

## **Self-Reported Health Information from the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry**

**As of December 2018**

On January 10, 2013, Public Law 112-260 was enacted requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish an open burn pit registry for Veterans who may have been exposed to burn pits in Iraq or Afghanistan. In response, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) established the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR) for eligible Servicemembers and Veterans to report their deployment-related exposures.

The purpose of the registry is to identify and monitor potential health effects from exposure to airborne environmental hazards. Registry participation is open to any Veteran or active-duty service member who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990, or in Afghanistan or Djibouti, Africa, after September 11, 2001. Participation in the registry is voluntary and will not in any way affect participants' access to health care or benefits.

Eligible individuals may join the registry by completing an online self-assessment questionnaire, designed to give providers a broad picture of the participant's health and current and past exposures. Following completion of the questionnaire, participants are encouraged to participate in a free, medical evaluation that will support or confirm the self-reported information on the questionnaire.

The following summary includes self-reported information from 164,295 Veterans and active-duty service members in the registry between June 2014 and December 2018. It also provides a brief description of the demographic and military service characteristics of registry participants.

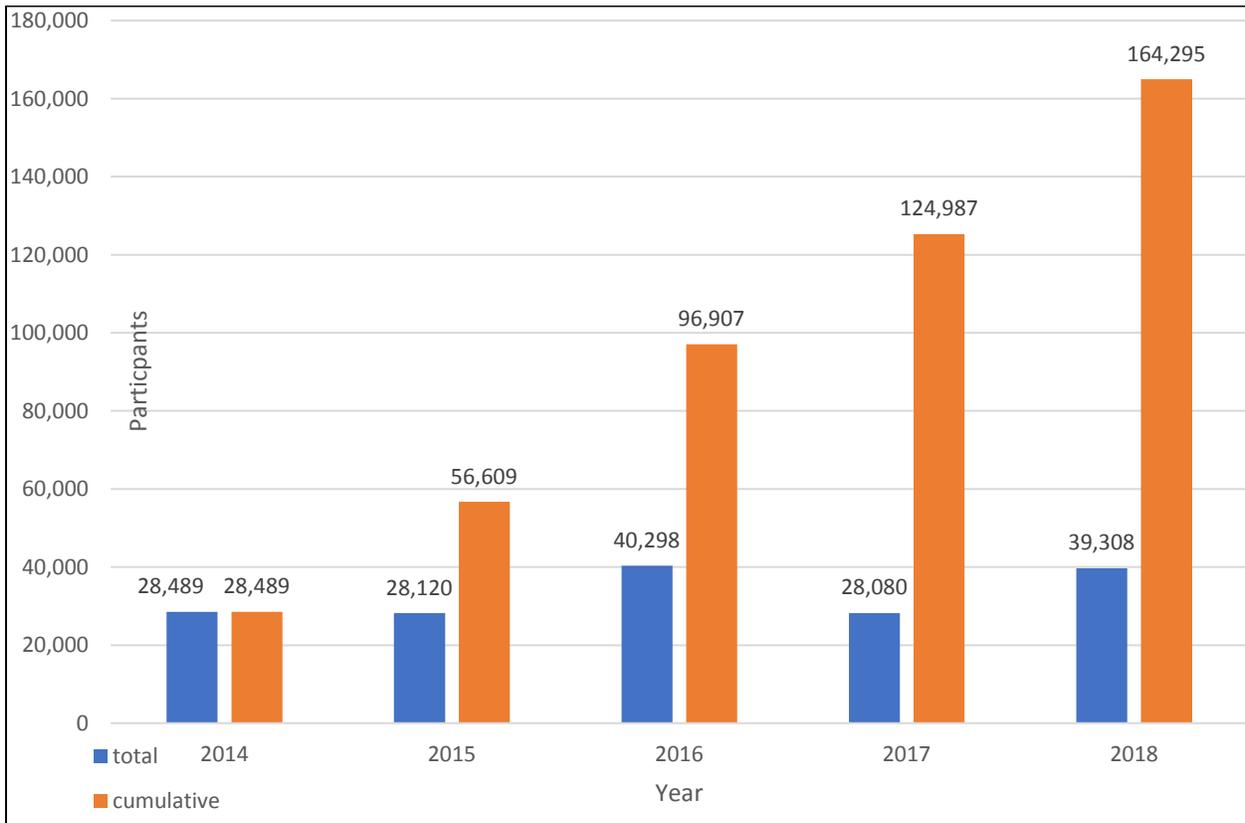
**The data in this report is descriptive and does not necessarily mean that exposure caused a specific disease.**

### **1. Burn Pit Registry Facts:**

- 157,107 (93.6%) reported a burn pit exposure during deployment
- 100,352 (59.9%) reported duties involving burn pits
- 90,211 (53.7%) are interested in seeing a health care provider
- 114,954 (70.4%) were close enough to feel the blast of an improvised explosive device (IED)
- 63,378 (39%) report ever smoking
- 14,048 (8.5%) are Gulf War 1 Veterans
- 55,801 (34%) saw a health care provider during their deployment for respiratory symptoms due to air quality.

