

***NIHL In The Military...
Are We Winning The War?***



JDVAC

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***A LITTLE HEARING CONSERVATION
HISTORY...***



1945... Early models of HPDs available



1948... USAF issues first regulation concerning hazardous noise



1956... USAF introduces first military hearing conservation program

***1960... Pure tone audiometry replaced
whisper test for induction screening***



1965... Army establishes Audiologist as an occupational specialty



1970... USN establishes a comprehensive hearing conservation program



1975... Walden et al. publish The Prevalence of Hearing Loss Within Selected USA Branches



***1980... Army establishes a comprehensive
Hearing Conservation Program***



**1991 (Desert Storm)... audiology services
provided in theatre**



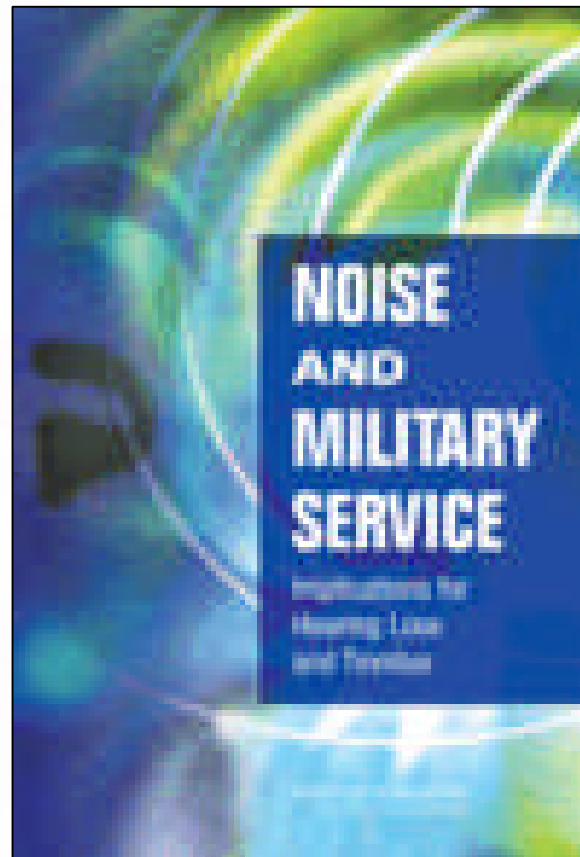
1999... DOEHRS-HC introduced to standardize audiometric data repositories across services



2001... Global War On Terrorism begins



Claims for hearing loss and tinnitus see unprecedented growth. Congress authorizes IOM study and report.



