Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

User Guide for Service Members

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Contents

Overview

In June 2014, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, found at https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry, in response to concerns that veterans were experiencing a range of respiratory illnesses possibly associated with exposure to burn pits while deployed overseas. The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry process allows eligible veterans and service members to document their exposures (such as emissions from open burn pits, oil-well fires, or pollution) during deployment, as well as health concerns, through an online questionnaire and a voluntary medical evaluation.

The registry is voluntary and does not affect access to VA health care or compensation benefits. Upon completion of the questionnaire, registry participants may schedule a free medical evaluation with their local military hospital or clinic to discuss their exposures and review their completed questionnaire with their health care provider. The registry helps participants proactively identify and discuss health concerns, while informing future VA and Department of Defense (DoD) research on the health effects of open burn pits and other airborne hazards.

The following guide is designed to help service members navigate the complete registry process. It describes the registry requirements; provides an in-depth, step-by-step guide for accessing, registering, and completing the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry questionnaire; and provides instructions for scheduling the recommended medical evaluation.

Requirements

In order to register for the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, you must meet the following requirements:

- You must be either a service member or veteran who has deployed to contingency operations in the Southwest Asia theater of operations or Egypt at any time on or after August 2, 1990, or Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, or Uzbekistan on or after September 11, 2001.

  These regions include the following countries, bodies of water, and the airspace above these locations:

  - o Afghanistan
  - o Bahrain
  - o Djibouti
  - o Egypt
  - o Gulf of Aden
  - o Gulf of Oman

  - o Iraq
  - o Kuwait
  - o Oman
  - o Qatar
  - o Saudi Arabia
  - o Syria

  - o United Arab Emirates
  - o Uzbekistan
  - o Waters of the Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea

- You must have a Defense Self-service (DS) Logon Level 2 (Premium) account.

Registry Process

Log in to the Registry

1. At least 90 days after returning from your most recent eligible deployment, visit the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry at https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry.

2. Select **DS Logon Sign in** in the upper righthand corner of the screen or **Get Started** in the lower righthand corner of the screen.
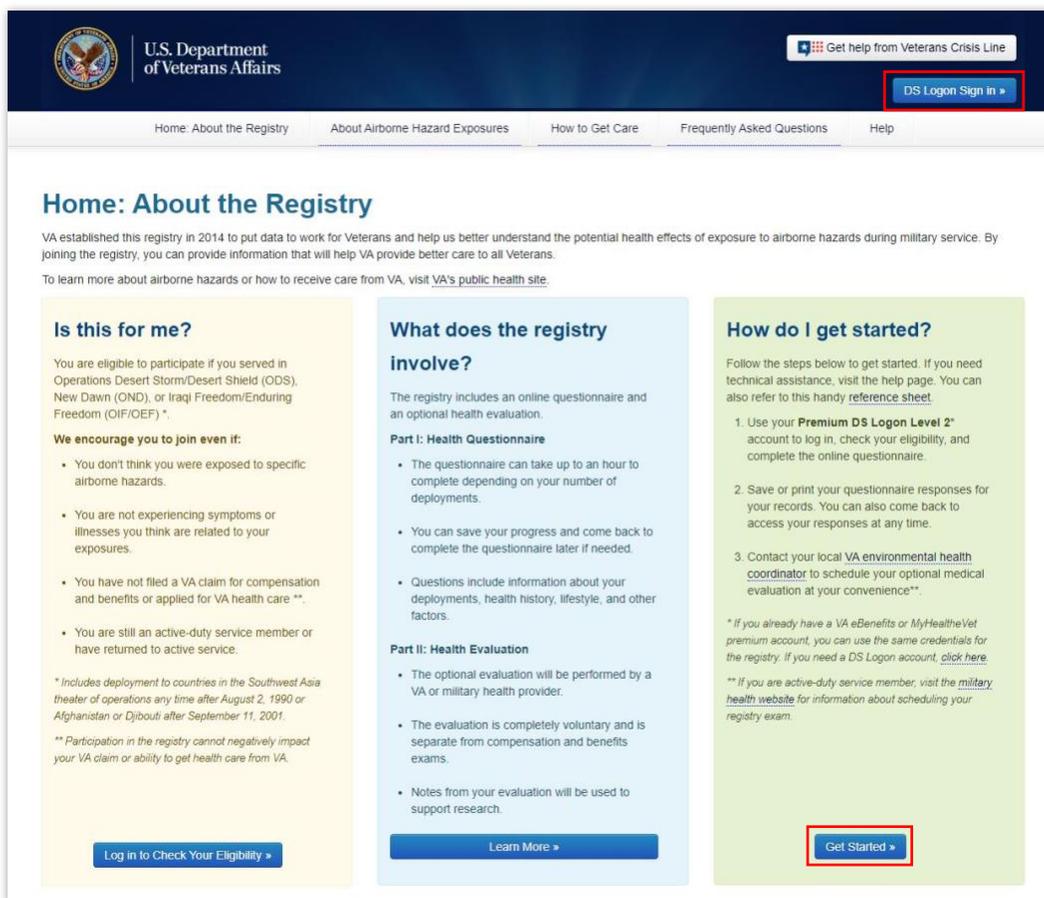
Figure 1: Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Homepage

