

## **Solano Veteran Services Office helps with hearing loss benefits**

Hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears) is one of the most common disabilities among veterans and members of the armed services. Most people would agree, everything the military does is loud! Hearing protection has not always been used in the past, and even today, the use of protective gear is not always accomplished. Veterans suffering from hearing disabilities are encouraged to visit the Veteran Services Office to sign up for benefits related to this medical condition.

Our office files three to four of these claims every day, and are very successful in obtaining hearing aids and / or compensation for veterans who suffer from a military service related hearing disability.

Hearing loss as a result of exposure to loud noises during military service, such as airplanes, engines and gunfire are quite common. Although hearing loss may not be immediate, many veterans suffer some form of a hearing disability at some point during their lifetime.

Don't suffer with hearing loss or tinnitus alone, take advantage of the benefits and resources you've earned when you visit our office. To qualify for disability benefits for an auditory problem as a result of your military service, you need to first prove the condition was caused by your military duty. To be deemed service connected, hearing problems must be diagnosed by a licensed audiologist or physician and will include two tests, including:

- (1) A Maryland CNC test, which measures speech recognition and ability
- (2) A Puretone audiometric test, used to evaluate one's level of hearing loss

Be sure to inform your audiologist that you need both tests in order to satisfy the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) requirements for a service connection. Also, be sure to remove any hearing aids you may already be using before being tested.

Once submitted, the VA will review your auditory test results, and, using a numerical formula, determine the level of benefits you will receive. This formula is laid out in section 4.85 of the VA's Federal Code for ratings for impairment of visual and audible fields.

Veterans who suffer from hearing loss many years after leaving the service should not assume the loss is simply due to their age. If you can demonstrate that you were exposed to loud noises during service, you may still be able to establish a service connection.

If you feel you may have been exposed to an auditory trauma in the service and now suffer from hearing loss or tinnitus, please visit our office, as we're here to help. We help Solano County veterans with a wide range of military service related benefits. Stop in and let us see what we can do for you.

*Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran's Services for Solano County. Reach him at (707) 784-6590 or [TEPuntillo@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:TEPuntillo@SolanoCounty.com). The Solano County Veteran's Services Office, 675 Texas St. in Fairfield, is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.*

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