# THEWARROR'S SIFFILMOUND WAR FIGHTERS WITH HEARING LOSS ARE WOUNDED

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2009 Informational Public Health integrated focus on USMC hearing loss and its future impact.

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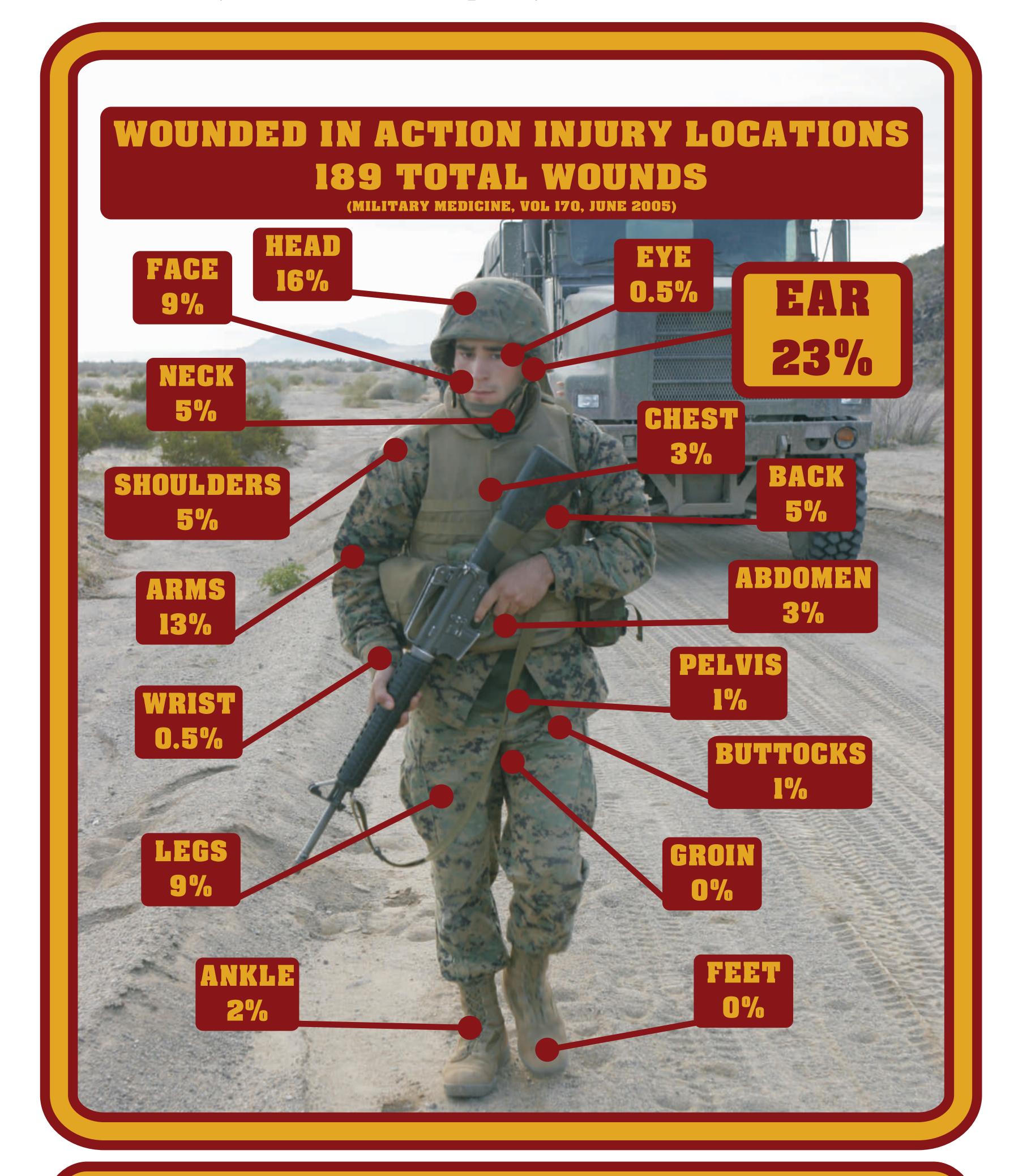
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GET BACK-GET BACK or did he say... ATTACK-ATTACK

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to empower USMC personnel with program expertise and education to improve safety and quality of life for our fighting forces.

Project Objective: Improving the Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) through awareness within the War Fighting community with the impact on Mission Safety and the members quality of life.



## USMC MISSION IMPACT

- Inability to localize and identify sound sources in a combat environment
- Hearing Loss can place war fighter's in danger
- Diminished oral communication skills (sending and receiving)
- Ineffective command and control at small unit level with a potential for mission failure

Impacts of Noise on Tank Gunner Performance and Survival (The effects of poor hearing resolution!)

