

2024 RallyPoint Questions and Answers

QUESTION:

Is there a difference in the first Cohort in 2001 and follow on groups in the variety of diseases and morbidity for the groups? I was in 1-87IN 10th Mtn there in 2001.

RESPONSE:

We have evaluated this issue and see no difference in the rates of disease or cancers between K2 Veterans that deployed early during the K2 occupation compared to those that deployed later. The K2SP will repeat these analyses at regular intervals over the next 10+ years and keep the K2 community informed of any new findings.

QUESTION:

I was at K-2, back in 2004. Worked at the ASP former Soviet aircraft hangers. The VA told me when I got back, nothing is covered. What has changed since then?

RESPONSE:

Uzbekistan (K2) was included in the presumptions designated under the PACT Act. There are over 300 conditions and cancers included in these presumptions. K2 veterans are encouraged to enroll in VA healthcare so they may be properly evaluated for all health concerns that they may have and to submit a claim for any condition they believe is related to their military service at K2 or elsewhere.

QUESTION:

As far as the Ammo Dump being put off limits in 2001 so it's not being included, PLEASE remember Soldiers ie.. MP's Patrolled and enforced the off limits, and in the early days we actually had dug in fighting positions for our vehicles outside of the berms and around the old ASP!

RESPONSE:

All K2 Veterans that served between 2001 and 2005 are included in the K2 Surveillance Program and the analysis of health outcomes and causes of death. Additionally, all personnel that deployed to K2 are eligible for the PACT Act covered presumptions.

QUESTION:

Why are Dr. Culpepper, the VA, and DoD continuing to deny that enriched uranium was what my team found in 2001? I provided concrete evidence to Secretary McDonough, Catherine Herridge, and Jon Stewart. I will continue to provide the evidence (pictures, reports, medical records) to refute the claim that only DU was found. The interim CHPPM-UER report states enriched uranium, the lab reports show radioactivity above background levels and greater, asbestos, chemical contamination, gross jet fuel contamination, respirable dust (particulate matter 10 microns and below). Bottom line, K2 was an environmental disaster.

RESPONSE:

DoD is the authoritative source on contaminants identified at military installations, bases, and sites. Any data or information about contaminants at the K2 site should be shared and discussed with DoD.

QUESTION:

Evidence of enriched uranium exposure has been presented to the Secretary of the VA and the DOD, will the VA stop investigating depleted uranium exposure and now address the enriched uranium and other toxic exposures ailments and deaths that are documented from K2?

RESPONSE:

To date there has been no credible evidence of enriched uranium at K2. DoD is the authoritative source for determining what contaminants were located at military installations. Depleted uranium was documented at K2. The health outcomes evaluated in the K2 Surveillance Program (K2SP) include conditions and cancers that may be linked to radiation exposure such as blood cancers (leukemias and lymphomas) and multiple myeloma. Small numbers of these cancers were documented in the K2 cohort but the rate of these cancers are not greater than the OEF deployed and non-deployed comparison groups. Enriched uranium is particularly toxic and with sufficient exposure one would expect to see increased rates of blood cancers (leukemias and lymphomas) and/or multiple myeloma within 17-20 year followup period for which we have data. The K2SP will repeat these analyses at regular intervals over the next 10+ years and keep the K2 community informed of any new findings.

QUESTION:

I and my unit, 351st OD CO DET, were deployed to K2 and operated and improved the K2 Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) for 8 consecutive months from Sep 2002 thru Apr 2003. The ASP was located at the SW corner of the base past the PT track and immediately adjacent to the southern end of the cluster of Hardened Aircraft Structures (HAS) area that was fenced off and signed "Danger Keep Out- Chemical Agents and Unexploded Ordnance Area". The ASP contained the southernmost 2 HAS structures, of the 8 total HAS structures, in that area- 6 of which were contained in the fenced off 'danger' area. Evidently, the contamination stopped in between the 6th and 7th HAS structures and everything south of the 6th HAS was safe for ASP operations. Additionally, the ASP was located less than 200 yards from the continuously operated Burn Pit on the other side of the west wall from the ASP.

However, on the contrary, once our unit arrived at K2 our secondary mission was to get the ASP up to DDESB standards which involved continuous excavation of the entire ASP site for almost the entirety of our deployment to K2. Additionally, unit personnel were directly involved with excavation, hand digging, and construction improvements to one of the dilapidated/destroyed HAS structures to be able to enclose the structure to enable the storage of sensitive ammo/items.

During the ASP excavation, countless, suspicious items and/or vials containing unknown liquids were discovered and turned into safety and we were never told what those items were or what they contained (see photos provided). Not to mention the unknown and inconceivable amount of these items that were destroyed, crushed, and strewn throughout the ASP site during excavation operations for 8

consecutive months. The 351st OD CO personnel were exposed to these toxic exposures in the ASP vicinity on a daily basis not to mention toxic exposures in the remainder of K2 and Tent City.

