

THE WARRIOR'S SILENT WOUND

WAR FIGHTERS WITH HEARING LOSS ARE WOUNDED

NAVAL HOSPITAL CAMP LEJEUNE

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

HEARING CONSERVATION

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

CDR Alan Ross MSC, USN



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 the safety and quality of life for our fighting forces.

OPERATIONAL AUDIOLOGY PROJECT

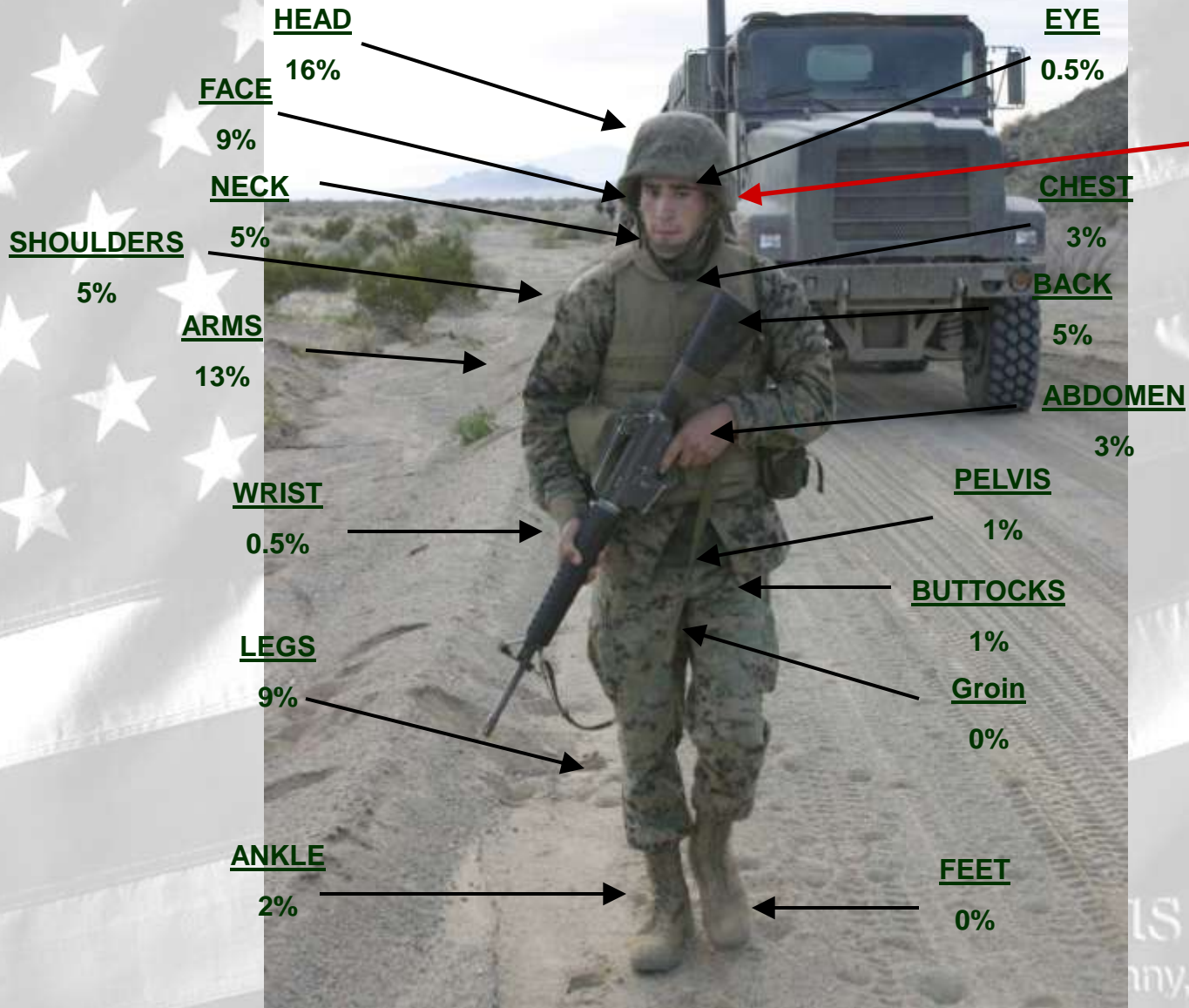
Project Objective: Improving the Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) through awareness within the War Fighting community, its impact on Mission Safety and members quality of life.

Out of many, one

WOUNDED IN ACTION INJURY LOCATIONS

189 TOTAL WOUNDS

(MILITARY MEDICINE, VOL 170, JUNE 2006)



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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

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HEARING LOSS DEGRADES COMBAT PERFORMANCE – WORD INTELLIGIBILITY

Impacts of Noise on Tank Gunner Performance and Survival

(The effects of poor hearing resolution!)

	<u>GOOD</u> <u>HEARING</u> 40 SEC	<u>POOR</u> <u>HEARING</u> 90 SEC
TIME TO IDENTIFY TARGET		
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%

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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.)



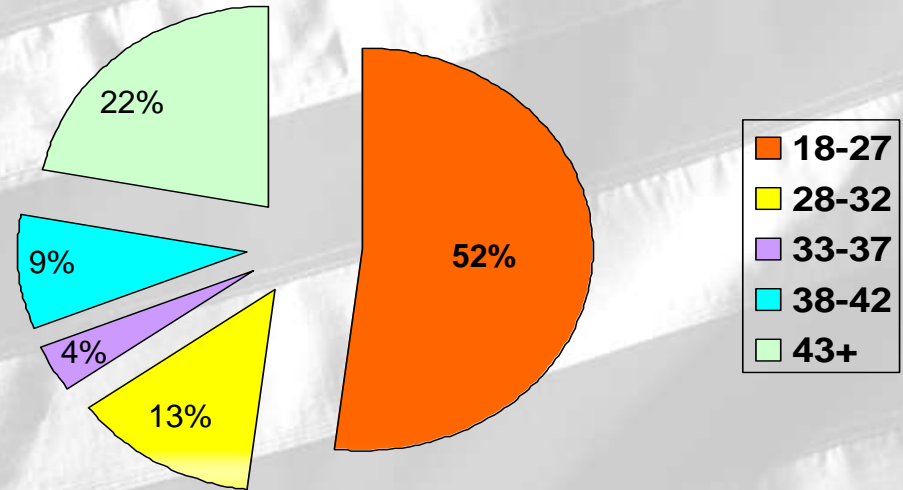
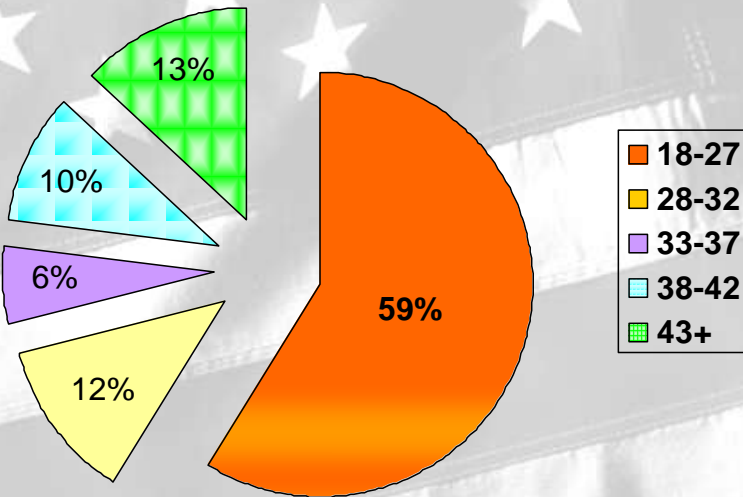
Financial impact (personal and VA)

“US Troops are suffering the same amount of Hearing Loss as WWII”