IOM Recommendations for DOD

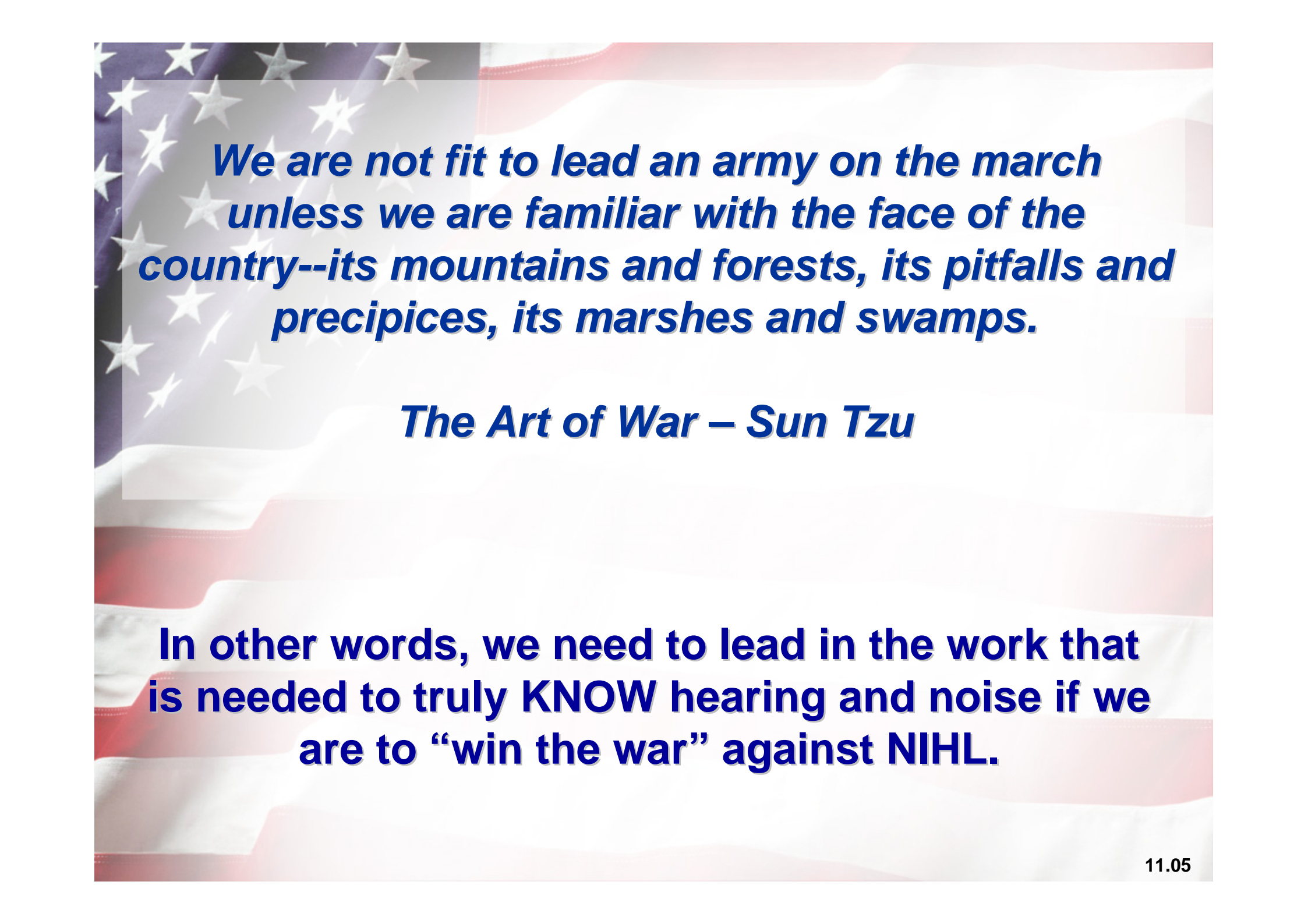
- **Increase use of hearing protection**
- **Monitor tinnitus**
- **Audiograms for all new members at all basic training sites and audiograms for all members at separation**
- **Explore VA participation (Benefits Delivery at Discharge)**
- **Include 6000 Hz and 8000 Hz in all audiograms for detection of noise-induced hearing loss**
- **Improve compliance with annual monitoring and follow-up**
- **Improve data collection, reporting, tinnitus tracking, hygiene component (dosimetry)**
- **Give VA access to hearing conservation data**

DOD's Response?



IOM Research Recommendations

- **Obtain Valid estimates of the incidence, prevalence and severity of NIHL and tinnitus among military personnel, including gender specific estimates.**
- **Establish cohorts of military veterans with various documented noise exposures, immediately upon discharge, and survey them periodically for ototoxic exposures, subsequent nonmilitary noise exposures, and hearing function, as well as presence and severity of tinnitus, in order to determine if there is a delay in the effects of military noise exposure.**
- **Conduct randomized trials and interventions within each military branch to determine with greater certainty which approaches to hearing conservation lead to lower NIHL and tinnitus.**
- **On a sample basis, determine noise levels for modern military activities and noise doses experienced by military personnel where dosimetry has not been done.**
- **Conduct real-world studies in military settings, including field and garrison conditions, to assess the noise attenuation and utilization rates of HPDs.**

The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the United States flag, showing the stars and stripes. The text is overlaid on this background.

We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.

The Art of War – Sun Tzu

In other words, we need to lead in the work that is needed to truly KNOW hearing and noise if we are to “win the war” against NIHL.