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# 8 days after quarantine and testing negative, 142 Fort Benning soldiers test positive for COVID-19



Photo credit DVIDS

By Elizabeth Howe  
Connecting Vets

The U.S. Army tested a cohort of 640 new recruits and instructors for COVID-19 upon arrival at Fort Benning, Ga. All but four tested negative. Eight days after training started, 142 of them tested positive.

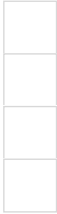
training started, 142 of them retested positive.

## UPDATE: Fort Benning continues training through COVID-19 outbreak that infected 142 soldiers

According to a release from U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 640 new recruits arrived at Fort Benning and were medically screened and tested by medical professionals. At the time, four tested positive. All 640 recruits entered a 14-day monitoring period, with the four COVID-positive recruits isolated and properly treated.



June 1, 2020  
2:21 pm



After the 14-day monitoring period, training operations began with COVID-19 prevention measures in place including masks and social distancing. Despite these efforts, however, eight days after the end of the 14-day monitoring period, one recruit reported to the chain of command with COVID-19 symptoms.

All 640 recruits – which form 30th AG Battalion and 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment – were retested for COVID-19. After all 640 tests were returned over a two-day period, that same cohort of recruits had a 22 percent COVID-positive rate with 142 positive tests.

Fort Benning public affairs did not provide any additional information regarding how it believes this post-screening COVID-19 outbreak occurred or whether any additional mitigation efforts were being implemented as a result. Media requests for this information had not been answered at the time of this article's publication.

All 142 COVID-positive individuals were isolated or quarantined according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The majority were asymptomatic and none have been hospitalized. Fort Benning is currently conducting contact tracing, and all impacted buildings, common areas, dining facilities and training areas within the unit area have been sanitized.

While all other branches of the Department of Defense have presented relatively stable rates of increase in new COVID-19 cases recently, the Army's rate spiked over the weekend with 160 new COVID-19 cases total.

### COVID-19 Cases by Branch

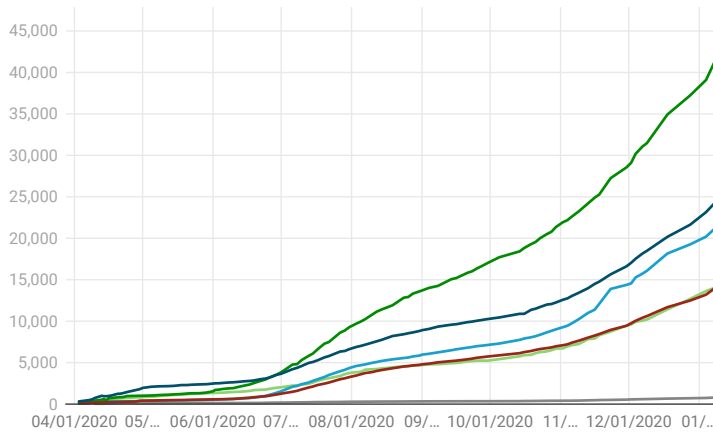


Chart: Elizabeth Howe • Source: Connecting Vets • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

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Each branch has implemented some sort of COVID-19 mitigation efforts, and several hubs for new recruits even closed for certain periods of time as leadership grappled to maintain training pipelines while also minimizing the impact of the virus on operations.

### COVID-19 prevention efforts at basic trainings are failing

Similarly to Fort Benning's outbreak, the Marine Corps experienced COVID-19 clusters among recruits who had previously all tested negative for the virus.

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### COVID-19 hits Marine boot camp hard

"The health, welfare, and safety of our soldiers, families, civilians, and retirees remain our highest priority," the Fort Benning statement reads. "We continue to assess, refine, and coordinate prevention and response efforts on post and within the community to ensure the well-being of all."

As of Monday morning, the Department of Defense reported a total of 9,885 positive cases of COVID-19. Across the force, the pandemic has resulted in 36 deaths.

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## Cumulative DoD COVID-19 Cases

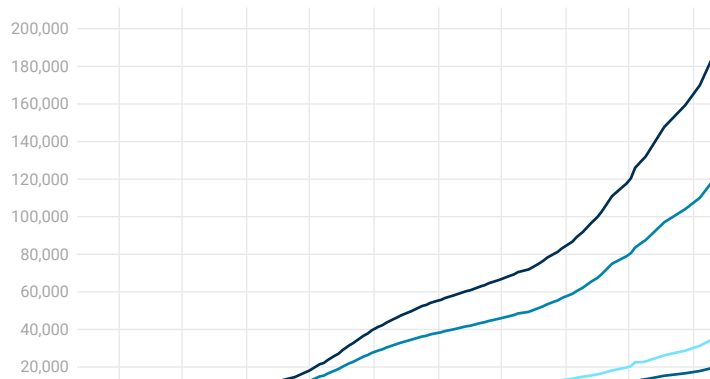




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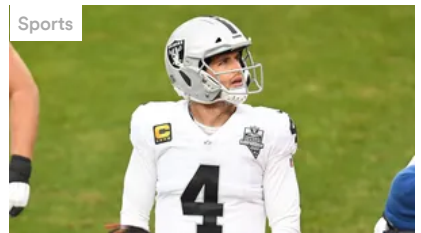
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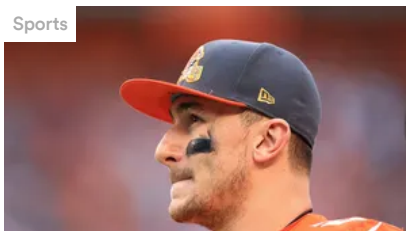
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