



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES:
DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS**

by

Ian A. Haskins

December 2023

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Carolyn C. Halladay
Anshu N. Chatterjee

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2023		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES: DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Ian A. Haskins				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) Far-right extremism (FRE) was on full display during the attack on the U.S. Capitol Building on January 6, 2021. As concerning as this event was, a bigger concern is that a relatively large contingent of those who participated in the attack were active-duty service members and veterans. There is a long history of service members being involved in FRE. The aftermath of the U.S. Civil War saw the Ku Klux Klan come to being. Today, there is still a presence of FRE in the U.S. armed forces, illustrating that efforts undertaken by the Department of Defense (DOD) to fully eradicate FRE from its ranks has not gone according to plan. Every year there continues to be reports of service members being arrested, jailed, or separated from service for participating in prohibited extremist activity. In spite of sporadic efforts to counter extremism, the attack on the Capitol seems to have been the culminating event that triggered the DOD to act on a more massive scale. Even with the changes the DOD has already made, there are further solutions they should consider implementing that are actively being promoted by the academic community. These solutions include expanded screenings, the establishment of an extremism database, and extremism task force units embedded within each of the service branches. FRE harms good order and discipline throughout the U.S. armed forces. Nothing short of the complete eradication of extremism from the U.S. armed forces should be accepted.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS far-right extremism, FRE, U.S. armed forces, Department of Defense, DOD			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 87	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

**FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES:
DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS**

Ian A. Haskins
Lieutenant, United States Navy
BS, Slippery Rock University, 2010

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2023**

Approved by: Carolyn C. Halladay
Advisor

Anshu N. Chatterjee
Second Reader

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

Far-right extremism (FRE) was on full display during the attack on the U.S. Capitol Building on January 6, 2021. As concerning as this event was, a bigger concern is that a relatively large contingent of those who participated in the attack were active-duty service members and veterans. There is a long history of service members being involved in FRE. The aftermath of the U.S. Civil War saw the Ku Klux Klan come to being. Today, there is still a presence of FRE in the U.S. armed forces, illustrating that efforts undertaken by the Department of Defense (DOD) to fully eradicate FRE from its ranks has not gone according to plan. Every year there continues to be reports of service members being arrested, jailed, or separated from service for participating in prohibited extremist activity. In spite of sporadic efforts to counter extremism, the attack on the Capitol seems to have been the culminating event that triggered the DOD to act on a more massive scale. Even with the changes the DOD has already made, there are further solutions they should consider implementing that are actively being promoted by the academic community. These solutions include expanded screenings, the establishment of an extremism database, and extremism task force units embedded within each of the service branches. FRE harms good order and discipline throughout the U.S. armed forces. Nothing short of the complete eradication of extremism from the U.S. armed forces should be accepted.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
B.	LITERATURE REVIEW	3
C.	RESEARCH DESIGN	11
II.	EXTREMIST PRESENCE IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES.....	13
A.	SSGT JOSEPH MANNING AND SGT MICHAEL CHESNEY, USMC.....	14
B.	LT CHRISTOPHER HASSON, USCG	17
C.	TSGT CORY REEVES, USAF.....	20
D.	SPC KILLIAN MACKETHAN RYAN, USA.....	22
E.	EXTREMISM AT SEA	23
F.	CONCLUSION	25
III.	ASSESSING DOD AND DON COUNTER-EXTREMISM DOCTRINE	27
A.	DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INITIATIVES	27
1.	DOD Instruction 1325.06 – Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities among Members of the Armed Forces	29
2.	DOD Instruction 1304.26 – Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction	34
3.	DODI 1304.23 – Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record for Military Recruiting Purposes	36
4.	Memo – Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks.....	38
5.	Memo – Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group	39
B.	EVALUATING DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INITIATIVES ON EXTREMISM	42
C.	U.S. NAVY INITIATIVES.....	45
1.	U.S. Navy Regulations – Article 1167: Supremacist Activities.....	45
2.	MILPERSMAN 1910–160 and 1920–070	46
D.	EVALUATING DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY EFFORTS ON EXTREMISM	48
E.	CONCLUSION	49

IV.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	51
A.	EXPANDED SCREENING MEASURES WITH PERIODIC CHECKS.....	52
B.	EXTREMISM DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM	55
C.	BRANCH SPECIFIC EXTREMISM TASK FORCE UNITS	57
D.	CONCLUSION	60
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	63
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Banner hung by SSgt Manning and Sgt Chesney	15
Figure 2.	Weapons cache discovered during search at Hasson’s apartment	19

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADL	Anti-Defamation League
CEWG	Countering Extremism Working Group
CO	commanding officer
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DODI	Department of Defense Instruction
DODIG	Department of Defense Inspector General
DON	Department of the Navy
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FRE	far-right extremism
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
IE	Identity Evropa
IG	Inspector General
LOE	line of effort
MEPS	Military Entrance Processing Command
NCO	non-commissioned officer
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Service
NJP	non-judicial punishment
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSI	Office of Special Investigation
SNCO	staff non-commissioned officer
SRNCO	senior non-commissioned officer
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
USCG	United States Coast Guard

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisors, Dr. Carolyn Halladay and Dr. Anshu Chatterjee, for their immeasurable help and patience throughout the entirety of this thesis process. Dr. Halladay's candidness in her reviews of rough drafts was always welcomed, as was her ability to reorient me when I would get off track. Dr. Chatterjee offered unique ways of presenting ideas that deepened the quality of my project, which will always be greatly appreciated.

I would like to extend my tremendous gratitude to Ms. Alison Scharmota from the Graduate Writing Center for her writing expertise, her willingness to work with me one-on-one, her patience, and her encouragement. Alison was cognizant that writing is a subject that I do not excel in, but she was able to help in ways that I could understand. She helped improve my basic writing abilities for this project which I am forever thankful for.

Finally, I want to thank my wife, Jessica, and my two daughters, Kinsley and Keilani, for their love and support throughout this long and arduous process. They have made tremendous sacrifices for me to be able to have a successful Navy career and for that I am forever grateful.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION

The present research analyzes efforts taken by the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of the Navy (DON) to reduce extremism in the U.S. armed forces that has become a concern over the past decade. The investigation illustrates that the current methods employed by the DOD and the DON towards identifying and preventing the spread of domestic extremist ideologies in the U.S. armed forces in any capacity which are not sufficient. Therefore, the major question that guides this research is: Which practices or directives should the DOD and the Navy implement to reduce or eliminate domestic extremist ideologies from its ranks? To this end, this thesis also promotes recommendations that might improve the DOD and the Navy's ability to accomplish that effort.

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Domestic far-right extremism (FRE) in the U.S. armed forces is not a new phenomenon but, as the events of 6 January 2021 at the Capitol (among others) illustrate, it has yet to be fully addressed. As of August 2023, approximately 1,100 would-be terrorists and insurrectionists face criminal charges for taking part in the attack.¹ In spite of DOD and Navy directives banning extremist activities, 15 percent of these attackers were actively serving in the military in some capacity or had prior military experience.² This figure may increase depending on whether there are additional arrests made among the thousands of people who participated in the attack. The 15 percent statistic is significant since there is typically only 10 percent of the U.S. population at any one time that serves in its all-volunteer force.³ The events of that day, along with this surprising statistic, have pushed the DOD to review the extremism problem.

¹ Lauren Sforza, "Number of People Charged in Jan. 6 Rioting Surpasses 1,100," The Hill, last modified August 10, 2023, <https://thehill.com/policy/national-security/4147038-number-of-people-charged-in-jan-6-rioting-surpasses-1100/>.

² Robert Pape, "The Jan. 6 Insurrectionists Aren't Who You Think They Are," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, January 6, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/06/trump-capitol-insurrection-january-6-insurrectionists-great-replacement-white-nationalism/>.

³ Aymann Ismail, "We Know Exactly Who the Capitol Rioters Were," *Slate Magazine*, January 4, 2022, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2022/01/january-6-capitol-riot-arrests-research-profile.html>.

