



Gulf and Middle East war burn pits could be this generation's Agent Orange

NOVEMBER 2017

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) estimates that hundreds of thousands of veterans who served in the Gulf War in the 1990s and most recently in the conflicts in the Middle East may have been exposed to a myriad of airborne chemicals and toxic substances because of burn pits. Burn pits were used to destroy and eliminate everything that was not needed during missions – including, but not limited to chemicals, toxic materials and unexploded enemy ordinance. This hastily means turned debris into a hazardous gas for everyone to breathe.

The US Department of Veteran Services has 110,989 service men and women listed in its burn pit registry. Subsequently, a study by the VA Public Health Department acknowledges that some service men and women are experiencing many of the short-term burn pit health effects, including burning, dry or tearing eyes, nasal congestion, sneezing, sore throat and cough. Veterans with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma (or a natural tendency of asthma) may experience chronic lung problems, allergies, or may have respiratory symptoms that last for a longer period because of the potential exposure.

It took the military many years to codify the harmful and deadly effects of Agent Orange on Vietnam veterans. Because of this, the VA suggests that every Gulf War, Iraqi and Afghanistan veteran exposed to burn pits – especially those who experience lung, digestive and neurological issues – get an official diagnosis from their health care provider.

If you need help filing a claim regarding exposure to burn pits or any other issue, please visit the San Mateo County Veteran Services office, as we are here to help.

The San Mateo County Veteran Services Office is extending our thankfulness and gratitude to all Veterans in our County. Thank you and your families' sacrifice for our great Nation.

Happy Veterans Day!



WHERE TO CONNECT WITH US:

Tuesdays, 8:30am to 3pm, VA Menlo Park Building #348

November 2nd, 16th, & 30th - San Bruno VA Clinic 8am-3:30pm

November 3rd - 8am-3:30pm, Peninsula Vet Center 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park

November 8th- 8:00am-3:30pm, VA Palo Alto Building #4, Room #B210

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available. <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY