



**Intelligence**  
ASSESSMENT

## (U) Gang-Related Activity in the US Armed Forces Increasing

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Prepared by

**National Gang  
Intelligence Center**

**(U) Gang-Related Activity in the US Armed Forces Increasing**

**(U) Scope Note**

(U) This intelligence assessment addresses standing FBI gang intelligence requirements set Part I.B.1.2. The assessment also addresses the Military and Civilian Infrastructure (INFR) requirements of the National Intelligence Priorities Framework.

(U) This assessment explores the prevalence of US-based street gang members serving in the US military. Data for the report was obtained from FBI information, open-source documents, and the following law enforcement sources:

- (U) Aurora, Illinois, Police Department
- (U) Buffalo, New York, Police Department
- (U) Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- (U) California Department of Corrections
- (U) California Department of Justice
- (U) Ceres, California, Police Department
- (U) El Paso Police Department
- (U) Fayetteville, North Carolina, Police Department
- (U) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police
- (U) Lakewood, Washington, Police Department
- (U) Los Angeles County Probation
- (U) Los Angeles Police Department
- (U) Milwaukee High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- (U) Office of National Drug Control Policy
- (U) Richland County, South Carolina, Sheriffs Department
- (U) Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- (U) San Diego, California, Police Department
- (U) San Joaquin, California, District Attorney
- (U) US Army Criminal Investigative Division
- (U) US Air Force Office of Special Investigations
- (U) US Naval Criminal Intelligence Service
- (U) US Department of Defense

**(U) Key Judgments**

- (U) Gang-related activity in the US military is increasing and poses a threat to law enforcement officials and national security. Members of nearly every major street gang have been identified on both domestic and international military installations. Although most prevalent in the Army, the Army Reserves, and the National Guard, gang activity is pervasive throughout all branches of the military and across most ranks, but is most common among the junior enlisted ranks. The extent of gang presence in the armed services is often difficult to determine since many enlisted gang members conceal their gang affiliation and military authorities may not recognize gang affiliation or may be inclined not to report such incidences. The military enlistment of gang members could ultimately lead to the worldwide expansion of US-based gangs.
- (U) Gang members may enlist in the military to escape their current environment or gang lifestyle. Some gang members may also enlist to receive weapons, combat, and convoy support training; to obtain access to weapons and explosives; or as an alternative to incarceration. Upon discharge, they may employ their military training against law enforcement officials and rival gang members. Such military training could ultimately result in more organized, sophisticated, and deadly gangs, as well as an increase in deadly assaults on law enforcement officers.
- (U) Gang membership in the armed forces can disrupt good order and discipline, increase criminal activity on and off military installations, and compromise installation security and force protection. Gang incidents involving active-duty personnel on or near US military bases nationwide include drive-by shootings, assaults, robberies, drug distribution, weapons violations, domestic disturbances, vandalism, extortion, and money laundering. Gangs have also been known to use active-duty service members to distribute their drugs.
- (U) Military-trained gang members also present an emerging threat to law enforcement officers patrolling the streets of US cities. Both current and former gang-affiliated soldiers transfer their acquired military training and knowledge back to the community and employ them against law enforcement officers, who are typically not trained to engage gangsters with military expertise.
- (U) Gang members have been known to enlist in the military by failing to report past criminal convictions or by using fraudulent documents. Some applicants enter the criminal justice system as juveniles and their criminal records are sealed and unavailable to recruiters performing criminal background investigations. Many military recruiters are not properly trained to recognize gang affiliation and unknowingly recruit gang members, particularly if the applicant has no criminal record or visible tattoos.
- (U) Gang members commonly target dependent children of military personnel for recruitment. Military children are considered potential candidates for gang membership because the transient nature of their families often makes them feel isolated, vulnerable, and in need of companionship. Dependents of service members may be involved in drug

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distribution and assaults both on and off of military bases. Lax security at open installations may facilitate recruitment by allowing civilian gang members to access the base and interact with military personnel and their children.

- (U) While allowing gang members to serve in the military may temporarily increase recruiting numbers, US communities may ultimately have to contend with disruption and violence resulting from military-trained gang members on the streets of US cities. Furthermore, most gang members have been pre-indoctrinated into the gang lifestyle and maintain an allegiance to their gang. This could ultimately jeopardize the safety of other military members and impede gang-affiliated soldiers' ability to act in the best interest of their country.

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**(U) Introduction**

(U) Gang-related activity in the US Armed Forces is increasing. Although gang members constitute only a fraction of military personnel nationwide, their presence can compromise installation security and force protection both internally and externally. Gang members in the military can disrupt good order and discipline and threaten military operations. Gang membership in the ranks may also result in a disruption of command, low morale, disciplinary problems, and a broad range of criminal activity. Gang-affiliated military personnel and dependent gang-affiliated children of service members facilitate crime on and off military installations, and are at risk of transferring their weapons and combat training back to the community to employ against rival gang members and law enforcement officers.