Countering extremism in the DOD and the Navy is vital to maintaining its operational capability. Extremism negatively impacts smooth operation by damaging morale and combat readiness, discipline and the ability to follow orders, and public trust and confidence.⁴ Simply put, extremism negatively affects good order and discipline, one of the most important structural foundations that enables problem-free operations. Optimal good order and discipline guarantees the chain-of-command structure works as designed. Furthermore, regardless of age, sex, race, etc., good order and discipline guarantees that lawful orders from superiors will be followed.

Service members with domestic extremist ideologies would inherently find it difficult to practice good order and discipline. Therefore, extremist ideologies and good order and discipline are concepts that are mutually exclusive in the entirety of the DOD. As *The New York Times* asserts, “In the military, extremists pose a threat to good order and discipline.”⁵ For example, service members adhering to an extremist ideology who displays hate towards immigrants might find it difficult to follow the orders of immigrants in positions of authority. From a Navy perspective, sailors with extremist ideologies would likely find it difficult to adhere to the Navy’s core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment due to the nature of their hateful, violent ideologies. As Vice Admiral John Nowell Jr. points out, “Extremist behaviors and conduct, even if from only a small percentage of our force, violate our Core Values, are detrimental to good order and discipline, reduce warfighting readiness and degrade the toughness, trust and connectedness.”⁶ Domestic extremism also threatens the Navy’s mission: “to recruit, train, equip, and organize to deliver combat ready Naval forces to win conflicts and wars while maintaining security and deterrence through sustained forward presence.”⁷ As Jacob Ware

⁴ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, DOD Instruction 1325.06 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), 9.

⁵ “Extremists in Uniform Put the Nation at Risk,” *New York Times*, November 13, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/13/opinion/us-police-military-extremism.html>.

⁶ Department of the Navy, *Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks*, NAVADMIN 044/21 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021), https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Messages/NAVADMIN/NAV2021/NAV21044.txt?ver=Uraz_JTPld6Dok_jVRyozQ%3d%3d.

⁷ “United States Navy Recruiting,” Navy Recruiting Command, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.navy.com/>.

discusses, “Far-right extremists also likely threaten the military’s image and attractiveness at a time when recruitment is already low.”⁸

In one of its first efforts to address extremism following the attack on the Capitol, the DOD decided it was necessary to direct an extremism stand down to review with all military service members from all branches the current policies addressing extremism.⁹ Commanding officers (CO) and officers-in-charge were directed to lead tailored discussions that should have included the “importance of our oath of office, a description of impermissible behaviors, and procedures for reporting suspected, or actual, extremist behaviors in accordance with the DODI.”¹⁰ DODI refers to the Department of Defense Instruction 1325.06.¹¹ Since the directed stand down, the DOD has made, and continues to make, some changes to its overall effort to counter extremism.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is widely accepted that domestic FRE poses a serious threat to the United States, to democracy, and to minority populations—or anyone else who the individuals and groups who adhere to such ideologies cast as the enemy. This section reviews some relevant scholarship on the broader questions—and challenges—of FRE in U.S. society writ large, which the U.S. armed forces both represent and protect.

Prior to the significant events of January 6, 2021, contributions to the debate on FRE in the military had been sporadic. Since then, there has been a significant uptick in the amount of ongoing debate. Those who contribute to the debate have arguments that can be categorized into four differentiating themes. The first group discusses whether FRE scattered throughout the military is a problem. Those in the second category converse on

⁸ Jacob Ware, “The Violent Far-Right Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Military,” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 31, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/violent-far-right-terrorist-threat-us-military>.

⁹ Lloyd Austin, “Stand Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks” (official memorandum, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Feb/05/2002577485/-1/-1/0/STAND-DOWN-TO-ADDRESS-EXTREMISM-IN-THE-RANKS.PDF>.

¹⁰ Lloyd Austin, “Stand Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks.”

¹¹ Lloyd Austin, “Stand Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks.”

why and to what extent FRE is a problem for the military. The third theorize what the catalysts are to the far-right extremism problem. Finally, those academics in the fourth camp fall into one of the first three groups but are distinguishable in that they further expound on the problem by proposing solutions.

Key to most far-right extremists (and in contrast to most extreme ideologies on the left of the political spectrum) is a pathological kind of nationalism that takes exclusion as both its means and its ends. While discussing domestic threats the United States currently faces, Matthew Jackson explains the beliefs some of these groups adopt. Jackson explains:

Most of these extremist movements also believe in some form of cultural, ethnic, or racial nationalism. Cultural nationalism argues that a nation's culture needs to be protected and immigrants who cannot assimilate should return to their home countries. Ethnic nationalism argues against the mixing of races and believes that diversity among races should be maintained. Their rhetoric is often described by right-wing extremists as an "invasion" by another group of people within their own country. Finally, racial nationalism believes that a country should be one race and if races are intermingled, it would threaten the survival of the nation state.¹²

Similarly, Bjorgo and Ravndal examine the threat of right-wing extremism the United States faces and how for years it has been overshadowed by the lesser threat of Islamic terrorism. Bjorgo and Ravndal outline varying degrees of right-wing extremism based on different characteristics of nationalism.¹³ Like Jackson, the characteristics are categorized as cultural nationalism, ethnic nationalism, and racial nationalism.¹⁴ Cultural nationalism focuses on cultural assimilation, those who come to the U.S. should adopt American culture.¹⁵ Ethnic nationalism focuses on "ethnic identity," a belief in which every ethnic

¹² Matthew Jackson, "America's Three Domestic Threats and the Need for a Reform of Domestic Intelligence," (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020), 25, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/66087>.

¹³ Tore Bjorgo and Jacob Ravndal, *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism: Concepts, Patterns, and Responses*, (The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019), 2–5, <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Extreme-Right-Violence-and-Terrorism-Concepts-Patterns-and-Responses.pdf>.

¹⁴ Bjorgo and Ravndal, *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism*, 2–5.

¹⁵ Bjorgo and Ravndal, *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism*, 2–5.

group has a right to exist.¹⁶ Racial nationalism focuses on “racial purity” of the state and embraces violent, anti-government sentiments to achieve its goals.¹⁷ The Alt-Right, an American group with views centered on “white-nationalism,” is an example of an ethno-nationalist group that leans towards racial nationalism due to its violent capacity.¹⁸ Civilians and the military alike can sympathize with the varying views of nationalism.

Far-right extremists have been involved in the military since the end of the Civil War when the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was formed. The KKK, as Vitali puts it, “represented the prototype of right-wing extremism” of that era.¹⁹ Andrew Gumbel describes the KKK as, “a club for disaffected confederate veterans...mushroomed into the vanguard of white opposition to the end of slavery.”²⁰ Supporting these assertions, Simi, Bubolz, and Harman explain:

A long history documents the organizational and membership overlap between FRE and the U.S. military. In 1865 the Ku Klux Klan’s founding members were confederate officers and soldiers and the Klan’s first Imperial Wizard was a general in the Confederate Army. More recently, since 1953, at least nine FRE organization have been formed by active military personnel. Many of these individuals have been high-ranking officers, including generals, rear admirals, commanders, lieutenant generals, and lieutenant colonels.²¹

Regardless of far-right extremists’ involvement in the military for nearly two centuries there has been little done to combat it. As Schake and Robinson put it, “the military has

¹⁶ Bjorgo and Ravndal, *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism*, 2–5.

¹⁷ Bjorgo and Ravndal, *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism*, 2–5.

¹⁸ Bjorgo and Ravndal, *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism*, 2–5.

¹⁹ Joshua Vitali, “Fueling the Fire: An Examination of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States Over the Last Decade,” (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020), 19, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/65460>.

²⁰ Andrew Gumbel, “The Domestic Terrorism Threat in the United States: A Primer” (occasional paper, George Washington University, 2015), 4, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/Gumbel.pdf>.

