

“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it.”

—*Thomas Paine*

Thomas Paine wrote those words almost two and a half centuries ago. But their significance endures.

This issue of *Hearing Life* is dedicated to the millions of men and women who’ve served with honor and courage to protect those blessings of freedom on which we’ve built our country and our lives.

For the many of us who’ve never served in the armed forces, we’ll never truly know the fatigues that these men and women have undergone on our behalf. Yet, there’s hardly one among us whose life hasn’t been intertwined with that of a Veteran. For their service, dedication, fortitude and love of country we extend to them our utmost respect.

As an organization that serves the needs of people with hearing loss, we recognize the long-term implications of injury to the inner ear caused by the high-decibel and excessive noise that so often accompanies military service.

Today, millions of U.S. Veterans have hearing loss, tinnitus or related issues.

Each year, we learn more about the damage that unaddressed hearing loss inflicts on quality of life and many other aspects of health.

Of significant concern for our Veterans is the isolation that hearing-related problems can cause—and the toll it can take on mental and emotional well-being. When an individual is left without the right information and resources to appropriately address the loss of hearing and other related issues, it can undermine the strongest and most resilient among us.

In an effort to honor our Veterans through all their years by providing them with information, resources and community, our organization has established the HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter.

We encourage all Veterans with hearing-related issues to join the virtual chapter—at no cost. And we hope that the information in this issue proves instrumental to our Veterans as they move forward in living their best lives with hearing loss. For their service and sacrifice, we are honor-bound.