

# Depleted Uranium Death Toll among US War Veterans Tops 11,000

Nationwide Media Blackout Keeps U.S. Public Ignorant About This Important Story

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The death toll from the highly toxic weapons component known as depleted uranium (DU) has reached 11,000 soldiers and the growing scandal may be the reason behind Anthony Principi's departure as secretary of the Veterans Affairs Department.

This view was expressed by Arthur Bernklau, executive director of Veterans for Constitutional Law in New York, writing in Preventive Psychiatry E-Newsletter.

"The real reason for Mr. Principi's departure was really never given," Bernklau said. "However, a special report published by eminent scientist Leuren Moret naming depleted uranium as the definitive cause of 'Gulf War Syndrome' has fed a growing scandal about the continued use of uranium munitions by the U.S. military."

The "malady [from DU] that thousands of our military have suffered and died from has finally been identified as the cause of this sickness, eliminating the guessing. . . . The terrible truth is now being revealed," Bernklau said.

Of the 580,400 soldiers who served in Gulf War I, 11,000 are now dead, he said. By the year 2000, there were 325,000 on permanent medical disability. More than a decade later, more than half (56 percent) who served in Gulf War I have permanent medical problems. The disability rate for veterans of the world wars of the last century was 5 percent, rising to 10 percent in Vietnam.

"The VA secretary was aware of this fact as far back as 2000," Bernklau said. "He and the Bush administration have been hiding these facts, but now, thanks to Moret's report, it is far too big to hide or to cover up."

Terry Johnson, public affairs specialist at the VA, recently reported that veterans of both Persian Gulf wars now on disability total 518,739, Bernklau said.

"The long-term effect of DU is a virtual death sentence," Bernklau said. "Marion Fulk, a nuclear chemist, who retired from the Lawrence Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, and was also involved in the Manhattan Project, interprets the new and rapid malignancies in the soldiers [from the second war] as 'spectacular'—and a matter of concern.' "

While this important story appeared in a Washington newspaper and the wire services, it did not receive national exposure—a compelling sign that the American public is being kept in

the dark about the terrible effects of this toxic weapon. (Veterans for Constitutional Law can be reached at (516) 474-4261.)

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