



by David Glaser, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA  
*Doctor of Audiology*

# THE MILITARY'S SMART EARPLUGS

If there is an institution that recognizes the importance of earplugs, it is the U.S. Army. Over the past couple of years, Army soldiers have been introduced to the military's newest ear protection system, the Tactical Communication and Protective System (TCAPS). In recognition of the fact that [more than half](#) of all troops returning from Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from some degree of hearing damage, the Army needed to find a way to protect soldiers' ears from loud noises while simultaneously maintaining their ability to hear soft sounds. "Smart earplugs" suppress the sound of loud explosions and still allow soldiers to hear the words of people close by. Thus, TCAPS protects wearers from noise-induced damage while preserving their "situational awareness."

## TIP OF THE WEEK

If you think that there is a possibility that you are causing damage to the ears with loud noises, use hearing protection. It is better to be safe than sorry.

P.S. Digital technology makes it possible for today's hearing instruments to differentiate between sounds (loud and soft, high and low frequency) and lessen or block out those that are unwanted.

AA-46