

**Veterans Day
November 11**



In honor of Veterans Day, the focus of this issue of the Informer is on hearing loss and veterans: the causes, how to qualify for services with the VA and the advantages of becoming an HLAA member. It is my hope that you will pass this issue on to a veteran or a family member who could use the information.

— Informer Editor



A tribute to our nation's veterans

By Laura Friedman, Hearing Health Foundations, Nov. 9, 2018

Each year on Veterans Day, November 11, we proudly honor the men and women who have bravely served our country and fought to protect our freedoms.

Veterans Day is important because it honors our soldiers and it is a time to raise awareness about their experiences on and off the battlefield. Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) and tinnitus (ringing in the ears) are the top two health conditions among military veterans, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). By the end of fiscal year 2016 over 1 million veterans received disability compensation

as a result of hearing loss, and about 1.6 million received compensation for tinnitus.

In addition to being disproportionately affected by hearing loss and tinnitus, our soldiers and veterans are also more susceptible to developing central auditory processing disorders (CAPD). CAPD occurs when one can hear sounds but is unable to understand the words. It is sometimes caused by intense exposure to sudden and loud noises from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), ammunition and engine noise.

Blasts can result in temporary hearing loss and put military personnel at risk. However, the word “temporary” should be approached with caution: repeated short-term hearing loss can damage the sensitive hair cells in the inner ear, leading to permanent hearing loss.

Hearing loss and tinnitus as a result of noise is largely preventable. There’s a misconception that not using hearing protection would inhibit vital communication and mission readiness. With today’s increasingly sophisticated technology, soldiers no longer need to choose between protecting their ears or their lives. Wearing hearing protection such as noise-attenuating

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**November chapter meeting:
How the Brain Works to Hear**

This month’s speaker, audiologist Gary Dorf, has over 40 years’ experience in audiology, hearing aid dispensing, counseling the hard-of-hearing and business development. He will touch on topics including hearing loss and dementia and how Bluetooth can help the hard-of-hearing.

CHAPTER CALENDAR

All events are held at the at Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712 unless otherwise noted

- Nov 8** Chapter meeting, 6:30: Dr. Gary Dorf, “How the Brain Works to Hear”
- Nov 17** HAT demo, 10:30-12:00
- Nov 14** Board Meeting, 12:00-2:00, Weingart craft room
- Dec 13** Chapter meeting, 6:30: Holiday Party

Lip Reading classes are held Mondays 10:00–noon and Wednesdays 9:30–11:30 am



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from **Gail Morrison**

Italy with a hearing loss: Part 2

One day we got up early and headed for the Dome, which was in the front of the Vatican. This is the area where the Pope gives his sermon on Sunday and where thousands of people gather to await the voting and announcing of a new Pope. The area was huge and there were large screens; I wondered if the sermons were captioned. Here, we simply walked to the Dome and entered. The Pietà was in a room to the back, which seemed like at least a block from the door that was roped off. We weren't allowed to get up close. Probably people would want to touch it; I know I wanted to. But there it was! No one was speaking. Just gazing in amazement! The statue said it all, without words! Right at home again.

This same day, we also toured the Coliseum. I was amazed at how large the Coliseum is. It seems to extend forever in all directions and is three stories high. One could see the pits where the animals and slaves were kept in Roman days to be slaughtered. To think that I was walking where history walked hundreds of years ago!

There was so much to see: the cobbled, narrow streets crowded with little cars and lots of motorcycles and taxis zooming on their way and squeezing around the corners! Everywhere one looked, was beauty. From our roof top, we had a view of the Dome and heard church bells pealing from the many churches in the afternoon sunshine, each taking their splendid turn. I didn't need perfect hearing to appreciate the view.

In Florence, at my granddaughter's insistence, we toured the oldest pharmacy in the world, a real treat, as it was beautiful. We bought some handmade soaps, passing up the perfumes and medicines! Again, hearing not necessary to enjoy the sights and smells.

Did I have fun? Yes! It was the great adventure and knowing that my Aunt Ruth had traveled these same streets and sights when she took her Grand Tour in the 1950's. Another kind of history repeating itself!

news from HAT

Hearing Assistive Technology

by **Katie Wright**, HAT Chair

What is CART?

One of our most important hearing assistive technologies is live captioning. Often called CART, the acronym stands for Computer Aided

Realtime Translation. A captioner—most often someone trained as a stenographer or court reporter—uses a stenotype machine with a phonetic keyboard and special software. A computer translates the phonetic symbols into captions almost instantaneously and displays them on a laptop or on a large display screen. A slight delay may occur because of the captioner's need to hear and enter the words and the computer processing time. Real-time captioning can be used for programs that do not have written scripts or captions, such as courtrooms, lectures, classes, meetings, and news programs.

I had the honor a couple of weeks ago to be on a panel talking about CART at the California Court Reporters Association Convention. Our Chapter captioner Saba McKinley is actively involved in the effort to get court reporters interested in providing CART. She arranged for me to be on the panel, which was held at the Sunday luncheon included in the attendees' registration fees. There were close to 300 people in the room! The panel consisted of me as the hard-of-hearing representative, a young woman with a cochlear implant who grew up signing, and a man without hearing loss who provides live captioning and also signs. It was fantastic to have the opportunity to share how important live captioning is to our community. It was a great experience!