3. Select **Use your DS Logon Level 2 account**.

4. Select **Accept**.

> **TIP:** You can also access the registry page by visiting the VA Launchpad > Select **DS Logon Sign in** > Enter your DS Logon Level 2 account credentials > Select **Sign In**.

5. Enter your DS Logon username and password and select **Login**.
   a. If you need to register for a DS Logon account, select **Create Account** and follow the prompts. Select **Download FAQs** for additional guidance, which can be found at the bottom right hand of the DS Logon page.

Figure 2: DS Logon Title Screen

6. The first time you log in to the registry, confirm your consent to the End User License Agreement and Notice of Privacy Practices by selecting **I Consent, take me to the registry**.

Determine Eligibility

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry system automatically pulls deployment history from DoD deployment records to determine initial eligibility. If you are initially determined to be eligible (meaning the records in the database show you were deployed in the qualifying countries and/or bodies of water), continue to page 9 to "Verify Contact Information."

However, if you are not initially determined to be eligible, but you know you should qualify for the registry, this may be the result of missing or inaccurate data in the deployment database. ***You must initiate a manual eligibility review to be considered for the registry***.

> ⓘ **IMPORTANT NOTE**: If you recently returned from a deployment, it may take up to 90 days for your recent deployment history to appear in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry system. If your initial registration attempt indicates no eligible deployment history, try logging in again more than 90 days after returning from deployment before requesting a manual eligibility review.

1. Select **Request an Eligibility Review**.
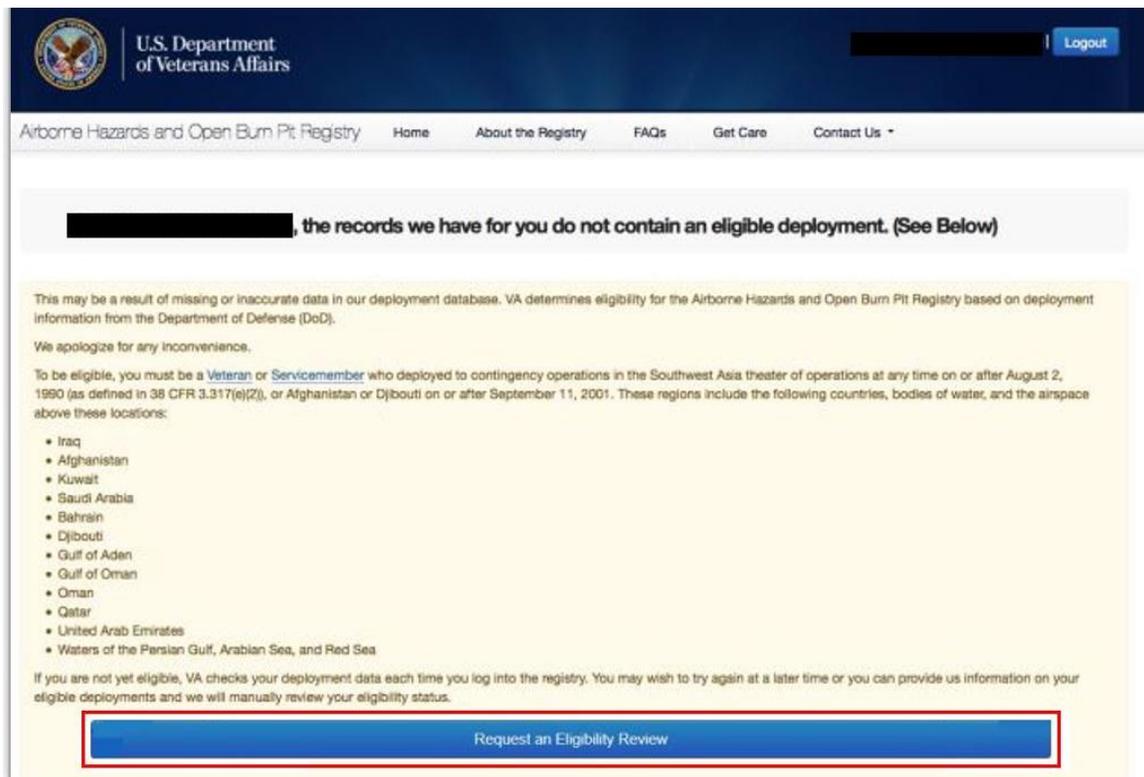
Figure 3: Request an Eligibility Review