**(U) Prevalence of Gang Members in the Military**

(U) Members of nearly every major street gang, including the Bloods, Crips, Black Disciples, Gangster Disciples, Hells Angels, Latin Kings, The 18th Street Gang, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Mexican Mafia, Nortenos, Surenos, Vice Lords, and various white supremacist groups, have been documented on military installations both domestically and internationally. These members are present in most branches and across all ranks of the military, but are most common among the junior enlisted ranks. The US Army, Army Reserves, and National Guard are likely to have the most enlisted gang members because they are either the largest branches of the military, the service is part-time, or they tend not to be as selective as the other branches of the armed services. Estimates are difficult to obtain because many gang-related incidences are reported as conduct matters and are not within the investigative purview of criminal investigative services. However, the US Army's recent adoption of the National Crime Information Center definition of "gangs" and "gang membership" may contribute to an increase in reporting of gang-related incidents.<sup>1</sup>

- (U//LES) The US Army Criminal Investigative Division (CID) has reported a modest increase in gang-related activity in the Army over the past several years. Of the 10,309 criminal incidents they investigated in 2006, for instance, only 16 were for gang-related offenses, up from four in 2003.<sup>2</sup>
- (U//LES) Since 2004, the FBI and El Paso Police Department have identified over 40 military-affiliated Folk Nation gang members stationed at the Fort Bliss Army Installation in Texas who have been involved in drug distribution, robberies, assaults, weapons offenses, and a homicide, both on and off the installation.
- (U) Fort Hood, Texas, Army Installation officials have identified nearly 40 gang members on base since 2003. Military-affiliated Gangster Disciple members at Fort Hood have been responsible for robberies, assaults, theft, and burglaries on and off base.

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<sup>1</sup> (U) Prior to the adoption of the NCIC definition, the US Army had no uniform definition of "gang."

<sup>2</sup> (U//LES) US Army CID.

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In 2005 a Fort Hood soldier and Gangster Disciple leader was convicted of committing two aggravated robberies.<sup>3</sup>

- (U//LES) Nearly 130 gang and extremist group members have been identified on the Fort Lewis, Washington, Army Installation since 2005. These gang members are believed to be responsible for many of the criminal misconduct incidences reported on base.<sup>4</sup>
- (U//LES) Army CID has documented a number of gang-related incidents on Fort Bragg Army Installation in North Carolina and on the Fort Campbell Army Installation in Kentucky over the past several years.<sup>5</sup>

(U) Accurate data reflecting gang-related incidences occurring on military installations is limited, since the military is not required to report criminal offense statistics occurring on post to the FBI. Consequently, military data reflecting criminal incidents are not incorporated into the Uniform Crime Report (UCR).

### **(U) Gang Motivations for Joining the Military**

(U//LES) Many gang members join the military to escape their current environment or troubled gang lifestyle. Other gang members may enlist in the military as an alternative to incarceration; to receive combat training; to obtain access to weapons and supplies; to learn basic first aid and medic skills that can later benefit their gang; or to take advantage of opportunities to commit crimes. Upon discharge from the service, gang members may transfer their military combat training and weapons knowledge to their gang, where they may receive an inflated status for their tactical expertise.

- (U//LES) In May 2005 an Army recruit and suspected Crip member was assigned to the US Army Finance Battalion where he engaged in drug distribution. He was eventually discharged from the Army for misconduct.<sup>6</sup>
- (U) According to open source reporting and multiple law enforcement reporting, soldiers—including gang members—are currently being taught urban warfare for combat in Iraq, including how to encounter hostile gunfire.<sup>7</sup>
- (U//LES) The Defense Criminal Investigative Service reported in 2006 that gang members, particularly MS-13 members, are increasing their presence on or near US military installations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> (U) Michelle Guffy, "Hood Soldier Guilty in Gang-Related Trial," *The Killeen Daily Herald*, January 2005.

<sup>4</sup> (U//LES) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police.

<sup>5</sup> (U//LES) US Army, *Summary Report Gang Activity Threat Assessment, Fiscal Year 2006: A Review of Gang Activity Affecting the Army*, Criminal Investigative Command, 1 December 2006.

<sup>6</sup> (U//LES) US Army CID.

<sup>7</sup> (U//LES) California Department of Justice, "Gang Members in the Military," *Intelligence Operations Bulletin*, Vol. No. 45, November 2005.

(U//LES) Gang members may also use the military to recruit and spread their gang affiliations. Gang recruitment often occurs on the installation following a soldier's enlistment. If soldiers are not recruited into a gang on-base, they may be recruited off-base by civilian gang members or by civilian gang members visiting the installation.

- (U) According to an August 2006 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, military recruiter violations increased 50 percent from 2004 to 2005. The report concluded that military recruiters under pressure to meet recruiting goals have engaged in criminal violations such as overly aggressive recruiting tactics and document falsification. The Army, Navy, and Air Force measure recruiter performance by the number of recruits who enlist rather than the number who actually complete basic training,<sup>9</sup> which may encourage recruiter violations.

(U//LES) US criminal courts have allowed gang members to enter the service as an alternative to incarceration. Several incidences wherein gang members have been recruited into the armed services while facing criminal charges or on probation or parole have been documented. In many instances, a gang member facing criminal charges may be provided the option to join the military or serve a jail sentence. Furthermore, some army recruiters have been known to conceal recruits' gang affiliation to help boost their enlistment numbers.<sup>10</sup>

- (U//LES) In August 2006 a Latin King member from Milwaukee joined the Marines while under federal indictment for racketeering. The recruiter reported that despite the gang member's indictment, he was still eligible for military service because he had not yet been convicted. He was, however, ultimately denied enlistment from service before reporting for duty.<sup>11</sup>
- (U//LES) In 2006 an MS-13 member stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington reported that he and several other MS-13 members joined the military after their clique's leader was incarcerated. The soldier claimed that he was candid about his gang membership when recruited.<sup>12</sup>

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(U) **Figure 1:** Latin King member flashing gang signs.