The list of toxins at K2 continues to grow and after spending 8 consecutive months there operating a part of K2 that was under 'excavation' almost that entire time; immediately adjacent to a 'known K2 contaminated site'; constantly unearthing vials of unknowns; and barely 200 yards from the 'burn-pit'; I am convinced that the health conditions of myself and other unit personnel that I know of are directly contributable to the site conditions and toxic exposures of K2.

I want to share my personal health conditions and diagnoses, since K2 deployment, to increase the awareness of what those of us deployed to K2 are experiencing, as well as, let others that were there know the symptoms and illnesses that are being developed in others. Personally, I went from a totally super-healthy condition prior to K2 deployment (never had a primary physician) to developing allergies almost immediately after deployment to the point that we had a cat prior to deployment to having to give up the cat very shortly after deployment. Then developing asthma. Then developing psoriatic arthritis to the point that I had psoriasis from my ankles to my forehead covering approximately 40% of my body as well as arthritis with fingers and toes that no longer bend. Then developing cataracts at 48. Then, most recently, developing years of experience with severe ulcerative colitis / diverticulitis / and IBD symptoms which just resulted in a colostomy that likely won't be reversed. Most of my illnesses seem to be autoimmune system related and characterized by the VA as "Known Clinical Diagnoses".

I have not been able to be in contact with many of the personnel from our detachment that was deployed to K2 but, I am aware of one individual that has survived testicular cancer.

Summarizing here: The VA's view of illnesses 'basically' fall into 2 categories

1- 'Known Clinical Diagnoses': must fall under PACT ACT illnesses and occur a max. of 365 days from date of discharge, OR;

2- - "Unknown, undiagnosed, or medically unexplained": The Gulf War Syndrome illnesses fall under the 'medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness' which is basically a bunch of 'syndromes', 'disorders', etc. that can't be a conclusive diagnosis or a "Known Clinical Diagnosis" and has a NLT development date of 31 DEC 2026.

Just to name a few toxins on the VA's list of known toxins above acceptable levels:

- Benzene: changes levels of blood antibodies and white blood cells.
- Copper: reduced antibodies.

- Naphthalene: to my knowledge, known to cause cataracts.

Among many things, Naphthalene is a biproduct of spent fuels (gas, diesel, jet fuel, etc. all of which were used in burn pits as accelerants)

- Radioactive Depleted Uranium... the list goes on...

Questions:

1. Wouldn't or couldn't these toxic exposures cause "Known Clinical Diagnoses"?

2. When will the VA add or expand more 'Known Clinical Diagnoses' to the PACT ACT presumptive illnesses list to include "known" serious autoimmune system illnesses in addition to the existing cancers and respiratory illnesses currently on the presumptive list?

Example. Gastro Cancer is on the list. But, it will be very difficult to develop Gastro Cancer when you no longer have a colon?!

3. Regarding the soldier I mentioned above that survived testicular cancer. VA told him it 'was' service-connected, zero disability, and thank you for your service. When will the VA own this and support it's veteran's so that they can have meaningful discussions with their medical providers about what they were exposed to as well as assist with financial support to help relieve the very heavy burden of future medical expenses OR more importantly the tens of thousands in medical fees already incurred?

In my appeal to the VA, I / we may have numerous 'known clinical diagnoses' but collectively something that we were exposed to, in our case- for 8 consecutive months, or a collection of toxic exposures, may have altered or effected our immune systems to contribute to the development of these "Known Clinical Diagnoses / Illnesses". Additionally, we are all different and react differently to toxic exposures and other various illness exposures and to have a 365 day max. limit after discharge is absurd for non-presumptive illnesses.

As study results and evaluation findings, one after another, are being debunked- Now is the time to stop hiding behind smoke and mirrors, own up to this, and take care of your veterans!

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your service. Your accounting of the conditions at K2 are similar to DoD's three site surveys. Summaries of these reports can be found at:

<https://ph.health.mil/topics/envirohealth/hrasm/Pages/K2-Airbase-Exposures.aspx>. VA, in collaboration with CDC's Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registries, re-evaluated the sample collected during the K2 occupation and reported that there were several contaminants that meet or exceed today's health limits. That report can be found here:

https://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/exposures/K2_Contaminants.pdf#. The K2 Surveillance Program

is designed specifically to assess health outcomes in those that served at K2 compared to similar Veterans that deployed elsewhere or did not deploy at all. The initial assessments were presented at the K2 Community Forum on June 25th. At this time, we did not find an increased risk for adverse health outcomes in the K2 population. However, we continue to monitor the K2 population and will repeat these assessments every other year at least through 2030. We appreciate your willingness to share your medical history with us however, this is protected health information and VA must follow HIPAA and privacy laws and regulation. We encourage you to share this information with you healthcare provider so that they are fully informed of your military service and can factor this information into treatment plans. If you are not currently enrolled in VA healthcare we encourage you to do so and can begin the process at this site: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>. If you have not already done so, we also encourage you submit a claim for the conditions you noted. That process can be initiated at this site: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

