



PRESS ADVISORY

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For Immediate Release

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

On Gulf War's 25th Anniversary, Researchers & Veterans Say VA Failing to Treat Signature Injury

Congressional Hearing Marks Persian Gulf War's 25th Anniversary with Sharp Criticism of VA Clinical Guideline and VA-Contracted Institute of Medicine Report

(Washington) – Gulf War veterans and researchers of Gulf War Illness – termed the “signature” injury of the 1991 Gulf War in a recent government-sponsored report – will provide sharp criticism of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) during a Congressional hearing Congress on Tuesday, just hours before the precise 25th anniversary of the 1991 Gulf War’s decisive liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

The investigative hearing, entitled, “*Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of Health Outcomes on the 25th Anniversary*,” is being held by the U.S. House Veterans’ Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee on in Washington DC on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 4:30 p.m., in Room 334 of the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

At the hearing, veterans and researchers will dissect VA’s current research and treatment efforts related to Gulf War Illness, the “signature” injury of the 1991 Gulf War according to a new report by the Institute of Medicine.

According to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, “Twenty-five years after the Gulf War, [concerns persist that there has been little improvement in understanding the war’s signature injury, Gulf War Illness \(GWI\) or how to treat or manage it.](#) There are a number of reasons for this, including VA’s frequent characterization of GWI as psychological malady and VA’s clinical guidelines that recommend the use of psychotropic drugs for many GWI symptoms.”

Gulf War veteran **Anthony Hardie**, a national leader on Gulf War veterans’ health issues and Director of Veterans for Common Sense (VCS), will testify before Congress on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 4:30 p.m., just hours before the precise 25th anniversary of Operation Desert Storm’s ground war that decisively liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

Hardie describes a new VA-contracted research report as, “rolling up the sidewalk’ on a promising avenue of Gulf War Illness research, just when it is beginning to unravel the underlying biological mechanisms of Gulf War illness and point to treatment targets,” and a new VA Gulf War Illness guide for physicians that fails to include actual treatments, “another example of VA’s systemic research failures.”

Hardie will be joined by **David Winnett** of New Braunfels, Tex., a former U.S Marine another national Gulf War veteran leader who runs a 10,000-member online discussion group for ill Gulf War veterans. Winnett will share a few of hundreds of heartbreaking perspectives of Gulf War veterans around the country for whom VA is failing to provide effective treatments for their toxic wounds of war.

Prominent Gulf War Illness researcher **Roberta White, Ph.D** will also testify. Dr. White is Professor And Chair of the Department Of Environmental Health at the Boston University School Of Public Health and Professor and Attending in Neurology (Neuropsychology) at the Boston University School Of Medicine. Dr. White was lead author of a 2014 government report that highlighted the serious impact of Gulf War Illness on nearly one-third of the war’s veterans. Dr. White will testify that, “recent recommendations from VA concerning the diagnosis and treatment of ill Gulf War veterans threaten the viability of the promise emanating from two decades of research.

Dr. White will be joined by **James Binns**, former chairman of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses that has been a vocal critic of Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) policies toward Gulf War veterans. Binns will describe a 16-year VA-contracted review of Gulf War veterans’ health, “a house of cards,” and explain how, “these same corrupt practices have been employed to deny the effect of toxic exposures from burn pits to the health of recent Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.”

The hearing will last about 90 minutes. Gulf War veterans and Gulf War Illness researchers will be on hand and **available to take questions from the press** following the hearing.

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Congressional Hearing website, with testimony uploaded following hearing:

<http://veterans.house.gov/hearing/persian-gulf-war-an-assessment-of-health-outcomes-on-the-25th-anniversary>

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