



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Ref: FOI2019/07540

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

26 July 2019

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 1 July 2019 requesting the following information:

“Dear Independent Medical Expert Group, Gulf war veterans are consistently reporting memory and cognitive issues as well as Endocrine and or pituitary problems way far and above the norm for the public population and / or the veteran group. What is the best , and most specific, way for them to get the proper pension percentage allowance granted onto their medical records without the MOD or other bodies being able to deny that a problem exists and or that they are responsible for (Given that much research documentation has since been published both here and in the USA relating to the Anthrax Vaccine and Sarin Poisoning issues from the Khamisayah demolition and coalition bombing.) these issues”.

You addressed your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) to the Ministry of Defence’s (MOD) Independent Medical Expert Group. However, as you have referred to Gulf War veterans, your email has been passed to the Defence People Secretariat within the MOD, and I have been asked to reply. A search for information has been conducted by the Department and some information in scope of your request is held.

To date in the UK there is no evidence of raised levels of auto-immune disorders in 1990/91 Gulf veterans. This is based both on War Pension claims data and the NHS and national registers which record the incidence and mortality of diagnoses with the result that the UK is well placed to detect changes in recorded rates of disorders over time. Mortality data covering the period to 31 December 2015 is published at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/causes-of-deaths-that-occurred-among-the-uk-veterans-of-the-199091-gulf-conflict>.

The overwhelming evidence from international scientific research shows no robust evidence of adverse health effects associated with Gulf service. Some of the early US studies suggesting serious underlying pathology due to the health protection measures, insecticides etc. with, for example, compromise of neurological and immune system responses came from a single research team and has not been replicated either by US researchers or any other group. Reproducibility is a pre-requisite in establishing causation.

No distinct disease process or pathology associated with Gulf illness has been identified. In particular, there is no evidence of raised levels of autoimmune disorder. Similar symptoms are reported in 1990/91 Gulf veterans from countries who did not receive the same protection measures as in UK.

Successive UK governments recognise that some veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict have reported raised levels of common non-specific symptoms. In some cases, these are disabling, and it is accepted under war pensions legislation that some of this ill health is related to their Gulf service. No fault compensation can be claimed by any veteran through the War Pensions Scheme administered by MOD's Veterans UK if their disablement was caused as a result of service in the Armed Forces before 6 April 2005. Veterans UK can be contacted through their website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk or freephone: 0808 1914 2 18.

The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) provides a caseworker approach that offers professional help and guidance through either telephone or face-to-face contact. The VWS can be contacted on the freephone helpline above or at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service>

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIOFOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat FOI