2. Verify and/or enter any missing contact information.

3. Add eligible deployment history by typing a base, country, or body of water in the search bar. Note, only eligible locations will appear in the search results.

4. Next to the deployment information that applies to your service, select **Add**.
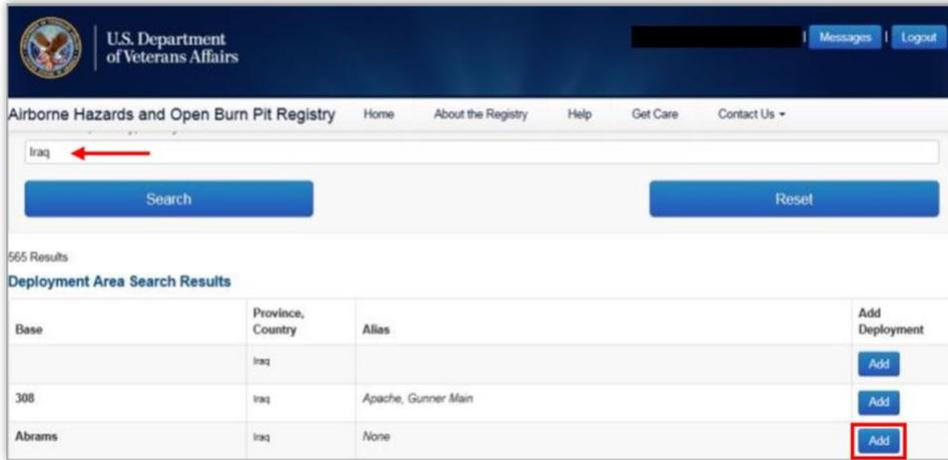
Figure 4: Deployment Area Search Result

