

The following pre-notice newsletter is mailed to all study participants. This newsletter will reengage participants and let them know to expect the survey to open soon.

THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY

PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS



WWW.MILLENNIUMCOHORT.ORG

THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY LAUNCHES SOON!

Please keep us updated

? Have you recently moved or changed your email address?

? Has your name changed?

Please visit our website
www.millenniumcohort.org to
update your contact information.

Your **Subject ID** can be found below
the barcode on the address side of
this newsletter.

It's almost time to
update your health
information. The
2024 survey will
be available on
our website soon!

Dear Participant,

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your commitment to the Millennium Cohort Study. As the head researcher, I'm humbled every day by the sacrifices that you and your fellow service members make for our country.

We started this journey in 2001 with a small group of over 77,000 participants, many of whom courageously went on missions after 9/11. Today, we take pride in the impressive growth of our study, with over a quarter of a million participants from all military branches, including Reservists and National Guardsmen. Your invaluable contributions have been key to this remarkable achievement.

Thank you for your unwavering service and ongoing dedication to this study. Your participation plays a crucial role in shaping the future of healthcare for our nation's heroes.

Very respectfully,

Rudy Rull, PhD, MPH
Principal Investigator, Millennium Cohort Study

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

The Millennium Cohort Study continues to be the U.S. Department of Defense's largest and longest-running study and celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2021. Between 2001 and 2021, the Millennium Cohort Study has enrolled over a quarter of a million service members making it one of the largest cohort studies in the world! You represent your service branch, gender, and age group, so your participation is incredibly valuable to the continued success of this study.

Below is a breakdown of the data that describes key characteristics of the **201,619** participants that joined in the Cohort between 2001 and 2011. Where do you fit in?

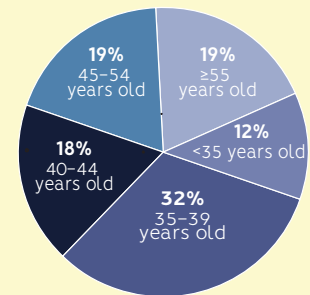


69%



31%

Remaining involved with the study as you age is critical to answering many challenging questions about the long-term effects of military service on health and well-being.



Age of the Cohort

Separation Status



75% of participants have separated from the military and are no longer on active duty

Weight



16% of males and 32% of females have a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5–24.9 kg/m², which is in the healthy weight range

Education



49% of participants have at least an associate degree

Alcohol



12% of participants drink above recommended limits*
*7 drinks/week for women and 14 drinks/week for men

Smoking



93% of participants have either never smoked or have quit smoking

Marital Status



73% of participants are currently married

Sleep



Participants get an average of 6.4 hours of sleep per night

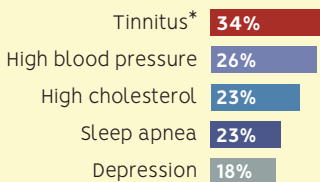
Exercise



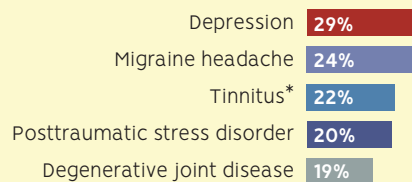
87% of participants exercise at least 2 times per week

5 most commonly reported health issues

Men

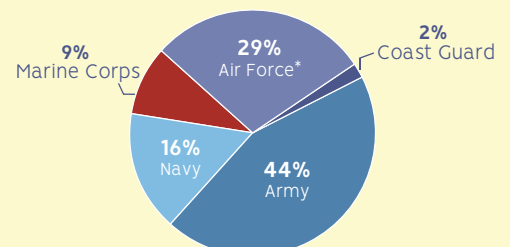


Women



*Tinnitus is the sensation of hearing ringing, buzzing, hissing, chirping, whistling, or other sounds.

Cohort by service branch at time of enrollment



*At this time, the Air Force count includes Space Force service members.

IMPACT ON POLICY



U.S. Army photo by Adam Garlington

The main objective of the Millennium Cohort Study is to provide evidence-based knowledge to inform and improve interventions, clinical practice guidelines, and policies of key stakeholders, including Department of Defense (DoD) and Veteran's Administration (VA) leadership.