Help your chapter whenever you shop at Ralphs

Register online at www.ralphs.com/account/create or phone 1-800-443-4438 to call or renew.

When registering, reference number **XE889** for **Hearing Loss Assn. LB/Lakewood Chapter.**

Thanks for your support!

Tribute

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helmets, which use ear cups to protect against hazardous sound, or Tactical Communication and Protective Systems, which protect against loud noises while amplifying soft ones, can go a long way to reduce overall exposure, while ensuring vital communications.

Any form of hearing loss can be detrimental to soldiers on duty, as the ability to hear signs of danger and to communicate with fellow soldiers is crucial for mission success and survival. Off-duty, hearing loss and tinnitus can also impact one's well-being.

Regardless of age, type of hearing loss, or cause, if left untreated or undetected, hearing loss can lead to considerable negative social, psychological, cognitive, and health effects. As a result, it can seriously impact professional and personal life, potentially leading to isolation and depression. Treating hearing loss can also decrease one's risk of acquiring other serious medical conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, dementia, and diabetes.

Veterans who have acquired hearing loss and tinnitus, either as a result of war or through other causes, can seek treatment at their local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center. Through partnerships with local community providers, the VA offers comprehensive hearing health services including screening, evaluation, treatment, and/or management of hearing, tinnitus, and balance disorders.

While it may be daunting to take the initial step of having a hearing test, it is important to know there are many different treatment options available. Some forms of hearing loss, such as those that affect the middle ear, are treatable through surgery. Damage to the inner ear and auditory nerve can cause permanent hearing loss; however technologies such as hearing aids, assistive/alerting devices, TV and telephone amplifiers, and cochlear and other auditory implants can optimize residual hearing by amplifying sounds.

As for tinnitus treatments, many patients have seen improvements with counseling and sound therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and the use of white-noise machines. Be sure to discuss the cause of your hearing loss and

tinnitus and various treatment options with your audiologist or ear, nose, and throat specialist (ENT).

“On this and every Veterans Day, HHF sincerely thanks our military and our veterans for their brave service and sacrifice. I would also encourage all members, past and present, to have their hearing tested and monitored by a hearing health professional on a regular basis.”

—Nadine Dehgan, CEO,
Hearing Health Foundation

Please visit va.gov/directory/guide to find your local VA medical facility.

<https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/blogs/a-tribute-to-our-nations-veterans>

HLAA and veterans

HLAA salutes America's heroes who served to protect our freedom. Thank you for your service.

Do you have a hearing loss due to military service? A report from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that more than 60,000 military members are on disability for hearing loss from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

HLAA was founded in 1979 by Howard “Rocky” Stone, a retired CIA agent, who endured hearing loss from his service in the United States Army. Rocky was well-known in the agency for both his skill and his hearing loss. On one occasion he was having a hard time “hearing” when talking with then-Director Richard Helms, so Rocky plopped himself on Helms’ desk and asked him to face him directly so he could read his lips! Another time, his old-fashioned body hearing aid was mistaken for a recording spy device and was confiscated. Rocky earned the Agency’s highest honor and went on to establish an organization for people who have hearing loss and want to stay in the hearing world with technology and strategies.

HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter

HLAA is excited to announce the formation of our very first virtual chapter for veterans with hearing loss (caregivers welcome too!). Chapter members communicate via an online platform called Basecamp, and conducts monthly meetings, complete with captions, using Zoom.

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HLAA and veterans

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The founding members have applied for an EIN, are working on chapter bylaws, and discussing priorities for the future. During the first meeting on September 26, 2018, the group adopted its mission:

The mission of the HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter is to provide education, be an advocate for veterans with hearing loss, and to provide a support system to help them to return and adjust to civilian life.

If you are a military veteran with hearing loss or a caregiver of a veteran, we welcome you. Join the chapter by sending an email to [Erin Mirante](#).

The HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter is sponsored exclusively by Starkey Hearing Technologies.

Complimentary HLAA membership for veterans

HLAA is honored to offer two types of membership for United States veterans (both include the other [benefits of Individual membership](#)):

Digital Membership—this complimentary membership includes our award-winning [Hearing Life](#) in digital format; or

Non-Digital Membership—[Hearing Life](#), our bimonthly magazine, will be delivered right to your mail box; complimentary for one year, renewal at \$35/year.

Our bimonthly magazine, [Hearing Life](#), is a helpful resource on the latest in technology, medical issues, legislation, personal stories, and more. If you are a veteran and are interested in joining HLAA, please complete the [Veteran Membership Form](#) and mail it, fax it or email it in.

Complimentary HLAA Convention registration

HLAA would like to show its support of veterans attending their first HLAA Convention by offering a complimentary registration (as well as for a caregiver). For more information about registering for HLAA's annual convention, email the [HLAA Meeting Planner](#).

The HLAA Convention has workshops, a trade show with all the latest technology and services, is communication accessible (real-time captioning and assistive technology in all sessions) and is a lot of fun!

