



ESL Podcast 646 – War-Related Disabilities

GLOSSARY

veteran – a person who served in the military during a war; a person who has completed military service

* Jake's great-grandfather is a World War II veteran.

rewarding – giving one a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction; worthwhile and making someone feel good

* It must be so rewarding to work to find homes for orphaned children.

returning vet – a returning veteran; a person who served in the military during a war and is completing or has recently completed that service, coming back home

* Returning vets sometimes have difficulty relating to their spouse and children once they move back home.

physically – relating to the body and things that one can feel and see

* Unloading boxes from trucks is a physically demanding job.

injured – for a part of the body to be hurt, damaged, or broken

* I can't believe nobody was injured in that car accident!

to adjust to – to adapt to something; to transition from one condition or thing to another; to become accustomed to something

* How long did it take you to adjust to living in this country?

medical disability – a condition that does not allow one to use part of one's body as other people do

* Her hearing is so bad that it's a medical disability and she needs to wear hearing aids.

limb – an arm or leg

* Is the pain worse in your right or left limbs?

amputated – removed surgically, especially when talking about an arm, leg, or finger

* Bobby's arm got caught in the machines at the factory and it had to be amputated.

hearing loss – a reduction in one's ability to hear well; losing one's ability to hear

* Felipe has severe hearing loss because he worked at the airport for 20 years without the right ear protection.



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visual impairment – a reduction in one’s ability to see well; losing one’s ability to see

* Yolanda isn’t blind, but she has to wear very thick glasses because of her visual impairment.

inspiring – motivating; making one believe that anything is possible and want to try to do difficult things in one’s own life

* That movie about Mother Theresa was so inspiring! I hope I can accomplish similar things in my life.

paralyzed – unable to move part of one’s body, usually because there is a medical problem that prevents the brain from communicating with the muscles in parts of one’s body

* After the stroke, the left side of Vreneli’s face was paralyzed.

paraplegic – paralyzed from the waist down; unable to move one’s legs

* Mitch is a paraplegic, but he has full use of his arms and hands.

quadriplegic – paralyzed from the neck down; unable to move one’s legs and arms

* Some computer programs help quadriplegics type by speaking into a microphone.

wheelchair – a special chair that moves on wheels, used by people who cannot walk

* Chuck uses a motorized wheelchair that can go up to 10 miles per hour.

prosthetic limb – an artificial arm or leg, used by people who have lost their real arm or leg

* Geraldo has only one leg, but hardly anyone knows because his prosthetic limb is so realistic-looking.

seeing-eye dog – a dog that is trained to help a blind person in daily activities, such as crossing the street

* Please don’t pet seeing-eye dogs, because they’re working and they shouldn’t be distracted from their job.

modified – changed; altered

* This keyboard has been modified to be more ergonomic and prevent wrist injuries.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who would need a seeing-eye dog?
 - a) A blind person.
 - b) A paraplegic.
 - c) A quadriplegic.

 2. Who would need a prosthetic limb?
 - a) An amputee.
 - b) A person with hearing loss.
 - c) A person with a visual impairment.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

vet

The word “vet,” in this podcast, means a veteran, or a person who served in the military during a war: “On Veterans’ Day, we honor all the vets who have served our country.” The word “vet” also can mean “veterinarian,” or a doctor who treats sick and injured animals: “Do you know any good vets who specialize in pigs?” As a verb, “to vet (something)” means to share an idea or document with another person to observe his or her reaction and request feedback: “It’s always a good idea to vet your proposals with your co-workers before you present them to the director.” Or, “If you have time, I’d like to vet a few of my ideas with you before the next budget meeting.”

limb

In this podcast, the word “limb” means an arm or leg: “Please keep your limbs within the vehicle at all times.” Or, “He was born with one limb shorter than the other.” The word “limb” can also refer to a branch of a tree: “Let’s hang the children’s swing from that long limb on the left-hand side of the cherry tree.” The phrase “to go out on a limb” means to do something even though one knows it is risky: “Edgar knew Rebecca already had a boyfriend, but he decided to go out on a limb and ask her out to dinner anyway.” Finally, the phrase “to risk life and limb” means to do something even though one knows it is dangerous and might cause injury or death: “Would you risk life and limb to help a cat that got stuck in a tree?”