Since the launch of the cohort in 2001, the Millennium Cohort Study has investigated the impact of military service, including deployments and other occupational exposures, on long-term mental, physical, and behavioral health of service members and veterans.

Along with our publications, we also fulfill requests for research that will be used to aid in policy decisions. For example, our team recently provided results and findings describing the impacts of sexual harassment and sexual assault on service members to the Office of Personnel and Readiness, Health Services Policy and Oversight. We have also conducted analyses examining adverse mental health outcomes among Army veterinarians and veterinary technicians, as requested by the Commanding Officer of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

The unique strength of the Millennium Cohort Study is our ability to measure long-term health outcomes over a wide range of exposures. We hope study results will help define healthcare policies, guide prevention and treatment programs, and strengthen opportunities for future generations of military personnel. Examples of findings from the Millennium Cohort Study that have been used to inform policy include:

Women's Health

The 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed the Millennium Cohort Study to provide annual reports to Congress on gynecological and perinatal health through 2022.

Substance Use

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report in 2013 entitled "Substance Use Disorders in the U.S. Armed Forces" that included direct mention of the Millennium Cohort Study and the unique capability to examine substance use in service members and military families.

Respiratory Health

In 2020, the National Academies Press published a consensus report on respiratory health outcomes among service members who were deployed to the Persian Gulf region and Afghanistan. Specific focus of the analysis was on health outcomes of exposure to airborne hazards associated with service in these regions. In particular, the study evaluated and summarized "emerging evidence on respiratory health outcomes in service members from research such as the Millennium Cohort Study." The report summarized findings across multiple studies and recommendations for future research and policies as related to respiratory health.

Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

The Millennium Cohort Study is considered a population health resource for informing performance and readiness optimization of active-duty personnel. Data from the study on obesity and deployability have been used to inform current body composition standards. Specific policy changes have been made in DoD recruitment and retention policies. In addition, information has been used to inform Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) weight management programming.

FEATURED RESEARCH

Why is Sleep Research Important?

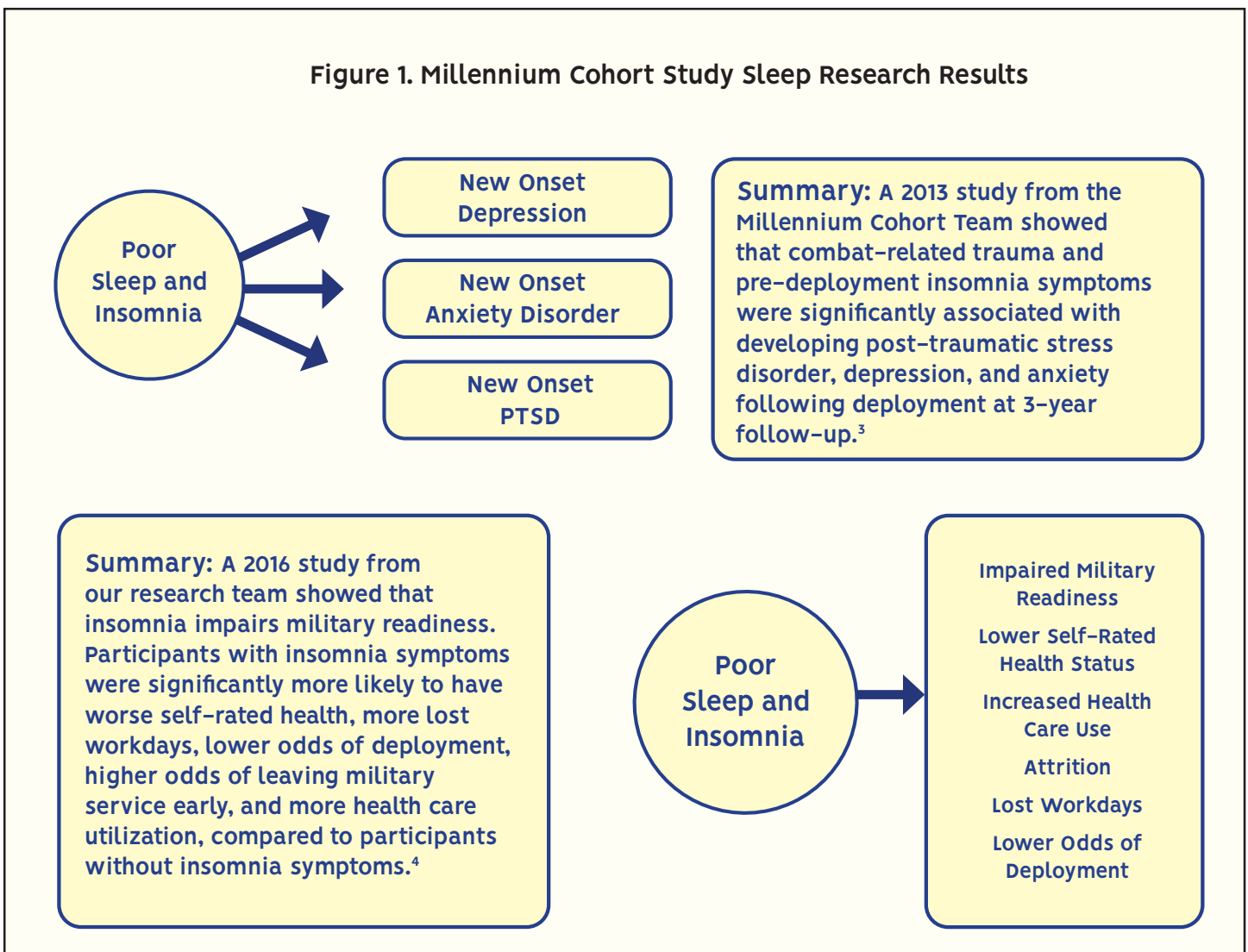
Sleep is essential for good health. Not getting enough uninterrupted sleep negatively affects a person's attention, learning and memory, and physical health.

