Potential Exposure at Fort McClellan

From <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/fort-mcclellan/index.asp>

Fort McClellan was an Army installation in Alabama that opened in 1917.

Some members of the U.S. Army Chemical Corp School, Army Combat Development Command Chemical/Biological/Radiological Agency, Army Military Police School and Women's Army Corps, among others, may have been exposed to one or more of several hazardous materials, likely at low levels, during their service at Fort McClellan. Potential exposures could have included, but are not limited to, the following:

* **Radioactive compounds** (cesium-137 and cobalt-60) used in decontamination training activities in isolated locations on base.
* **Chemical warfare agents** (mustard gas and nerve agents) used in decontamination testing activities in isolated locations on base.
* **Airborne polychlorinated biphenyls** (PCBs) from the Monsanto plant in the neighboring town.

Although exposures to high levels of these compounds have been shown to cause a variety of adverse health effects in humans and laboratory animals, there is no evidence of exposures of this magnitude having occurred at Fort McClellan. **There are currently no adverse health conditions associated with service at Fort McClellan.**

PCBs and the Monsanto chemical plant

From 1929 to 1971, an off-post Monsanto chemical plant operated south of Fort McClellan in Anniston. PCBs from the plant entered into the environment, and the surrounding community was exposed.

Since the 1990s, several investigations have been conducted to characterize the exposure of Anniston residents to PCBs from the Monsanto plant. In 2015, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) published an assessment of the potential health risks caused by airborne PCBs in Anniston and concluded that the concentrations found were "not expected to result in an increased cancer risk or other harmful health effects in people living in the neighborhoods outside the perimeter of the former PCB manufacturing facility."

Fort McClellan today

Fort McClellan closed in 1999 as part of the Army Base Closure and Realignment Committee (BRAC) program. The BRAC legislation required the environmental cleanup of Fort McClellan prior to its transfer to the public domain. Oversight of parts of the base has since been transferred to the Alabama Army National Guard, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, and the Department of the Interior, as well as to the community of Anniston, where the re-development and re-use of the land is overseen by the McClellan Development Authority.

Veteran health care and compensation benefits

VA does not presume that any adverse health conditions are associated with service at Fort McClellan. Veterans who are experiencing health issues that they associate with their service while at Fort McClellan should see their primary care provider or local environmental health provider. There is no VA environmental health registry associated with service at Fort McClellan.

Veterans may also file a claim for [disability compensation](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage). VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis.

Useful resources

* [DoD Fort McClellan website](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/)
* Environmental Cleanup Program Fact Sheets
  + [Chemical warfare materials](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/FACT%20SHEET%20UNNUMBERED.pdf)
  + [Underground storage tanks](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/FACT%20SHEET%201.pdf)
  + [Landfills](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/FactSheet2.pdf)
  + [Wildlife refuge](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/FACT%20SHEET%203.pdf)
  + [Cleanup process](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/FactSheet4.pdf)
* Chemical Fact Sheets
  + [PCBs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf)
  + [Sulfur mustard](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts49.pdf)
  + [Nerve agents](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts166.pdf)
  + [Cobalt (Co-60)](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts33.pdf)
  + [Cesium (Cs-137)](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts157.pdf)
* Environmental Baseline Survey
  + [Volume I](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/Preliminary%20Assessments/Final%20EBS%20Vol%20I%20&%20II/Final%20Environmental%20Baseline%20Survey,%20Volume%20I,%20199801.pdf?RelDoc=%2FDocuments%2FPreliminary+Assessments%2FFinal+EBS+Vol+I+&%20II/=&file_url=%2FDocuments%2FPreliminary+Assessments%2FFinal+EBS+Vol+I+%26+II%2FFinal+Environmental+Baseline+Survey&file_url=Volume+I&file_url=199801%2Epdf)
  + [Volume II](http://www.mcclellan.army.mil/Documents/Preliminary%20Assessments/Final%20EBS%20Vol%20I%20&%20II/Final%20Environmental%20Baseline%20Survey,%20Volume%20II,%20199801.pdf?RelDoc=%2FDocuments%2FPreliminary+Assessments%2FFinal+EBS+Vol+I+&II/=&file_url=%2FDocuments%2FPreliminary+Assessments%2FFinal+EBS+Vol+I+%26+II%2FFinal+Environmental+Baseline+Survey&file_url=Volume+II&file_url=199801%2Epdf)
* [ATSDR Health Consultation: Airborne PCBs in Anniston](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/AnnistonPCBSiteAirSampling/Anniston%20PCB%20Site_Air%20Sampling_HC_02-04-2015.pdf)
* [Federal Register Notice of Intent (2001)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2001-01-04/html/01-228.htm)
* [EPA Superfund Webpage: Anniston, AL](http://www.epa.gov/region4/superfund/sites/npl/alabama/anpcbstal.html)