



July 13, 2021

The Honorable Virginia S. Penrod
Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Department of Defense
4000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-4000

SUBJECT: Request for Evaluation of Photographs Proximate to the Khamisiyah Demolitions

Dear Ms. Penrod:

Since the 1990s, the official Department of Defense position has remained unchanged: no Gulf War troops were in Khamisiyah's first-noticeable effect (FNE) area, where the acute symptoms of chemical warfare agent exposure (e.g., sarin) would have been recognizable; instead, the 100,000-plus U.S. troops notified as having been under Khamisiyah's plumes were only potentially exposed to very low levels of sarin nerve agent, too low to cause any health effects.

However, the photos we have received from veterans near the Khamisiyah demolitions clearly show the first clause of that old narrative to be false. These photos show that U.S. troops were very, very close to the Khamisiyah demolitions and clearly within the FNE area. This is also consistent with troops' recollections and attestations.

Over the last few years, we have met and communicated with various officials within DoD with the goal of having an appropriate evaluation of these photographs to the degree of rigor that Khamisiyah-exposed veterans deserve. The most recent was Elizabeth R. Fudge, *Executive Officer OASD(HA), Health Readiness Policy & Oversight*. Her last communication was in May stating that she had reached out to the organization that was going to evaluate these photographs, but they had not yet provided a response and she was going to reach out to them again.

We would like to elevate this discussion to ensure these photographs receive the official review that Gulf War troops deserve. Khamisiyah and other Gulf War veterans have

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suffered in near silence for decades, and we believe these photographs are clear evidence of many U.S. troops being within the FNE zone.

The joint points of contact for this matter are Mr. Ron Brown, [REDACTED]@vva.org, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and Mr. Anthony Hardie, [REDACTED]@veteransforcommonsense.org,
[REDACTED]

We look forward to your earliest response.

Sincerely,



John Rowan
National President/CEO
Vietnam Veterans of America



Anthony Hardie
National Chair & Director
Veterans for Common Sense



Ronald Brown
Toxic Wounds Consultant
Vietnam Veterans of America