

Committee on an Epidemiologic Study on the Health of Veterans Who Served at Fort McClellan, 1979–1999

STATEMENT OF TASK

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will convene an ad hoc committee to conduct an epidemiologic study of veterans who served at Fort McClellan from 1979-1999, 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. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will provide a roster of veterans who served at Fort McClellan during the study period that contains identifying information.

Using the roster of Fort McClellan veterans, the committee will conduct a mortality analysis to include causes of death through the last complete year available. Death information will be provided through linkage to the VA death ascertainment file, but the committee may also use other sources, such as the National Death Index.

The committee will design the study using a sampling frame based on the roster of veterans provided and specify a comparison group of individuals who may not be part of the roster. The design will include the use of a web-based survey instrument that will collect factors regarding potential exposures based on occupational or training program assignment at Fort McClellan and health outcomes, as well as additional confounding factors as appropriate. To the extent possible, the survey should incorporate questions that have been validated for other surveys of veteran populations and should take approximately 30 minutes. In addition to the web-based survey, other collection methods may be used as considered appropriate by the committee to improve response rates. Data elements from VA administrative databases will be made available as needed to support the study. For example, the VA master veteran index will be made available to search for most current address.

Following data collection, the committee will analyze the data and write a report that details the study design, survey methodology, strengths and limitations, results of the analysis including etiologic inference. The report will include findings but no conclusions or recommendations.

At the end of the study, in addition to the final report, the sponsor will receive a copy of the survey and final data set.