Army Investigates Alleged Leak of Soldiers' HIV Status

November 25, 2015

The Army is investigating a gay soldier's allegation that a colonel directed subordinates to compile and circulate a list of soldiers who are HIV positive, the Washington Blade reports.

Sergeant Joseph Witting has been on active duty in the Army for over 12 years, serving two tours in Iraq. He tested HIV positive shortly in 2012, and then transferred last year to the Physical Disability Agency office in Arlington, Virginia.

Wittig later transferred to Walter Reed in Bethesda to get treatment and support for the anxiety and stress resulting from his leaked HIV status.

Wittig said that until he contacted the Blade about this story, the Army had not responded to his formal complaint.

A Pentagon spokesperson confirmed with the Blade that the Army is investigating the matter and that violations of soldiers' privacy are a serious matter.

Wittig told the Blade that he and others whose names were leaked felt ostracized and stigmatized. For example, he said, at a potluck dinner, people working at the food table would remove the serving spoons he used to put food onto his plate.

"People with HIV are made to feel so low," he told the paper. "No one should feel they are garbage."

To read more about living and serving with HIV in the military, read POZ's recent cover story "Mission Critical."

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