5. Complete the displayed fields and select **Add**.

6. Ensure your deployment dates do not overlap.

7. Once you have entered all your eligible deployments and they appear in the "Deployment Periods" table, submit the manual eligibility request by selecting **Send My Information**.
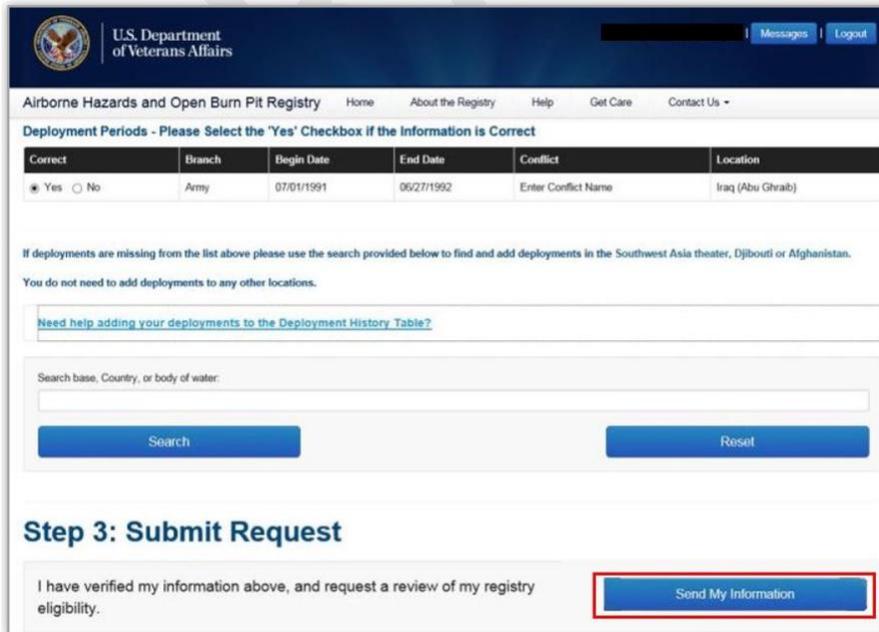
Figure 5: Eligibility Request Submission Screen

Your information will be submitted and is subject to a manual review. VA will review the information you submit and, if necessary, ask you to provide documentation that indicates your eligible deployment(s). The manual review process can take up to 90 days. You can call the *Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Help Desk (877-470-5947)* for assistance with accessing the registry and entering deployment dates.

Figure 6: Manual Eligibility Request Submission Verification Screen

You can track your eligibility status by logging in to the registry. Once VA has validated your deployment, you will receive an automated notification via email alerting you that you may proceed to complete the registration process and begin the questionnaire. *It can take up to 90 days for VA to manually review your eligibility.*

💡 **TIP**: The VA Messaging System within the registry will send you a duplicate of the message you received via email. You can access your messages by selecting **Messages** in the upper right corner of the screen.

Verify Contact Information

Once you have been determined eligible for the registry, either initially or after submitting a manual eligibility review, you will verify and/or update your contact information. This is the first of three phases to complete the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry questionnaire, as indicated by the status bar above the questionnaire fields. You must confirm that your contact information is correct before you can begin the questionnaire.

1. If the information displayed is correct, select **My Contact Information is Correct**.

2. If the information displayed is incorrect, select **No. I Need to Update My Information** to update the information.

Figure 7: Verify or Update Contact Information Fields

> ⚠ **IMPORTANT NOTE**: Keeping your contact information up to date is important. Service members who are exiting the service should update their contact information to include any new email address, home address, or phone number. You can return to the registry at any time to update your contact information.

Verify Deployment History

After verifying your contact information, you will begin the second phase of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry questionnaire, "Start the Questionnaire." The first of eight sections asks you to verify your eligible deployment history, whether you were initially eligible or deemed eligible after submitting your manual eligibility review.

1. Review each deployment history entry in the "Deployment Periods" table for accuracy.

2. Select **Yes** to indicate the information displayed in the row is correct.

3. Select **No** to indicate the information displayed in the row is incorrect.

Figure 8: Deployment History Verification Screen

4. For both incorrect and missing deployments, use the search field to find and add information.

5. Type a base, country, or body of water in the search bar. Please note that only eligible locations will appear in the search results.