²¹ Pete Simi, Bryan Bubolz, and Ann Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 8 (2013): 655, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2013.802976>.

made sporadic efforts to combat it directly.”²² Concern regarding FRE in the armed forces only began in the mid-1970s.²³ A fight between African American marines and white marines at Camp Pendelton led to a command investigation discovering “a KKK chapter at the base and led to the jailing or transfer of sixteen Klansmen.”²⁴ Extremist instances like this are scattered throughout the history of the military and continue to be uncovered today.

There is consensus that old white-nationalism and white-supremacy has become notoriously more popular in recent years. Vitali sums up this ideology’s resurgence succinctly:

over the past decade, during a time where federal law enforcement has been largely focused on Islamic extremist cells, right-wing extremism has reestablished itself in America. History has shown that American society has been ravaged by right-wing extremism several times; these periods provide a context for this latest resurgence. Hate group and hate crime data collected by watchdog groups and the FBI demonstrates that right-wing extremism has re-emerged with force over the last decade.²⁵

Additionally, there is general consensus on the possible explanation for this unexpected resurgence, the technological advances in the accessibility of the internet along with the increased popularity of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Generally, social media usage has exploded in the U.S. over the past two decades. Data suggests that adult usage of social media expanded from 5 percent in 2005 to approximately 72 percent in 2021.²⁶ The increased usage also includes far-right extremist groups. The problem is these platforms unknowingly enable far-right extremists to segregate themselves from views

²² Kori Schake and Michael Robinson, “Assessing Civil-Military Relations and the January 6th Capitol Insurrection,” *Orbis* 65, no. 3, (May 2021): 542, <https://doi-org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1016/j.orbis.2021.06.013>.

²³ Matt Kennard, *Irregular Army: How the US Military Recruited Neo-Nazis, Gang Members, and Criminals to Fight the War on Terror* (New York: Verso, 2012) 17.

²⁴ Kennard, *Irregular Army: How the US Military Recruited Neo-Nazis, Gang Members, and Criminals to Fight the War on Terror*, 17.

²⁵ Vitali, “Fueling the Fire: An Examination of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States Over the Last Decade,” 31.

²⁶ “Social Media Fact Sheet,” Pew Research Center, April 7, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>.

outside their own. As Vitali puts it, these platforms are “no more than echo chambers for agreeing voices”²⁷ Additionally, social media platforms allow these extremist groups to proselytize and radicalize individuals who are unsure on whether to join or not. Sunstein discusses social media and extremism further explaining:

Group polarization is unquestionably occurring online. From the evidence discussed so far, it seems plain that the Internet is serving, for many, as a breeding ground for extremism, precisely because like-minded people are connecting with greater ease and frequency with one another, and often without hearing contrary views. Repeated exposure to an extreme position, with the suggestion that many people hold it, will predictably move those exposed, and likely predisposed, to believe in it.²⁸

These echo chambers do nothing but rile up extremists pushing some towards more extreme behavior that promotes their racially based ideology. As Sunstein puts it, the Internet, to include social media, has made it simpler for nationalist, supremacist, and extremist groups to congregate in the virtual world.²⁹ The elimination of geographic barriers has strengthened lines of communication used to share information and enflame passions.³⁰ This allows extremist groups to tart up an ugly, old hate through fancy, new avenues.

There is relatively unanimous concurrence throughout the academic community that FRE is in fact a problem for the DOD and the Navy. At the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman argue, “The demand for active personnel meant increasing the threshold for removing current extremists and lowering standards during the initial screening process among new recruits.”³¹ This argument is supported by Matt Kennard. While interviewing a veteran with known white-supremacist views, Kennard explains, “Leaders in the neo-Nazi movement agree that Forrest’s journey has

²⁷ Vitali, “Fueling the Fire: An Examination of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States Over the Last Decade,” 62.

²⁸ Cass Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), 76–77.

²⁹ Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*, 86.

³⁰ Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*, 65

³¹ Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” 656.

become even more common as the military needs more fighters.”³² Furthermore, the leaders of extremist groups have a desire for their followers to infiltrate the armed forces. As Daniel Koehler described, “Already radicalised (sic) extremists might actively try to enter the armed forces for strategic or tactical purposes, to gain weapons training, access to ammunition and explosives or to recruit other soldiers for their cause.”³³ Abigail Hall, Jerod Hassell, and Chivon Fitch support this reasoning when they referenced an interview with a far-right extremist in which he explains how extremist groups want their members to receive military training and bring it back to their groups so that they can train others.³⁴

There have been attempts to explain why military personnel join far-right extremist organizations. Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman hypothesize that personal identity issues resulting from military service push service members into the arms of far-right extremist groups.³⁵ The authors provide four in-depth case studies involving FRE in the military from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.³⁶ The first two case studies discussing Richard Lee Guthrie, Aryan Republican Army co-founder, and Timothy McVeigh, Oklahoma City bomber, illustrate how involuntary exits from the military have the potential to push people towards FRE.³⁷ The last two case studies involved James Dye, member of various far-right extremist groups, and Ken Yates, member of the Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord extremist group.³⁸ These two case studies are examples of how “reflected appraisals and

³² Kennard, *Irregular Army: How the US Military Recruited Neo-Nazis, Gang Members, and Criminals to Fight the War on Terror*, 24.

³³ Daniel Koehler, *A Threat from Within? Exploring the Link Between the Extreme Right and the Military*, (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019) 20, <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2019/09/ICCT-Koehler-A-Threat-from-Within-Exploring-the-Link-between-the-Extreme-Right-and-the-Military.pdf>.

³⁴ Abigail Hall, Jerod Hassell, and Chivon Fitch, “Militarized Extremism: The Radical Right and the War on Terror,” *The Independent Review* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 232, https://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir_26_2_05_hall.pdf.

³⁵ Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” 657.

³⁶ Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” 660–64.

³⁷ Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” 660–62.

³⁸ Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” 662–63.

social stress” can lead to far-right extremist group membership.³⁹ In addition to these case studies supporting the hypothesized catalysts, they also illustrate the overall history of those with military experience joining far-right extremist groups over the last few decades. Understanding how service members are pushed into FRE may help the DOD and the Navy develop new processes that make extremist groups seem less attractive.

Many researchers have suggested solutions to address the FRE problem in the U.S. armed forces. One common theme is the expansion of background checks for those entering military service. Background checks are necessary to keep those who adhere to extremist ideologies out of the armed forces. Daniel Koehler suggests, “include background checks in military recruitment procedures that go beyond criminal activity and look at past involvement in violent extremism as well.”⁴⁰ Dr. Heidi Beirich, from the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, testified to Congress, “It [the DOD] is very clear that screening measures need strengthening.”⁴¹ She continues, “It doesn’t have clear procedures to investigate social media accounts, which is where you find most extremism nowadays.”⁴² Expanded background checks may be an area which would strengthen the DOD’s posture against FRE.

Another common theme when discussing solutions involves the establishment of a system in which data is collected and stored for situations involving extremism. Data collection would allow the DOD and Congress to identify the scope of the extremism problem in the armed forces. Daniel Milton and Andrew Mines contend:

Such a system would benefit from uniform reporting requirements across the service branches and from agencies outside the DOD. It would also benefit from gathering data on more than just criminal probes compiled by the military criminal investigation organizations (MCIOs) and the FBI into active duty service members and veterans. This includes cases that fail to

³⁹ Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, “Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis,” 662–63.

⁴⁰ Koehler, *A Threat from Within? Exploring the Link Between the Extreme Right and the Military*, 21.

⁴¹ *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military – How to Stop It?: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives*, 116th Cong. 2 (2020), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-116hhrg42962/pdf/CHRG-116hhrg42962.pdf>.

