.

### **Q3 – What Veterans Affairs Canada benefits are Persian Gulf Veterans eligible for from Veterans Affairs Canada?**

Depending on when they applied for benefits, members and Veterans with service in the Persian Gulf could be eligible under both the *Pension Act* and the *Veterans Well-being Act*. Those who applied for benefits **on or after** April 1, 2006, are eligible under the *Veterans Well-being Act*. Those that made application **prior to April 1, 2006**, and received a decision, continue to hold some rights under the *Pension Act* related to the condition for which they received that decision.

### **Q4 – Why isn’t Veterans Affairs Canada providing *Pension Act* benefits only to these Persian Gulf Veterans?**

By virtue of their service, the needs of these modern-day members and Veterans is better met by the programs provided for under the *Veterans Well-being Act*, which focus

Persian Gulf Veterans

Source: Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance, in consultation with CPA

Date: 2024/10/15

on rehabilitation and re-integration to civilian life, as well as providing compensation for disabilities and income replacement.

**Q5 – What is the Government of Canada doing to commemorate Persian Gulf Veterans?**

Public recognition of CAF members and Veterans across all eras and conflicts holds profound significance for Canadian society. As such, Veterans Affairs Canada's Commemoration Strategic Plan is dedicated to advancing the Government of Canada's approach in acknowledging the service of modern-era Veterans over the past several decades. Persian Gulf Veterans service is commemorated through various initiatives outlined in Veterans Affairs Canada's Commemoration Strategic Plan. By engaging in ongoing consultations, the plan strives to gather invaluable perspectives from Veteran organizations and individual Veterans to ensure that their voices are heard in shaping the most effective and meaningful ways to recognize the service and sacrifice of Canada's Veterans. This includes ceremonies marking significant milestones, such as the 30th and 35th anniversaries of the end of the Gulf War. Additionally, Gulf War Veterans service is recognized on the National War Memorial under the inscription "In Service to Canada" which formally recognizes all Canadians who served in the past, who serve today, and who will serve in the future. Veterans Affairs Canada collaborates with the Embassy of Kuwait to Canada, to ensure Canadian Veterans of the Persian Gulf War are recognized and honoured. Veterans Affairs Canada's Veterans Week learning materials also highlight the service of Gulf War Veterans and modern Veterans.

## **BACKGROUND – PERSIAN GULF VETERANS**

- A petition was introduced in the House of Commons by MP John Brassard, Barrie-Innisfil, on June 14, 2023 (Petition No. 441-01549) calling on the Government of Canada to reclassify “Persian Gulf War - The Liberation of Kuwait” from "Special Duty Area" to "Wartime Service" within all Canadian policy on this, the 30th anniversary of the Liberation of Kuwait, to provide equality for "Persian Gulf War – The Liberation of Kuwait" as wartime Veterans.
- The petition was initiated by Harold Davis, President of the Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada, and received 965 signatures.
- The Minister of National Defence tabled the Government Response to the Petition on August 16, 2023 ([Petition e-4399 - Petitions \(ourcommons.ca\)](#)). Text of Government response is pasted below.
- Service during the Persian Gulf conflict is designated as Special Duty Service in recognition of the elevated risk that serving members were exposed to during this service. Like Wartime Service, the Special Duty Service designation ensures that members or Veterans are eligible for a Disability Pension or Pain and Suffering Compensation for a disability or death resulting from injury or illness incurred during, attributable to, or aggravated during the Gulf War. Individuals are covered 24 hours a day, seven days a week during periods of Wartime Service or Special Duty Service.
- The Minister of National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, may designate Special Duty Service under the authority of the *Veterans Well-being Act*.
- No conflict or operation in which members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have served has been designated Wartime Service since the Korean War. Only Special Duty Service designations have been used since then.

### **Government Response: war service**

*The Government of Canada is grateful for the dedicated service of all Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans, including those who served in the Persian Gulf from 1990 to 1991.*

*To date, service during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War are included in the Pension Act as service during war. Service in all other conflicts, operations, and deployments in which Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and Veterans have taken part, including all current deployments, are designated by Order of the Minister of National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, as either a*

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*“Special Duty Area” or a “Special Duty Operation” – commonly called “Special Duty Service” – under the authority of the Veterans Well-being Act.*

*The practice of categorizing the military service of CAF members and Veterans is an internal process done in the interest of providing them with the benefits to which they are entitled from National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada. This is because the precise circumstances of a member or Veteran’s service, such as whether they were deployed on an operation, can impact aspects of a member or Veteran’s benefits—for instance, when determining whether Veterans Affairs Canada’s Insurance Principle or Compensation Principle should apply during the adjudication of disability benefits.*

*In accordance with sections 69 and 70 of the Veterans Well-Being Act, the Minister of National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, has the authority only to designate a “Special Duty Area” or “Special Duty Operation”. Applying these categories is not meant to signal greater or lesser respect for the service of members and Veterans, nor are such categories indicative of a lesser degree of risk on the part of those deployed. For example, in addition to the Persian Gulf, service in the Balkans and Afghanistan have been classified by Order of the Minister of National Defence as “Special Duty Service”. Moreover, changing the categorization of those who served in the Persian Gulf from “Special Duty Service” to “Wartime Service” would not necessarily result in any change to offered benefits, as these Veterans are eligible for the highest level of benefits through Veterans Affairs Canada for any injuries arising from such service.*

*Public recognition of CAF members and Veterans’ service in all eras and conflicts is vitally important to Canadian society. As such, Veterans Affairs Canada’s Commemoration Strategic Plan is dedicated to advancing the Government of Canada’s approach in acknowledging the service of modern-era Veterans over the past several decades. By engaging in ongoing consultations, the plan endeavors to gather invaluable perspectives from Veteran organizations and individual Veterans to ensure that their voices are heard in shaping the most effective and meaningful ways to recognize the service and sacrifice of Canada’s Veterans.*

*The Government of Canada continues to be sincerely grateful to Persian Gulf Veterans for their service to Canada, and their invaluable contributions to the proud traditions of the Canadian Armed Forces.*