Shutdown: Soldiers Without Pay - Trump Orders Pentagon to Find Funds

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It is not a usual scene for the world's leading military power: American soldiers and their families lining up to receive food packages. Yet, this is what is happening these weeks in the United States, where the federal freeze — the so-called *shutdown* — has frozen the salaries of hundreds of thousands of public employees, including members of the Armed Forces.

The Federal Shutdown and Its Consequences

The *shutdown*, which began on October 1st, is the result of the lack of agreement in Congress on the federal budget. Although considered essential services, the Armed Forces are not immune to the effects of the freeze: activities continue, but salaries are suspended until the end of the administrative emergency.

The situation, reminiscent of the 2018-2019 period — the longest *shutdown* in American history, lasting 35 days — is already having tangible repercussions. According to **Military.com**, in some areas of the United States, traffic at *food pantries*, the food banks dedicated to military families,

has increased by over 30%.

The organization **Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA)**, which assists about half a million military families each year, has reported a significant increase in demand, especially among the lower pay grades (E-1 – E-6). In Killeen, Texas, home to one of the main U.S. Army bases, the demand for food aid has grown by 34% in the first days of the freeze.

Families in Difficulty and Growing Concerns

Many military personnel and spouses have told U.S. broadcasters that they live “paycheck to paycheck.” In Norfolk, Virginia — home to the world's largest naval base — a veteran interviewed by CNN explained that “her husband's salary is just enough to cover monthly expenses” and that “the missed October payment would have been devastating.”

The **Food Bank of Southeast Virginia** has also confirmed that it is preparing for a new peak in requests, recalling how during the last *shutdown* the lines lengthened for weeks, involving even families who were turning to civil solidarity for the first time.

Trump and Hegseth announce the end of “political correctness” in the US Armed Forces: “gender-neutral” physical standards at the male level

President Trump's Intervention

Faced with the prospect of over 1.3 million military personnel without pay, President **Donald Trump** ordered the Department of Defense to use “all available funds” to ensure regular salary payments by **October 15th**.

The Pentagon, led by **Pete Hegseth**, then sourced about **8 billion dollars** by tapping into resources originally allocated for research and development projects. A decision that, while providing immediate relief to military families, has raised concerns about future impacts on technological innovation and modernization of the armed forces.

Trump justified the decision by stating he “did not want to allow the Democrats to hold the armed forces hostage with their political blockade.” However, Vice President **J.D. Vance** admitted that if the *shutdown* persists, “chaos will be inevitable.”

A Thought-Provoking Signal

The incident is sparking a broad debate in the United States: not only for the image of soldiers lining up for a food package but for the contradictions emerging in the federal budget system. In a country that allocates over **800 billion dollars a year to defense**, the political blockade in Congress translates into hardships for military personnel and their families, with a human impact that goes beyond accounting.

The episode shows how even the most powerful armed forces on the planet can be vulnerable to the mechanisms of domestic politics. And while the Pentagon works to ensure payment continuity, the underlying warning remains: national security is not only measured by the number of aircraft carriers or stealth fighters but also by the economic well-being of its soldiers and their families.

News link: https://time.com/7325261/military-pay-trump-shutdown-food-pantry/