- Sleep deficiency (too short or too long of sleep) and untreated sleep disorders are associated with a growing number of health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and depression, all of which can be harmful to military readiness.
- In addition to health problems, poor sleep is associated with lost worker productivity, and poor sleep and fatigue can cause accidents, making sleep a serious public health issue.²
- Sleeping 7–9 hours per night is essential for optimal performance of the service member.

Key Points: What did the Millennium Cohort Study Find?

The Millennium Cohort Study is collaborating with leading sleep researchers to conduct research to understand how sleep affects health over time and influences readiness and warfighter performance. Some example studies are featured below in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Millennium Cohort Study Sleep Research Results



FEATURED RESEARCH

Why is Research on Tobacco Use Important?

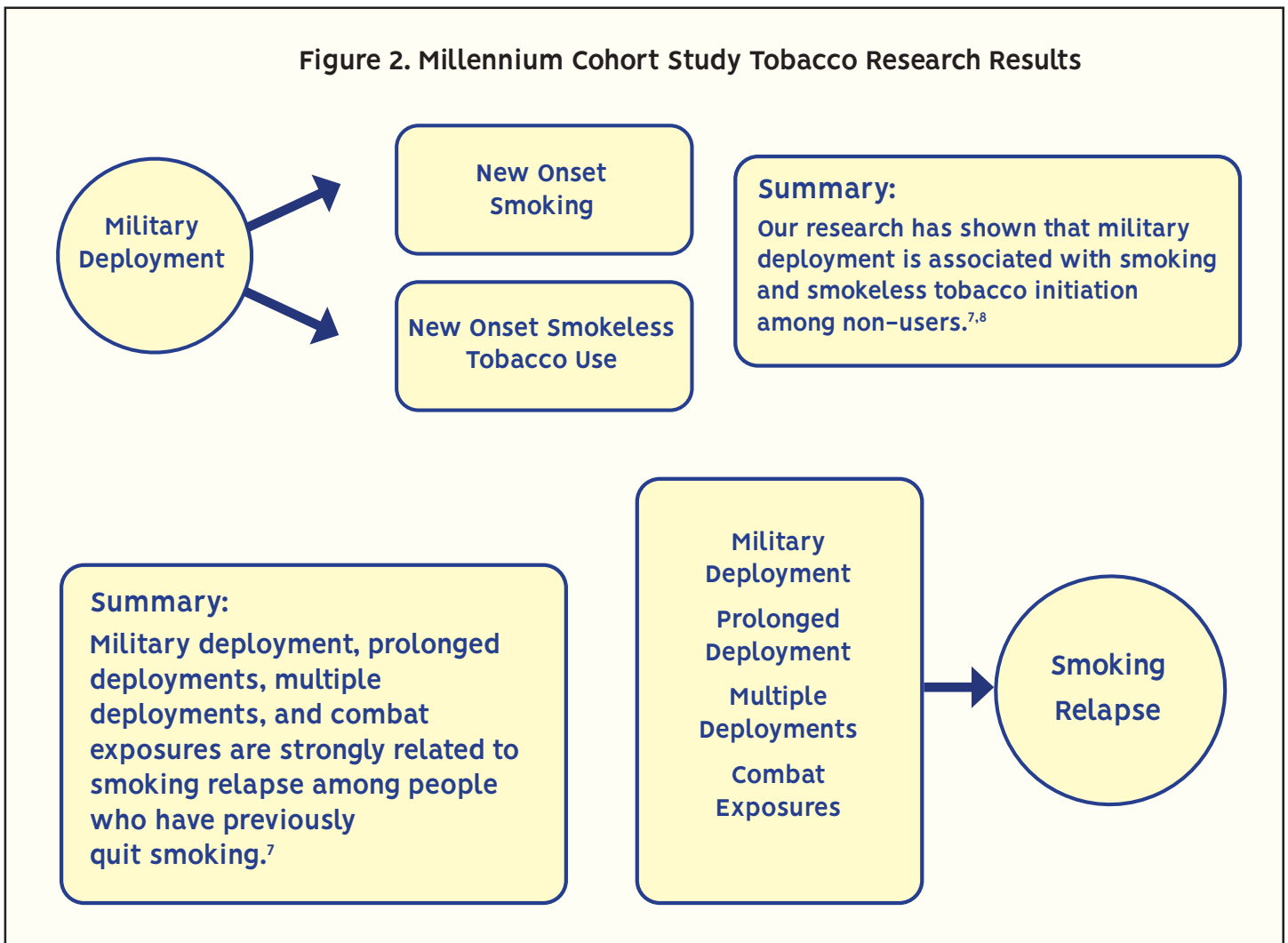
Tobacco use, through its many forms (cigarettes, vaping, cigars, smokeless tobacco), has many negative health effects and is related to diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the world.⁵

- Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are more often used among service members than the U.S. population.
- Regular tobacco use leads to diminished force readiness, medical morbidity (chronic conditions) and mortality (early death), and increased spending for medical costs.
- According to the Military Health System, “using tobacco in any form poses a threat to readiness and the overall health of the force.”⁶
- It is thought that smoking is used as a coping strategy for the stress experienced in military deployments.

Key Points: What did the Millennium Cohort Study Find?