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CULTURE NOTE

The United States Department of Veterans “Affairs” (issues; things someone is involved in) provides many types of financial support for American vets, and especially for vets who were injured while serving in the military and are now disabled.

Vets who were injured during military service may be “eligible for” (able to receive or apply for) monthly “compensation” (money received; payments). The amount of the payment depends on the type and “severity” (how bad something is) of the injury and the resulting disability. For severe disabilities, the compensation may be more if the vet has “dependents” (people who financially depend on the vet and live with him or her, usually a husband or wife, or child).

If a vet is “killed in action” (killed while fighting in a war), the “surviving spouse” (the husband or wife who is still alive) and/or other dependents may be eligible for financial compensation

The “GI Bill” and other programs give vets money for “higher education” (classes leading to a college degree). The amount of money received depends on how long the vet served in the military and which school he or she plans to attend. The money can be used for tuition, fees, textbooks, and more. Injured or disabled vets can apply for “vocational rehabilitation” services that help vets train for new jobs that they can do with their disabilities.

Vets can also apply for special “home loans” (money one can use to buy a home, but must pay back) and “life insurance” (a policy that pays money to one’s family members if one dies).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 646: War-Related Disabilities.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 646. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. You can download a Learning Guide there that will help you improve your English even faster than not downloading the Learning Guide.

This episode is called "War-Related Disabilities." "Abilities" are things that you are able or can do; "disabilities" are things that you cannot do. War-related disabilities are usually injuries, something that happens to your body that damages it – that hurts it somehow. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Elena: How do you like your new job at the Veteran's Hospital?

Wieland: I like it a lot. It's really rewarding.

Elena: What do you do there, exactly?

Wieland: My job is to help returning vets who have been physically injured adjust to living with their medical disabilities.

Elena: You mean people who have lost limbs?

Wieland: Yes, some of the vets have had one or more limbs amputated. But that's only one of the many disabilities we see at the hospital. For instance, this week I'm working with a vet who suffered serious hearing loss and a woman who has developed a visual impairment.

Elena: It sounds like a very hard job.

Wieland: It can be, but it's also inspiring sometimes. I've seen people who are paralyzed – paraplegics and quadriplegics – overcome their disabilities and lead full and happy lives. With the help of wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, seeing-eye



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dogs, and modified cars, a lot of people with disabilities can learn to be independent. That's part of my job.

Elena: Then you're just the person I need to help my brother.

Wieland: Is he disabled?

Elena: Yes, he has a serious case of paralysis, cause by extreme laziness. Is there any help for him?

[end of dialogue]

Elena begins our dialogue by asking Wieland, "How do you like your new job at the Veteran's Hospital?" A "veteran" (veteran) is a person who has been in the military, usually during a war. A person who is no longer in the military, in the army or navy for example, but they used to be; they were in military service. My father was a veteran. He was in the U.S. Army during World War II. A "veteran" can also be a more general term to refer to someone who has been through some difficult experience or in an organization that had problems and this person has a lot of experience. Or it can just mean someone who's very experienced in what they do. "She's a veteran news reporter," meaning she has a lot of experience; she's been doing it for many years. Here, however, "veteran" means someone was in the military. The U.S. government has special hospitals for veterans, especially those who are coming back from war who are injured, who perhaps have lost their legs or one of their arms. We call these veteran's hospitals. There's one here in Los Angeles; there's one in almost every big city in the United States, and they are operated by the U.S. government.

Wieland says, "I like it a lot (I like my job). It's really rewarding." Something that is "rewarding" is something that gives you a sense of satisfaction, that makes you feel this is worthwhile. Certainly for me, recording these podcasts is very rewarding. Elena says, "What do you do there, exactly?" What kind of work do you do at the hospital? Wieland says, "My job is to help returning vets who have been physically injured adjust to living with their medical disabilities." Lots of terms there; let's start with "returning vet." A "returning vet" is a returning veteran; "vet" is short for veteran. This is a person who is coming back from a war zone, or from a place where they were stationed – where they were working. They're coming back to the United States; they're returning, and hence – therefore we have the term "returning vets." "Vet" (vet) actually has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations.



