

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
9/19/13

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First Sergeant Matthew P. Eversmann, US Army (retired) Named National Spokesperson for “Fit to Serve” Campaign

Sgt. Eversmann, whose service was featured in “Black Hawk Down,” to raise awareness of the pressing need for improved hearing healthcare for America’s Veterans

WASHINGTON, D.C. – September 19, 2013 - [The International Hearing Society \(IHS\)](#) today announced that First Sergeant Matthew P. Eversmann, US Army (retired), has been named National Spokesperson for “Fit to Serve” (www.fittoserve.us), IHS’ grassroots campaign to improve the hearing healthcare system for America’s Veterans. Eversmann’s service in Somalia was detailed in Mark Bowden’s 1999 book “Black Hawk Down.” Eversmann was later portrayed by Josh Hartnett in the 2001 [Oscar-winning motion picture](#) based on the book.

“I am pleased to join Veterans and hearing advocates from across the country who believe, as I do, that men and women who served our nation have earned access to quality hearing healthcare services,” said Eversmann. “Despite the hearing loss I sustained as a result of combat operations, serving in the United States Army was a tremendous honor, and I am proud to now have the opportunity to advocate for those who have sacrificed so much for our country.”

According to the [Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#), the two most prevalent service-related disabilities for Veterans are [tinnitus \(ringing in the ears\)](#) and hearing loss. The effect of hearing loss can be devastating to a Veteran, particularly as they adjust to a civilian lifestyle, and may contribute to depression, heightened stress, fatigue, and other challenges. For many Veterans, a lack of proper hearing healthcare exacerbates these symptoms, leading to strained relationships and inability to maintain a career.

Despite the VA’s best efforts, the number of Veterans lacking adequate hearing healthcare services is quickly surpassing the VA’s ability to respond. Veterans often face long wait times to get appointments, extensive travel to the nearest VA clinic and limited follow-up care. Fit to Serve is working to lift existing restrictions in order to allow all qualified hearing aid specialists to, alongside the hearing professionals of the VA, provide hearing healthcare services to America’s Veterans.

“IHS is honored to have Sergeant Eversmann join our campaign for improved hearing healthcare for our nation’s Veterans,” said Thomas Higgins, President of IHS and US Navy Veteran. “His

remarkable service to America, and the hearing loss he has experienced as a result of combat make him an ideal advocate for Veterans everywhere.”

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