<sup>8</sup> (U//LES) US Navy Defense Criminal Investigative Service, "Gangs in the Military and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)," *Criminal Intelligence Bulletin*, 2006-004.

<sup>9</sup> (U) US Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Military Recruiting: DOD and Services Need Better Data to Enhance Visibility over Recruiter Irregularities*, Report to Congressional Requestors, no. GAO-06-846, August 2006.

<sup>10</sup> (U) Some non-violent felonies may be waived.

<sup>11</sup> (U//LES) Milwaukee HIDTA.

<sup>12</sup> (U//LES) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police.

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- (U//LES) In 2005 a Latin King member was allegedly recruited into the Army at a Brooklyn, New York, courthouse while awaiting trial for assaulting a New York police officer with a razor. He was reportedly instructed by the recruiter to conceal his gang affiliation (See Figure 1).<sup>13</sup>
- (U//LES) In 2005 a California probation officer reported that they were lobbied by Army recruiters to support early probation terminations for gang-affiliated probationers to facilitate their military recruitment.

(U//LES) The military also provides gang members the opportunity to travel and recruit members internationally and may place gang members in a region with an untapped drug or weapons market. A number of US-based gang members and gang graffiti have been documented both on and near US military installations abroad.

- (U//LES) Black Disciple, Gangster Disciple, Hells Angels, Latin Kings, Mexican Mafia (La Eme), Nortenos, and Surenos graffiti has been reported in Iraq, according to open-source reporting (See Figure 2).
- (U) In 2005 a pledging gang member was killed during a gang initiation at Kasierslauten Army Installation in Germany, according to FBI reporting.
- (U) According to open-source reporting, in 2004 a soldier and suspected gang member stationed in Weisbaden, Germany, stabbed a man to death in a nightclub brawl.<sup>14</sup> Several gang-related incidents involving the dependent children of service members have been reported on and off Weisbaden Army Airfield.<sup>15</sup>
- (U//LES) Crips graffiti has been reported near US military bases in Germany, Italy, and Japan. Gangster Disciple and Latin King graffiti has been reported in Germany, according to Army and open-source reporting.<sup>16</sup>

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(U) **Figure 2:** Mexican Mafia graffiti in Iraq.

(U) Many current and former Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (OMG) members have military experience. OMGs, such as the Hells Angels, have been known to recruit soldiers due to their explosives and firearms expertise.

- (U) Both US and Canadian law enforcement officials suggest that a number of Hells Angels and Bandidos OMG members are former members of the military.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> (U//LES) Fort Bragg Military Police.

<sup>14</sup> (U) Kevin Dougherty, "Trial of Soldier Accused in Fatal Stabbing at Club Goes to Jury," *Stars and Stripes*, 11 December 2004.

<sup>15</sup> (U) Jessica Inigo, "Wiesbaden Brawl Probe Focuses on Possible Gang Activity," *Stars and Stripes*, 21 June 2005.

<sup>16</sup> (U//LES) US Army.

- (U//LES) A number of Hells Angels members, including an Army Lieutenant Colonel from Illinois, are serving or have served in Iraq (see Figure 3).<sup>18</sup>
- (U) A Nomad OMG prospect was recruited by Hells Angels members upon returning from Iraq in 2006 due to his military expertise.<sup>19</sup>

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(U) **Figure 3:** Army tanker with “support your local Hells Angel” inscribed on back.

### (U) Crimes Committed by Gang-Affiliated Service Members

(U//LES) Although gang members constitute only a fraction of military personnel nationwide, their presence can result in an increase in criminal activity both on and off military installations. Gang members in uniform use their military knowledge, skills, and weapons to commit and facilitate various crimes. Gang incidents involving active duty personnel on US military bases nationwide include drive-by shootings, drug distribution, weapons violations, domestic disturbances, vandalism, assaults, extortion, and money laundering. Gangs have also been known to use active duty service members to distribute drugs.

- (U) The Aurora Police Department reports that in July 2006 a Marine reservist and Maniac Latin Disciple gang member who had served in Iraq was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of three teenagers in Aurora, Illinois.<sup>20</sup>
- (U//LES) According to FBI investigative data, in April 2006 a Blood member and active duty soldier at Fort Lewis allegedly robbed a bowling alley on base and is a suspect in a home invasion robbery in Olympia, Washington.
- (U//LES) In September 2005 an Army soldier and suspected Crip member at the Fort Lewis shot and killed a soldier and his girlfriend in an unsuccessful armed robbery in Lakewood, Washington.<sup>21</sup>
- (U//LES) In January 2005 a Fort Hood soldier and Gangster Disciple leader was convicted of two aggravated robberies in Killeen, Texas.<sup>22</sup> According to open-source reporting, he allegedly directed 30 to 40 Fort Hood Gangster Disciple members to commit illegal activities including drug dealing, identity theft, and armed robberies.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> (U) Staff Report, “Military Probes Links Between Soldiers, Biker Gangs,” *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, 30 August 2004, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

<sup>18</sup> (U//LES) Illinois State Police.

<sup>19</sup> (U//LES) San Joaquin District Attorney.

<sup>20</sup> (U) Aurora Police Department.

<sup>21</sup> (U//LES) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police and Lakewood Police Department.

<sup>22</sup> (U) Michelle Guffey, “Hood Soldier Guilty in Gang-Related Trial,” *Killeen Daily Herald*, 25 January 2005.

