
Your Military

Coronavirus survivors banned from joining the military

Meghann Myers

📅 May 6

How the military plans to test service members



As the Defense Department negotiates its way through the coronavirus pandemic and its fallout, military entrance processing stations are working with new guidance when it comes to bringing COVID-19 survivors into the services.



A past COVID-19 diagnosis is a no-go for processing, according to a recently released MEPCOM memo circulating on Twitter.

“During the medical history interview or examination, a history of COVID-19, confirmed by either a laboratory test or a clinician diagnosis, is permanently disqualifying ...” the memo reads.



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Those who have tested positive for [#COVID—19](#) are no longer eligible for military service EVEN AFTER THEY COMPLETELY RECOVER??

WTF?? [#miltwitter](#)



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“During the screening process, a reported history of confirmed COVID-19 will be annotated ‘Considered disqualifying’”



Pentagon working on guidance for garrison commanders in states lifting coronavirus stay-at-home orders

With some states easing restrictions on local businesses and outdoor gathering spots, military installations will have to balance safety of forces with civilian moves.

By: Meghann Myers and Karen Jowers

The move comes as the services prepare for a surge of post-graduation recruits during the summer and fall high season.

In recent weeks, new trainees have been 100-percent tested for COVID-19 before starting training. So far, clusters have been discovered at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, the Army and Marine Corps' biggest initial entry training installations.

About [Meghann Myers](#)

Meghann Myers is the Pentagon bureau chief at Military Times. She covers operations, policy, personnel, leadership and other issues affecting service members.

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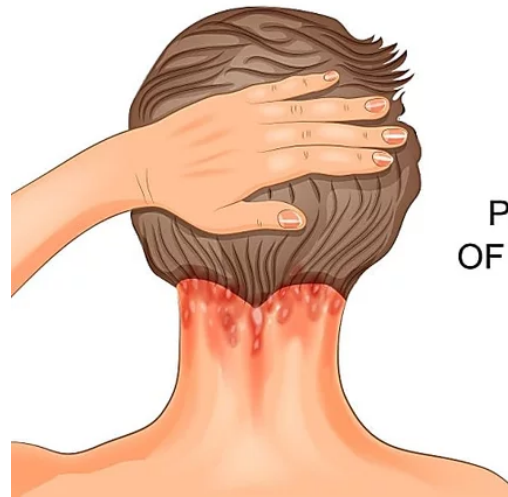
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Joey Ford

this is temporary. they don't know the long-term effects yet. everything is waiverable

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Well, everyone will eventually be infected and have the virus, you going to lock out everyone. This makes no sense.

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THIS SOUNDS LIKE ANOTHER CBS FAKED NEWS REPORT...

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Jessica Orsini

What part of, "The memo is authentic, Pentagon spokeswoman Jessica Maxwell confirmed to Military Times," was unclear to you?

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To: All Personnel

References:

- (a) USMEPCOM-200408-5GGB - INFO MSG -2019 -n-CoV Infection Control Workflow
- (b) USMEPCOM Regulation 40-1 Medical Qualification Program

Purpose: To provide interim guidance on rendering a medical qualification determination for an applicant with a history of confirmed COVID-19.

Instructions: All 65 MEPS and one RPS will implement the following:

1. An applicant with a positive MEPS screening for COVID-19, but without confirmation by either a laboratory test or clinician diagnosis, will be allowed to return to the MEPS to continue processing after the 14-day RJ date has been met IAW the current version of reference (a). Upon return to the MEPS, the applicant will be processed IAW references (a) and (b) unless otherwise stated in this

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The memo is authentic, Pentagon spokeswoman Jessica Maxwell confirmed to Military Times.

Specifically, it lays out guidelines for MEPS staff to deal with potential, as well as confirmed, coronavirus cases. That starts with screening at all MEPS, which includes taking a temperature and answering questions about symptoms and potential contact.



Updated guidance allows unhospitalized COVID-19 survivors to join the military

Now, prospective recruits who have tested positive for coronavirus can join up, as long as they weren't hospitalized.

By: Meghann Myers

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If an applicant fails screening, according to the memo, they won't be tested, but they can return in 14 days if they're symptom-free. Anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will have to wait until 28 days after diagnosis to report to MEPS.

Upon return, a diagnosis will be marked as "permanently disqualifying" for accession. Recruits can apply for waivers for all permanently disqualifying conditions, including surviving COVID-19. However, without any further guidance for exceptions dealing with COVID-19, a review authority would have no justification to grant a waiver.

Maxwell declined to explain why a coronavirus diagnosis would be permanently disqualifying, compared to other viral, non-chronic illnesses that do not preclude military service.

However, given the limited research on COVID-19, there are likely a few factors that military medical professionals are trying to hash out when it comes to recruiting survivors: Whether respiratory damage from the virus is long-lasting or permanent, and whether that can be assessed; the likelihood of recurring flare-ups, even if someone has had two consecutive negative tests; and the possibility that one bout of COVID-19 might not provide full immunity for the future, and could potentially leave someone at a higher risk to contract it again, perhaps with worse complications.