

Persian Gulf Veterans – Wartime Service

Issue

For several years, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and Veterans that served during the Persian Gulf conflict have been calling for greater recognition in the form of commemoration and financial compensation for their roles during this conflict. Their main request is that their service in the Persian Gulf, be recognized as “Wartime Service” given its similarity to operations undertaken during wartime.

Context

Since the end of the Korean War, service in high risk conflicts, operations, and deployments, such as the Persian Gulf conflict, the Balkans and Afghanistan, are designated by the Minister of National Defence as Special Duty Service.

The Special Duty Service designation 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.

The term “Wartime Service” is not defined or used in either the [Pension Act](#) or the [Veterans Well-being Act](#). Wartime Service terminology has been used internally by VAC for ease of reference when referring to service in World War I, World War II, the Korean War in the “[Disability Benefits in Respect of Wartime and Special Duty Service – The Insurance Principle](#)” (Insurance Principle) policy. There are no provisions within current legislation that provide authority to designate a period of service as Wartime Service.

In addition to the request from Persian Gulf Veterans to have their service recognized as Wartime Service, they have also been calling for greater recognition of their service in this conflict. Ensuring meaningful recognition of modern Veterans is essential. As military service continues to evolve, commemoration and recognition efforts must appropriately reflect the contributions and sacrifices of those who have served in more recent conflicts and operations.

In 2014, “In Service to Canada” was inscribed on the National War Memorial to recognize all Canadians who have served, are serving, and will serve in uniform-whether in large-scale conflicts, peacekeeping and peace support missions, humanitarian efforts, or domestic operations.

In addition to “In Service to Canada,” the dates of these military engagements appear on the National War Memorial:

1914 – 1918: the First World War

1939 – 1945: the Second World War

1899 – 1902: the South African War

1950 – 1953: the Korean War

2001 – 2014: Canada's Mission in Afghanistan

The Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada (PGVC) is an advocacy, social and support association for Persian Gulf Veterans and their families. The PGVC also works to increase knowledge of Canada's contributions in the Persian Gulf to the Canadian public.

From the Persian Gulf Veterans' [Website](#), they are committed to preserving the legacy of those who served during the Persian Gulf conflict. "Our mission is threefold:

- **Honouring Sacrifice:** We pay homage to the dedication and valour displayed by our veterans. Your service in the face of adversity has left an indelible mark on history, and it's our duty to ensure that your stories are heard and celebrated.
- **Fostering Connections:** Reconnect with old friends and forge new connections with fellow veterans who understand the unique experiences you've been through. This is a space where camaraderie is rekindled, where the bonds formed in service are nurtured, and where no one walks alone.
- **Providing Resources:** From sharing information about benefits and healthcare services to offering guidance on transitioning to civilian life, we aim to provide the support you deserve. Our resource centre is a one-stop destination for valuable information tailored to Persian Gulf veterans."

Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada have requested that the Gulf War 1990-1991 be recognized with a new inscription on the National War Memorial.

Between June and November 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) held 11 meetings and heard from 29 witnesses' on the subject of the Recognition of Persian Gulf Veterans and Wartime Service. On December 16, 2024, ACVA released their report entitled, "[The Persian Gulf War Was a War](#)". The report makes five recommendations to address the requests from Persian Gulf Veterans for greater recognition of their roles during this conflict, both in terms of commemorating their efforts and of receiving financial compensation. ACVA requested an official Government Response to this report, though due to dissolution, this will not be tabled.

Key Update

Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence have worked closely to prepare a formal Government Response to ACVA's Report. This response carefully considers and responds to each of the five recommendations made. *redacted*