⁴² H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

raise larger flags because they fall below the criminal threshold, or ones that are ultimately resolved before justice agencies are involved. To provide more comprehensive understanding of the threat, the new system might also track cases of individuals who are screened out of service selection for extremism-related issues, as well as dishonorably discharged for extremist-related activities.⁴³

Schake and Robinson support this solution and believe it is the DOD's responsibility to eliminate extremism from the inside. They insist, "That effort should begin with collecting data so that both the military and civilian leadership can determine the magnitude of the extremism problem in its ranks."⁴⁴ Again, Beirich supported this theme in her Congressional testimony:

There appears to be no process to track people expelled for ties to White supremacist groups. There is little data in the public domain to know how serious this problem is. All of these are serious issues, as well as it being unclear how information on extremists in one branch are shared with other branches or the Guard or the FBI.⁴⁵

Being able to identify the scope of the extremism problem in the military would allow Congress to properly fund DOD efforts to combat extremism.

There is no doubt the attack on the Capitol involving many active and former military members has reignited the conversation about the U.S. armed forces' FRE problem and the solutions to counter it. Ideologies classified as FRE are inherently dangerous. It is apparent that FRE is on the rise in the broader American public thanks to increased popularity in social media. Because of the rise in the general public, a rise throughout the armed forces may be anticipated since the pool the armed forces has to recruit from is becoming more saturated with FRE creating bigger risk that FRE will infiltrate the armed forces. The relation between FRE and the U.S. armed forces has a troubled past dating back to at least the Civil War which spawned the KKK. There are a multitude of theories of why

⁴³ Daniel Milton et al., *"This is War": Examining Military Experience Among Capitol Hill Siege Participants*, (Washington, DC: The George Washington University, 2021), 39–40, https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/This_is_War.pdf.

⁴⁴ Schake and Robinson, "Assessing Civil-Military Relations and the January 6th Capitol Insurrection," 542.

⁴⁵ H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

members of the military community join extremist groups. There is also a myriad of solutions that have been presented to combat FRE in the U.S. armed forces. This thesis looks to contribute to the conversations surrounding proposed solutions the DOD can adopt to counter extremism throughout the ranks.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The empirical research design of this thesis entails an analysis of open-source information relating to the topic of extremism in the DOD. The design of this thesis is to be conducted in three sections: a presentation of case studies illustrating how FRE introduces risk to the U.S. armed forces, an assessment of current doctrine addressing FRE, and a proposal of solutions that may help reduce FRE based on that assessment and on the most promising findings from the literature review.

The first section of this thesis presents case studies from each branch of the DOD. Though a member of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), a case study from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) will also be presented as it is a member of the U.S. armed forces. The intent of this phase is to illustrate the presence of FRE in each branch of the U.S. armed forces. Additionally, each case study will logically explain the ways in which each case introduces risk to the DOD. Reviewing case studies from each branch will also illustrate that no branch of service is immune to FRE.

The second section of this thesis entails identifying and assessing current DOD and DON policy towards FRE and the associated doctrine. Furthermore, this phase will also assess some of the immediate efforts the DOD undertook in the aftermath of January 6. Assessments of the current instructions, directives, regulations, and memoranda will inform this thesis' recommendations.

The third section of this thesis promotes recommendations provided to the DOD and the DON from the scholarly community based on their expertise and the assessments made in the second phase of this thesis. The objective of this phase is to promote legitimate solutions the DOD could realistically implement that could better protect the DOD from FRE. These recommendations would likely reduce the number of service members

currently in the DOD who participate in FRE and prevent potential recruits who are committed to FRE ideologies from joining the DOD.

II. EXTREMIST PRESENCE IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

Scholars, non-governmental organizations, and journalists alike have illustrated time and again through their research the physical presence of FRE in all branches of the military dating back at least to the Vietnam War. In 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., a group of white soldiers in Vietnam dressed in KKK robes to celebrate his death.⁴⁶ Service members who chose to support FRE have committed ghastly acts against fellow service members and civilians in the name of white supremacy or some other anti-government sentiment. One of the most well-known cases of FRE committed by a member of the military community would be the bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma by U.S. Army veteran Timothy McVeigh. The truck bomb built by McVeigh and a few associates exploded outside the building in 1995 killing 168 men, women, and children, and injuring nearly 700 more. Almost 30 years later, the bombing is still considered the worst act of homegrown terrorism in the history of the United States.⁴⁷ Throughout 2022, there were more than 200 reports of domestic extremism in the military.⁴⁸ Even with this evidence, there are those who, including members of Congress, claim FRE is not an issue in the U.S. armed forces even though the evidence suggests otherwise. In opposition to an amendment to the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act aiming to address FRE in the armed forces, Representative Andy Biggs from Arizona argues, the amendment “attempts to create a problem when none exists.”⁴⁹

Contrary to Representative Biggs beliefs, this chapter presents evidence through case studies supporting the claim that FRE is present in the U.S. armed forces. These case studies also illustrate the ways in which FRE disrupts certain characteristics contributing

⁴⁶ James Maycock, “War Within War,” *The Guardian*, last modified September 14, 2001, <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2001/sep/15/weekend7.weekend3>.

⁴⁷ “Oklahoma City Bombing,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing>.

⁴⁸ Meghann Myers, “Domestic Extremism is Rare in the Military, ‘But It Is an Issue,’” *Military Times*, last modified December 7, 2022, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2022/12/07/domestic-extremism-is-rare-in-the-military-but-it-is-an-issue/>.

⁴⁹ Catie Edmondson, “House Passes \$840 Billion Military Policy Bill,” *New York Times*, last modified July 14, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/us/politics/house-military-policy-bill.html>.

to the efficient operation of the DOD, in particular morale and combat readiness, discipline and the ability to follow orders, and public trust and confidence.⁵⁰ This chapter will offer a case study from each service which includes the U.S. Coast Guard, a service under the jurisdiction of DHS with the exception of during wartime where it may be placed under DOD control if necessary.

A. SSGT JOSEPH MANNING AND SGT MICHAEL CHESNEY, USMC

In May 2017, two active-duty Marines, Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Michael Manning and Sergeant (Sgt) Joseph Chesney, scaled a building in Graham, North Carolina unfurling a banner from the roof displaying a symbol and slogan of white-nationalism, as shown in Figure 1.⁵¹ The building was across the street from the town's courthouse and the banner was intended to show support for a pro-Confederate rally.⁵² The banner read: "He who controls the past controls the future."⁵³ The banner also displayed a symbol of the Identitarian movement and the letters "YWNRU," meaning "You Will Not Replace Us."⁵⁴ Identitarianism, as Forrest Cullings explains, is viewed by far-right extremists "as a milder concept than white nationalism though it is eerily similar" whose "rhetoric centers on 'culture' and 'identity' rather than race."⁵⁵ The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) describes Identitarianism as a bigoted ideology that specifically endangers Muslims and

⁵⁰ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 9.

⁵¹ Aric Jenkins, "Man to Be Kicked Out of Marines After Unfurling White Supremacist Banner," *Time*, September 13, 2017, <https://time.com/4940709/joseph-manning-marines-white-supremacist-confederate-rally/>.

⁵² Groves, "Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally," *Task & Purpose*, April 19, 2018, <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/michael-chesny-charlottesville-white-nationalism/>.

⁵³ Groves, "Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally."

⁵⁴ Groves, "Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally."

⁵⁵ Forrest Cullings, "Alt-Right Influence on the Radicalization of White Nationalists in the United States, According to Significance Quest Theory" (master's thesis, Naval Post Graduate School, 2020), 31, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/65496>.

immigrants.⁵⁶ Both Marines were arrested by local police for trespassing. A few months later, however, during the infamous Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, protestors were filmed chanting the “You Will Not Replace Us” slogan.⁵⁷ Evidence suggests that Sgt Chesney was involved in organizing the August 2017 rally.⁵⁸ Ultimately, both Manning and Chesney were administratively separated from the Marine Corps due to their associations with far-right extremist groups, Manning in December 2017 and Chesney in April 2018.⁵⁹



Figure 1. Banner hung by SSgt Manning and Sgt Chesney⁶⁰

SSgt Manning and Sgt Chesney’s involvement in FRE was damaging to the Marine Corps, and the DOD writ large because of the spread of the idea and impact on other’s behavior. Damage done by Manning is significant due to his superior rank of Staff

⁵⁶ “Identitarianism,” Anti-Defamation League, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/identitarianism>.

