

As a result of filing numerous tinnitus and hearing loss claims, ("and getting the veterans awarded more times than not - audiograms/speech discrimination didn't support moderate to severe hearing loss"), I've been amazed by the number of veterans that seem to think since they can't prove exposure to traumatic acoustic events in their military career, they just won't file. (Combat veterans - hearing loss is conceded as happened in service by VA, rated based on current audiogram and speech discrimination figures.)

Here are a few web sites that will definitely help the veterans in providing the VA Regional Offices the actual exposure levels they may have been exposed to:

A good civilian web site and file would be found at:
http://www.e-a-r.com/hearingconservation/faq_main.cfm

Then under Noise Hazard they would want to download the Excel Database that list over 1700 Noise sources.

<http://www.e-a-r.com/pdf/hearingcons/NoiseNav.xls>

The individual Service Departments have web sites or instructions on Hearing Conservation programs as well:

U.S. Army (one of the best)
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/hcp/NoiseLevels.aspx>

U.S. Navy (click on the modules - great reference material)
<http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/occmcd/HCToolbox.htm>

USMC
<http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/sd/occhealth.htm>

U.S. Air Force (restricted by username and password - probably active duty only)

Then I remind the RVSRs at the VA Regional Office of OSHA's permissible noise exposure in Table G-16:

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9735

A traumatic acoustic event in conjunction with noise induced hearing loss greatly weighs in on the "benefit of the doubt" in favor of the veteran. For good measure, aircraft carrier flight decks during flight ops is normally 146db and pain in the ear happens around 130db.

Noise Induced Hearing Loss
<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/noise.asp>

Given the medical evidence supports the claim based on the 1000 to 4000 hz frequency range along with indicators for speech discrimination for disability purposes, recommend folks talk up their exposure to noise in the military when visiting their doctors for hearing exams and make sure it's noted in the exam. (i.e., (+) Severe noise exposure in military) or if the veteran has copies of his/her medical service records, and can show audiograms periodically since released from active duty, they may be able to get a medical opinion to support their claim.

Veterans must be able to show two key factors:

- 1. Traumatic Acoustic Event**
- 2. Disability incurred in Service**

As the VA has a "Duty to Assist" will their raters look up the impulse noise levels? I don't believe so, that's why I provide all the information up front.