

Facts about the Military, Veterans and tinnitus

- ☞ Tinnitus, commonly defined as “ringing in the ears,” is often a debilitating condition that ruthlessly reduces quality of life for those chronically affected.
- ☞ Tinnitus is the **number one service-connected disability** for returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan (three consecutive years).
- ☞ Tinnitus is most often the result of extreme noise exposure from either a single impulse noise or the accumulation of noise exposure; head and neck injury is the second leading cause.
- ☞ Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) detonate at decibel levels of **140dBA+** which is loud enough to immediately leave soldiers with a painful – and constant – reminder of their service.
- ☞ According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2009 there were over **760,000** veterans receiving service-connected tinnitus disability.
- ☞ At the current rate of increase, the number of veterans service-connected for tinnitus will increase to over **1.5 million** by 2014.
- ☞ Those **760,000** Vets translate into **\$1.12 billion** annually for compensation as of 2009.
- ☞ At the current rate of increase, service-connected disability payments to veterans with tinnitus by the VA will increase to over **\$2.26 billion** by 2014.
- ☞ 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 IEDs, **49 percent** reported having tinnitus.
- ☞ In 2009, in the United States, there was only approximately **\$10 million** combined from various organizations and agencies for tinnitus research.
- ☞ It costs **\$4.3** million to create an M1 Abrams Tank, **\$5.9** million to engineer an M1 Helicopter and **\$18.8** million to make an F-16 Fighter Jet.
- ☞ The Army is the only branch of the military that *requires* ear plugs as part of its 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