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## GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

# ODHH Monthly Bulletin

November 2010

## A message from Director Lisa Kornberg

ODHH is proud to dedicate this issue of the *Monthly Bulletin* to the veterans who have served our country and to their families. This is the second time we have focused our November issue on veterans with hearing loss and it is a tradition we look forward to continuing in the years to come so that all of those who have served in the military can access the support and services they need.

To the service members and their families, thank you for the sacrifices you've made and your commitment to keeping us safe. Happy Veterans Day from ODHH.

-Lisa

## In This Issue

[ODHH Commitment to Veterans](#)

[New Technology Helping Deaf Employees in the Army](#)

[VA Benefits for Veterans with Hearing Loss](#)

[Resources for Veterans with Hearing Loss](#)

## ODHH Commitment to Veterans



The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) was established in 2001 to provide expertise related to Marylanders with hearing loss and to facilitate their ability of access resources and services. This includes providing information and support for Maryland's servicemen and women who have lost their hearing.

Last November, ODHH produced its first-ever Monthly Bulletin dedicated to veterans with hearing loss. Since then, the Office was featured in the Summer Edition of [The Maryland Veteran](#), became regular participant in the Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA) veteran musters held throughout the State, posted updates to the "[Veterans Information](#)" section of our website, and hosted a Town Hall meeting at the Northern Senior Center near Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.

But our work is not done. We must continue to work together to ensure that servicemen and woman and their families have access to the resources and services they need. That is why we are proud to announce the creation of a new, quarterly newsletter specifically for veterans with hearing loss - The Veteran Communicator. If



In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

For more information on the history of Veterans Day, visit [The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs website](#).

### Quick Links

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**ODHH on the Move**

you would like to receive this quarterly newsletter, please e-mail [Julie Schafer](#) and ask to be added to the mailing list.

## New Technology Helping Deaf Employees in the Army

*from the Army News Service - October 21, 2010*

Across the Army, about 280 civilian employees are deaf while another 2,100 are hard of hearing, and the Army is providing new technology to ensure they can do their jobs.

A seminar for Pentagon employees Tuesday as part of Disability Employment Awareness Month discussed adaptive technology and challenges facing deaf employees.

"Traditionally, the federal government has been a massive supporter of hiring people with disabilities, and the Army has exemplified that," said Barbara Stansbury, deputy director of the Army's Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

By making available interpreters or adaptive technology, she said the Army ensures deaf employees can bring their valuable skills to the table the same as their hearing counterparts.

Such technology includes video phones, for instance, that allow deaf employees to make phone calls using only sign language. Another piece of technology is the "UbiDuo," system, which consists of two keyboard and screen devices, similar to laptops, that allow a deaf and hearing employee to sit face-to-face and carry on a conversation.

To read the rest of the article, visit the [Official Homepage of the United States Army](#).

## VA Benefits for Veterans with Hearing Loss



According to the Federal Veterans Benefits Administration, tinnitus and hearing loss were among the most prevalent service-connected disabilities for veterans receiving compensation at the end of fiscal year 2009. During fiscal year 2009, 570,966 veterans received compensation for hearing loss associated with military service, and 639,029 received compensation for service-related tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

Veterans with hearing loss related to their military service may receive compensation benefits ranging from \$123 - \$2,673 per month, depending on the severity of the loss. If you are found to have a service connected hearing loss, the VA will also provide hearing aids at no charge.

- Tinnitus is also a compensable disability up to a maximum of 10%. \$123/month is the 10% compensable rating.
- Veterans filing disability claims with the VA should seek help from an accredited representative when filing for benefits. There are a number of National Organizations, for example the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans (DAV), that have accredited representatives in around the State.
- The staff at the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Service & Benefits Program is also accredited with the VA to assist veterans and dependents with their claims. You can reach a Veterans Benefits Specialist at your local [Veterans Affairs Office](#).

Questions about other services and programs for people with hearing loss? Contact the ODHH at 410-767-6290 or [odhh@gov.state.md.us](mailto:odhh@gov.state.md.us).

**Walk4Hearing**  
Sunday, November 7  
8 AM  
Tidal Basin  
Washington, DC

**Brown Bag Lunch for Professionals**  
Friday, November 12  
12 PM - 2 PM  
Maryland Relay  
Baltimore, MD

**Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
Tuesday, December 7  
11 AM - 2 PM  
Talbot County Dept. of  
Social Services  
Easton, MD

## Resources for Veterans with Hearing Loss



The [Hearing Loss Association of America](#) (HLAA) is one of the nation's foremost membership and advocacy organizations for people with hearing loss. HLAA provides information on all aspects of hearing loss including hearing aids, assistive technology, and coping strategies. For more information about a free one-year membership, contact the [Membership Department](#).

The [Association of Late-Deafened Adults](#) (ALDA) is about communication and acceptance of every deafened individual. Some people lip-read, some sign, some use hearing aids, some have cochlear implants, and some need to have others write down what they are saying. ALDA's official communication philosophy is "Whatever works!" ALDA is offering a military

discount for membership and a reduced registration fee for their annual convention, [ALDAcon](#).

The [Williams Sound RALD](#) (Military Assistive Listening Device Program) offers assistive listening devices at a discounted price PLUS free personalized telephone support to Military Service Members and their families. Whether your needs are specific to TV listening, workplace environment, telephone sound, group dialog or one-on-one conversation, products from Williams Sound help you focus on what you'd like to hear. CALL: 1-800-328-6190 - Monday to Friday - 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Central Standard Time.

The [National Technical Institute for the Deaf](#), a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, has established the Military Veterans with Hearing Loss Project at RIT/NTID and plans to admit recent veterans with hearing loss. Those veterans can earn bachelor or graduate-level degrees at RIT with access services - such as real-time captioning and notetaking in the classroom - from NTID. Nearly 1,300 deaf and hard-of-hearing students attend NTID. They receive access services as needed in classrooms throughout the RIT campus.

For more information and resources for veterans with hearing loss, visit the ["Veterans Information" section of the ODHH website](#).

## Event: Hearing Loss and Disabilities of Returning Veterans



On Thursday, November 18, 2010 from 6:30 PM-8:00 PM, the Hearing Loss Association of Greater Baltimore will host Nathaniel Thomas, Employment Specialist with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) in the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

Mr. Thomas assists veterans in areas of employment, housing, health care, behavioral health, and other areas as needed. He is a person with a hearing loss who lost his hearing as an adult. He served in the army until 1993. Since retiring from the Army, he has continued his career in public service with the help of two hearing aids.

Come hear about his personal experiences as well as issues of returning veterans. The event will be held in the auditorium of the Hearing and Speech Agency in Baltimore: 5900 Metro Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215. Sign language interpreters and CART will be provided. Assistive Listening Devices are available upon request.

This meeting is free and open to the public.

**Questions? Comments? Contact:**

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