Service-connected hearing loss compensation for veterans

Hearing loss, as well as tinnitus (ringing in the ears), is quite common among veterans. Service-connected disability compensation is available for eye and ear problems.

Establishing direct service connection for hearing problems

To qualify for disability benefits for a visual or auditory problem caused by service on the basis of direct service connection, you need to prove the condition was caused by your military duty. The following must be established to prove the disability is service-connected:

- A current diagnosis of a hearing or vision condition
- Evidence of an event in service that caused the condition, and
- A medical opinion linking the current vision or hearing condition to the event in service

Disability ratings for hearing problems

Hearing problems are rated under the VA Schedule of Ratings Disabilities in Section 4.87, diagnostic codes 6200 to 6260. Common hearing issues for veterans include hearing loss and tinnitus. Other ear disabilities include:

- Cancer, entitled to a 100% rating for six months following termination of cancer treatment
- Peripheral vestibular disorders (inner ear problem leading to dizziness), rated at 10% for occasional dizziness or 30% when you have dizziness and sometimes stagger
- Loss of one or both ears (auricles), rated at 30% for loss of one ear or 50% for loss of both, *and*
- Perforated eardrum (the only available rating is 0%)

Hearing loss testing requirements

Hearing loss as a result of loud noises that veterans were exposed to during service, such as airplane engines or gunfire, are quite common. To be deemed service-connected, hearing problems must be diagnosed by a licensed audiologist and must include two tests:

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Service-connected compensation

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- A Maryland CNC test (measures speech recognition ability), *and*
- A puretone audiometric test (used to evaluate your level of hearing loss).

Make sure to tell your audiologist that you must have both tests in order to satisfy the VA requirements for service connection. And be sure to remove any hearing aids you may have before being tested.

The VA takes the auditory test results and, using a numerical formula, determines the actual rating to assign. This formula is laid out in Section 4.85 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Typical ratings for hearing loss are 0% or 10%, but severe or profound hearing loss can qualify for a higher rating.

If you don't have hearing loss until you are older

If you don't suffer hearing loss until many years after leaving the service, don't assume that you will be denied benefits on the basis that your hearing loss is related to your age. If you can show that you were exposed to loud noise during service, you may still be able to establish service connection for your hearing loss.

Tinnitus

Tinnitus is a noise that you hear in your ears, such as a buzzing or ringing that happens again and again, or consistently. The only rating available for tinnitus is 10%. A 10% rating will be assigned whether you have ringing in one ear or in both ears, you cannot receive a 20% rating due to tinnitus in both ears.

If you also have hearing loss, however, you are entitled to one rating for hearing loss and another for tinnitus.

Hearing Assistive Technology

HAT demonstration

Saturday, Nov. 17, 10:30–12:00

Weingart Senior Center in Lakewood

Try out a large variety of devices that can improve your ability to hear better in difficult situations. These devices can be very helpful to people with or without hearing aids and are a lot less expensive.

HAT does not sell hearing aids or hearing assistive devices. We DO provide information on where to purchase items we demonstrate.

Informer print subscriptions

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HLAA, Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter

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Professional Advisor

Dr. David DeKriek, Au.D.

Newsletter

Editor Katie Wright

Layout Ilga Dravnieks

For more information about our chapter:

hlaa-lb-lakewood.org

email: info@hlaa-lb-lakewood.org

Katie Wright (323) 205-6794

katie.hearingloss@gmail.com

HLAA Hearing Loss Association of America

Join HLAA to receive *Hearing Loss Magazine* and to become part of the one organization that represents the interests of 48 million people with hearing loss in the U.S.

Send \$35 for individual or \$45 for family membership to:

Hearing Loss Association of America

7910 Woodman Avenue, Suite 1200

Bethesda, MD 20814

Or join online: www.hearingloss.org/content/join

For more information:

(301) 657-2248 or email inquiry@hearingloss.org.

Membership brochures are available at chapter meetings.

CTAP California Telephone Access Program

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English Voice 1-800-806-1191

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www.californiaphones.org/about-us

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First Class

Address Service Requested

Hearing Loss Association of America,
Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter
c/o Katie Wright
7802 Kingbee Street
Downey, CA 90242

Upcoming Programs

- Nov 8** Dr. Gary Dorf, "How the Brain Works to Hear"
Dec 13 Holiday party
Jan 10 Dr. David DeKriek, "Your Audiological Exam"

HLAA Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, 6:30-8:00 pm, at the Weingart Center, 5220 Oliva Ave, Lakewood 90712

If you don't like meetings because you can't hear well, our meetings are different!

- We have a high quality sound system
- You can borrow an assistive listening device
- If you have hearing aids with telecoils, we have a hearing induction loop
- If none of these help, we project captions on the wall for you to read.

We provide all these options free so you can understand what is said.



Hearing Loss Association of America

HLAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy. The national support network includes the national office in Washington D.C., state organizations and local HLAA Chapters.

Join HLAA now at www.hearingloss.org/content/join to receive *Hearing Loss Magazine* and become part of the one organization that represents the interests of 48 million people with hearing loss in the United States.