

Philippine military cuts 'life-threatening' run tests

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Most armies pride themselves on pushing soldiers to their physical limits in preparation for combat.

But in the Philippines, senior officers have decided a two-mile run could be "life-threatening" to troops, and have shortened a [fitness test](#) to compensate.

The timed run forms a key part of the twice-yearly fitness examination for all soldiers, but from next month the apparently deadly distance will be reduced to a safer two kilometres, military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Ramon Zagala said.

The change was instituted as three officers have collapsed and died doing the fitness tests since 2010, according to a military commissioned health study that recommended the shorter runs, according to Zagala.

"The technical working group found out that after two kilometres they (soldiers) can fall victim to heart attack or stroke," he said.

One of those who died was a marine officer who ran the old distance in 16 minutes, Zagala said.

All the time limits are determined by the troops' ages, with the youngest soldiers required to run the two kilometres within 12 minutes, according to Zagala.

Officers who fail the [test](#) will not be given command assignments, while failure for ordinary [soldiers](#) could be cause for dismissal from the service, he added.

Zagala insisted that, despite the seemingly short [distance](#) and slow times required, the fitness test was in line with other nations.

He said four neighbouring Southeast Asian countries had also decided to implement shorter runs in their [fitness](#) tests, with Indonesian troops running the longest at 2.4 kilometres.

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