

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Epidemiologic Study on the Health of Veterans Who Served at Fort McClellan, 1979-1999

Seeking Veterans' Perspectives

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SUMMARY:

What this is: The National Academies committee invites veterans and other members of the public to share perspectives and experiences related to service at Fort McClellan.

What this is not: This is not a survey and not a research study. You do not need to answer every question.

Why we are asking: Your input will help the committee think about what topics and experiences to cover as it develops a health status survey and plans its analyses in the coming months.

Public record: Written comments you provide will be placed in the committee's Public Access File and may be quoted or summarized in the committee's report. Please do not include private medical details, Social Security numbers, VA claim information, addresses, or other sensitive personal information.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is an agency of the federal government whose mission is to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors. In accordance with section 801 of PL 117-168, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022, VA has commissioned the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct an epidemiologic study of the health of veterans who served at Fort McClellan, Alabama, from 1979 to 1999. The National Academies is a nonprofit organization created by Congress that provides independent analysis and advice to the nation on pressing national problems.

To do this work for VA, the National Academies established a committee of national experts. Based on a roster of veterans provided by VA, the committee will develop and conduct a health status survey of veterans who served at Fort McClellan, Alabama, from 1979 to 1999 as well as a separate mortality analysis of decedent Fort McClellan veterans who served during the same period. At the end of this process, the committee will develop

a report that describes the results of the survey and mortality analysis. The report will be available to the public free-of-charge.

You can find more information about the project at our website:

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/projects/HMD-BPH-25-03/about>

Fort McClellan:

Fort McClellan, an Army base in Anniston, Alabama, served as a major training site following its opening in 1917. It housed groups such as the U.S. Army Chemical Corps School, the Army Combat Development Command Chemical/Biological/Radiological Agency, the Army Military Police School, and the Women's Army Corps. As part of the Army Base Closure and Realignment Committee program, it closed in 1999.

The Committee's Work So Far:

The committee consists of 13 experts from all over the country. It includes doctors, environmental and occupational epidemiologists, toxicologists and exposure scientists, biostatisticians and survey specialists, and experts in veterans' health. It first convened in February 2026 and has held one public meeting so far, as well as other closed committee deliberation sessions.

How You Can Help the Committee:

The committee would like to hear from individuals about their experiences serving at Fort McClellan. We are seeking perspectives to *inform* the committee's planning. The committee will develop a survey later; this request is for public input only. We welcome input from veterans who served at Fort McClellan between 1979 and 1999, as well as others with relevant perspectives (e.g., Fort McClellan veterans from other periods, family members, caregivers, and organizations). Specifically, the committee appreciates input on any of the following, with a focus on information that will inform the survey the committee is developing:

- 1. When were you at Fort McClellan, and why were you there?**

Examples: year(s) (or approximate), basic training, advanced/specialty training, instructor, cadre, permanent party/staff, TDY/temporary assignment.

- 2. Where did you spend most of your time, and for about how long?**

Examples: weeks/months; on-post vs off-post housing; barracks; specific training areas; classrooms; ranges; maintenance shops; field training sites; dining facilities; clinics; other places on or near the installation (general descriptions are fine).

- 3. What did you do day-to-day while you were there?**

Examples: job or MOS-related duties; training school/course; typical daily routine;

field exercises; weapons/range activities; vehicle/equipment maintenance; chemical-related training; administrative work; instructor responsibilities.

4. **Were there any materials, environments, or situations (including acute or repeated exposures, for example inhalation or skin contact with toxicants/substances) that you believe may have posed health risks—and how might contact have happened?**

Also, if you remember: any safety practices, warnings, training, or protective equipment used (or not used)—for example, gloves, masks/respirators, ventilation, decontamination, signage, briefings.

5. **What health outcomes or health topics are you most concerned about related to service at Fort McClellan?**

Examples: cancers; respiratory/lung issues; skin conditions; neurologic symptoms; reproductive or pregnancy-related concerns; thyroid/endocrine issues; autoimmune conditions; mental health concerns; hearing/vision; other chronic conditions.

You can speak generally—no private medical details are needed.

6. **Is there anything else you want the committee to understand about service at Fort McClellan as it plans its work?**

Examples: job types, schools/units, or locations the committee should pay attention to; groups who may have had different experiences (trainees vs permanent staff, instructors, range staff, maintenance, specific schools/facilities, on-post vs off-post housing).

You may share as much or as little as you wish, and you may focus on general themes rather than personal details. Please do not include sensitive personal information (for example: full date of birth, address, phone number, Social Security number, VA claim numbers, or detailed medical records).

If you would like to provide oral comments at the committee's second meeting (March 26-27 and April 1), [register here](#). Each individual will have up to 3 minutes (no PowerPoint slides). Space is limited and advanced registration is required.

Members of the public may also submit written comments for consideration by the study committee (as individuals or on behalf of an organization) [via this form](#) through May 15, 2026 (all questions are optional, including name and email).

All materials and comments received will be placed in the committee's Public Access File in compliance with Section 15 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Materials and comments received may also be included in the committee's report.

The committee cannot provide medical advice or comment on individual VA claims. This project does not determine eligibility for VA benefits.