
The Royal British Legion

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Veterans Hearing Fund

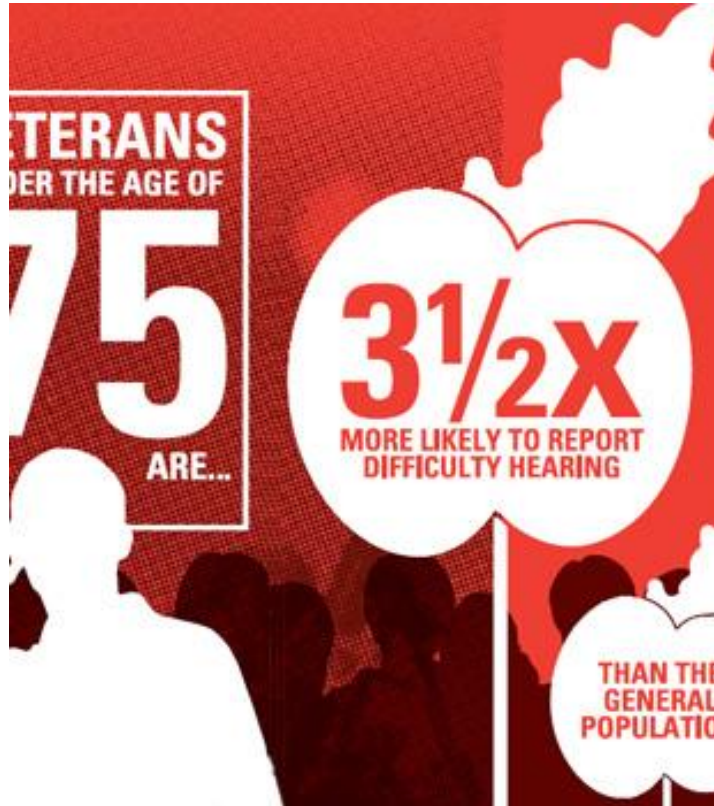


1. Origins

2. Design

3. Applications

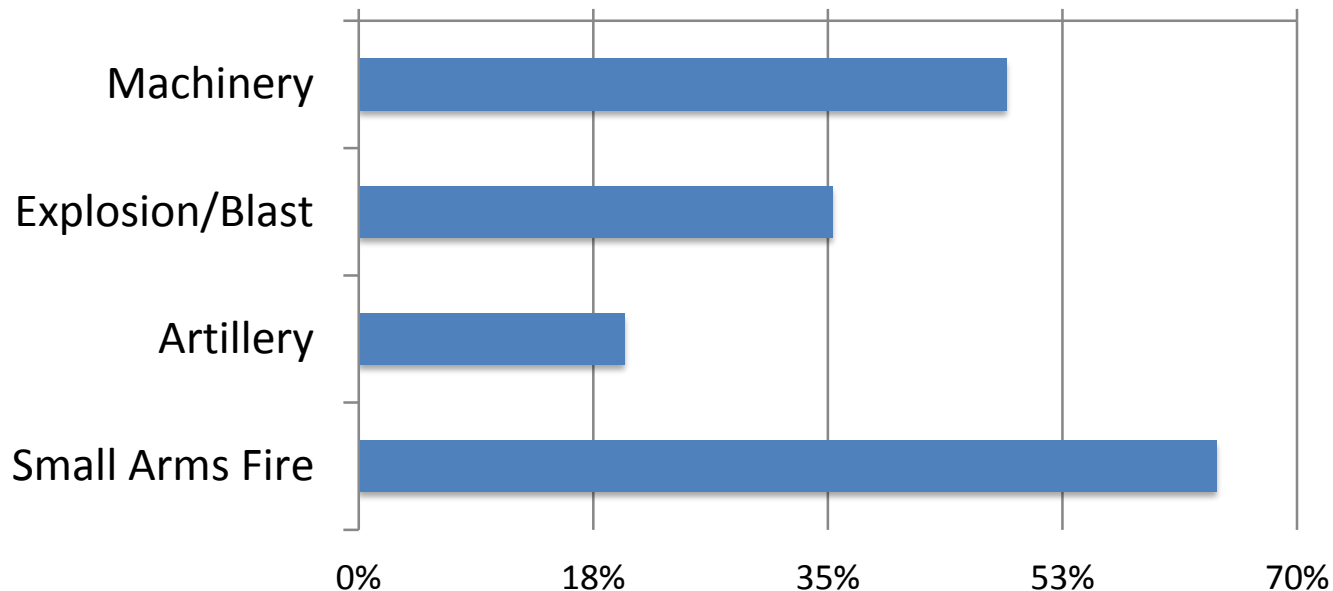
Lost Voices - 2014



- In a TRBL survey of 1,100 veterans conducted in 2014: 11% of veterans report having problems hearing and 6% reported tinnitus.
- Based on our latest 2014 household survey, this amounts to over 300,000 ex-Service personnel living with work related noise induced hearing loss.
- In a comparison of different age groups, veterans under the age of 75 are 3 and 1/2 more likely than the UK population to report difficulty hearing.

Lost Voices - 2014

Individuals who served in recent conflicts may be at even greater risk: audiometric tests on infantry troops returning from Afghanistan in 2007-08 indicated that up to 14% suffered from hearing loss.



Lost Voices - Recommendations



- The MOD introduces more sophisticated tests of communication impairment when assessing eligibility for military compensation, rather than relying solely on pure tone audiograms;
- Military compensation is awarded for tinnitus in isolation (with appropriate limitations) where the impact on communication and quality of life is significant;

Lost Voices - Recommendations



- That the Government makes available specific funding for veterans with Service-related hearing problems, to ensure that their military-issued hearing aids can be serviced and replaced on the NHS, and to ensure that working age veterans can access in the ear aids to reduce any embarrassment and stigma they may experience as a result of their hearing loss (granting them 'special treatment' if necessary, in accordance with the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant).

Libor Fines from HM Treasury



“Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.” – The Armed Forces Covenant

The Veterans Hearing Fund

Consultation

Armed Forces Charities
Civilian Charities
Ministry of Defence
Dept of Health
NHS (England and DAs)
Academics and Medics

Key Issues

Avoiding Duplication
Eligibility
Provision
Want vs Need
Clinical vs Wellbeing
