

HOUSTON POST 3/13/95.

# Gulf war vets' group says documents support claims toxins caused illnesses

ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRVING — Gulf war veterans presented evidence Sunday they say refutes the federal government's assertion that they were not exposed to chemical and biological agents during the 1990-1991 war.

The group released recently declassified Department of Defense documents obtained through the federal Freedom of Information Act that mention exposures to such agents during the war.

Among the documents were Operation Desert Storm command log entries from January and March 1991.

A Jan. 20 entry says Czechoslovakian troops had detected chemical agents "flowing down from factory/storage (facility that had been) bombed in Iraq.

Predictably, this has become/is going to become a problem."

Scores of gulf war vets attended a weekend conference here sponsored by the National Task Force of Desert Storm Veterans Group.

Of the 697,000 troops who served in the war, about 6 percent, or 43,000, have reported ailments.

The symptoms of all but 15 percent can be attributed to known illnesses. President Clinton has said he will devote \$20 million to study the problem.

Another log entry dated Jan. 18 tracked a Iraqi Scud missile attack on the Israeli cities of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Nazareth.

"Israeli police confirmed nerve gas," the log states.

"Look at that. It says 'confirmed,' not 'reported,'" said Paul Sullivan, president of Gulf

War Veterans of Georgia.

Pentagon spokesman Navy Cmdr. Chuck Franklin denied that there is a cover-up. "There still are unanswered questions about what is causing the illnesses of gulf war vets," he said.

The log entries are particularly disturbing, he said, in light of a May 1994 Department of Defense memorandum sent to veterans that said: "There is no information, classified or unclassified, that indicates that chemical or biological weapons were used in the Persian Gulf." The letter was signed by John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Secretary William Perry.

"We have documents that confirm" the agents were present, Sullivan said. "The Department of Defense has only denials."

"FOR THE RECORD" MARCH 13, 1995  
1995 NATIONAL CONFERENCE