
Peculiarities Of Military System in Usa

Most would consider the military as an honorable and fair system, which is true, as they are dedicated and respectable people working hard to protect our country, represented by the strongest men and women. However, when hardworking and intelligent people are denied from being able to serve our country because they are “different,” or because of one little flaw, is the military actually thinking in favor of our people or does the military take their requirements too far? With their scrupulous rules and requirements of who they let in, the military lets themselves disqualify some of the best men and women, all because of their ridiculous requirements and attitude towards psychological and mental disorders.

Most people’s view on the military is based on what they see from the “outside” world, and don’t really have any idea of what really goes on in the service. I for one am not in the service, but as a girlfriend of a soldier in the army, I do know something that not a lot of people are aware of, such as their somewhat shady and slightly discriminative tactics when rejecting a person from the military. For example, having ADD or ADHD places significant restrictions on one being able to enlist. Prior to 2004, anyone with ADD or ADHD was not allowed to join the military and would be disqualified if they had a history of the diagnosis. According to usmilitary.about.com, one recruit named Jon received a perfect score of the entrance and ASVAB exam, but was rejected from the marines three times because he had ADHD. The rules have changed since then, and the military is now not allowed to “technically” disqualify someone for having ADD/ADHD, however according to Sergeant Cody Pope from the Army Recruitment Station in San Jose, California, anyone who has been treated for it within the last year is not able to join until they have been off medications for ADD or ADHD for a whole year. However, even if you do reach the requirement of being off ADD medication for a year, a lot of the time recruiters will still disqualify you from enlisting, by finding another reason for disqualification. On a post made by a recruit on the army’s official website, Goarmy.com, a recruiter denied a recruit who had ADD from joining the army, classifying his disqualification under “Conduct Disorder” and not a mental illness so he wouldn’t get in trouble for discriminating a recruit with a mental disorder who reached the standards of being off of medication for over a year.

The definition of ADHD states that ADHD stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and is a chronic condition marked by persistent inattention, hyperactivity and sometimes impulsivity. Although ADD and ADHD can inhibit a person’s ability to focus on a particular task, it doesn’t mean that they aren’t capable of being a part of the service. The military says that they allow someone to join if they haven’t been treated for it within the last year, yet that person could still suffer from ADD or ADHD and it could still slightly affect their work in some kind of way if they aren’t medicated. Even though being on the medication might not make soldiers look as perfect and impeccable as the military wants them to, adults who are treated on ADD/ADHD medication have significant improvements in attention, concentration, and mental alertness, along with a significant decrease in physical restlessness and impulsivity. Not only that, but a soldier taking the appropriate medication will make a soldier who is already capable into one who is even more capable.

On the other hand, their rules are somewhat reasonable because someone with a more severe

case of ADD or ADHD could greatly affect a specific job or task and could make things difficult for other soldiers around them. According to the article, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in the Workplace, by Bill Carnes and Madison Holloway, “hyperactivity causes ADHD adults to get so focused on a specific task that they become oblivious to everything else around them.” This could be potentially dangerous when a soldier is performing a serious task and is unaware of his surroundings and could be vulnerable to exposure of enemies or dangerous weapons nearby. Also, many people agree that giving a gun to anyone with ADD or ADHD is a very bad idea. Considering that people with ADD and ADHD are easily distracted, giving people with this condition a gun could backfire (literally), and cause them to mess up their task or potentially damage something. A person in the military cannot be oblivious to their surroundings because anything could happen at any given moment and they cannot let their unit down all because they were not paying attention. Another reason they don’t allow people with ADHD or ADD to join is because there will be circumstances throughout a person’s career in the military where they will not be able to access medication, such as during deployment or under attack. This could be problematic for people who need their medication in order to focus, as they will not be able to perform their best and becomes more of a hazard on the military’s side with having to make sure that they get their medication needed.

