



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA



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January 24, 2024

The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor
Minister of Veterans Affairs

Sent via email to minister-ministre@veterans.gc.ca

Dear Minister,

I urge you to designate Canadians who served in the Persian Gulf War of 1990 – 1991 as Wartime Service Veterans. Like many Veterans before them, these brave individuals answered the call of duty and risked their lives in active combat. Their service deserves to be recognized fully, and it is both disappointing and disrespectful that Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) refuses to do so. On the surface, it appears this refusal is because the department is more concerned with saving money than affording Veterans the benefits they deserve. If that is truly the reason, it is shameful. Minister, you need to address this perception and make the change to recognize Persian Gulf War Veterans as War Time Veterans.

After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) joined the largest coalition of powers since World War Two, entering an active combat zone alongside coalition partners. CAF members played an important role in this conflict, [especially in air and naval operations](#), demonstrating the dedication and distinction of these Canadian troops.

The Persian Gulf War was also the first conflict in Canadian history in which [women served in active combat roles](#). Previously excluded from military operations, these brave women stepped up and proved that they could perform combat duties just as well as their male counterparts. They set the stage for the many women CAF members who served in later operations, and their service should be remembered and commemorated.

Despite these facts, VAC has denied these Veterans the respect and compensation they deserve. Although serving in an active combat zone, VAC designates them as 'Special Duty' rather than 'Wartime,' Veterans, entitling them to [fewer benefits](#) and a lower commemorative standing than other Veterans. For instance, because of its 'Special Duty' status, the Persian Gulf War is not eligible to be separately inscribed in the National War Memorial or any other municipal cenotaph in Canada.

Although our coalition partners have recognized that Persian Gulf War Veterans engaged in wartime service, the Canadian government has refused to follow suit. While Persian Gulf War Veterans presented this issue to your predecessor, Lawrence MacAulay, he did nothing to address it. Worse, after [an e-Petition](#) to



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reclassify the service of Persian Gulf War Veterans gained 1,666 signatures in 2021, your government never provided a response. This is unacceptable, and Veterans deserve greater accountability from their elected leaders.

Minister, you know by my previous correspondence that I will continue to push you to do better for Veterans. You have an opportunity with this file to correct the mistakes of your predecessors. You know these Veterans deserve the benefits, so why are you holding back? Even the former Minister of National Defence, Anita Anand, has stated that this issue falls under your responsibility and yet it continues to be ignored by your government. I will continue to press you on this file in the House, during Question Period, and in committee until you do the right thing and fix it. Veterans' service must be remembered and honoured.

Sincerely,

Rachel Blaney, MP
North Island-Powell River
NDP Critic for Veterans Affairs