US Department of Veteran Affairs

PATIENTS SEEN WITH HEARING LOSS SEP-DEC 2008

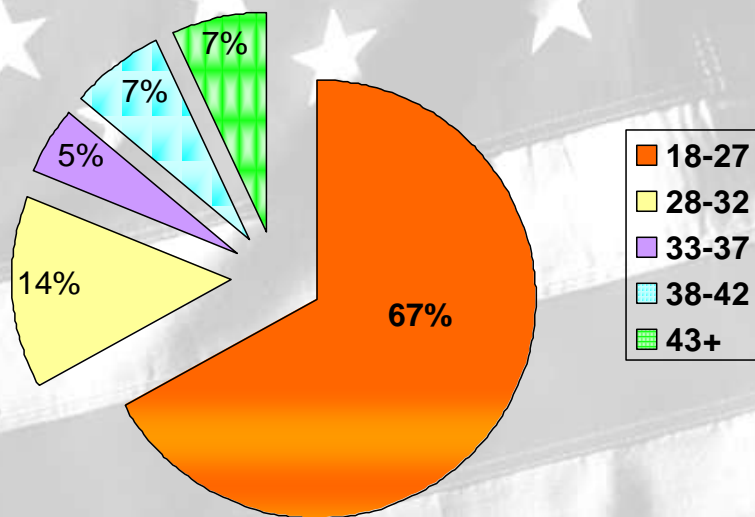
PATIENTS FITTED FOR HEARING AIDS SEP-DEC 2008



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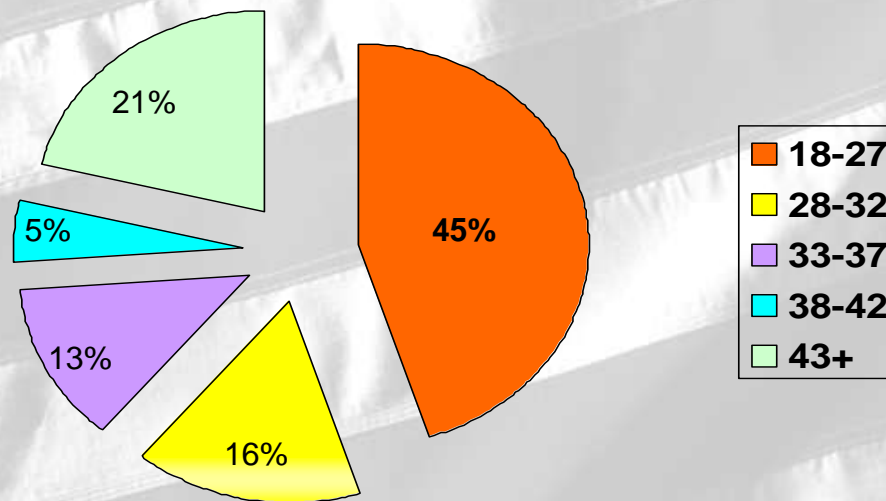
PATIENTS SEEN WITH HEARING LOSS

SEP-DEC 2009



PATIENTS FITTED FOR HEARING AIDS

SEP-DEC 2009



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Problems with the Hearing Conservation Program (HCP)

OER's: (*Occupational Exposure Registry*): Required by base order but most units do not supply them to the Hearing Conservation Dept.

Participation: Many units do not participate in the HCP program. Lack of cooperation from unit safety officers.

Accountability: Currently hearing is NOT a readiness issue.

Timing: Most units wait until a month or two before deployment to book the MOHCAT, or they have personnel tasked with other training while the MOHCAT is scheduled to be testing at their unit.

Education: Military personnel are sent for a hearing test but have no idea why.

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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 casualties 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 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 into 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.”

Chelsea J. Carter

Associated Press Writer

How to Begin Fixing the Hearing Conservation Program

OER's: Required for unit to receive annual testing for Hearing Conservation, will still offer non-hearing tests, and termination testing for units that have not submitted an OER.

Participation: Contact Safety Officers and offer our services.

Accountability: Annual HCP compliance reports sent to Commanding Generals.

Timing: Provide education to units, make our services more accessible, explain the booking process and STS requirements.