⁵⁷ CNN, “Charlottesville Organizers Left Behind an ‘Enormous’ Paper Trail,” video, 7:13, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVo131blj4U>.

⁵⁸ Groves, “Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally.”

⁵⁹ Groves, “Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally.”

⁶⁰ Source: Isaac Groves, “Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally.”

Sergeant, a staff non-commissioned officer (SNCO). Stephen Bajza explains, “Marine SNCOs hold a position with special responsibilities, and they are due a greater level of respect.”⁶¹ SSgts have more direct leadership with junior enlisted Marines, are responsible for their Marines’ development, and are held to a higher standard of accountability.⁶² Sergeants are the highest rank of non-commissioned officers (NCO) in the Marine Corps. Meanwhile Chesney’s more junior rank does not exonerate him of the damage his participation in FRE has caused. Bajza describes the roles of Marine Corps NCOs through their creed:

I am an NCO, dedicated to training new Marines and influencing the old. I am forever conscious of each Marine under my charge, and by example will inspire him to the highest standards possible.

I will strive to be patient, understanding, just, and firm. I will commend the deserving and encourage the wayward.

I will never forget that I am responsible to my Commanding Officer for the morale, discipline and efficiency of my men. Their performance will reflect an image of me.⁶³

Marines who are members of such extremist groups that exhort racism towards Muslims and immigrants runs counter to the attributes the Marine Corps desires for their leaders.

Manning and Chesney’s membership in and representation of a white nationalist group jeopardizes morale and combat readiness, discipline and the ability to follow orders, and the public’s trust and confidence. Those in Manning and Chesney’s position would likely find it difficult to have discipline and follow orders from superiors who are Muslim or immigrants based on the premise of their ideology. But, all types of people serve in the U.S. armed forces, including Muslims and immigrants. In 2015, the Marine Corps had more than 500 Muslims serving.⁶⁴ Many immigrants choose military service as their

⁶¹ Stephen Bajza, “Enlisted Marine Corps Ranks,” Military.com, last modified July 21, 2023, <https://www.military.com/marine-corps/enlisted-ranks.html>.

⁶² Bajza, “Enlisted Marine Corps Ranks.”

⁶³ Bajza, “Enlisted Marine Corps Ranks.”

⁶⁴ Mariam Khan and Luis Martinez, “More than 5,000 Muslims Serving in the US Military, Pentagon Says,” ABC News, last modified December 8, 2015, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/5000-muslims-serving-us-military-pentagon/story?id=35654904>.

pathway to obtaining American citizenship. More than 10,000 U.S. service members were naturalized in 2022 alone.⁶⁵ Manning and Chesney's ideology and perspective may have undermined relationships by lowering moral and combat readiness among subordinates who were Muslim or immigrants.

Manning and Chesney's behavior can also erode the public's trust and confidence in the U.S. military institution by actively representing and promoting FRE ideologies. Minorities in the U.S. might interpret Manning and Chesney's behavior to mean that the U.S. armed forces will not protect minorities. Another dangerous aspect of this case study that erodes further the American peoples' trust and confidence is the fact that Sgt Chesney received training in explosives handling as he was an explosives ordnance technician.⁶⁶ Training someone who holds these extremist beliefs to use these dangerous materials introduces a higher level of risk and encourages the public to question the judgement and intent within the DOD. As *The New York Times* explained, "Across the board, extremists and their sympathizers, whether they act on their beliefs or just spread them, erode the public's trust in the institutions that are designed to keep the country safe."⁶⁷ Media in a democratic society is a site for public expression. Following these instances in the news reflects the public's trust in the defense institutions and are important indicators of the relationship.

B. LT CHRISTOPHER HASSON, USCG

Christopher Hasson had been a member of the military nearly his entire adult life. He served in the Marine Corps for a few years followed by two years in the Army National Guard.⁶⁸ When Hasson was arrested in 2019 for drugs and illegal weapons, he had been

⁶⁵ "Military Naturalization Statistics," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed July 24, 2023, <https://www.uscis.gov/military/military-naturalization-statistics>.

⁶⁶ Groves, "Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally."

⁶⁷ "Extremists in Uniform Put the Nation at Risk," *New York Times*, November 13, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/13/opinion/us-police-military-extremism.html>.

⁶⁸ "Christopher Paul Hasson," Counter Extremism Project, accessed May 16, 2023, <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/christopher-paul-hasson>.

serving in the USCG for over 20 years.⁶⁹ However, Hasson was privately espousing far-right extremist ideologies. According to the Counter Extremism Project, Hasson is “a self-proclaimed long-term white nationalist and former skinhead.”⁷⁰ According to a *Navy Times* article, Hasson, “apparently wrote to a neo-Nazi leader, Hasson identified himself as a white nationalist of more than 30 years and advocated for ‘focused violence’ in order to establish a ‘white homeland.’”⁷¹ What tipped off investigators from the USCG, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Justice was the fact that Hasson was researching information on Nazis, including Hitler, and Jewish communities within the United States using his government computer.⁷²

Hasson was influenced by the rampage committed in Norway by Anders Breivik, to the extent that he was taking recommendations based on Breivik’s manifesto.⁷³ When investigators searched Hasson’s home, 15 guns were found along with over 1,000 rounds of ammunition, as shown in Figure 2.⁷⁴ According to the Counter Extremism Project, Hasson was selecting targets through a hit list of distinguished Democratic politicians and was researching the security detail of Supreme Court justices, evidence that two branches of government were being threatened.⁷⁵ In another similarity to Breivik’s manifesto, Hasson even went as far as to stockpile pain medications, like opioids, and performance-enhancing drugs, like steroids and human growth hormones, presumably in an effort to boost his proficiency during an attack.⁷⁶ This evidence suggests that Hasson was preparing

⁶⁹ Lynh Bui, Dan Lamothe, and Michael Miller, “Coast Guard Lieutenant Used Work Computers in Alleged Planning of Widespread Domestic Terrorist Attack, Prosecutors Say,” *The Washington Post*, last modified February 21, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/ex-coast-guard-lieutenant-ordered-held-for-14-days-while-government-weighs-terrorism-related-charges-in-his-planning-of-widespread-terrorist-attack/2019/02/21/57918f12-3573-11e9-854a-7a14d7fec96a_story.html.

⁷⁰ Counter Extremism Project, “Christopher Paul Hasson.”

⁷¹ Michael Kunzelman, “Sentence Upheld for Former Coast Guard Officer Tied to Terror Plot,” *Navy Times*, last modified February 22, 2022, <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2022/02/22/sentence-upheld-for-former-coast-guard-officer-tied-to-terror-plot/>.

⁷² Counter Extremism Project, “Christopher Paul Hasson.”

⁷³ Counter Extremism Project, “Christopher Paul Hasson.”

⁷⁴ Counter Extremism Project, “Christopher Paul Hasson.”

⁷⁵ Counter Extremism Project, “Christopher Paul Hasson.”

⁷⁶ Counter Extremism Project, “Christopher Paul Hasson.”

for a domestic attack in the name of white-nationalism and FRE. There was no doubt he had the means to do so when the federal agencies foiled his plans. In the end, Hasson plead guilty to weapons and drug charges, and a judge sentenced him to 13 years in prison.⁷⁷



Figure 2. Weapons cache discovered during search at Hasson's apartment⁷⁸

Hasson's actions likely degraded the American public's trust and confidence in the armed forces. It would be difficult for a member of the American public to dismiss Hasson's actions and trust he and other service members like him, even after taking the Oath of Office, would act in the best interest of the United States, the Constitution, and the people. As Nan Levinson asserts, "Trust is paramount within the military and every service member is supposed to abide by a code of ethics, as well as by the Constitution, to which all of them swear an oath."⁷⁹ Furthermore, this is additional proof the DOD, in this case the DHS, needs to step-up its efforts in keeping extremists like Hasson, a trusted

⁷⁷ Kunzelman, "Sentence Upheld for Former Coast Guard Officer Tied to Terror Plot."