The Millennium Cohort Study is collaborating with leading tobacco researchers to conduct research to understand how military service and deployment affect tobacco use trends, mental and physical health in relation to tobacco use, and tobacco cessation. Some example studies are featured below in **Figure 2**. We are currently collecting data related to vape use and will be reporting on this in the future.

Figure 2. Millennium Cohort Study Tobacco Research Results



RECENTLY PUBLISHED PROJECTS

Racial, Ethnic, and Sex Disparities in Mental Health Among U.S. Service Members and Veterans

Mental health experiences vary among people of different backgrounds. This study explored whether similar differences exist within the U.S. military, focusing on how factors like race, ethnicity, and gender might influence the mental health of service members and veterans. This paper is available online ahead of print at the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Individual and Military Factors That Modify the Association Between Recent Sexual Trauma and Health Outcomes Among U.S. Service Members and Veterans

Experiences like sexual harassment and assault can take a toll on both your mind and body, affecting people in military and civilian life alike. This study looked at whether personal experiences and military service influence how sexual trauma impacts health, including anxiety, depression, physical pain, and sleep problems. This paper was published in the September 2023 issue of *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

Lifetime Traumatic Brain Injury and Risk of Post-Concussive Symptoms

Many service members have experienced traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). This study looked at whether having more TBIs makes symptoms like headaches, memory problems, and trouble sleeping (called post-concussive symptoms) more likely. This paper was published in the June 26, 2023 issue of *Journal of Neurotrauma*.