- About 106,000 (64%) of those in the registry are Veterans (retired or separated from service.)
- About 59,000 of those in the registry are currently in the service (active duty, Reserve or National Guard.
- 398 of those in the registry have passed away. This is from all causes to include motor vehicle accidents and other traumatic injuries.

## 2. AHOBPR Participants by Per Year and Cumulative



**TABLE 1: Sex of Participants in the Registry**

Sex	Number of Respondents (%)
Male	139,003 (85)
Female	16,749 (10)
Missing	8,543 (5)

**TABLE 2: Age of Participants in Registry**

Age (years)	Number of Respondents N (%)
<25	3,153 (2)
25 – 34	52,050(32)
35-44	53,884(33)
45-54	36,037(22)
55-64	7,854 (5)
65+	710 (0)
Missing	10,607 (6)

**TABLE 3: Registry Participants' Branch of Service**

Branch of Service	Number of Respondents (%)
Air Force	33,560 (20)
Army	99,693 (61)
Coast Guard	260 (0.2)
Marines	18,158 (11)
Navy	11,089 (7)
Missing	1,535 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>164,295</b>

**TABLE 4: Most Concerning Self-Reported Exposure**

<b>Most concerning self-reported exposures on health</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (%)</b>
On-base air pollution during deployment (burning fuel, burn pits) (Deployment only)	113,685 (69)
Off-base air pollution during deployment (factories, cars, burning trash, dust) (Deployment only)	33,531 (20)
Don't Know	10,127 (6)
Unknown	3,306 (2)
Military jobs while I'm not deployed (Non-deployment only)	1,860 (1.1)
Smoking (by you or those near you) (Either deployment or non-deployment)	968 (0.6)
I do not wish to answer	572 (0.3)
Hobbies and non-military jobs (Non-deployment only)	246 (0.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>164,295</b>

**TABLE 5: Most Common Self-Reported Health Conditions**

<b>Most common self-reported health conditions (top 5)</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (%)*</b>
Spine arthritis	79,661 (48)
Knee arthritis	53,193 (32)
Unspecified Lung**	43,050 (26)
Arthritis/rheumatism (not specified)	41,479 (26)
Mood disorders (depression/anxiety/emotional problems)	35,342 (21)
<b>Total for top 5</b>	<b>252,725</b>

\* The percentages do not equal 100 because some participants have multiple health issues.

\*\*The question does not specify which lung disease. See Top Self-Reported Respiratory and Cardiac Health Conditions for more descriptive information.

**TABLE 6: Most Common Self-Reported Respiratory and Cardiac Conditions**

<b>Most common self-reported respiratory and cardiac conditions*</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (%)</b>
Allergies	65,275 (40)
Hypertension	60,834 (37)
Asthma	23,662 (14)
Chronic Bronchitis**	20,989 (13)
Other lung condition	14,549 (9)
Other heart condition	11,744 (7)
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**	4,884 (3)
Coronary artery disease	2,894(2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>213,575</b>

\*The total is greater than overall total because some participants reported multiple conditions.

\*\*This section was updated on September 27, 2019, to correct the number of respondents for chronic bronchitis and COPD.

**TABLE 7: Most Common Self-Reported Cancers**

<b>Self-reported cancers</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (%)</b>
Skin (non-melanoma)	1,892 (1.2)
Skin (Don't know what kind)	1,003 (0.6)
Melanoma	845 (0.5)
Prostate	542 (0.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,282 (3)</b>

**TABLE 8: Hobbies Self-Reported by Registry Participants**

<b>Hobby</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (%)*</b>
Woodwork	17,596 (57)
Indoor swimming/indoor ice skating	11,809 (38)
Metalwork	5,514 (18)
Welding	5,139 (16)
Epoxies	3,825 (12)
Pottery	405 (1.3)
Stained Glass	187 (0.6)
<b>Total number of hobbies reported</b>	<b>178,048</b>

\*Percentage based on the 30,722 respondents with hobbies. Total number of hobbies exceed the total number of respondents because multiple respondents reported multiple hobbies.