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These returning vets have been “physically injured.” “Physically” refers to your body, things that you can feel and see. “Injured” is the same as hurt or broken. If you injured your foot it hurts; you did something to it that has damaged it somehow. “To adjust” means to adapt to something, to go from one situation to another situation – “to adjust to.” “Medical” refers to medicine, things that are used to help you get better. A “disability” is something that you cannot do. Here, it means some typically part of your body that isn’t working the way it should, or perhaps you’ve lost a leg or you’ve lost a finger; you have a medical disability. Why do we say “medical disability,” since we are talking about the body? Well, it’s possible to have other disabilities. In school, sometimes we talk about “learning disabilities,” things that are related to the way you learn, things that you perhaps have difficulty with. Here, it refers to injuries – physical injuries to the body.

Wieland says, “My job is to help returning vets who have been physically injured adjust to living with their medical disabilities.” Elena says, “You mean people who have lost limbs?” A “limb” (limb – the “b” is silent, we don’t pronounce it) is either an arm or a leg. You have four limbs: two arms and two legs. Wieland says, “Yes, some of the vets (some of the veterans) have had one or more limbs amputated.” “To amputate” (amputate) means to remove either an arm or a leg or possibly a finger or toe. To physically remove it from your body, we would say to remove it surgically. You have a special doctor called a “surgeon,” who is responsible for things like “amputations,” which is the noun. So yes, some of the vets have had limbs amputate. We call someone who has a limb amputated an “amputee,” that’s a person who has had a limb amputated. Wieland says, “But that’s only one of the many disabilities we see at the hospital. For instance, this week I’m working with a vet who suffered serious hearing loss and a woman who has developed a visual impairment.” “Hearing loss” is when you are unable to hear very well. There could be a lot of causes for that. “Visual” refers to your eyes, what you can see. An “impairment” is something similar to a disability; it’s something that you cannot do or cannot do very well. A “visual impairment” is when you can’t see very well.

Elena says, “It sounds like a very hard job (a very difficult job).” Wieland says, “It can be, but it’s also inspiring sometimes.” “Inspiring” means motivating, making you believe that anything is possible, making you want to try harder. Wieland says that he’s seen people who are paralyzed – paraplegics and quadriplegics – overcome their disabilities and lead full and happy lives. “To be paralyzed” means to be unable to move some part of your body, usually because there’s some medical problem. We also have an expression “to be paralyzed with fear,” meaning you’re so afraid that you can’t move. But normally, “paralyzed” is a medical condition – a disability. There are two common types of paralyzed



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conditions. One of them is to have no ability to use your legs; from your waist down you can't move your body. We call someone who has that condition a "paraplegic" (paraplegic). That's from the waist down, the bottom half of your body. If you can move the top or the bottom half of your body we would call you a "quadriplegic." This is someone paralyzed we would say from the neck down, meaning anything below their neck. You can move your head perhaps, but not anything else. Unfortunately that happens sometimes when people have serious injuries; it could be in war, it could even in a car accident.

Wieland says that the patients, the people at the hospital, often overcome their disabilities. They are able to go beyond them and lead, or have, full and happy lives. "With the help of wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, seeing-eye dogs, and modified cars, a lot of people with disabilities can learn to be independent." A "wheelchair" (one word) is a special chair that has wheels on it so that a person who cannot walk can be moved or move him or herself. "Prosthetic limbs" are man-made or artificial limbs: a leg or an arm for people who have lost their leg or arm. "Seeing-eye dogs" are specially trained dogs that help blind people – people who cannot see – in their daily activities. They help them walk, move from one place to another. Finally, a "modified car" is a car that has been changed; we might also say "altered" so that someone who has a disability can use it.

Elena says, "Then you're just the person I need to help my brother." Wieland says, "Is he disabled?" Elena says, "Yes, he has a serious case of paralysis, cause by extreme laziness. Is there any help for him?" Remember we talked about being paralyzed with fear. Well, Elena says that her brother is paralyzed because he's extremely lazy, he won't get up and move. Of course, she's making a joke here.

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

We hope you found listening to this script rewarding. Thank you Dr. Lucy Tse for writing it.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again on ESL Podcast.

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