QUESTION:

Many of the K2 veterans have chronic, undiagnosed illnesses. Several have been evaluated at the WRIISC and were told that they would like to see more K2 veterans. How can we get the message to the VA practitioners to refer these multisymptomatic, chronic and undiagnosed illnesses to the various WRIISC sites?

RESPONSE:

We are aware of the concerns regarding chronic multisymptom illness (CMI) in the K2 community. We are currently reviewing data in the K2 Surveillance Program to specifically assess the rate at which CMI may be present. The initial assessment revealed no increased occurrence in conditions that are frequently included in the classification of CMI. We will share additional details once those assessments have been completed.

QUESTION

During my C&P exam, I was informed of the existence of our "Individual Longitudinal Exposure Reports" (ILERs). I was denied direct access to the ILER but she read an excerpt saying that I had been exposed at K2, and was mistakenly told that we were exposed to mustard gas residue, with no other exposures. I have had memory and confusion issues for years and have finally been seen by a neurologist who said I was fine because I didn't have dementia. He also said he couldn't do anything else because he had to wait for the VA to tell him something else about us (Likely side effects t of exposures). Why hasn't this information been updated I our re words so we can get basic treatment?

RESPONSE

Based on three different site surveys conducted at K2 (<https://ph.health.mil/topics/envirohealth/hrasm/Pages/K2-Airbase-Exposures.aspx>) no evidence of mustard gas has been documented. A number of contaminants have been documented at K2 and efforts are underway to better inform VA healthcare providers and claim representatives about K2.

QUESTION:

During the first online Q&A about K2 a gentleman chimed in and spoke about how he was directly responsible for taking the samples on K2 and that there was in fact yellow cake Uranium on site. He was quickly disconnected from the forum. Are any of your findings on K2 including all classified information gathered over the years? Can this inquiry even request classified info for this?

RESPONSE

Yes, we factored in all available data and information. In collaboration with our DoD partners we were successful in having all of the reports from the K2 site surveys declassified and they can be found here: <https://ph.health.mil/topics/envirohealth/hrasm/Pages/K2-Airbase-Exposures.aspx#WherecanIgetmoreinformation-9>. DoD is the authoritative source for determining what contaminants were at military installations. DoD has documented that depleted uranium was found at K2 but to date, there is no evidence that enriched uranium was found at K2.

QUESTION:

The VA Secretary was directly given irrefutable proof by first person account that enriched uranium was found in the soil at K2. Why has the VA not updated the K2 data with that information. You do NOT have to wait for any admission from the DoD to that. Your standard of care is "More likely than not". It's time to live up to that and give ALL K2 vet the care they need.

RESPONSE:

All K2 Veterans are eligible for VA healthcare and are fully covered by the over than 300 presumptive conditions specified under PACT Act. DoD is the authority on documenting the contaminants at military installations to include K2. To date, there is no credible evidence that enriched uranium was identified at K2. Depleted uranium was identified and has been documented. All K2 veterans are eligible for a uranium test at no expense to the Veteran. There have been 340 uranium tests in K2 Veterans to date and all have been negative for enriched or depleted uranium.

QUESTION:

The last Speaker stopped short of saying those activated, instead, he said those deployed to K2. My question is does the 15,035 total veterans that are on the K2 master roster include guard and reserve personnel? The first speaker eluded to a 2012 study of active duty only regarding the K2 surveillance program.

RESPONSE:

Yes, the 15,035 include guard and reserve personnel.

QUESTION:

I was there 03-04, lived in tent city for a month or 2. A good friend that was there with me passed away from Colon Cancer 2 years after getting back from there. I've had GI issues since that deployment. I've been out going on 13 years, and still have them to this day. I've indicated to several doctors that was when the issues first started. Anyone else have GI issues that started after K2?

RESPONSE:

The K2 Surveillance Program (K2SP) has assessed the occurrence of many GI conditions and cancers. While unfortunately these conditions and cancers have occurred in K2 Veterans, the rates of these conditions and cancers are not greater than was observed in the OEF deployed and OEF nondeployed comparison groups. These assessments and analyses will be repeated at regular intervals over the next 10+ years and findings shared with the K2 community. You are encouraged to submit a claim for the GI conditions you have as they may be included in the presumptive conditions covered by PACT Act which applies to those that served at K2. You can initiate this process here <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

QUESTION:

VA granted me presumptive associated with my Lymphoma, and I also lost my left kidney due to a large tumor growing on top of it, which was 3 years after returning from K2. No disability was offered. Can I refile another supplemental claim to get higher disability/compensation?