⁷⁸ Source: Kunzelman, "Sentence Upheld for Former Coast Guard Officer Tied to Terror Plot."

⁷⁹ Nan Levinson, "The US Military Has an Extremism Problem," *The Nation*, last modified July 19, 2023, <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/us-military-extremism-teixeira/>.

commissioned officer, from joining the armed forces and to continue doing extremism checks on those who are serving.

C. TSGT CORY REEVES, USAF

The U.S. Air Force also illustrates such problems when it comes to hidden FRE in its ranks that damages the characteristics for smooth operation. When Cory Reeves was uncovered as a white nationalist, he was a Master Sergeant in the Air Force. The rank of Master Sergeant is considered a senior non-commissioned officer (SRNCO), a position that is responsible for many important operations in the U.S. Air Force and for leading and mentoring airmen.⁸⁰ It was discovered by the Air Force's Office of Special Investigation (OSI) that Reeves, who had over 16 years of service, was the head of a Colorado chapter of Identity Evropa (IE).⁸¹ Christopher Adamczyk points out, "IE was considered one of the most prominent white nationalist groups in the United States."⁸² The ADL identifies IE as, "a white supremacist group that was active under that name from 2016 to 2019."⁸³ As David Roza explains about the ideology of IE, "its members believe white people should maintain supermajorities in Europe and the U.S."⁸⁴ Identity Evropa now refers to themselves as the American Identitarian Movement.⁸⁵ According to the *Air Force Times*, Reeves was an active participant and fund-raiser for IE, he wore their clothing, took part in protests, and distributed propaganda.⁸⁶ Furthermore, photos posted by Reeves on the

⁸⁰ Stephen Bajza, "Air Force Enlisted Ranks," Military.com, accessed May 19, 2023, <https://www.military.com/air-force/enlisted-ranks.html#:~:text=Enlisted%20Air%20Force%20ranks%20are,the%20grade%20of%20E%2D5>.

⁸¹ David Roza, "Air Force Finally Kicks Out Senior NCO Demoted for White Nationalist Ties," Task & Purpose, last modified September 10, 2020, <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/air-force-white-nationalist-discharged/>.

⁸² Christopher Adamczyk, "God versus Titans: Ideological Indicators of Identitarian Violence" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020), 44, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/66032>.

⁸³ "Identity Evropa," Anti-Defamation League, accessed May 21, 2023, <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/identity-evropa>.

⁸⁴ Roza, "Air Force Finally Kicks Out Senior NCO Demoted for White Nationalist Ties."

⁸⁵ Anti-Defamation League, "Identity Evropa."

⁸⁶ Stephen Losey, "Demoted Master Sergeant with White Nationalist Ties is Now Out of the Air Force," *Air Force Times*, last modified September 9, 2020, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/09/09/demoted-master-sergeant-with-white-nationalist-ties-is-now-out-of-the-air-force/>.

internet were discovered showing him and a group of people painting the IE logo under an overpass in Denver.⁸⁷ In the end, Reeves was reduced in rank to Technical Sergeant and ultimately separated from the Air Force.⁸⁸

Reeves' active participation in a white nationalist group jeopardized morale, combat readiness, and public trust and confidence. His ideology is in direct conflict with the responsibilities of his rank, which would degrade morale and combat readiness amongst those under his leadership. As Bajza describes, "Air Force SRNCOs are expected to set the highest standards of personal integrity, loyalty, leadership, dedication and devotion to duty, including upholding Air Force policies, traditions, and standards."⁸⁹ If Reeve's racist ideology permeated into his behavior and attitude on duty, then his interaction with any of the 29 percent of the Air Force who are minorities could have degraded morale.⁹⁰ Some important studies have highlighted racism in military institutions. According to a 2020 study conducted by the Air Force, race and ethnicity were found to be correlating factors for disparities that exist amongst those groups.⁹¹ It is important to note, racism at grassroots among service member is part of the problem.

Reeves' position in Identity Evropa wore down the public's trust and confidence in the armed forces. As *The Washington Post* reported and reflected, "Reeves repeatedly referenced an 'ethnostate' in the (sic) his alleged posts. He also appeared to mock people in interracial relationships, including his own family members."⁹² The American people

⁸⁷ Roza, "Air Force Finally Kicks Out Senior NCO Demoted for White Nationalist Ties."

⁸⁸ Losey, "Demoted Master Sergeant with White Nationalist Ties is Now Out of the Air Force."

⁸⁹ Bajza, "Air Force Enlisted Ranks."

⁹⁰ Rachel Cohen, "Air Force Finds Hurdles to Success for Women, Hispanics, Other Minorities in Second Disparity Review," Air Force Times, last modified September 9, 2021, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2021/09/09/air-force-finds-hurdles-to-success-for-women-hispanics-other-minorities-in-second-disparity-review/#:~:text=As%20of%20June%2030%2C%20the,identify%20as%20Hispanic%20or%20Latino>.

⁹¹ "Department of the Air Force Releases Reports on Racial Disparity Review Update, Second Disparity Review," Department of the Air Force, September 9, 2021, <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2769127/department-of-the-air-force-releases-reports-on-racial-disparity-review-update/>.

⁹² Katie Shepherd, "An Airman was Accused of Spreading White-Nationalist Propaganda. He's Been Demoted but is Allowed to Continue Serving," *The Washington Post*, last modified November 20, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/11/20/air-force-airman-accused-white-nationalist-propaganda-identity-evropa-demoted/>.

need to have complete faith in their military, that it serves in their best interest and in the best interest of the country. They should not be worried that people like Reeves, the chapter leader of a far-right extremist group, are able to join the armed forces and promote like he did to the SRNCO rank. Cases like this illustrate why the DOD should consider implementing more extensive and continuous background checks on members of the armed forces to ensure they are maintaining the standard of conduct the American people expect out of their military.

D. SPC KILLIAN MACKETHAN RYAN, USA

Killian Mackeithan Ryan, a 21-year old U.S. Army Specialist, was serving in the Army's prestigious 82nd Airborne when he was discharged for online extremist posts. According to a *Rolling Stones* article written shortly following Ryan's separation, "he was a self-avowed racist who was communicating with other online extremists and claiming he'd joined the military to practice killing black people."⁹³ During an investigation conducted by a local Joint Terrorism Task Force in North Carolina, it was discovered that Ryan was using multiple Instagram accounts to contact other accounts linked to racially extremist ideologies. The username on one of Ryan's accounts was "naziace1488."⁹⁴ According to the ADL, "1488 is a combination of two popular white supremacist numeric symbols. The first symbol is 14, which is shorthand for the '14 Word' slogan: 'We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.' The second is 88, which stands for 'Heil Hitler' (H being the 8th letter of the alphabet)."⁹⁵

Similar to the cases above, Ryan's actions degraded the American peoples' trust and confidence they should have in its armed forces to operate in the best interest of all people they are sworn to protect. The American people should be able to have complete

⁹³ Adam Rawnsley and Seamus Hughes, "The Justice Department Got Creative to Rid the Army of a Self-Avowed 'Nazi'," *Rolling Stone*, last modified September 2, 2022, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/military-extremism-nazi-arrest-justice-department-1234586141/>.

⁹⁴ Ben Finley, "FBI: Soldier Linked to Racist Post, Extremism," *The Associated Press*, last modified September 8, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/social-media-race-and-ethnicity-racial-injustice-north-carolina-0dd30cfedd6d9039c39cd27dd83e94f7>.