Single and Repeated High-Level Blast, Low-Level Blast, and New-Onset Self-Reported Health Conditions in the U.S. Millennium Cohort Study: An Exploratory Investigation

Service members exposed to blasts may experience various health issues. This study investigated whether service members who experienced powerful blasts (from incoming fire) or smaller ones (from their own artillery) were more likely to report health problems such as anxiety, depression, hearing loss, ringing in the ears, tiredness, and severe headaches. This paper was published in the March 21, 2023 issue of *Frontiers in Neurology*.

Identifying At-Risk Marines: A Person-Centered Approach to Adverse Childhood Experiences, Mental Health, and Social Support

While past studies have linked tough childhood experiences (like abuse or neglect) with health problems later in life, they often examined each type of experience separately. This study took a different approach by looking at how unique combinations of these experiences might affect people differently, giving us a clearer understanding of these connections. This project was published in the March 15, 2023 issue of *Journal of Affective Disorders*.

Contribution of Post-Trauma Insomnia to Depression and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Women Service Members

This project examined whether women service members and veterans who experienced recent combat and/or sexual trauma were more likely to struggle with sleep problems (insomnia) compared with women who did not report these recent experiences, and whether insomnia was linked with anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. This paper was published in the March 9, 2023 issue of *Sleep*.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED PROJECTS CONTINUED

Risk and Protective Factors for Cancer Mortality Among United States Service Members and Veterans (2001–2018)

This study examined factors, including health behaviors and military experiences, that could affect the risk of dying from cancer and focused on those who served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This paper was published in the May 1, 2023 issue of *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

The Bi-Directional Relationship Between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Obstructive Sleep Apnea and/or Insomnia in a Large U.S. Military Cohort

This study explored whether sleep problems like sleep apnea and insomnia could both cause and be caused by PTSD in service members and veterans, and whether experiences such as combat deployment could affect these relationships. This project was published in the December 2022 issue of *Sleep Health*.

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San Diego, CA 92186-5777

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SUBJECT ID PANEL MAIL ID MAIL ITEM

The following email about the pre-notice newsletter is sent to all study participants. This email will send a link to the digital version of the newsletter and provide them with a way to update their mailing address should they not receive the postal mail.

Dear <name>,

As the Principal Investigator of the Millennium Cohort Study, I extend my deepest gratitude for your commitment to this landmark study as well as for the sacrifices you have made for our nation.

Since its launch in 2001, the Millennium Cohort study has proudly grown from 77,000 participants to over a quarter of a million, spanning all service branches and including Reservists and National Guardsmen. This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without your invaluable contributions.

You should have recently received a newsletter from the Millennium Cohort Study team, highlighting the upcoming survey launch, the impact of our research on policy decisions, and other key updates. If you haven't received the newsletter, it is accessible online at

<link>

In the event you haven't received the newsletter, please take a moment to update your mailing address with the study team. To do so, simply visit our website at <link> and click on "Update Contact Info."

Thank you for your unwavering service and your commitment to this study. Your participation contributes significantly to shaping the future of healthcare for our nation's heroes.

Very respectfully,
Rudy Rull, PhD, MPH
Principal Investigator, Millennium Cohort Study

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <xxxxxxx>.

The Millennium Cohort Study is an authorized Department of Defense research project. Note Report Control Symbol #DD-NAVY-2678, Office of Management and Budget Approval # 0703-0064, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol #NHRC.2000.0007.

If you would like this email address to be removed from our email list, please visit <unsubscribe code>

The following letter announces the launch of the 2024-2025 survey cycle and provides participants with the necessary information to access their survey.



MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY

Committed to Understanding Service Member and Veteran Health

*****AUTO

Sample Name

Any Street

Any Street 2

Any City, State Zip_Code



Dear <Name>,

We recently contacted you announcing our plans to launch our next follow-up survey as part of the ongoing Millennium Cohort Study. This is the largest and longest-running health study in history assessing wellbeing, chronic illness, and other physical and psychological concerns affecting current and former U.S. service members.