6. Next to the deployment information that applies to your service, select **Add.**
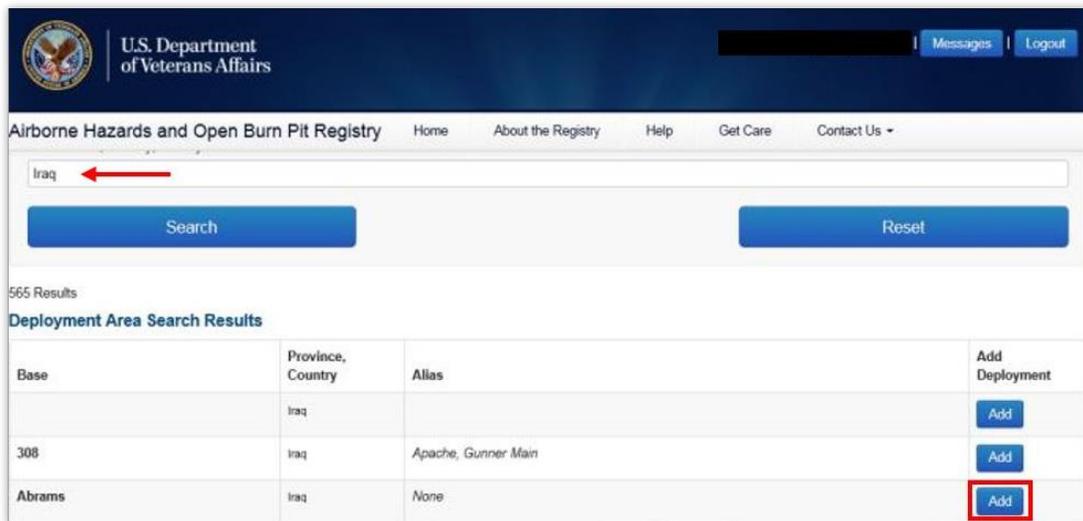
Figure 9: Deployment Area Search Result

7. Complete the displayed fields and select **Add**.

8. Ensure your deployment dates do not overlap.

9. Once you verify and/or update your deployment history, select **Save Changes** and then **Next Section**.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All self-entered deployment history changes and additions to the "Deployment Periods" table are subject to a manual review by VA. *If you manually edited/added deployment information, you should wait to complete the questionnaire until your edited/added deployment information is reviewed and deemed eligible by VA.* Once VA completes the manual deployment review, you will be notified via email and the VA Messaging System that your self-entered deployment history is either "Reviewed-eligible" or "Reviewed-not eligible." *You will only be asked questions about eligible deployments*.

Complete and Submit the Questionnaire

After verifying your deployment history, you can continue to complete the remaining sections and sub-sections of the questionnaire. The questionnaire covers eight major topics and asks primarily about your health history, deployment history, and work environment and lifestyle. Table 1 lists the section topics and sub-section topics, where applicable.

Table 1: Questionnaire Section and Sub-Section Topics

#	SECTION TOPIC	SUB-SECTION TOPIC
1	Deployment History	1.1 Deployment Data from the VA Defense Information Repository and Other Sources 1.2 Location Specific Deployment Exposures 1.3 General Military Occupational Exposures 1.4 Environmental Exposures, Regional Air Pollution
2	Symptoms and Medical History	2.1 Functional Limitation and Reported Cause 2.2 Health Conditions 2.3 Height and Weight 2.4 Cancer History 2.5 Tobacco Exposure 2.6 Deployment Smoking History 2.7 12 Month Alcohol Use
3	Health Concerns	N/A
4	Places You've Lived	N/A
5	Work History	5.1 Current Occupation Status 5.2 Main Occupation 5.3 Dust Exposures 5.4 Gas, Smoke, Vapors, or Fumes Exposure 5.5 Asbestos Exposure
6	Home Environment and Hobbies	6.1 Home Environment, Community, and Hobbies (Environmental Exposures)
7	Health Care Utilization	N/A
8	Contact Preferences	N/A

The questionnaire will take about an hour to complete depending on your number of deployments, and the questions are intended to provide a broad and complete picture of your health. A small sub-section of the questionnaire will repeat to address concerns specific to each verified and eligible deployment segment. Even if you do not think some of your deployment information is related to exposures or that your lifestyle affects your health, you should still provide as much information as possible.

> 💡 **TIP**: You do not need to complete the questionnaire in one sitting. The next time you log in to the registry, you will automatically resume the questionnaire where you last saved.

As you complete the questionnaire, remember that:

- You must answer all the questions on the screen before proceeding to the next section, but you are able to return to previous sections at any time by selecting **Previous Section**.

- The questionnaire automatically saves when you select **Next Section**, but you can select **Save Changes** on each screen to save progress, as needed.

- You can monitor your questionnaire progress by viewing either of the following:
  - The section and highlighted sub-section you are working on within the questionnaire on the left side of the screen
  - The status bar at the top of the screen, which fills in gradually as you answer questions

Figure 10: Questionnaire Layout and Navigation Features

1. Proceed to answer the questions and select **Next Section** until you reach the end of the questionnaire.

2. Once you have completed the questionnaire, select **Submit Questionnaire**. If you deploy to an eligible region after submitting your questionnaire, you may return to the registry in the future to add that deployment.

Figure 11: Questionnaire Submission Screen

Review Registry Documents and Resources

Upon submitting your questionnaire, you will be taken to the third and final phase of the questionnaire, "Next Steps and Resources." The screen will congratulate you for completing the questionnaire and allow you to select four documents to download or print, including three for service members.

> 💡 **TIP**: You can also access your submitted questionnaire and the resources any time online by logging in to the registry > Select **Next Steps and Resources** along the status bar > Select **Questionnaire**.

1. Select **Questionnaire** to download and/or print a copy of the questionnaire for your records.
2. Select **New Participation Letter** to view details on how to schedule your recommended medical evaluation.
3. Select **DoD Fact Sheet for Servicemembers and Retirees** for registry information specific to service members and retirees.
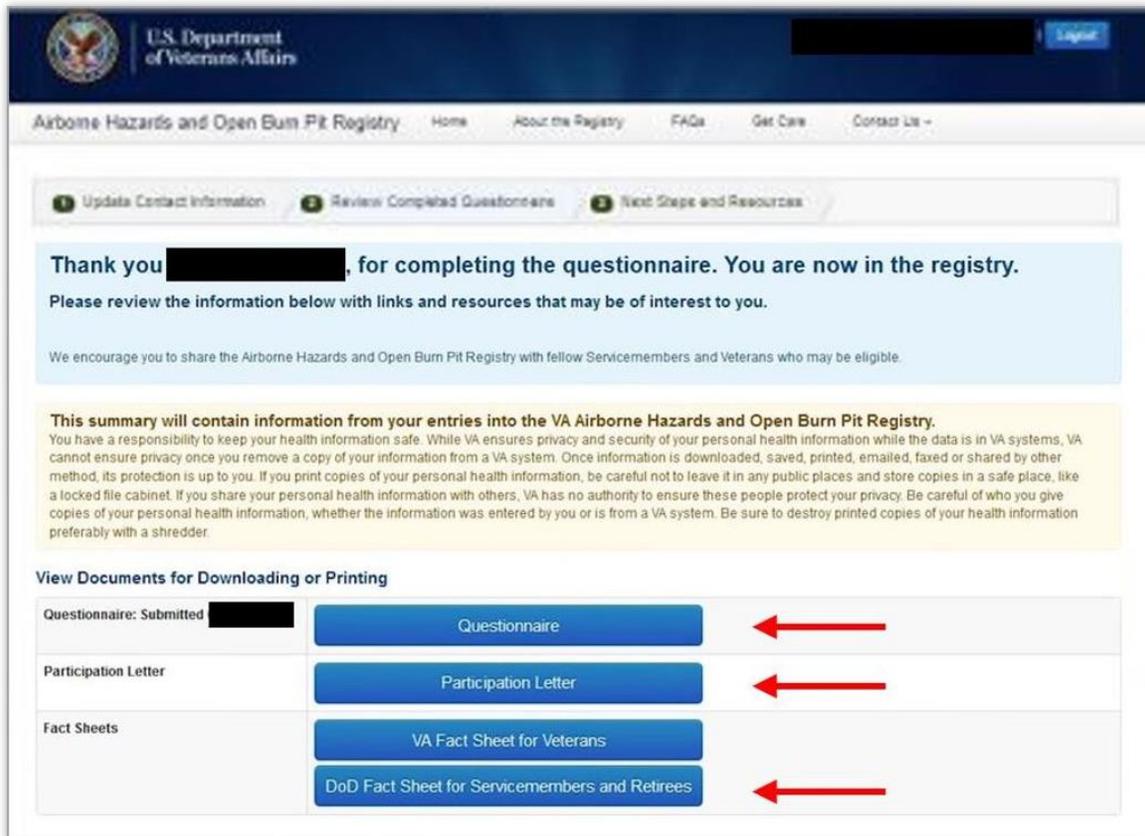
Figure 12: Registry Completion Screen and Available Resources

> ⚠ **IMPORTANT NOTE**: If you download and/or print the questionnaire, ensure that you are taking steps to protect your personal information. Be cautious about with whom you share your personal health information and be sure to destroy printed copies of your health information after use, preferably with a shredder.

