

GULF WAR VETERANS PETITION

Issue

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.

Context

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 was 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

Gulf War Veteran Petition Key Issue Summary

Source: Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Date: 2024/10/15

National Defence, in consultation with the Minister of Veterans Affairs, as either a “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 to designate a “Special Duty Area” or “Special Duty Operation”. The Minister of National Defence does not have authority to designate service as war service, since the periods and places that define war service are specifically defined within the Pension Act.

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.

Key Update

Service during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War are included in the *Pension Act* as service during war. Parliament has not considered military service to be “service during war” since the Korean War.

Service in conflicts, operations, and deployments in which Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans have taken part, including current deployments, can be 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*.

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 may already be 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 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. 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.