<sup>23</sup> (U) Brad Stutzman, “Witness: Gang Leader a Soldier; Trial Testimony Links Killeen Robberies to Hood Gang Activity,” *Temple Daily Telegram*, 31 July 2006.

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### *(U) Weapons and Drug Smuggling*

(U//LES) Gang members in the military are commonly assigned to military support units where they have access to weapons and explosives. Military personnel may steal items by improperly documenting supply orders or by falsifying paperwork. Law enforcement officials throughout the United States have recovered military-issued weapons and explosives—such as machine guns and grenades—from criminals and gang members while conducting search warrants and routine traffic stops.<sup>24</sup>

- (U) A 2006 GAO probe revealed that undercover government investigators purchased sensitive surplus military equipment, such as launcher mounts, signal converters, and body armor, from a DOD contractor.<sup>25</sup> A 1993 GAO report similarly concluded that there was widespread theft of military small arms due to lax inventory control.<sup>26</sup> US Army CID maintains that the military has implemented stricter inventory controls over weapons.<sup>27</sup>
- (U//LES) In June 2006 an incarcerated US Army soldier and active gang member identified 60 to 70 gang-affiliated military personnel in his unit allegedly involved in the theft and sale of military equipment and weapons. The soldier reported that many of the military personnel in charge of ammunition and grenade distribution are sergeants who are active gang members. The soldier also reported that military commanders were aware of the actions of these gang-affiliated personnel.<sup>28</sup>
- (U//LES) A May 2006 interview with a former Marine and Gangster Disciple member incarcerated in Colorado detailed how easily soldiers—many of whom were gang members—stole military weapons and equipment and used them on the streets of US cities or sold them to civilian gang members.<sup>29</sup>
- (U) In December 2005 a National Guard soldier allegedly smuggled several machine guns back from Iraq and sold them to a gun dealer in Georgia, according to open-source information.<sup>30</sup>
- (U//LES) Army CID reporting indicates that in 2004, an Army Sergeant and suspected National Alliance White Supremacist group member from Fort Bragg was caught mailing an AK-47 home to his father in Washington state. A barracks inspection revealed that the

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<sup>24</sup> (U//LES) California Department of Justice, “Gang Members in the Military,” *Intelligence Operations Bulletin*, Vol. No. 45, November 2005.

<sup>25</sup> (U) Staff Report, “Sensitive Military Gear Bought in GAO Probe,” *Los Angeles Times*, 23 July 2006.

<sup>26</sup> (U) GAO, “Military Small Arms Parts, Poor Controls Invite Theft,” *Testimony before the Committee on Governmental Affairs*, United States Senate, 18 November 1993.

<sup>27</sup> (U//LES) Army CID.

<sup>28</sup> (U//LES) Los Angeles Police Department, Gang Intelligence Report, 2 August 2006.

<sup>29</sup> (U//LES) Colorado Department of Corrections.

<sup>30</sup> (U) Associated Press, “Former Soldier Accused of Smuggling Machine Guns from Iraq,” *Macon.com*, 21 September 2006.

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soldier had numerous weapons, ammunition, and racist propaganda in his possession. After a short incarceration, he was discharged from duty and allowed to leave with his personally-owned weapons.<sup>31</sup> Local police in Washington state have since reported several incidences involving the discharged soldier's weapons.<sup>32</sup>

(U//LES) Military weapons and supplies are stolen by both gang-affiliated and by non-gang-affiliated military personnel who sell the weapons to gang members or criminals on US city streets.<sup>33</sup> Law enforcement officials nationwide have encountered active service members selling or attempting to sell stolen military weapons, supplies, and drugs to civilian gang members and criminals. US Senate testimony dating back to 1993 has revealed that military weaponry has been sold at public gun shows, some in their original government packaging.<sup>34</sup>

- (U//LES) According to the Los Angeles Police Department, in August 2006 a parolee in San Bernardino, California, was arrested in possession of an armed military shoulder mounted rocket launcher.<sup>35</sup>
- (U) Open-source reporting indicates that in January 2006 a Navy veteran in Ingleside, Texas, was arrested for stealing military equipment from the Ingleside Naval Station and selling it on the Internet.<sup>36</sup>
- (U) In November 2005 two senior airmen from Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, were charged with drug distribution after selling drugs to an undercover police officer. According to the ATF, a firearm purchased by one of the airmen had been reported stolen and was subsequently recovered in Calgary, Canada, in the possession of Asian gang members. The airman further admitted to trafficking guns across the US-Canadian border and selling them to a friend residing in Canada.<sup>37</sup>
- (U//LES) In November 2005 a gang member and active duty Navy service member in California was discovered in the possession of firearms and bullet-proof vests, and is suspected of distributing stolen firearms and hand grenades, according to uncorroborated FBI source reporting.
- (U//LES) In August 2005 a US soldier in San Antonio was suspected of supplying arms—including hand grenades and bullet-proof vests—to the Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi), according to uncorroborated but reliable FBI source information.

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<sup>31</sup> (U) Federal regulations provide that a soldier who is dishonorably discharged cannot possess weapons.

<sup>32</sup> (U//LES) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police and US Army CID.

<sup>33</sup> (U//LES) California Department of Justice, "Gang Members in the Military," *Intelligence Operations Bulletin*, Vol. No. 45, November 2005.

