



# BeyondDuty+

## Tinnitus's Connection to Hearing Loss

Noise exposure is among the leading causes of tinnitus in veterans. Whether it's **prolonged gunfire, explosions, or engine noise**, the **auditory system often suffers lasting damage**, especially when no or **improper protective equipment** is used or provided. Studies have shown that even **a single blast can damage delicate hair cells**, which do not regenerate, triggering both hearing loss and persistent tinnitus.

Military personnel face unique risks of acoustic trauma that civilians rarely experience, which is why prevention and monitoring are essential.

## Common Sources of Noise-Induced Damage in The Armed Forces

Treatment	Sound Level (dB)	Risk Factor
Small Arms Fire	140 - 190 (dB)	Immediate damage without protection
Artillery and Explosives	170 - 200 (dB)	Severe, often permanent hearing loss
Aircraft and Vehicle Engines	100 - 140 (dB)	Gradual damage over time
Training Simulations	120 - 160 (dB)	Cumulative effect with repeated exposure

## The Connection Between Hearing Loss and Tinnitus



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Hearing loss and tinnitus **often occur together because both result from damage to the cochlear hair cells.** When auditory input decreases, the brain attempts to fill in the gaps, creating what are known as phantom sounds. This link is so strong that **an estimated 80% of people with tinnitus also show measurable hearing loss.**

## Why Veterans are at Higher Risk of Hearing Loss & Tinnitus

- Repeated unprotected exposure
- Lack of immediate treatment after acoustic trauma
- Stigma around reporting hearing issues during service
- Delayed onset after discharge

Important Reminder: If you served in environments with chronic noise, contact a hearing loss specialist who is veteran-friendly to undergo a comprehensive hearing assessment, even if your hearing seems fine.

## How Can We Assist

Our specialists at Veteran Welfare Group can guide you through the process of getting help, from arranging expert appointments to providing resources about hearing protection and treatment options.

You deserve support that respects your service and your health needs. Whether you're newly discharged or have lived with tinnitus, help is available.



## Contact Us

For more information and support, get in touch with our advisors and veterans with lived experience today.



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