Your participation is crucial to the success of this study. We understand that your time is valuable, and we want to express our sincere gratitude for your willingness to contribute to this important research.

Completing the survey is easy and convenient!

We've made it as simple as possible for you to complete the survey online. Simply visit our secure website at www.millenniumcohort.org or scan the QR code below.

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

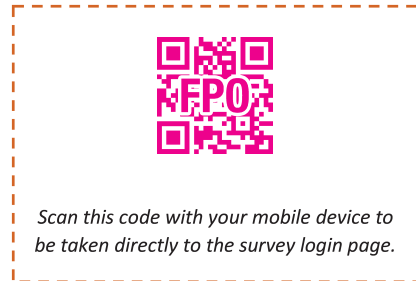
After you submit your questionnaire online, you will have the opportunity to select a \$5 gift card or a Millennium Cohort hat or coin as a small way of expressing our appreciation for your previous and continued efforts to make a difference in the lives of current and future military members.

Your responses are essential!

Even if you are no longer on active duty, or are not experiencing any health concerns, your responses are still very important. We strive to gather data from a wide range of participants to gain a deeper understanding of the health and wellbeing of our service members, past, present, and future.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team



For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Team Study at usn.nhrc-milcohortinfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465, and reference your Subject Id: <SID>

The Millennium Cohort Study is an authorized Department of Defense research project. Note Report Control Symbol # DD-HA(AR)2106, Office of Management and Budget Approval # 0720-0029, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol # NHRC.2000.0007.

DEPLOYMENT HEALTH RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

P.O. BOX 85777 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92186-5777 • DSN: 553-7465 • PHONE: 888-942-5222 • MILLENNIUMCOHORT.ORG

<SEQ#NC>

60660

Participants will receive one of the follow emails announcing the launch of the 2024-2025 survey cycle.

Participants will receive one (1) of the following emails.

Launch Email - Version 1

Dear <name>,

We recently invited you to participate in a follow-up survey as part of the ongoing Millennium Cohort Study. If you did not receive your invitation letter, please be sure to reach out to the study team to update your mailing address.

The site is now open, and even though we have not heard from you for a while, we still welcome your participation. We have made it as easy as possible to complete your survey online.

Simply visit our website by using the following link.

<link>

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

After completing your survey online, you will have the opportunity to select a \$5 gift card or a Millennium Cohort hat or coin as a small token our appreciation for your ongoing participation in this project. Completing your survey online is fast, convenient, secure, and environmentally friendly!

Even if you are no longer on active duty, or are not experiencing any health concerns, your responses are still very important. We strive to gather data from a wide range of participants to gain a deeper understanding of the health and wellbeing of our service members, past, present, and future.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <XXXXXX>.

The Millennium Cohort Study is an authorized Department of Defense research project. Note Report Control Symbol #DD-NAVY-2678, Office of Management and Budget Approval # 0703-0064, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol #NHRC.2000.0007.

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Launch Email - Version 2

Dear <name>,

We recently invited you to participate in a follow-up survey as part of the ongoing Millennium Cohort Study.

The site is now open, and we welcome your participation. We have made it as easy as possible to complete your survey online.

Simply visit our website by using the following link.

<link>

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

If you did not receive your invitation letter, please be sure to reach out to the study team to update your mailing address.

After completing your survey online, you will have the opportunity to select a \$5 gift card or a Millennium Cohort Study hat or coin as a small token our appreciation for your ongoing participation in this project. Completing your survey online is fast, convenient, secure, and environmentally friendly!

Even if you are no longer on active duty, or are not experiencing any health concerns, your responses are still very important. We strive to gather data from a wide range of participants to gain a deeper understanding of the health and wellbeing of our service members, past, present, and future.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

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The following are reminder emails about the 2024-2025 survey cycle.

Reminder Email

Dear <Name>,

Mental health is vital to everyone’s overall health but is often overlooked or stigmatized. Millennium Cohort Study research shows that mental health conditions like PTSD, depression, and anxiety can often coexist with other problems like insomnia, substance abuse, or unhealthy weight, all of which can lower quality of life.