	GOOD HEARING	POOR HEARING
TIME TO IDENTIFY TARGET	40 sec	90 sec
INCORRECT COMMAND HEARD BY GUNNER	1%	37%
CORRECT TARGET IDENTIFICATION	98%	68%
ENEMY TARGETS KILLED	94%	41%
WRONG TARGET SHOT	0%	8%
TANK CREW KILLED BY ENEMY	7%	28%

SOURCE: <u>Tank Gunner Performance and Hearing Impairment</u> (Garinther & Peters, Army RD&A Bulletin 1990, Jan-Feb 1-5)

# QUALITY OF LIFE IMPACT

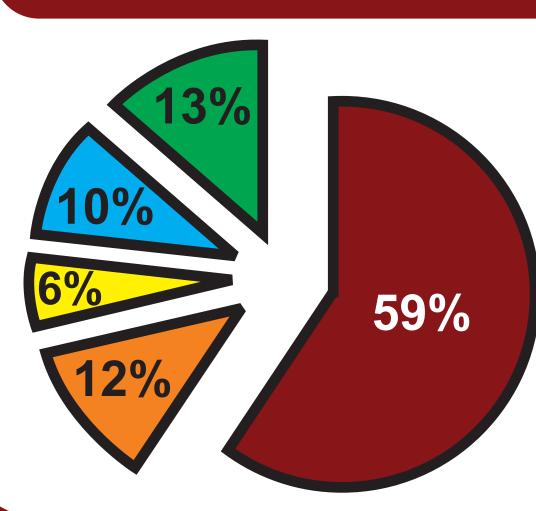
- Quality of life-hearing in social settings
- Change of Occupation-no longer meet specific occupation standards
- Denied employment (police, firefighter etc.)
- Financial impact (personal and VA)

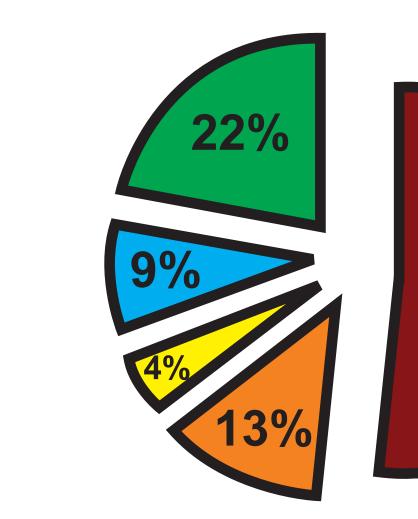
"US Troops are suffering the same amount of Hearing Loss as WWII''

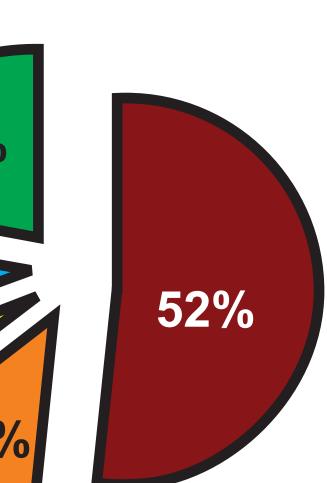
US Department of Veteran Affairs

THE

AGE GROUPS OF







### PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

28-32

33-37 38-42 43+

- 21% of military personnel within our region have been identified with a Significant Threshold Shift (STS)
- 25% of our High Risk population at Camp Lejeune (infantry/artillery) have an STS
- Of the patients seen by the audiologist, 59% were between the ages of 18-27
- Hearing loss is NOT one of the standards identified when evaluating for readiness.

# RESULTS WITH PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT/COMPLIANCE

- Increase combat efficiency
- Decrease potential loss of life in combat
- Clear and concise oral communication
- Preserve quality of life for service members
- Decrease VA costs to government

Elements for Force Health Protection with quality hearing are "essential to maintaining a Healthy and Fit Force and minimizing causalities in both deployed and non-deployed environments."

CAPT W.R. Stover Medical Service Corps Commanding Officer, NMCPHC

# FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Bring the war fighter into the 21st century
  - ★ Quiet pro
  - **★** Combat Earplug
  - ★ Introduction to Engineering Controls
- Set audiometric standards for readiness
- Education throughout the War Fighting Community
- Integrate Unit Safety and Unit Surgeons in the process for improvement

"If they can not hear what they need to on patrol, they could jeopardize their life, their buddies, and ultimately their mission."

Associated Press Writer

Chelsea J. Carter

Occupational Health DISCIPLINE

threshold shifts on noise exposed personnel at Camp Lejeune.

Informational **CATEGORY**  NUMBER

**TITLE:** WARRIOR SILENT WOUND

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**BACKGROUND:** 1. Observation of low compliance and lack of knowledge regarding the impact of hearing loss on safety during combat and training environments; 2. 52% of active duty personnel requiring hearing aids in the past 6 months were between the ages of 18-27.

**OBJECTIVE(S):** Increase awareness of the Hearing Conservation Program. Provide education and recommendations to protect lives and improve quality of life for noise exposed personnel at Camp Lejeune.

METHODOLOGY: 1. Data collection from DOEHRS-HC and VA; 2. Interview with safety personnel from HQMC; 3. Interview with BUMED PHA 4; Data from general industry for hearing protection; 5. Interaction with NMCPHC regarding impact of program. **RESULTS:** Pending Lean Six Sigma results.

**DISCUSSION:** Educate Marine Corps regarding the status of their Hearing Conservation Program and the impact of hearing loss and significant threshold shifts on training and battlefield communications/survivability.

**CONCLUSION:** Raise awareness and compliance of the Hearing Conservation Program. Decrease rates of hearing loss and significant

**RECOMMENDATION:** 1. Increase USMC command involvement and compliance with the Hearing Conservation Program 2. Educate Commands and individuals regarding the impact of noise related injuries on active duty and civilian quality of life. 3. Introduce alternatives for hearing protection. 4. More program involvement with unit safety representatives for compliance and enforcement.