

# Air Force Officer Faces Court-Martial Over Religious Objection to COVID Vaccine, Willing to Fight



An Air Force non-commissioned officer who refuses to receive a COVID-19 vaccine after both his religious exemption request and appeal were denied is now facing a trial by court-martial for his refusal.

Master Sergeant Vincent White, stationed at Hurlburt Field Air Force Base, was given an “Article 15” punishment by the Air Force on Wednesday. Pursuant to [Article 15](#) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a service member’s commander can make them perform extra duties, reduce base pay, strip their rank and levy other penalties.

White [chose the alternative](#) – go to trial.

“Now the Air Force can choose to back down and just give him another reprimand and then proceed to separation proceedings,

or they could prefer charges,” R. Davis Younts, White’s lawyer, told [The Epoch Times](#).

If the Air Force stays the course, White “is likely going to be the first military member who will be can be sent to court-martial over this,” he added.

According to [documents](#), White, a Christian, was ordered to receive his first dose of a COVID vaccine on Jan. 31, but instead refused and submitted a [religious accommodation request](#). His request, like many others, was denied.

On Feb. 14, White was [issued a letter of reprimand](#) (LOR) for non-compliance. On Feb. 23, White was ordered again to get vaccinated. On March 8, a second reprimand was issued. On March 22, a third order to get vaccinated against COVID was issued.

“This will be my third order to you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine with full licensure approval from the FDA and provide proof,” the [third order read](#).

The memo stated failure to comply with the order could result in administrative and/or punitive action for a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. A document issued April 6 showed the commander telling White he would be punished under Article 15 of the code unless he chose a trial over his decision not to get vaccinated.

Responding to that LOR led to White receiving the Article 15 punishment and another order to receive the vaccine.

“This is next-level coercion on the part of the Air Force,” White’s lawyer told [Just the News](#). In a statement to the news outlet, Younts said:

*“The Letter of Reprimand is a punishment, an adverse action, but it’s a piece of paper that doesn’t have an immediate effect. Now you are punishing people with the threat of*

*taking their rank away, their pay away, giving them extra duties and working long hours.*

*This is true punishment because of religious faith and what is worse is they either have to get the vaccine, accept punishment that'll be harsh because they won't get a fair hearing, or face a court-martial. The military fails to recognize no fully approved FDA vaccine has been produced. They are doubling down on their lies to airmen to force them to get the vaccine. The only way for a fair hearing is turn [the Article 15 punishment] down and demand a trial.*

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in August 2021 implemented a [COVID vaccine mandate](#) for all military branches, claiming getting troops vaccinated was “crucial for military readiness and to curb COVID-19 cases and hospitalization numbers.”

The military claims it allows for religious exemptions for sincerely held religious beliefs, but very few requests have been approved. White, who has been in the Air Force since 2009, is a Christian who opposes COVID vaccines on religious grounds, according to Younts.

The [maximum punishment](#) for failure to obey a lawful order is dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and confinement for two years.

Other members at the base have received Article 15 punishments but chose to accept the commander's penalties or separated from the Air Force, Younts said. White, however, prefers a fair trial.

“He believes they should go to court, he believes he should have an opportunity to have a judge look over all the facts and circumstances of this to actually adjudicate the issues within the military criminal system about the lawfulness of this order, and the legality of this, and so it takes somebody

going to trial to do that," Younts said. "He's willing to do it."