

COVID in Army Life

I had a very unique COVID-19 pandemic experience, as I had just joined the Army and was training on Fort Benning. Due to this, I had no access to the outside world. No contact home, no phone, just training day in and day out. All we knew was that there was a potentially deadly virus going around and we had to wear masks all the time. Six months straight of unknown terror. A lot of us thought this was the end of the world, or the start of World War III. As warfighters in training, this got some of us excited, and others nervous. Still, we had no idea what was going on until we left our units and could somewhat rejoin the outside world.

I was stationed in Hawaii, which sounds exciting, except for the fact that there were still travel restrictions, and I was joining to work, not vacation. Still, however, this could be considered a type of tourism in the fact that I had the opportunity to travel to Hawaii when no one else was allowed except for the local population. As time went on, I saw a drastic shift in Hawaii from being a tropical ghost town into it being a major travel destination when travel restrictions were lifted. There is obviously so much more to this story, and life changing events of COVID while in the military, but for this case of tourism as a focus, I believe I have a very unique experience with the pandemic overall. Especially, working in Hawaii, but also traveling to allied forces to train their troops when travel bans were lifted. Overall, the experience I had with tourism during COVID was based completely around work and operating in the Pacific. Traveling was a part of our operational assignment and truly seen as a necessity, rather than finally getting a break and getting to travel again.