Maximising Reach

Eligibility



Veterans or Reservists must have acquired hearing loss or impairment during their period of Service.

How will we know?

- Audiometry Records or
- Clinician Endorsement

Provision

The Legion will support non-surgical interventions that enhance wellbeing beyond pure clinical need.

Hearing Aids
Peripherals
Therapies
Travel / Hotels

Overseas applicants will be supported from mid 2016.



Application: Stage One



Veterans should request their Service medical records, including audiometry data, from the MOD.



They must submit a simple application to the Legion, to include Service audiometry records (at enlistment and at discharge).

Applicants whose records demonstrate hearing loss will be invited to Stage Two.

Applicants whose records do *not* include Service audiometry data will be invited to Stage Two, but their clinician will be requested to explain why it is believed that the applicant's hearing loss was acquired during military Service.

Application: Stage Two

Applicants invited to Stage Two must have their hearing-related wellbeing needs assessed by an audiologist.

The Stage Two application form must be submitted by the audiologist.

The audiologist should provide the rationale for any recommended intervention(s) and confirm that it is not available through statutory sources (eg, the NHS).

Decision Making



Anonymised applications will be considered by the Advisory Panel of the Veterans Hearing Fund.

The Panel meets every two months; it consists of an independent Chairperson, three highly experienced audiologists and a Legion representative.

The Panel is accountable to the Oversight Board, who lead the strategic review of the Veterans Medical Funds programme.

Mortar Officer



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Our Ask to You

Please help us help as many Veterans as possible by promoting the existence of the Veterans Hearing Fund with your patients and colleagues.

Please help us make the programme a success for Veterans by letting us know how we can improve, and what we can do to help *you*.

www.rbl.org.uk/hearing

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