

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
May 9-10, 2018**

**Resolution No. 19: Burn Pits and Environmental Exposures  
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission  
Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

WHEREAS, Since 2001, the United States military has used large burn pits during operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Djibouti to dispose of various forms of waste; and

WHEREAS, Waste includes, but is not limited to: plastics, Styrofoam, metal/aluminum cans, rubber, chemicals (such as paints and solvents), petroleum and lubricants, munitions and other unexploded ordinances, wood waste, medical and human waste and incomplete combustion by-products; and

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, the amount of solid waste burned at some of the bases was estimated at about two tons of material per day and increased to several hundred tons per day; and

WHEREAS, Burn pits were deemed to not effectively dispose of the waste and produced smoke that routinely blew over the entirety of the bases where they were located until the pits were eventually replaced by incinerators at some bases; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DoD) performed air sampling at some bases which detected the following: particulate matter, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds and toxic organic halogenated dioxins and furans (dioxins); and

WHEREAS, Currently, the Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to determine what possible adverse synergistic health effects might be caused by a combination of any or all of the four detected substances; and

WHEREAS, Some studies show that some of the detected compounds may affect the respiratory system, skin, eyes, liver, kidney, central nervous system, cardiovascular system, reproductive system, peripheral nervous system and gastrointestinal tract; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2018, That The American Legion urge Congress to enact legislation to require the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a center of excellence in prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment and rehabilitation of health conditions for veterans relating to exposure to burn pits and other environmental exposures.**