

## Vaccine-free French healthier than allies

London: French forces who served in the Gulf War were not given the vaccines and anti-biological warfare measures administered to British and United States veterans and are free from the illnesses that beset their allies, the US Congress has been told.

Evidence to the subcommittee on national security shows the effort made to protect service personnel from biological and chemical weapons is most likely to have damaged their health.

The French were given protective suits but not the cocktail of drugs that British and US service-men took. Only 140 of the 25,000 French Gulf veterans have reported illnesses related to Gulf War service, compared with more than 5000 of the 52,000 British troops deployed, and 137,862 of the 697,000 US service personnel.

Unlike US and British forces, the French used bottled water, and did not use organophosphorous pesticides, now known to be very dangerous to humans.

Fourteen inoculations were given to British troops. In addition their immune systems were tested with the first-ever issue of nerve agent pre-treatment tablets as an antidote against chemical weapons, and the use of pesticides, including organophosphates to prevent fly-borne diseases. US and British forces were in total exposed to 33 toxins.

Among those taking part in the committee hearings was Lord Morris of Manchester, a campaigner for the Gulf War veterans, who gave evidence on the possible causes.

While accepting that these measures were taken in what were thought to be their best interests, British Gulf veterans who are now in broken health - many with severely debilitating but still undiagnosed illnesses - trace some of their problems to the [British] Ministry of Defence's efforts to protect them.

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<http://www.smh.com.au/news/0202/13/world/world3.html>