<sup>34</sup> (U) GAO, "Military Small Arms Parts, Poor Controls Invite Theft," *Testimony before the Committee on Governmental Affairs*, United States Senate, 18 November 1993.

<sup>35</sup> (U//LES) Los Angeles Police Department.

<sup>36</sup> (U) Staff Report, "Feds: Ingleside Man Was Selling Stolen Military Equipment," *MSNBC*, 23 January 2006.

<sup>37</sup> (U) Clifton Adcock, "Four Face Drug, Conspiracy Charges," *Great Falls Tribune*, 22 November 2005.

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- (U//LES) In August 2005 an associate Blood member working as a military police officer at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, was charged with theft of body armor stolen from the base. The Air Force OSI purchased vests from gang members following the subject's arrest for the armed robbery of several gas stations located off base. The subject was subsequently discharged from duty and convicted of armed robbery in 2006.<sup>38</sup>

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(U) **Figure 4:** Female soldiers flashing gang signs and brandishing weapons.

- (U//LES) In May 2005 eight US soldiers were charged with participating in a widespread bribery and extortion conspiracy. FBI source information revealed that several military personnel stationed in Colombia transported 46 kilograms of cocaine to El Paso, Texas, a portion of which was to be distributed by members of the Texas Syndicate prison gang.
- (U) In 2004 a series of commando-style bank robberies in Washington, DC, were committed using fully automatic assault rifles that were smuggled from Iraq by a soldier and purchased from a gang member's friend. The soldier was a member of a military police battalion based at Fort Meade Army Installation, Maryland.<sup>39</sup>

(U//LES) Despite heightened post 11 September 2001 security measures, civilian gang members and retired soldiers with gang affiliation are still permitted to access military installations to visit friends and to patronize bars and nightclubs. This may facilitate the collaboration and recruitment of soldiers and dependent children by civilian gang members and result in criminal activity on and off the installation.

- (U) Fort Bragg officials report that a number of violent incidences occurring on post often involve gang members and transpire at on-post nightclubs.<sup>40</sup>
- (U) In May 2005 the Fort Bragg Provost Marshall (PM) closed the Fort Bragg Fair early because of multiple fights prompted by youths flashing gang signs (See Figure 4). The PM remarked that similar incidences had also occurred at the prior year's fair.<sup>41</sup>
- (U//LES) A retired Special Forces soldier and President of the Hells Angels Fayetteville, North Carolina, chapter regularly visits Fort Bragg.<sup>42</sup>

#### *(U) Collaboration between Rival Gangs in the Military*

<sup>38</sup> (U//LES) US Air Force OSI.

<sup>39</sup> (U//LES) Eric Weiss, "Robbers Used Weapons Smuggled From Iraq by Soldier," *The Washington Post*, 16 July 2006.

<sup>40</sup> (U) Fort Bragg Military Police.

<sup>41</sup> (U) Justin Willett, "Fights Close Fair at Bragg," *Fayetteville Online*, 21 May 2005.

<sup>42</sup> (U//LES) Fayetteville Police Department.

(U//LES) Gang members who enlist in the military may find themselves among strangers—some of whom are gang members—in need of similar support and companionship. Gang members in the military have been known to join forces with rival gang members, even crossing racial and ethnic boundaries to commit crimes and use each other to recruit members.<sup>43</sup> These unusual alliances also make it difficult to prosecute gang-related activity, since judges are often not convinced that the defendants are actually gang members based on their association with one another.<sup>44</sup>

- (U//LES) FBI and military authorities report incidents of rival gangs, such as the Bloods, Crips, and Gangster Disciples joining forces while in the service and engaging in gang-related criminal activity.<sup>45</sup> Rival gang members stationed at Fort Bliss, for instance, have joined forces to commit assaults on civilian gang members.

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(U) **Figure 5:** MCAS Beaufort Marines flashing Crip signs as posted on My Space.com.

*(U) Crimes Committed Against Rival Gang Members*

(U) Gang members in the military also commit acts of aggression toward rival gang members.

- (U) In August 2005 three soldiers who were suspected gang members stationed at Fort Wainwright Army Installation, Alaska, were indicted on second-degree murder charges for their involvement in the gang-related shooting death of a Crip member at a local nightclub off-post near Fairbanks, Alaska. According to open-source reporting, they were acquitted in March 2006.<sup>46</sup>
- (U) According to open-source reporting, in August 2006 a former Marine and Blood member stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Camp Pendleton, California, was convicted of killing a rival gang member and wounding another in an October 2005 gang-related shooting in La Mesa, California.<sup>47</sup>
- (U) In August 2006, 18 suspected Crip members—four of whom were active-duty Marines assigned to MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina—were arrested for planning an

<sup>43</sup> (U//LES) US Army.

<sup>44</sup> (U//LES) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police.

<sup>45</sup> (U//LES) California Department of Justice, “Gang Members in the Military,” *Intelligence Operations Bulletin*, Vol. No. 45, November 2005.

<sup>46</sup> (U) Margaret Friedenaur, “Jury Acquits Three Soldiers of Shooting,” *Anchorage Daily News*, 22 March 2006.

<sup>47</sup> (U) Ray Huard, “Ex-Marine Guilty of Murder,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 15 August 2006 and San Diego Police Department.

attack at a high school football event in Columbia, South Carolina.<sup>48</sup> According to investigators, the Marines had traveled to Columbia several times to recruit youth for gang membership per the direction of a gang leader in Florida (See Figure 5).<sup>49</sup>

### **(U) Crimes Committed Against Law Enforcement Officers**

(U//LES) Both active-duty and former gang-affiliated soldiers transfer their acquired military training, knowledge, and weapons back to the community to employ against rival gang members and law enforcement officers who are typically not trained to engage gangsters with military expertise. Some law enforcement officials are adjusting their tactics to accommodate military-trained gang members.

