



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

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Tinnitus and Hearing Loss **Acoustic Trauma in Military Service**

The following general information is presented to assist Veterans in filing VA disability compensation (service-connected) claims. Our trained Veterans Benefit Specialists (VBS's) are available to assist you in developing your claims.

Background: Military service personnel are often exposed to many forms of acoustic (noise) trauma which may impair hearing. A few examples are the following:

- Combat or simulated conditions (incoming/outgoing mortar and rocket fire, landmines, grenade blasts, artillery, machine gun and other weapon fire)
- Aviators, flight line personnel, plane/helicopter/jet aircraft mechanics etc...
- Ship personnel in engine room, gun fire from ships, deep sea divers
- Radio/sonar operators
- Other military occupational duties involving excess noise exposure

Tinnitus: A subjective ringing or buzzing in the ear or ears. A veteran (claimant) must have a written diagnosis on the hearing loss evaluation, noted below, that states: **“Veteran has history of bilateral tinnitus and hearing loss which is more likely than not due to (specify the type of acoustic trauma in service).”**

Hearing Loss: A determination of impaired hearing must be conducted by a state-licensed audiologist (VA or private) and must include a controlled speech discrimination test (Maryland CNC) and a puretone audiometry test under the provisions of 38 CFR, 4.85.

Medical History: A medical history of treatment and/or evaluation for tinnitus and hearing loss, to include names and addresses, must be provided with the claim. The history should be for time prior to military service, during military service and after military service. Also, a brief statement regarding any acoustic exposure before military service and after military service should be included.

Medical Records: If you have any audiology treatment records or evaluations in your possession from any source, please provide copies for your claim.

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