

Wristbands and Dining Cards: New Army Policies Exclude, Isolate Unvaccinated

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The U.S. Army can't legally mandate COVID vaccines, but restrictive policies like those at Fort Drum and Fort Bragg make it increasingly difficult for service members to refuse.

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"Liberty is always dangerous but it is the safest thing we have." –[Henry Emerson Fosdick](#)

A March 17 [memorandum](#) from the commander at the U.S. Army's Fort Drum reservation in New York lists privileges withheld from service members who refuse to get the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) – an [experimental Emergency Use Authorization](#) product [not proven](#) to prevent infection or transmission of the COVID virus.

The memo, "Prohibited Activities for Personnel Within the Authority of the Commander, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum," states:

- Fully vaccinated service members do not have "restriction of movement" or quarantine after travel and return to post. Unvaccinated must quarantine for 10 days and can test out after seven days of quarantine. "Family members must be able to quarantine with the service

member (i.e. spouse cannot go to work, children cannot go to school).”

- Vaccinated service members only require an O-3 (captain or company commander) to approve their leave, while unvaccinated must request leave from a higher-ranking O-5 (lieutenant colonel or battalion commander) with an additional procedural step of submitting an Exception to Policy (ETP). These ETPs will be tracked at the division level for additional scrutiny, and likely will be denied.
- Vaccinated service members may meet with or host any non-local visitor from outside the five states contiguous to New York (New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont). Unvaccinated service members must obtain approval from an O-5 in their chain of command, and then enter a 10-day quarantine to meet with or reside with any non-local visitor.
- Vaccinated service members have no limits on gatherings at a private residence. Unvaccinated have a limit of 12 guests at indoor gatherings, and 15 guests at outdoor gatherings. ETPs may be granted for larger on-post public social gatherings by an O-5 commander, but If all personnel attending the gathering are vaccinated no ETP is required.
- Vaccinated service members can conduct outdoor physical training unmasked. Unvaccinated must wear masks during physical training. Vaccinated personnel may be authorized to conduct unmasked physical training at indoor facilities, “without unvaccinated personnel present.”
- Face masks may be removed if all people in a room are vaccinated.

Perhaps the most shocking item in the new policy is this: Fort Drum authorized a COVID wristband for vaccinated service members.

What's happening at Fort Drum is bad enough, but maybe not as bad as the civil rights violation occurring against the unvaccinated at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, where the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division has made a vaccination card mandatory to enter a dining facility.

Because a majority of lower enlisted soldiers don't have access to kitchens in the barracks, they are dependent on the dining facilities for most, if not all of their meals while on duty or in training rotations which don't provide access to public restaurants.

This mandate will disproportionately affect lower-income personnel who may have to trade accepting an experimental vaccine in order to have food.

These policies at Fort Drum and Fort Bragg are reminiscent of the fear and prejudice that led to policies of exclusion, removal and detention of loyal Japanese Americans to internment camps – or concentration camps, in corrected historical terminology, as the targeted people of Japanese descent were not enemies of the state.

The [Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians](#) concluded that U.S. government policies toward Japanese Americans were [based on](#) “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership” – not military necessity. That conclusion led to the [Civil Liberties Act of 1988](#).

Likewise, the Army's COVID policies are based on prejudice against the unvaccinated (personnel who do not put the vaccinated at risk) and hysteria concerning a virus with a [99.9% survival rate](#) for most military service members.

Has the U.S. Army forgotten its historical role in facilitating most of the internment camps that caused loss of income, lack of access to healthcare, psychological trauma and public hostility for thousands of Japanese Americans?

As COVID policies force quarantines upon healthy people and their entire families, have leaders deserted the [Ex parte Endo](#) U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1944 that declared loyal citizens of the U.S. cannot be detained without cause?

The policies at Fort Drum and Fort Bragg set the stage for a sequel to the shameful chapter in U.S. Army history detailed in the Commission on Wartime Relocation report, "[Personal Justice Denied.](#)"

It is urgent that service members file complaints to the inspector general to halt this momentum towards medical fascism.

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