- (U//LES) In a May 2006 interview with the Colorado Department of Corrections, an incarcerated Gangster Disciple member and former Marine discussed the advantages of military training and how it assists gang members in bank robberies, home invasions, and confrontations with police.<sup>50</sup>
- (U) A 2006 news interview revealed that a Marine, who was a King Cobra member, stationed at MCAS Camp Pendleton, taught members of his gang how to engage in military-style ambushes and how to position themselves for tactical advantage. He further admitted that he joined the Marines “to learn how to shoot guns.”<sup>51</sup>
- (U//LES) According to Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police (FLDAP) and Lakewood Police Department, in August 2005 a naval chaplain’s assistant and United Blood Nation (UBN) member from Bremerton Naval Station attempted to kill a state prison corrections officer in a contract killing in Lakewood, Washington.<sup>52</sup>
- (U//LES) In January 2005 an active-duty Marine, who was a suspected Norteno gang member, used military tactics to shoot two police officers—killing one—off-base in Ceres, California. According to FLDAP and Ceres police, the soldier killed in the exchange had learned military combat tactics while stationed in Iraq and had a criminal record prior to joining the Marines.<sup>53</sup>

### **(U) Identifying Gang Members in the Military**

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<sup>48</sup> (U) Associated Press, “Marines, Others Arrested in Plot to Disrupt Football Jamboree,” *WSBTTV.com*, 15 August 2006; Richland County, South Carolina Sheriffs Department.

<sup>49</sup> (U) Associated Press, “Sheriff: Beaufort Marines Behind Repeated Gang Recruiting Effort,” *WISTV.com*, 13 September 2006 and Richland County, South Carolina, Sheriffs Department.

<sup>50</sup> (U//LES) Colorado Department of Corrections.

<sup>51</sup> (U) Fox News interview, 22 March 2006.

<sup>52</sup> (U//LES) Fort Lewis Department of the Army Police and Lakewood Police Department.

<sup>53</sup> (U) Ceres Police Department and Staff Report, “Raya Tied to Gangs, Drugs,” *Manteca Bulletin*, Vol. 97, No. 4, 19 January 2005.

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(U//LES) Although all applicants are screened for criminal history and other indicators of tendencies to engage in unlawful behavior, gang members have bypassed prohibitions and enlist in the military by failing to report past criminal convictions or by using fraudulent documents. Some gang members have reportedly been instructed by recruiters to conceal past convictions or are told they can enlist as long as they do not have any felony arrests or convictions.<sup>54</sup> Other applicants enter the criminal justice system as juveniles and their criminal records are sealed and unavailable to recruiters performing criminal background investigations.<sup>55</sup>

- (U//LES) According to US Army reporting, some recruiters are not properly trained to recognize gang affiliation and unknowingly recruit gang members, particularly if the applicant has no criminal record or visible tattoos.<sup>56</sup> If gang affiliation is not identified during the recruitment process, then the enlisted gang member may be identified through tattoos, barracks inspections, tagging or graffiti, or by displaying colors and hand signs. Fort Bragg has developed a “Newcomers Brief” on gangs and extremist groups in the military to assist military personnel in identifying gang affiliation.<sup>57</sup> The US Army maintains that a average of only three out of 10 applicants meet Army standards to qualify for service.
- (U//LES) Many military members, including those stationed abroad, use the Internet to communicate with family, friends, and other gang members, and to recruit. In 2005 the Buffalo, New York, Police Department and the FBI intercepted an e-mail from a suspected Diablos Motorcycle Club member stationed in Germany sent to members of his gang in the United States.<sup>58</sup>
- (U) Many enlisted gang members maintain Web pages or Web logs (blogs) displaying photographs of themselves wearing gang colors, presenting hand signs, and brandishing weapons.<sup>59</sup> These blogs and electronic communications are often undetected by military authorities.

(U//LES) Some enlisted gang members are identified through on and off-post incidents, including fights, shootings, domestic disturbances, and traffic stops. Still, a large amount of gang-related activity goes undocumented or unreported to military officials.

### **(U) Service Member Dependents: Targets for Recruitment**

(U//LES) The involvement of dependent children of service members in gang activity on or near military installations is also increasing. A National Drug Intelligence Center national street gang survey conducted in 1998 revealed that gangs spread to the community when such dependents

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<sup>54</sup> (U) Some non-violent felonies may be waived.

<sup>55</sup> (U) Whitehouse Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Report on Relationship of Gangs in the Military, to Foreign Governments and Drug Trafficking Interdiction Intelligent Information*, 8 March 2001.

<sup>56</sup> (U//LES) US Army, Navy, and Air Force, e-mail correspondence, February-August 2006.

<sup>57</sup> (U) Fort Bragg, *Newcomer's Brief*, Office of the Provost Marshall (PM), 2006.

<sup>58</sup> (U//LES) Buffalo Police Department.