By completing your current Millennium Cohort Study survey, you will help us better understand the impact of military service on the long-term mental health and quality of life of service members. To get started, simply visit our website at:

<link>

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

A 2016 study using Millennium Cohort Study data found that service members with combat deployments developed PTSD and other mental health disorders (anxiety, depression, etc.) more often than those with non-combat deployments or no deployments.

The research team is working to better understand and identify risk factors for these mental health conditions. Through this investigation, the team can strengthen prevention measures and inform policies to promote mental health care and education.

Our research team can only conduct this important work due to the continued involvement of our dedicated participants.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <XXXXXX>.

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Reminder Email

Dear <Name>,

Military service can present a range of physical and mental stressors, from daily duties to deployment and combat. The Millennium Cohort Study aims to document these stressors and their impact on the health of current and former service members. Even if you don't feel stressed by your military experience, your input is still invaluable.

We're currently gathering information about participants' experiences and health status. If you have not yet had an opportunity to complete your Millennium Cohort Study survey, you can do so by going online to our secure website:

<link>

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

By reviewing the common stressors that participants report having, we hope to make further strides in research toward developing the most effective ways to approach stress management among military personnel. This research is not possible without your participation. You can help us recognize the underlying causes of stress in the military by participating in our survey.

Thank you for working with us to help protect, promote, and strengthen the health of our service members and Veterans.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <XXXXXX>.

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Reminder Email

Dear <Name>,

Your participation in the Millennium Cohort Study is vital to understanding the long-term impact of military service on the health and well-being of our Service members and veterans. Many of your fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines have already completed their surveys, but each individual response is needed to make this study as comprehensive as possible.

To complete your survey, please visit:

<link>

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

Even if you are no longer actively serving, or do not currently have any health concerns, your continued participation is still crucial. The most significant benefits of this study will emerge over time, and your input helps ensure that future generations of Service members and veterans receive the best care and support possible.

Thank you for your dedication to this important study, helping us protect the health of those who serve.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <XXXXXX>.

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Incomplete Reminder Email

Dear <name>,

Thank you for taking the time to start filling out your Millennium Cohort survey. We understand that your time is very valuable, but your participation in this landmark study is very important.

Please follow the link below to finish the remaining questions:

<link>

Your Subject ID is: <XXXXXX>

Your continued involvement in this important project makes it possible to inform policy makers regarding your experiences and to guide prevention measures that positively impact former, current, and future Service members.

Thank you in advance for completing this important DoD survey.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <XXXXXX>.

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The following are our annual messages to our participants for
Veterans and Memorial Day.

Veterans Day Email

Dear <Name>,

On Veterans Day, we honor the sacrifices and bravery of those who have served. From the frontlines to the home front, your selfless service is a testament to your courage and devotion to our nation.

You should receive a Veterans Day postcard in the mail from the Millennium Cohort Study team. You can also view it online by visiting our website at <link>

The Millennium Cohort Study stands united in support of our veterans.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

If you are a Veteran or service member in crisis or concerned about one, please connect with qualified responders for confidential help at the Veteran Crisis Line by DIALING 988 then PRESS 1 or texting 838255. You can get more resources at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For any questions, please contact the Millennium Cohort Study Team at usn.nhrc-MilcohortInfo@health.mil or call toll free 1-888-942-5222 or DSN 553-7465 and reference your Subject ID: <xxxxxxx>.

The Millennium Cohort Study is an authorized Department of Defense research project. Note Report Control Symbol #DD-NAVY-2678, Office of Management and Budget Approval # 0703-0064, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol #NHRC.2000.0007.

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Memorial Day Email

Dear <Name>,

On this Memorial Day, we unite to honor the courageous men and women who sacrificed their lives for our nation's freedom. We reflect on the true cost of our liberties and acknowledge the profound debt we owe to those who paid it.

You should soon receive a Memorial Day postcard in the mail from the Millennium Cohort Study team. You can also view it online by visiting our website at <link>

Wishing you a meaningful Memorial Day as we honor our fallen heroes.

Very respectfully,
The Millennium Cohort Study Team

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