

## Snoring and the Military

Men and women who serve in the military must be on alert for the enemy at every waking hour. Some fight another battle, even while they're sound asleep.

Snoring is an enemy that plagues people of all ages, walks of life and professions, including those who serve in the military. Of course, when several military men and women begin snoring in the same barracks, the resulting racket can make even the bravest souls ready to take cover.

The Canadian Army performed a mini-study to determine the cause of snoring in the military, and whether there were actually more or fewer snorers in the armed forces than in other professions. For this study, a number of snorers were taken as a test group to participate in a comparison test of military vs. non-military snorers. Not surprisingly, the resulting data showed very little difference in the snoring habits of those in the military, as compared to civilians. What was very surprising, however, was that many of the military snorers were overweight.

Overweight? Our military? Yes, in Canada and the United States, army personnel who suffer with snoring often do so because they are simply overweight. But, how could this happen in a place where extreme exercise regimes are part of the daily routine? And, how could the military allow our country's defenders to become lax and out of shape?

Following this study on snoring and the military, certain programs were implemented by the US and Canadian Armed Forces to whip their comrades back into shape. Fitness programs were developed to not only encourage weight loss, but also to improve diet, educate people on exercise, and help change their behaviors to encourage improved health.

### Snoring Solutions

Once these studies were completed, consideration was given to the problems with snoring. Some of the worse snorers in the study were given a CPAP system to use. CPAP, or Continuous Positive Air Pressure, is a treatment given by mask while sleeping. This device provides a steady stream of air that enables the airways to stay open. The device is very effective in the treatment of snoring, and may eliminate the problem entirely. Active U.S. Navy personnel have used CPAP with great success. However, the system is not so easily utilized on the field. Members of the armed forces including firefighters, engineers, air traffic controllers, drivers, and pilots, were not so successful with the CPAP system. Those in the field have found that carrying the CPAP system was simply not practical, and were required to experiment with other devices.

Rather than dismissing the snoring troops, or putting up with the nighttime noise, the offenders were offered other options. Some members of the armed forces choose to use nasal strips and other devices to combat the problem. These silent sleepers are able to perform better during the day and appreciate having a better night's sleep. The rest of the barracks are also thankful for the quiet.

Of course, snoring is a problem that plagues the entire world, not just North America. The Chinese army recently announced that it would no longer accept snoring students to military schools. Not unlike their decision to banish tattooed students on the grounds that they are tarnishing the military image, snoring students are believed to habitually disturb the collective military life.

Whether you serve in the military or live your days as a civilian, you needn't surrender your nights to the noisy nocturnal enemy. If you snore, there are options and snoring treatments available to help you. Talk to your doctor or healthcare professional.