<sup>59</sup> (U//LES) California Department of Justice, “Gang Members in the Military,” *Intelligence Operations Bulletin*, Vol. No. 45, November 2005.

moved into jurisdictions adjacent to military bases. Gang members commonly target dependent children of military personnel for recruitment. Military children are considered potential targets for gang membership because their families' transient nature often makes them feel isolated, vulnerable, and in need of companionship. Dependents of service members have been involved in drug distribution and assaults on and off of military bases. National and international transfers, which occur regularly, further provide opportunities for gang recruitment and may place enlisted gang members and their dependents in a region with an untapped drug market.

- (U//LES) US Department of Defense (DoD) youth program staff have acknowledged that military children are heavily influenced by gangs. However, many military spokespersons have dismissed these children as “wannabe gang members.”<sup>60</sup>
- (U//LES) US DoD Education Activity officials advise that students attending DoD schools may be influenced by or targeted for recruitment by gang members transferring from civilian schools.<sup>61</sup>
- (U//LES) According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, military facilities in the continental United States as well as overseas military facilities have all experienced gang activity committed by dependents of service members.<sup>62</sup>
- (U//FOUO) In 2006 two Blood members and juvenile dependents of service members assigned to Fort Campbell were accused of participating in a murder of a rival gang member.<sup>63</sup>
- (U) In October 2005 the wife of a Fort Irwin, California, soldier stationed in Iraq was arrested for planning to rob a Barstow, California, bank. According to open sources, the suspect reported that she was affiliated with a criminal street gang in Carson City, Nevada.<sup>64</sup>
- (U//LES) In 2005 Folk Nation graffiti was discovered on the bathroom stalls at a Fort Bragg junior high school, according to US Army reporting.<sup>65</sup>

### **(U) Military Policies Addressing Gang Affiliation**

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<sup>60</sup> (U) George Knox, Ph.D., “Gangs, Guerilla Warfare, and Social Conflict,” *An Introduction to Gangs*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2000 and interviews with multiple local, state, and federal law enforcement, February-August 2006.

<sup>61</sup> (U//LES) US Department of Defense Education Activity, DODEA Safe Schools Program, Newsletter 7-1, September 2006.

<sup>62</sup> (U) Whitehouse Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Report on Relationship of Gangs in the Military, to Foreign Governments and Drug Trafficking Interdiction Intelligent Information*, 8 March 2001.

<sup>63</sup> (U//FOUO) US Army, *Summary Report Gang Activity Threat Assessment, Fiscal Year 2006: A Review of Gang Activity Affecting the Army*, Criminal Investigation Command, 1 December 2006.

<sup>64</sup> (U) Staff Report, “Police Arrest Four for Drugs,” *Barstow Desert Dispatch*, 31 October 2005.

<sup>65</sup> (U//LES) US Army.

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(U) Military policies that specifically address the enlistment of gang members in the Armed Forces vary by branch or recruitment office.<sup>66</sup> Military command policy generally prohibits participation in or association with extremist organizations or groups that advocate the use of force or violence. Regulations additionally prohibit the display of inappropriate or obscene tattoos, body piercings, hand signs, colors, and graffiti. Military command policy, however, does not specifically refer to gang membership or gang activity (See Appendix).<sup>67</sup> These regulations were prompted by the 1995 *Burmeister* incident involving the murder of an African-American couple in Fayetteville, North Carolina, by soldiers affiliated with a white supremacist group at Fort Bragg. The murders led to an investigation that ultimately revealed 22 soldiers at Fort Bragg with known extremist tendencies.<sup>68</sup>

(U) In the aftermath of these murders, the Secretary of the Army formed a taskforce to investigate extremist group activity in the US Army. In 1996 the taskforce visited 28 major US Army installations in the United States, Germany, and Korea. After conducting over 7,000 interviews and 17,080 written surveys, the task force concluded that there was no widespread or organized extremist activity in the Army, but noted that “gang-related activities appear to be more pervasive than extremist activity on and near Army installations and are becoming a significant security concern for many soldiers.”<sup>69</sup>

### (U) Intelligence Gaps

(U) How many gang members are serving in each branch of the military, to include National Guard and reserve components?

(U) How many military service dependents are gang members?

(U) Are certain street gangs more likely to have members serving in the military?

(U) Which military installations have the most gang members or experience the most gang activity?

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<sup>66</sup> (U) FBI analysts made several attempts to contact military recruiting offices to clarify existing policies on gang membership in the military. Recruiters declined to comment.

<sup>67</sup> (U) US Department of Defense Directive, Number 1325.6-3.5.8, 1 October 1996. Gang Membership will not always result in a soldier’s discharge from military service. Actions taken against soldiers are often subject to the discretion of the Commander or Provost Marshal, who may elect not to discipline or discharge a gang-affiliated soldier, particularly if the soldier is not considered disruptive or insubordinate. Many criminal and gang-related incidents are addressed as administrative, rather criminal matters, and are not subject to the investigative purview of Army CID.

<sup>68</sup> (U) William Branigan and Dana Pries, “White Soldiers Held in Slaying of Black Couple,” *Washington Post*, 9 December 1995. Despite these guidelines, in 2006 the Southern Poverty Law Center presented evidence to the US Defense Secretary indicating that large numbers of neo-Nazis and other extremists are still serving in the Armed Forces.

<sup>69</sup> (U) News Release, “Army Task Force Report on Extremist Activity,” Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense, 21 March 1996.

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(U) How many incidences of criminal activity committed by gang-affiliated service members have been identified?

(U) How many incidences of law enforcement officers on the street encountering military-trained gang members have been identified?

(U) What is the extent of theft of military weapons and equipment by gang members?

