

Pentagon & Congress

Three troops die on the same day as military COVID-19 deaths continue to spike

By **Meghann Myers**

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About 73 percent of troops are at least partially vaccinated against COVID-19. (Maj. Charles An/Army Reserve)

Three troops died of COVID-19 on Oct. 3, bringing the total number to 62 as of Wednesday, according to the

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latest Defense Department update.

COVID-19 deaths among troops have been surging since late July, after zero deaths in June, and generally one or two a month going all the way back to March 2020. Then 14 troops died in August, followed by another 14 in September.

None of the service members who have died were fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to Pentagon spokesman Maj. Charlie Dietz, though one had received the first of a two-dose series.

The most recently reported deaths include:

- An Army National Guard first lieutenant, 34, died Sept. 17. He was assigned to Headquarters Company, 36th Infantry Division in Austin, Texas. The Texas Military Department declined to release the soldier's name.

- Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class Cory Weber, 51, died Oct. 3. He was assigned to Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center at Naval Air Station Fallon, Nevada.
- Chief Warrant Officer 4 Uriah J. Hayes, 43, died Oct. 3. He was an instructor with 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 1st Aviation Brigade at Fort Rucker, Alabama.
- Air National Guard Master Sgt. Jake Trevino, 41, died Oct. 3. He was assigned to the 502nd Security Forces Group at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas.



The latest deaths bump the military's mortality rate up to just under 0.03 percent, roughly 50 times what it was for most of 2020 and into 2021, as late summer brought unprecedented spikes in infections in pockets of the country.



The surge in deaths coincided with the Pentagon's

decision to mandate vaccination, using the Food and Drug Administration-approved Pfizer/Comirnaty product.

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Just over under 60 percent of the force was at least partially vaccinated when Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made the announcement in late August. Since then roughly 1-to-2 percent of the force has been getting vaccinated weekly, roughly on par with progress made throughout the late spring and summer. That number is now up to 73 percent.

Each of the services has set their own deadlines for compliance. The Air Force Department's comes first, with Nov. 2 for active-duty airman and Dec. 2 for reservists. The Navy and Marine Corps are due by Nov. 28 for active-duty and Dec. 28 for their reservists.

The Army settled on Dec. 15 for their active-duty members, but chose to give over half a million Reserve

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and National Guard forces – roughly 20 percent of the entire military – until June 30.

Reserve component soldiers have been the majority of COVID-19 deaths throughout the pandemic, but particularly in this most recent surge. Of 31 deaths since August, 14 were among Army reservists. Over the course of the entire pandemic, 21 out of 62 deaths have been among Army reservists.

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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. Follow on Twitter @Meghann_MT

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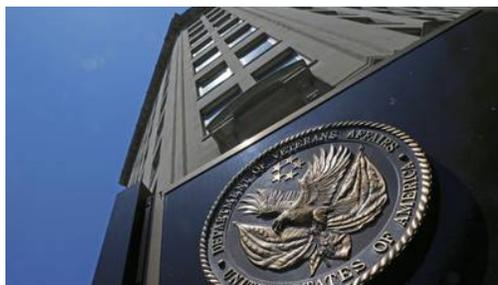
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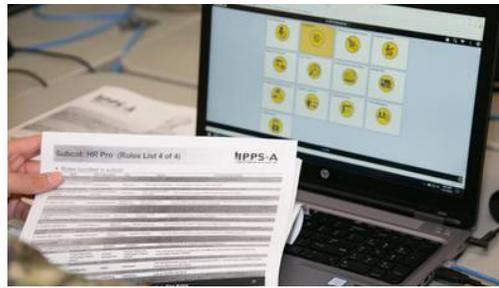
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