However, people with ADD or ADHD are in a way no different than anyone else. They aren’t mentally challenged; they aren’t incapable of doing anything academic that other people can’t do; they simply just need a little extra help from their medication in order to focus. Even though I somewhat agree with the military’s attempt to protect their forces with the best people possible, ADD/ADHD is such a small “disorder,” and shouldn’t disable a person from succeeding to serve their country if they have what it takes.

There are also several other things the military discriminates against such as having history of cancer or having too much earwax and the discrimination against anyone who has gone to counseling or has been treated with depression within the last year. The military does provide counseling for members in the service after they are enlisted; however, military regulations state that anyone who has gone to counseling or has been treated for depression within the last year prior to enlisting is ineligible from joining the military. I think that this is extremely hypocritical considering that they provide counseling for family members of those in the service, yet don’t allow their own men and women to go to counseling prior to enlisting. I understand that a person who goes to counseling could appear to have major issues, but just because someone goes to counseling doesn’t necessarily mean it is for an extremely serious problem. Talking to a counselor doesn’t make anyone “mentally ill” or in need of medication, as it can help for any type of life situations, even non traumatic ones. I think this is especially ridiculous since they are deploying their people, which takes a toll on a lot of people’s marriages and they aren’t even allowed to go seek counseling with their significant other prior to leaving.

But at the end of the day, their main purpose is to serve our country and that means filling the military with the people best fit for the job. The military has to do some difficult tasks that couldn’t be pulled off by just anyone, and according to the Military Code of Standards, it is important that they hire people who are physically and mentally fit for the job. Their dislike of potential recruits with depression or ADD somewhat makes sense because the military shouldn’t have to babysit their people, the soldiers and marines themselves should be the strong ones. These people need to be strong and determined because the military wants to have the best and only the best. But what is considered the best? Is it the people with lower academic and fitness scores that are accepted into the service because they’re “ADD free,” or

is it the people with higher test scores that reach the requirements of being off of ADD/ADHD medication for a year and are still disqualified? I understand why they would have such high standards, since they are protecting our country and we don't need anymore accidents, but the fact that they still find another way to disqualify these people who actually do reach their standards without getting in trouble makes me think that maybe the military doesn't really just have "requirements." Maybe it is just simply a world where nothing is ever good enough.

Although all of these requirements are somewhat understandable with who they want to accept, I believe that it is ridiculous to say you want strong and intelligent people to join when they literally go and disqualify those people over something so uncanny.

Studies have also shown that people with ADD or ADHD can be just as or even more intelligent than people who don't have it, such as Albert Einstein, who also had ADD, and was more than capable of pulling off the brainwork needed to operate something in the military. If people with these conditions can pull off regular desk type jobs that require even more sitting and concentration, then they can definitely pull off the little academic and brainwork needed in the military. Not disqualifying these people will allow people with possibly better fitness and test scores to join and could weed out people with lower physical and academic scores that were accepted due to their non-possession of ADD and make the military full of the real fighters and energetic hearts that we claim our country's military to have.

And for those who have experienced discrimination and have been mistreated throughout their experience in the service, we should speak up and inform others of the truth of the leaders that protect our country. Most people are unaware of what really goes on the military and don't really know what they are thanking them for when we tell everyone to "thank our troops." We could be thanking an individual soldier for working his tail off just to be seen as worthy enough to be enlist, or we could be thanking someone that just discriminated a recruit from joining because he went to counseling a few times. To me, it would be nice to be able to say "thank you for everything," to the military and know what we are actually thanking them for and that we would not want to take a single word back when we thank our troops. We should be more open about these kind of topics and people more aware of the stuff that goes on in the military. Not only will it make citizens more educated on the topic, it will make people have more knowledge on what they are doing when they enlist, that way the military can avoid the common problems they complain people to have when going into the service. Although we should still uphold our country's traditional regulations of letting strong and dedicated people in the service, allowing people with ADHD and ADD and other small disorder will help make them actually fair when it comes to enlistment and would only be an example of what it means to be free, such as being able to serve our country.