(U) Have gang members serving in the military compromised national security or engaged in domestic terrorism?

**(U) This intelligence assessment was prepared by the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC). Comments and queries may be addressed to the NGIC at (202) 324-6959.**

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(U) **Appendix**

(U) **Military Policies Applied to Gang Membership**

(U) *Excerpt of the US Department of Defense Directive, Number 1325.6, 1 October 1996*

3. (U) Policy

3.5.8. (U) Prohibited Activities. Military personnel must reject participation in organizations that espouse supremacist causes; attempt to create illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin; advocate the use of force or violence; or otherwise engage in efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.<sup>83</sup>

(U) **Excerpt of the US Army, AR-600-20, May 2002**

(U) Chapter 4 – Military Discipline and Conduct

4-12. (U) Extremist Organizations and Activities

(U) Participation in extremist organizations and activities by army personnel is inconsistent with the responsibilities of military service. It is the policy of the United States Army to provide equal opportunity and treatment for all soldiers without regard to race, color, religion, gender, or national origin.

(U) (d) Command Options. Commander's options for dealing with a soldier's violation of the prohibitions include:

(U) (1) UCMJ action: Possible violations include:

(U) (a) Article 81: Conspiracy

(U) (b) Article 92: Violation or failure to obey a lawful general order or regulation

(U) (b) Article 116: Riot or breach of peace

(U) (c) Article 117: Provoking speeches or gestures

(U) (d) Article 134: General article, specifically, conduct which is prejudicial to good order and discipline or service discrediting; soliciting.

(U) (2) Involuntary separation for unsatisfactory performance or misconduct, or for conduct deemed prejudicial to good order and discipline or morale.

(U) (3) Reclassify

(U) (4) Other administrative or disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the commander, based on the specific facts and circumstances of the particular case.

(U) (5) Commanders who identify individuals as extremists must take action in accordance with AR 600-20. At a minimum, the individual will be counseled on the Army Command Policy concerning extremism.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> (U) Although US DoD Directive No. 1325.6 does not specifically refer to "gangs," some military authorities maintain that this regulation could easily apply to gangs or gang members who advocate the use of force or violence.

(U) Excerpt of the US Navy Milpersman 1910 – 160, 31 May 2005 (Covers US Marines)

(U) Chapter 7

6. (U) Tattoos/Body Art/Brands. No tattoos/body art/brands on the head, face, neck, or scalp. Tattoos/body art/brands elsewhere on the body that are prejudicial to good order, discipline, and morale or are of a nature to bring discredit upon the Navy are prohibited. For example, tattoos/body art/brands that are excessive, obscene, sexually explicit or advocate or symbolize gang affiliation, violence, supremacist or extremist groups, or drug use are prohibited. In addition, tattoos/body art/brands will not be visible through uniform clothing. Waivers may be requested for prior service and existing tattoos from the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations.

(U) Chapter 11

1. (U) Policy

(U) a. Members must be processed following disciplinary or administrative action for any substantiated incident of serious misconduct resulting from participation in supremacist or extremist activities. The prescribed misconduct must relate to

(U) (1) illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin; or

(U) (2) advocating the use of force or violence against any federal, state, or local government agency thereof, in violation of federal, state, or local laws.

(U) b. Most cases will involve one or more violations of reference (a), including but not limited to the following:

(U) (1) Insubordinate conduct, disobedience, and orders violations, including violations of lawful general orders established in Navy regulations or other authoritative Navy instructions.

(U) (2) Cruelty or maltreatment of subordinates

(U) (3) Riot or breach of peace.

(U) (4) Provoking speech or gestures.

(U) (5) Various degrees of assault.

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<sup>84</sup> (U) The AR 600-20 does not specifically refer to “gangs.” This omission may make it difficult for military authorities to apply the regulation to gang members and gang activity. Some US Army authorities, however, maintain that the AR 600-20, which was enacted to thwart a recurrence of the Burmeister incident at Fort Bragg, could apply to a gang member who distributes his literature by means of graffiti or tattoos. For example, Article 81 of the UCMJ, Conspiracy, can apply to gang initiations. Article 134 can be applied to any gang-related activity deemed disruptive, or to the solicitation or recruitment of gang members by other gang members.

(U) **Excerpt of US Air Force AFI 51-903 and 36-2903**

- (U) D. Military Members' Participation in Dissident and Protest Activities, AFI 51-903, February 1, 1998
  
- (U) 4. Participation in hate groups
  - (U) (a) What groups? Supremacist groups, advocates of illegal discrimination, and advocates of violence to deprive others of civil right.
  
  - (U) E. Military Members' Expression Through Tattoos, Body Piercing and Body Alteration, AFI 36-2903, September 29, 2002.
    - (U) 1. Unauthorized tattoos/brands: Tattoos/brands anywhere on the body that are obscene; advocate sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination; are prejudicial to good order and discipline; or are a nature to bring discredit upon the Air Force.
      - (U) (a) Unauthorized tattoos/brands are prohibited in and out of uniform.
      - (U) (b) Members with unauthorized tattoos will be required to remove them at member's expense.
      - (U) (c) Members who fail to remove/alter unauthorized tattoo may be subject to disciplinary action or involuntary separation.
  
- (U) 2. Inappropriate tattoos/brand: Excessive tattoos or brands that exceed ¼ of exposed body part and those above the collarbone and readily visible when wearing an open color uniform.

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