RESPONSE:

We are saddened to hear of your health issues. Yes, you can file a supplemental or increase claim at any time. By submitting a claim for benefits we will evaluate the evidence and provide a decision that reflects your current health conditions. and ask that your current rating be re-evaluated. You can initiate this process here <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.1800-MyVA411

QUESTION:

How many people on here were on the K2 Community Forum event last year? After that event I honestly don't know what to expect during today's event. Good luck to all!

RESPONSE

Unfortunately we have no way to determine how many attended both K2 Community Forums. We announced each event well in advance through postal mail, direct email, posting on VA's K2 website, social media posts such as RallyPoint, and other communications with the general Veteran community.

QUESTION

I was asked to post this input during the 6/18 K2 Community Forum. My understanding is during the mark-up period of the original PACT Act, neurological conditions were included but eventually stripped out of the bill. As we have learned there are many K2 veterans experiencing neurological issues so is the VA working with Congress to get neurological issues included in the PACT Act or is the VA relying on military organizations such as Stronghold Freedom to do the heavy lifting with Congress? If neurological issues are eventually included with there be a window for those veteran suffering from those neurological issues to register for the PACT act and backdated to the original period as those who initially applied? I believe there are many veterans that didn't register initially since neurological issues were not included as like the PACT Act "didn't apply to me" then but now it does

RESPONSE

The K2 Surveillance Program is assessing neurologic outcomes. At this time we do not see an increased risk for any neurologic condition in the K2 population but our assessments will be repeated over the next 10+ years. Pact Act offers presumption on over 300 different conditions and cancers. If a condition that you suffer from is not included in PACT Act and you believe it is related to your military service at K2 or elsewhere, you are encouraged to submit a claim with Veteran Benefit Administration at this site <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

QUESTION:

Has medical data been attempted to be retrieved from the local Uzbek community/government?

RESPONSE:

No. To the best of our knowledge, Service members were not cared for by Uzbekistan providers. Thus, they would be unlikely to add any insights on the health of K2 Veterans.

QUESTION:

I've had difficulty scheduling a K2 depleted uranium test in Maryland. Is there a good website to schedule such a test? -Thank you!

RESPONSE:

More information on VA's depleted uranium program can be found here:

https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/depleted_uranium/followup_program.asp.

QUESTION:

I was deployed to K2 from DEC2001 to JUN2002 as the Liaison Officer. I had a unique experience in that my duties (CI officer, assistant security officer, civilian personnel officer, liaison to host nation) took me to all parts of K2. Question is, is there a POC to talk to about some of the observations I personally witnessed regarding exposure while deployed to K2?

RESPONSE:

DoD is the authoritative source on contaminants identified at military installations, bases, and sites. Any data or information about contaminants at the K2 site should be shared and discussed with DoD. DoD representatives are currently working to establish a mechanism for the K2 community to share experiences, observations, and/or evidence about contaminants at K2. When that process is formalized we will post information on VA's K2 website.

QUESTION:

I have Neurological issues that have gone unresolved, undiagnosed due to VA politics till recently. Tests and more tests that only result in shoulder shrugs from doctors and no path forward. Eventually, just recently I got a diagnosis of fibromyalgia after a mix of positive/negative lupus tests. I feel kinda like this was a "we give up" answer from the VA. I'm an engineer and this isn't something I can accept. What is being done for advanced studies? Alternant or advanced treatments? New technologies? Military and sporting orgs used to be the leaders in tech and innovation. VA seems to be 2 decades behind. I found a new technology non-invasive treatment that works for me but it's costly and not sustainable.

RESPONSE

We encourage you to continue to work with your VA healthcare providers to confirm diagnoses and to implement appropriate treatment. With regard to new treatments and technologies, clinical guidelines are followed in VA for the diagnosis and treatment of disease. These guidelines are the same for a given disease/condition whether or not it may have been caused by a military environmental exposure.

QUESTION

Has anyone else had issues not getting requested medical records or replies from VA for moving forward on VA claims. I requested and applied over a year ago NOTHING. No calls no medical records followed the request process and faxed and mailed a request as directed. Big goose egg and here we are coining up on the deadline for application and back pay.

RESPONSE

The following link provides detailed information on how to access and download your medical record: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-medical-records/>. Please follow this link to check on the status of your claim(s): <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/> or call 1-800-827-1000.1800-MyVA411, at any time to inquire about the status of your claim; or inquire about how you may submit additional evidence in support of your pending claim.
