

VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

April 2019

BURN PITS

Burn Pits were a common way to get rid of waste at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan. At this time, [research](#) does not show evidence of long-term health problems from exposure to burn pits. VA continues to study the health of deployed Veterans.

Eligible Veterans and service members include those who served in:

- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn
- Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm
- Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990

Health effects from burn pit smoke

Toxins in burn pit smoke may affect the skin, eyes, respiratory and cardiovascular systems, gastrointestinal tract and internal organs.

Veterans who were closer to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk. Health effects depend on a number of other factors, such as the kind of waste being burned and wind direction.

Most of the irritation is **temporary and resolves** once the exposure is gone. This includes eye irritation and burning, coughing and throat irritation, breathing difficulties and skin itching and rashes.

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I look forward to a great future for America - a future in which our country will match its military strength with our moral restraint, its wealth with our wisdom, its power with our purpose.

John F. Kennedy



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The high level of [fine dust and pollution](#) common in Iraq and Afghanistan may pose a greater danger for respiratory illnesses than exposure to burn pits, according to a [2011 Institute of Medicine report](#).

Waste products in burn pits include, but are not limited to: Chemicals, paint, medical and human waste, metal/aluminum cans, munitions and other unexploded ordnance, petroleum and lubricant products, plastics, rubber, wood and discarded food.

Health concerns?

If you are concerned about your exposure to burn pits, talk to your health care provider or contact your local [VA Environmental Health Coordinator](#) to help you get more information from a health care provider.

VA health care is available to all combat Veterans for conditions possibly related to service for five years after discharge. If you are not enrolled, contact our office to apply.

Registry

Join the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) and contact your local Environmental Health Coordinator to help you complete the free voluntary medical evaluation. [Check your eligibility and sign up](#) through an online questionnaire.

Compensation benefits for health problems

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to exposure to burn pits during military service. VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis. If you would like to file a claim please contact our office.

Read [Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors](#) to learn more about VA benefits.

April is National Month of Hope

During April, buds come into full bloom brightening our days, and National Month of Hope also lends a hand in lifting our spirits.

Bringing hope to someone can take many forms. Being a positive role model in the life of a child or providing a community a foundation for future endeavors both provide hope for the future. Lift the spirits of a friend suffering from a medical issue or volunteer at a local homeless shelter. We are each able to bring a ray of hope in our own ways by contributing wisdom, time, kindness and when possible donate to charities that make the impossible possible.

Mothers in Crisis, Inc. founded National Month of Hope to help spread hope around the world. Founded by Rosalind Tompkins in 1991, Mothers In Crisis supports women and families who are in need bringing them hope and empowering them to find a new path.

Everyone needs a little hope now and then. Spread a little sunshine their way and bring some hope into their lives.

Gulf War Illnesses

If you served in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations, you may suffer from illnesses or other conditions related to service in this region. The Southwest Asia region includes the following:

- Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia
- The neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia
- Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.)
- Oman
- The Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Oman
- The waters of the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea
- The airspace above these locations

You may be able to get disability benefits if you served in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations during the Gulf War period and you didn't receive a dishonorable discharge. Your illness or condition must also meet the requirements listed below and you must have one of the diagnoses listed below.

All of these must be true of your chronic illness or other condition. It:

- Started while you were on active duty or before December 31, 2016, **and**
- Caused you to be ill for at least 6 months, **and**
- Qualified you for a disability rating of 10% or more, **and**
- Was caused only by your service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations

And you must also have a diagnosis of one or more of these conditions:

- Functional gastrointestinal disorders
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Fibromyalgia
- Other undiagnosed illnesses, including but not limited to cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, and headaches.

If you served in Afghanistan, you may also suffer from illnesses or other conditions related to services in this region. You may be eligible for benefits if you didn't receive a dishonorable discharge and your chronic illness or other condition meets the requirements listed below.

All of these must be true. Your chronic illness or other condition:

- Started while you were on active duty or after September 19, 2001, **and**
- Caused you to be ill for at least 6 months, **and**
- Qualified you for a disability rating of 10% or more, **and**
- Was caused only by your service in Afghanistan

And you must also have a diagnosis of one or more of these conditions:

- Brucellosis
- Campylobacter jejuni
- Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)
- Malaria*
- Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
- Nontyphoid Salmonella
- Shigella
- Visceral leishmaniasis*
- West Nile Virus

*Indicates that there are exceptions to how the VA decides if these illnesses qualify you for benefits and these conditions may be covered even after a year has passed.

If you would like to file a claim for any of these conditions please contact our office to schedule an appointment with one of our Benefit Specialists.

Upcoming Event

Military Veterans Museum & Education Center's first



Open House and

Battle Re-enactment

Sunday, May 5, 2019

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

4300 Poberezhny Rd.

Oshkosh, WI



- 10:00 - 12:00 Educational Displays & Presentations
- 12:00 - 1:00 Vehicle Parade
- 1:00 - 2:00 Photo Ops & rides
- 2:00 - 3:00 Skirmish featuring the 3rd Gebirgsjager Division & 401st Glider Regiment
- 3:15 - 3:30 Fly by of P-51's
- 3:30 Closing with Taps

Free
Admission

Details to follow...

www.mvmwisconsin.com & www.facebook.com/mvmec

CONTACT US

Winnebago County
Veterans Service Office

Oshkosh Location
112 Otter St.
Oshkosh, WI 54901
(920) 232-3400

Neenah Location
211 N. Commercial
Neenah, WI 54956
(920) 729-4820

Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.
Send a request to:

CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us

Visit us on the web at:

[www.co.winnebago.wi.us/
veterans](http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans)



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For a list of more events,
check out our calendar!