

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF BRENT L. CASEY  
GULF WAR VETERAN**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,**

**"The GULF WAR: AN ASSESSMENT OF my personal HEALTH OUTCOMES ON THE  
25TH ANNIVERSARY"**

I provide this testimony in honor of the extraordinary sacrifices that my fellow Gulf War veterans have made over the course of the past 25 years, first by the historic and heroic victory achieved during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and then by the sacrifices made in the years since, both individually and collectively, in fighting what has turned out to be a much more deadly enemy than the enemy soldiers we once encountered on the toxic battlefields of the Middle East.

**BACKGROUND**

I am a four year veteran of the United States Army, having enlisted as a Private E-2 in September 1987 and Honorably Discharged as Sergeant E-5 in June 1991 immediately upon returning from the Gulf.

My service in the US Army as an Airborne qualified Combat Medic was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Unfortunately I share this testimony as a physically and somewhat emotionally broken man. Not as a result of the normal aging process, not from the effects of enemy bullets or shrapnel that occurred 25 years ago, but because of a *physiological* demon that managed to find a way to penetrate not only the substantial layers of protective clothing and equipment that I wore throughout the ground assault through Iraq (73rd Easting), but into my flesh, my internal organs, and through the blood-brain barrier that normally serves to protect the neurological mechanisms that control our cognitive abilities, our autonomic nervous system, and just about everything in the brain that regulates normal functioning of the human body.

In short, I am, and have been a very physically and somewhat emotionally sick man for the past 15-plus years. But the fact remains, I am here, and as far as I'm concerned I remain actively engaged in combat, as do hundreds of thousands of my fellow Gulf War veterans. The only thing that has changed over the 25 years that have passed since our rapid and resounding defeat of the Iraqi Army is that now we face a different foe, a foe much more resourceful and stubborn than even the toughest Iraqis that we faced during Operation Desert Storm. It pains me to admit that the battle we fight today is against some within the U.S. government – the same government that sent us to war in the first place.

Over the past month or so I have read numerous media accounts and engaged in a number of discussions with my fellow veteran advocates regarding the recent report issued by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) entitled, "Gulf War and Health, Volume 10: Update of Health Effects of

Service in the Gulf War.” I am incredibly disappointed about the conclusions and recommendations contained in that report. Given the overwhelming body of scientific evidence that over the past decade has proven time and time again, beyond any doubt whatsoever, that Gulf War Illness is indeed a genuine *physiological* illness and that effective *physiological* treatments can likely be found, I can't possibly fathom that the IOM made a 180-degree turn away from that science to a position that Gulf War Illness should now be treated primarily as “mind-body interconnectedness” – as if it were a mental disorder.

I am not a malingerer. I am not a liar. I am not mentally disturbed. My physical pain is real, and it is severe. The profound fatigue that I live with day in and day out is not a psychosomatic disorder. More importantly, the more than 200,000 of my brothers- and sisters-in-arms who live with the same physical pain and fatigue and other symptoms that I live with are not imagining their illnesses. It is absolutely preposterous to propose that Gulf War Illness should be treated primarily with cognitive behavioral therapy, exercise, and psychiatric drugs as suggested in this new DOD/VA Clinical Practice Guideline as if it were a psychosomatic condition is not only ridiculous, it is highly offensive to the warriors whose lives have been literally destroyed as a result of serving on what was undoubtedly the most toxic battlefield American forces have served on in the history of this great country.

I have been actively involved in advocating for and assisting fellow Gulf War veterans while serving as Advisor and Board of Director with the National Gulf War Resource Center (NGWRC) over the past 10 years. I have also served with the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) for Gulf War Illness treatment research for the past four years as a consumer reviewer as a member of the Scientific Merit Review panels and I believe very strongly in the unparalleled work of this treatment development program.

My hope and prayer is that Congress and the VA will not dismiss Gulf War veterans and our illnesses and that the CDMRP and research will continue to be funded.

Warm Regards and Godspeed,  
Brent Casey, MBA, ABD

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