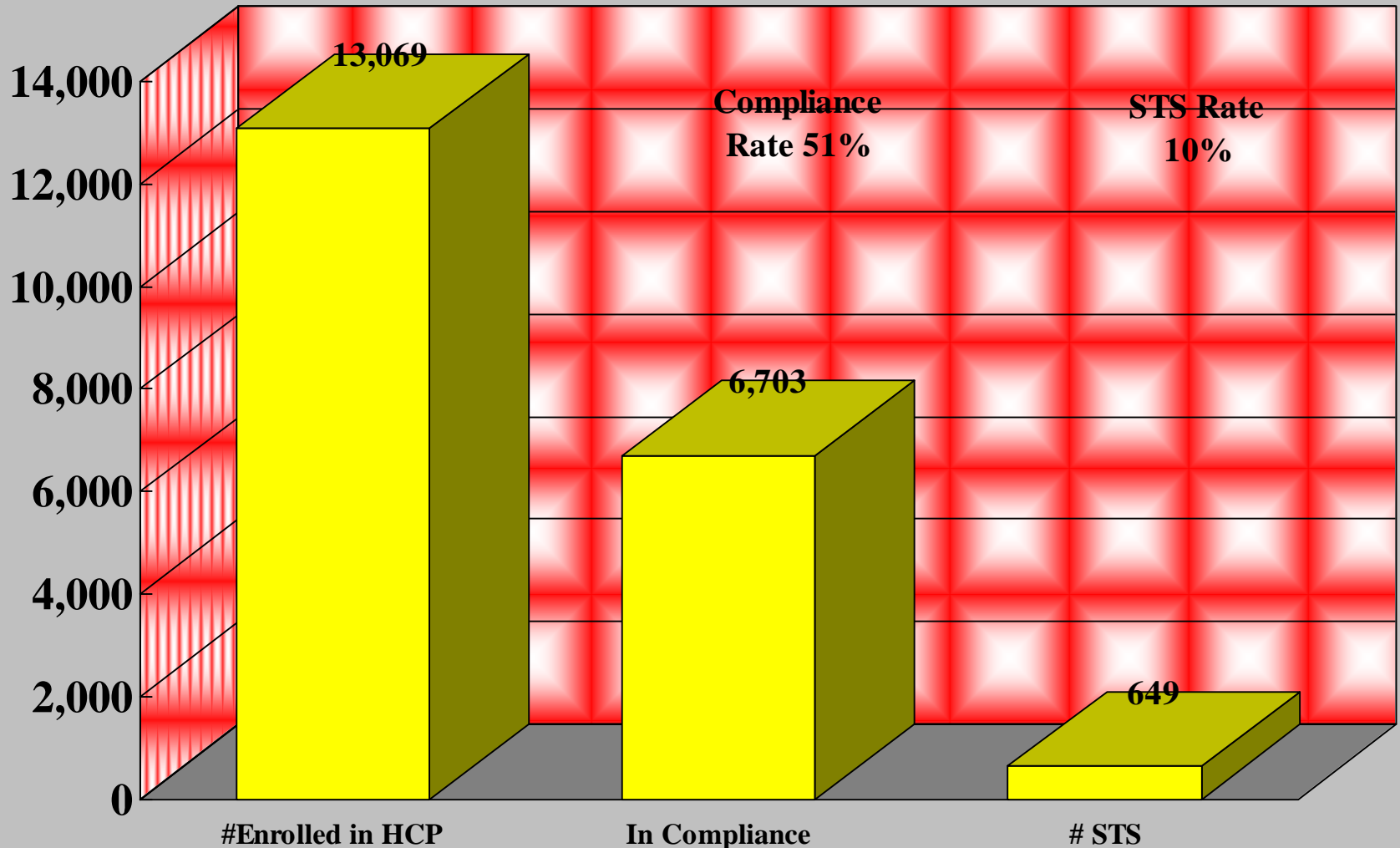
Education: Explain results to patients, and how to preserve and protect their hearing.

Readiness requirement: As soon as hearing is included as a readiness requirement for deployment, compliance will increase.

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CAMP LEJEUNE HEARING CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE & STS REPORT 2009

COMPLIANCE RATE = # IN COMPLIANCE / # ENROLLED IN HCP X 100
STS RATE = # STS / # IN COMPLIANCE X 100





Questions???

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