

### [Deadly Legacy of a War](#)

THE Gulf War was the first testing ground for a new weapons material -- depleted uranium. In 1998, the Iraqi government claimed that depleted uranium (DU) had caused the Gulf War Syndrome among its population. At the time, the world media treated the claim as propaganda but now both Gulf War veterans and researchers are questioning what risks DU weapons pose for military and civilian populations.

Invisible War: Depleted Uranium and the Politics of Radiation which screens tonight at 8pm, looks at the debate over DU weapons. Depleted uranium is one of the heaviest metals on earth and easy to mould into shells which are dense enough to penetrate heavy armour. It does not exist in nature but is a byproduct of atomic power generation. It is less radioactive than uranium, falling to half its original value after 4.5 billion years.

According to the Pentagon, 940 000 shells with more than 300 tonnes of depleted uranium were discharged during the Gulf War. The program claims that before the war, the US military expressed serious concerns about the health effects of DU and tied it to cancer and kidney disease.

A US army spokesman said the DU was too widely dispersed to pose any risk. But independent research found high levels of DU isotopes among Gulf War veterans, including U-236, which does not exist in nature, proving that the men were contaminated by exposure to DU.

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