Public Health Subcommittee

A Comprehensive Approach to the Assessment of Deployment Pulmonary Health

RADM (Ret) H. Clifford Lane, MD

Defense Health Board
August 19, 2013
Overview

- Membership
- Tasking
- 2008 DHB Report
- VA/DoD Airborne Hazards Symposium
- Proposed Meetings
Public Health Subcommittee

- RADM (Ret) H. Clifford Lane, MD (Chair)
- Sonia A. Alemagno, PhD
- Gary P. Carlson, PhD
- John D. Clements, PhD
- John Groopman, PhD
- David Lakey, MD
- James E. Lockey, MD, MS
- Gregory A. Poland, MD
- Maj (Ret) Joseph Silva, Jr., MD
Background

“There is some evidence of acute respiratory symptoms possibly associated with in-theater inhalational exposures [in Southwest Asia], but assessment of possible long-term pulmonary disease is inconclusive.”

- Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) [USD(P&R)] Memo dated January 20, 2012
Request that the Defense Health Board review evidence and recommend:

- A comprehensive approach to the assessment and prevention of deployment-related pulmonary disease, including screening and clinical diagnostic tools
- A direction for future research and surveillance

- Acting USD(P&R) Memo dated January 20, 2012
The evaluation should address the following questions in relation to the deployed environment:

- What clinical protocols should be used for diagnosing symptomatic individuals?

- How should clinical baselines be established in deploying personnel, and what types of registries are recommended to track individuals with pulmonary symptoms or disease?

- What future research studies are recommended, and how should these, as well as those already planned, be prioritized?

- Acting USD(P&R) Memo dated January 20, 2012
2008 DHB Report

- **Tasking:** Memorandum, DASD (FHP&R), February 28, 2008 – Requested that DHB review and comment on “Draft Health Risk Assessment, Burn Pit Exposures, Balad Air Base, Iraq”

- **Report:** Defense Health Board Findings, June 26, 2008
  - General Findings
    - Inherent Limitations of Screening Risk Assessment
    - Uncertainties
    - Prevention of Error
  - Conclusion – In this case, screening risk assessment provided an accurate determination of exposure levels, and that no significant short- or long-term health risks were anticipated.
Recommendations:

- The screening assessment report detail the source of mathematical error in the original report, with the goal of preventing such errors in the future.
- Need to develop, implement, and deploy effective risk communication plans to prevent the spread of misinformation.
- Minimize open pit burning of potentially toxic solid wastes, and develop and enforce policies concerning the use of burn pits.
- Put appropriate quality control measures in place.
August 13, 2013

- Attended by Drs. Lane and Silva
- Updates provided on VA/DoD collaborations related to health effects of airborne hazard exposure during deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan
- Topics included environmental exposure assessment, clinical care, surveillance, outreach and research
Proposed Meetings

- **Late August 2013**
  - Kick-off teleconference
    - Overview of tasking
    - Review Terms of Reference

- **Mid-to-Late September 2013**
  - In-person meeting at DHHQ
    - Finalize Terms of Reference
    - Determine the way forward