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What you should know about our military, veterans and tinnitus

- Tinnitus, often defined as “ringing in the ears” can be a debilitating condition ruthlessly reducing quality of life for those chronically affected
- Tinnitus is most often the result of extreme noise exposure from either a single impulse noise or the accumulation of noise exposure
- Noise exposure levels of **140dBA** and above can cause tinnitus and ear trauma instantaneously
- IED’s (Improvised Explosive Devices) detonate at decibel levels of **140dBA+** which is loud enough to immediately leave soldiers with a painful – and constant reminder of their service
- In 2006 the VA reported that nearly **400,000** veterans were on the rolls for service - connected tinnitus disability
- That translates into **\$539 million** annually for compensation as of 2006
- From 2000-2006 the rate of tinnitus disability awards increased at an average rate of **18.2%** per year
- That rate is likely to continue or worsen over the next five years, which would raise tinnitus disability payments by the VA to over **\$1.1 billion** by 2011
- The number of veterans on the rolls would increase to **818,811** for tinnitus alone
- Walter Reed Army Medical Center recently conducted a study of soldiers coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan The study concluded that of all those exposed to IED’s **49%** reported tinnitus on the separation health assessment questionnaires
- In 2005, the VA allocated \$4.4 million for auditory research – of that only **one-tenth** was used to investigate and determine best practices for tinnitus evaluation and treatment for America’s veterans
- Between all public and private funding available for tinnitus research in the United States there is **\$2-3** million available
- It costs **\$4.3** million to create an M Abrams Tank, **\$5.9** million to engineer a M Helicopter and **\$18.8** million to make an F 16 Fighter Jet
- The Army is the only branch of the military that requires earplugs as part of the uniform.

Examples of Sound Levels Associated with Military Equipment used in 2005

IOM Study on Noise in the Military: Implications for Tinnitus and Hearing Loss (2005)

Type of Equipment	Sound Level Location	dBA
Apache Helicopter	Pilot/Copilot	104/101
9mm Pistol	Shooter	157
5.56mm automatic weapon fired from HMMWV	Gunner	160
Grenade	At 50ft	164
105mm towed howitzer	Gunner	183

The American Tinnitus Association exists to cure tinnitus through the development of resources that advance tinnitus research