

Army Punishes 3,000 Soldiers Who Refused to Receive COVID Vaccines, Two Exemptions Granted for Marines



The U.S. Army relieved six active-duty leaders, including two battalion commanders, and [issued punishments](#) to 2,994 members who refused to comply with the COVID vaccine mandate issued by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

The punishments came as the Army [announced](#) it will increase its sign-on bonus to join the branch from \$40,000 to \$50,000 – replacing the gaping holes that will be left by mostly religious military members with fully-vaccinated recruits.

The Army said in a [press release](#) on Jan. 12, that 6 leaders have been relieved of command and 2,994 soldiers have received written reprimands for refusing the vaccine. Of the 2,128 religious exemptions requested, zero have been approved. Of the 653 medical exemptions requested, only 5 have been approved.

U.S. ARMY COVID-19 VACCINATION RATES			
Component	% Complete*	% Partial & Complete*	
Active Army	96%	97%	
Army Reserve	73%	78%	
REGULAR ARMY (ACTIVE COMPONENT) EXEMPTION DATA			
Permanent Medical Exemptions	Approved: 5	Disapproved: 595	Requested: 653
Permanent Religious Exemption	Approved: 0	Disapproved: 162	Requested: 2,128
Temporary Exemptions	5,921 (includes requests for permanent exemptions above)		
Refusals	3,611		
Official Reprimands	2,994		
*As of Jan.11, 2022			

Nearly 3,000 soldiers were given [general officer memorandums of reprimand](#) (GOMORs), which are career-ending if made a permanent part of a soldier's file. It's ultimately up to a soldier's commander if a GOMOR is permanently filed or filed locally – which results in removal after either three years or a change of station, and is not seen by promotion boards.

Members who don't comply will be kicked out of the military

Mandatory separations for the Army are expected to begin this month according to the release. Meanwhile, the [Marine Corps](#) and [Air Force](#) began discharging troops last month, and [the Navy](#) kicked out its first group of sailors in January.

The Marine Corps has begun [offloading service members](#) who refuse to get the shot, separating more than 350 troops. The Air Force followed suit firing 87 airmen and the Navy has fired 20 sailors.

Marine Corps grants first two religious exemptions, raises more questions

The Marine Corps granted its first and only two religious exemptions last week to two military members who were already in the process of separating from the service, raising serious questions about who they were and why a “denied” was abruptly switched to an “accepted.” The Marine Corps’ decision to approve the two vaccine religious exemptions are the first exemptions granted in 10 years.

According to [Fox News](#), an active-duty officer with extensive knowledge of the internal proceedings in the case involving the two approvals said the two Marines were initially denied religious exemptions, had submitted appeals and were approved only after they started the leave process.

One of the Marines was on terminal leave when the appeal was granted – meaning the member was already in the process of separating from the military. The other marine was granted an appeal and was in the Skill Bridge program, which “allows members who are within 180 days of release from active duty to locate career opportunities as they transition into civilian life.”

“Granting RAs [religious accommodations] for civilians is basically a moot point,” the officer told Fox News. “They did that as an administrative workaround ... to get it to look like they granted two, so that they would alleviate some of the pressure off of themselves.”

“It’s really just deception,” the officer said. “Even people who are about to retire or about to get out are still being forced to get the vaccine, which is completely nonsensical, because if it’s about health and readiness of the force, how does someone who’s about to be a civilian impact health and

readiness of the force?"

The officer said he knows at least a "dozen or so" chaplains whose religious accommodation requests were denied, arguing the Marine Corps process of granting religious accommodations is arbitrary at best.

Darrell Issa (R-CA) is demanding more information regarding the two approvals and said he has been contacted by military members expressing concerns about the process and mass denial of religious exemption requests.

Issa contacted Gen. David Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, giving him until Friday to provide detailed information on the two approved religious accommodation requests so that Marines who are still seeking exemptions can also "fully consider how to include complete details involving their own unique cases."

"When we hear about the lone two that somehow went from rejected to accepted, we already doubted it, and now we're being told by whistleblowers that it is fishy and that there is more to it," Issa said. "The wholesale rejection is not acceptable, and now the problem is getting the facts so that we can in fact draft an appropriate prohibition on the activity that's coming out of the Pentagon."

Issa said this is something "that is not going to be allowed to stand."

"This is a scandal," added Issa's spokesperson Jonathan Wilcox.

Wilcox argued that the Marine Corps either approved the two religious accommodations to "give the appearance religious rights are being respected, have made an error they have yet to correct or are intentionally misleading the public."