
The Gulf War officially began with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and ended with their retreat on February 28, 1991. More than 5,000 Canadians were deployed to the Persian Gulf during this period.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?
Since the end of the Gulf War, there have been concerns about the health of personnel who served in this conflict. This study examines if Canadian military personnel who deployed to the Gulf War had a higher risk of death than other members of the military who were not deployed to the Persian Gulf or than the general Canadian public.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?
To conduct this study, the researchers set up two groups: 1) the “Gulf War” group which consisted of all Canadian Armed Forces members deployed to the Gulf War; and 2) the “control” group which was a random selection of Canadian Armed Forces members who were eligible to serve in the Gulf War but did not deploy there. Information on mortality was collected through a linkage of their military records to the Canadian Vital Statistics Death Database. Data were available up to December 31, 2014 which allowed for a 24-year follow-up period (1991-2014). Comparisons were also made with the general Canadian population.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?
• The study included 5,127 Canadian Armed Forces Veterans who served in the Gulf War.
• The majority of these Veterans were male (95%). The number of deaths among females in the study were below the threshold for inclusion in the report.

Comparisons to Other Military Members
• There was no significant difference in the overall risk of death between the Gulf War group and the control group of other military members. This was true for deaths from all causes and also suicide deaths.

Comparisons to Other Canadians
• The Gulf War group had a lower risk of death from all causes (about 50%) than the male Canadian population of similar age.
• The Gulf War group also had a 50% lower risk of suicide than the male Canadian population of similar age.

Comparisons to International Studies
• These findings are consistent with results of Gulf War mortality studies in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom.
• International studies consistently report the Gulf War groups have similar mortality rates compared to the control groups of other military members and lower mortality rates compared to their general populations.

ARTICLE SOURCE: