



## Bladder Cancer and the Brave: Modern Warfare and First Responders

This is the burn pits. This slide is actually of an Iraq burn pit. As you can see, it's an open field fire, where material is dumped into a pit and then set on fire with jet fuel. That's apparently the common method of igniting a burn pit. Next slide. There's been a lot of concern about what people who were near burn pits were exposed to. There's been exposure estimates looking at where the burn pits occurred and the substances that were burned, included water bottles, medical waste, even unexploded munitions, and body parts. All of that were burned in these burn pits. The exposures from that included benzene, other toxic chemicals, and particulate matter, air pollutants. Either fine particulates or the black smoke that you saw on the previous slide. There is no presumptive standard at this point for people who were

exposed to burn pits for specific diseases that they might be compensated for, but it's in process. I think that whole process is still underway, and we will probably hear more about it in the coming months or years. I would now say that some of these exposures were similar to what happened at the September 11th, 2001 buildings that were collapsed in lower Manhattan. The exposures there were primarily to firefighters, police, and rescue workers. First responders, basically.

**Burn pit exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan**

- Burn pits in fields in open air were ignited by jet fuel
  - Waste disposed included water bottles, medical waste, unexploded munitions
  - Exposures included benzene, toxic chemicals, particulate matter
- Similar exposures occurred post Sept. 11, 2001 in NYC firefighters and rescue workers.



The families of people exposed to the burn pits have established their own website. This is similar to the marines website for Camp Lejeune exposures. Families that established the burnpits360.org site collected information about this whole long list of diseases, to the extent that they knew what they were exposed to and when. Information such as that was collected in a voluntary self-reported way. In 2013, president Obama signed the Open

Burn Pits Registry Act. Again, this was a congressional Act which was signed into law, such that the Department of Veterans Affairs now has set up a voluntary Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. Again, this is to collect information of volunteers who go online and give their information to the VA that can become the basis for deciding what further studies can and need to be done.

Several studies have been done by researchers in New York City of first responders and they have documented, in the initial stages anyway, higher rates of respiratory illness in respiratory veterans. The

### Burn pit exposures, cont.

- In 2010, families established Burnpits360.org to collect self-reported information from exposed veterans
- In 2013, Pres. Obama signed the Open Burn Pits Registry Act
  - Dept. of Veterans Affairs set up the voluntary Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit registry



### Burn pit health effects to date

- Several studies have documented higher rates of respiratory illness in exposed veterans
  - Increased wheezing, cough, chest pain/tightness and allergy symptoms
  - Additional studies underway
- World Trade Center responders also had diminished lung function in early studies
  - Additional studies underway



symptoms include wheezing, cough, chest pain and tightness, and allergy symptoms. There are additional studies underway currently by researchers in the New York/New Jersey area. The World Trade Center responders have also had diminished lung function in some early studies of the first responders. Next slide please. That's just a picture of people working on the piles, it was called, and then the smoke arising from it in the background. Next slide.

The James Zadroga Act 9/11 Health and

Compensation Act was passed in 2010. I'm sure you've seen references to that in the news. A comedian named Jon Stewart got very involved in advocating for that, and actually advocating for an update of that. James Zadroga was himself a first responder who had died, and so it was named after him. This also provides health monitoring and financial aid to first responders. This is not specific to veterans, this is to people who worked on the response to the 9/11 disaster in Manhattan. The health monitoring and financial aid includes bladder cancer, lung cancer, and a long list of other diseases. That's already

## James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010

- Provides health monitoring and financial aid to first responders, volunteers and survivors
  - Listed conditions include bladder cancer, lung cancer and many other diseases
- Period of eligibility extends to 2090



beginning, and it's going to continue the period of eligibility because of this update that was passed more recently. The eligibility for those exposed in 2001 will continue to 2090, if people live that long.

I offer that as an example not so much as a military exposure, but I'm sure some of the people who were first responders were military veterans and are military veterans that are suffering some of these conditions.

But it was set up specifically for the first responders of any type, and so it has some similarities to the burn pit exposed veterans, although in a different context. I think that's all I have. I'd be happy to take questions. Oh yeah, here's a series of references for those that want to look up any of these studies that I mentioned, or any of these symptoms that I talked about. They're in the four references on this slide. Now we can go to questions.

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