Add a Deployment After Submission

Once you complete and submit the questionnaire, you are fully enrolled in the registry. However, if you redeployed after your questionnaire submission, you can return to your profile to add deployments and document your exposures at each location. ***Please wait at least 90 days after your return to log in and update the registry***.

1. Log back in and you will be taken back to the Registry Completion Screen (Figure 12 above). Scroll down and click **Next Steps** in the bottom right corner of the screen.

2. Scroll to the section shown in Figure 13 and click **Add New Deployments**.

VA has enabled the AHOBPR to allow Active Duty, Guard and Reserves to add new eligible deployments as often as needed. Some Veterans may not have included all deployments in the AHOBPR if they submitted the questionnaire before their separation. Upon adding new deployments, you will also be asked to update the specific exposures you experienced during each deployment. In addition, all enrolled should update their contact information. To update or check contact information select here. To add new deployments in the AHOBPR database select here. It may take up to 5 minutes to update each deployment.

- Update Contact Information
- Add New Deployments

Figure 13: Add New Deployments Screen

3. You will be taken back to your Deployment Table. You can use the search bar located below the table (shown in Figure 14) to add your deployments. Please note that you will not be able to edit your previous deployments already entered into the table.
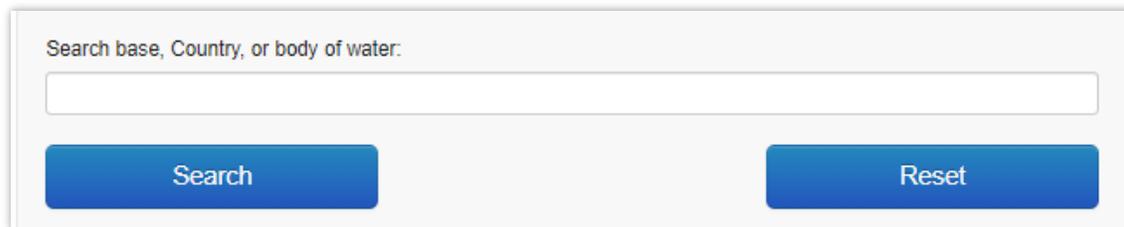
Search base, Country, or body of water:

| Search | Reset |

Figure 14: Deployment Area Search Bar

4. After you add your deployment(s) please proceed to the next page to complete the Location Specific Exposures section. After that is completed, select **Submit Questionnaire**.

Schedule Your Free Medical Evaluation

DoD will provide a free, optional medical evaluation to active duty personnel upon request. ***Please note that the completion of the questionnaire does NOT cue DoD to contact you to schedule this appointment.***

- If you are an active duty service member (including activated Reserve or Guard members), contact your local military hospital or clinic to schedule an appointment.

- If you are a National Guard or Reserve Component member (separated or still serving), VA will provide your free, optional medical evaluation. You will be contacted by VA, or you may proactively contact a local VA Environmental Health Coordinator, to schedule an appointment.

- Remember to note that your appointment is specifically to address "health concerns related to the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry exposures."

- ***Bring a printed copy of your questionnaire or securely share an electronic copy with your health care provider*** and write down any questions that you may have.

> 💡 **TIP**: There is no time limit to complete the medical evaluation. If you submitted the questionnaire as an active duty service member and have since separated from active duty, you may schedule your exam through a local VA Environmental Health Coordinator.

Additional Service Member Resources

DS Logon Resources

- DS Logon FAQs (To access this resource, select **Download FAQs** at the bottom right hand of the DS Logon page as previously shown in Figure 2)

- Defense Manpower Data Center Contact Center: 800-538-9552

Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Resources

- VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

- Health.mil/AHBurnPitRegistry (Service Member Fact Sheet, Video, FAQs, and more)

- VA Mobile Demonstration Video for the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

- Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Help Desk: 877-470-5947

Medical Facility Resources

- Military Hospital or Clinic Locator

- VA Facility Locator

- Local VA Environmental Health Coordinator Directory