⁹⁵ "1488," Anti-Defamation League, accessed June 4, 2023, <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/1488>.

confidence the DOD and the U.S. Army are allowing only the best candidates to pursue careers in military service. The evidence suggests that Ryan had no interest in serving honorably for the greater good of the country or its people in the same manner as many other honorable service members. Instead, Ryan chose, as his own words suggest, to serve in the armed forces endangering those his ideology deems to be less important, such as African Americans. African Americans account for roughly 21 percent of the U.S. Army's active-duty personnel in 2020.⁹⁶ Additionally, in 2017, 16 percent of the entire U.S. armed forces were African American.⁹⁷ Ryan's case study is another example supporting the need for an improved, expanded screening process for those wishing to enter military service.

E. EXTREMISM AT SEA

The Navy is one of the more unique branches of the DOD in that it is the only branch required to be segregated out to sea for months at a time. Though it is exceptionally rare for a ship to remain at sea for extended times, USS Nimitz spent 321 days at sea due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fearing that if the ship made a port call there may be a risk of the virus making it aboard the ship.⁹⁸ The Navy's secluded way of life requires extensive effort to maintain a high level of morale, combat readiness, and discipline to accomplish the missions its tasked with. In spite of this unique aspect of living, the Navy has had its own tribulations with FRE. In the last few years there have been multiple instances of extremism onboard Navy ships. In 2021, USS Lake Champlain and USS Carl Vinson each experienced cases of extremism.⁹⁹ USS Laboon also faced a bout with extremism in 2023. Such cases negatively impacted the morale, combat readiness, and discipline of each ship's

⁹⁶ "Black Americans in the U.S. Army," United States Army, accessed July 31, 2023, <https://www.army.mil/blackamericans/#:~:text=PRESENT%20DAY,representation%20in%20the%20U.S.%20population.>

⁹⁷ Amanda Barroso, "The Changing Profile of the U.S. Military: Smaller in Size, More Diverse, More Women in Leadership," Pew Research Center, last modified September 10, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/09/10/the-changing-profile-of-the-u-s-military/>.

⁹⁸ Jim Garamone, "Austin Praises Nimitz Carrier Strike Group for Record-Breaking Deployment," Department of Defense, last modified February 25, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2516467/austin-praises-nimitz-carrier-strike-group-for-record-breaking-deployment/>.

⁹⁹ Lolita Baldor, "Navy Commanders Address 2 Racist Incidents on West Coast," Associated Press, last modified February 9, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-navy-lloyd-austin-e5ee69e5f9b67d0eddd0ac2b9f9d61fe>.

crew who are separated from others at sea, and negatively impacted those ships' ability to accomplish their assigned missions.

In the case of the USS Lake Champlain, a noose was found on a black sailor's bed, also known as a rack.¹⁰⁰ The ship remained at port in San Diego until Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) could investigate the matter, which was handled expeditiously.¹⁰¹ After being tipped off, investigators identified the sailor responsible who eventually confessed to the racist act and was ultimately removed from the ship.¹⁰² The sailor's status in the Navy remains unknown. Regarding the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, an unknown sailor wrote hate speech on a wall of a bathroom onboard the ship.¹⁰³ The sailor responsible for this blatant case of extremism has never been identified. The most recent case of extremism onboard a Navy ship involved the USS Laboon. In February 2023, there were three separate incidents of a noose being found on the same sailor's rack.¹⁰⁴ The person or persons responsible for these actions has yet to be identified and will likely never be held accountable.

Such cases of extremist behavior onboard U.S. Navy ships undoubtedly had an impact on morale, combat readiness, and discipline. It would be completely logical to assume that some, if not many, members of the crew felt a sense of demoralization, especially those categorized as minorities. Demoralized sailors can lead to a less combat ready ship; it is possible these sailors would be less willing to go into harm's way risking their own lives for a ship and crew that they feel discriminated by in their hate speech. Admiral Mike Gilday, the Navy's Chief of Naval Operations, cautions, "If we must first

¹⁰⁰ Jeff Schogol, "USS Lake Champlain Crew Member Admits to Hanging a Noose at a Black Sailor's Bunk," Task & Purpose, last modified February 3, 2021, <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/sailor-uss-lake-champlain-noose/>.

¹⁰¹ Schogol, "USS Lake Champlain Crew Member Admits to Hanging a Noose at a Black Sailor's Bunk."

¹⁰² Schogol, "USS Lake Champlain Crew Member Admits to Hanging a Noose at a Black Sailor's Bunk."

¹⁰³ Baldor, "Navy Commanders Address 2 Racist Incidents on West Coast."

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Lehrfeld, "Hangman's Noose Discovered Aboard Norfolk-Based Destroyer," Navy Times, last modified March 1, 2023, <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2023/03/01/navy-responds-to-hate-symbol-incidents-on-norfolk-based-destroyer/>.

question the intentions of our shipmate standing watch with us, now, and especially, when taking fire, we will fail when the Nation needs us most in combat.”¹⁰⁵ In the Navy, the ships’ crews rely heavily on one another to get through the difficult times inherent of life at sea. Addressing such issues is likely to improve the crew’s morale. In the cases of USS Carl Vinson and USS Laboon, because the culprits were never identified, it is feasible to assume this damaged morale knowing these people are still onboard the ships and that some crew members are complicit in these actions. For these reasons, the Navy needs to have improved recruit screenings and some form of periodic background check throughout a sailor’s career.

F. CONCLUSION

These cases illustrate the risks of FRE in the ranks and suggest that perhaps the DOD policies are not sufficient for solving the problem. The DOD must get more serious when it comes to properly screening individuals who are joining the military. Furthermore, the evidence in some of these case studies suggests service members should be screened time and again throughout their career. In a September 2022 article from the Associated Press, names of over 100 service members were discovered on a membership list of the far-right group the Oath Keepers.¹⁰⁶ This scale of participation of service members in FRE from a single far-right extremist group illustrates the potential for thousands of service members being involved in FRE across the entire spectrum of groups emanating extremism. In all, these individuals have the capacity to cause significant harm across the DOD if more focused screenings are not put in place.

¹⁰⁵ Mike Gilday, “CNO Message to the Fleet Regarding Extremism,” The United States Navy, February 9, 2021, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Statements/display-statements/Article/2498904/cno-message-to-the-fleet-regarding-extremism/>.

¹⁰⁶ Alanna Richer and Michael Kunzelman, “Elected Officials, Police Chiefs on Leaked Oath Keepers List,” The Associated Press, last modified September 7, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/oath-keepers-leaked-membership-rolls-2ca4195ed3a10e45dd189bf98f3e5a26>.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. ASSESSING DOD AND DON COUNTER-EXTREMISM DOCTRINE

The federal investigations that followed the events of January 6, 2021 discovered a relatively significant number of veterans and active-duty personnel took part in the attack. However, the DOD's policy toward extremism has remained unchanged, as the broad policy has always decried extremism in the services. More than 100 people who have served or are actively serving in the U.S. armed forces have been sentenced for their participation in the January 6th attack.¹⁰⁷ Arguably, the DOD has taken action and enhanced its efforts to reduce far-right extremist activity in the armed forces. These changes targeted the directives that support the policy. To be sure, a very limited number of directives, instructions, and regulations exist that directly address extremist activity throughout the DOD and the Navy, one and three respectively. Other directives, instructions, and regulations do not directly address extremism, still they contribute to the overall objective of the policy, as this chapter shows.

However, the absolute number of policies that exist is not an important metric for judging policy effectiveness. The more important consideration is whether these documents meet the policy requirements necessary to reduce and eliminate extremism in the ranks of the armed forces. Ultimately, this chapter intends to identify and assess current directives, instructions, regulations, and memoranda implemented by the DOD and the Navy to eradicate FRE from the armed forces. Assessing the DOD and the Navy's doctrine countering extremism aids this thesis in providing recommendations.

A. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INITIATIVES

The DOD is responsible for establishing and disseminating the broad policy on extremism to the entirety of the U.S. armed forces. The DOD's policy on extremism is the foundation in which all extremism doctrine are developed, including doctrine written by

¹⁰⁷ Michael Kunzelman, "Marine Capitol Rioter Gets 1 Hour of Community Service for Each of 279 Marine Civil War Casualties," Associated Press, last modified September 11, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/hellonen-coomer-abate-marines-capitol-riot-sentencings-d8a7f1a228dd94a82f4381d318fe7b2f>.

each of the service branches. There are times when this policy requires updating, which is the DOD's responsibility as they are overall in charge in developing the DOD's extremism policy. In all, the DOD's responsibility on extremism can be summed up as follows:

Since 1969, the Department of Defense has provided policy guidance that enumerates the prohibition of specific activities by members of the Armed Forces. Over the subsequent five decades, that guidance has been routinely updated in response to significant events. In 1986, in response to the White Patriot Party's weapons theft incident, the guidance was updated with an addition of "prohibited activities." Later in the mid-1990s, following a series of high-profile incidents, additional points were added to clarify the investigative authorities that commanders had at their disposal while also ensuring that all military departments implemented training on these policies.¹⁰⁸

Updates that improve the policy are necessary because the previous policy may have been deemed insufficient following significant events, like that of January 6th. Furthermore, the reasoning for these ever-evolving instructions is to "provide guidance to commanders and guidelines for military personnel regarding prohibited and dangerous activities—including violence, actions that undermine good order and discipline, and the inequitable treatment of service members."¹⁰⁹

The following sections examine those DOD regulations that directly or indirectly challenge extremism, including instructions that were updated following the attack on the Capitol and the memoranda that were published by the DOD. These regulations illustrate what actions are banned, how COs can address extremism within their unit, the desired qualifications the DOD is looking for in recruits, and how to properly utilize criminal background checks for recruits. These are all ways in which the DOD combats extremism. At the conclusion of the DOD section, an assessment will be made on the DOD's doctrine countering extremism.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Defense, *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), 5, <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Dec/20/2002912573/-1/-1/0/report-on-countering-extremist-activity-within-the-department-of-defense.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ Department of Defense, *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense*, 6.

1. DOD Instruction 1325.06 – Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities among Members of the Armed Forces

In response to the January 6th attack, Secretary Austin's April 9, 2021 memorandum directed the DOD to update Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1325.06 to improve its ability to counter extremism in the ranks of the armed forces. Leadership at the DOD likely felt it necessary to update DODI 1325.06 as it is the primary DOD document responsible for instituting the DOD's policy towards extremism. According to the memo, "the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) and the General Council (GC) will review and update DODI 1325.06 to revise its definition of prohibited extremist activities among uniformed military personnel."¹¹⁰ The update was completed and the instruction was released in December 2021. The newly improved version of the instruction explicitly discusses extremism as it was given its own section, a change from the previous version. It is important to assess the primary DOD instruction on extremism as it will allow an understanding of the DOD's thought process is when it comes to facing extremism.

DODI 1325.06 extensively details the DOD's policy towards extremism, the damage the armed forces suffer due to extremism (as discussed in Chapter I), continues to provide commanding officers the tools to maintain good order and discipline, and specifically defines prohibited extremist activities and active participation.¹¹¹ DODI 1325.06 plainly lays out the DOD's four-point policy on extremism as follows:

- a) The Department of Defense shall safeguard the security of the United States;
- b) A Service member's right of expression should be preserved to the maximum extent possible in accordance with the First Amendment of the

¹¹⁰ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group" (official memorandum, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Apr/09/2002617921/-1/-1/1/memorandum-immediate-actions-to-counter-extremism-in-the-department-and-the-establishment-of-the-countering-extremism-working-group.pdf>.

¹¹¹ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, DOD Instruction 1325.06 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021).

Constitution and Statutory provisions of titles 10 and 18, United States Code and consistent with good order and discipline and the national security;

c) A commander must not be indifferent to conduct that, if allowed to proceed unchecked, would destroy or diminish the effectiveness of his or her unit;

d) The proper balancing of these interests depends largely upon the calm and prudent judgment of the responsible commander.¹¹²

In short, the U.S. views extremism, both within the DOD and throughout the public writ large, as a threat to U.S. national security.

Giving commanders the authority to handle extremism within their unit is a vital component to the DOD's fight against extremism. DODI 1325.06 states:

Commanders have the authority and responsibility to prohibit Service members from active participation in extremist activities, and other activities that adversely affect good order and discipline within the command. This includes, but is not limited to, the authority to order the removal of symbols, flags, posters, or other displays from military-controlled areas, to place areas or activities off-limits, and to order Service members not to participate in activities that are contrary to the good order and discipline of the unit, or pose a threat to the health, safety, and security of military personnel or a military installation.¹¹³

These broad powers given to commanders are necessary because it is impossible for the DOD to imagine every possible scenario that may involve extremism. Therefore, commanders are entrusted by the DOD to impartially determine what actions may run counter to good order and discipline.

If they see fit, Commanders are authorized to take administrative or punitive actions against service members who take part in prohibited extremist activities.¹¹⁴ Punitive actions may involve taking the service member through the non-judicial punishment (NJP)

¹¹² Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 1–2.

¹¹³ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 11.

¹¹⁴ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

process. For administrative actions, DODI 1325.06 states, “Adverse administrative action may include involuntary separation, reassignment, loss of security clearance, denial of reenlistment, and other administrative or disciplinary actions deemed appropriate by the commander.”¹¹⁵

When possible, commanders are expected to intervene when the actions of service members within their unit are bordering on active participation or has the potential to disrupt good order and discipline.¹¹⁶ The DOD suggests that commanders should attempt to intervene early through counseling and education.¹¹⁷ DODI 1325.06 states, “commanders may advise Service members that extremist activities are inconsistent with the military’s goals, beliefs, and values, as well as the oaths of office and enlistment.”¹¹⁸ Furthermore, DODI 1325.06 states that commanders may inform service members that their taking part in prohibited extremist activities:

- a) Will be taken into consideration when evaluating duty performance, to include appropriate remarks on evaluation reports;
- b) Will be taken into consideration when selections for positions of leadership and responsibility or military educational opportunities are made;
- c) Will result in a report to the appropriate agency for possible revocation of security clearance, which may lead to separation from the Armed Forces;
- d) May result in reassignment;
- e) May result in reclassification or bar to reenlistment actions, as appropriate;

¹¹⁵ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

¹¹⁶ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

¹¹⁷ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

¹¹⁸ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

f) Will result in reports to law enforcement and/or counterintelligence authorities, as appropriate.¹¹⁹

Lastly, the DOD suggests that commanders should utilize tools like mental health evaluations to aid these service members.¹²⁰

New to this instruction is the defining of prohibited extremist activities and active participation, which are much more extensive than in the previous version of this instruction.¹²¹ For extremist activities, the DOD prohibits personnel, military and civilian, from advocating or taking part in unlawful activities that robs people of their individual rights.¹²² The DOD also prohibits using violence towards achieving goals based in political, religious, discriminatory, or ideological goals.¹²³ Promoting, taking part in, or supporting terrorism, or attempting to overthrow or illegally alter federal, state, or local governments is forbidden.¹²⁴ DODI 1325.06 prohibits service members from advocating for or encouraging DOD personnel to impede military activities through breaking laws and disregarding lawful orders and regulations.¹²⁵ A final addition prohibits advocating for bigotry of any kind.¹²⁶

Regarding active participation in extremism, DODI 1325.06 has prohibited participation in fourteen activities.

¹¹⁹ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

¹²⁰ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 12.

¹²¹ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 9–10.

¹²² Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 9.

¹²³ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 9.

¹²⁴ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 10.

¹²⁵ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 10.

¹²⁶ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 10.

a) Advocating or engaging in the use or threat of unlawful force or violence in support of extremist activities.

b) Advocating for, or providing material support or resources to, individuals or organizations that promote or threaten the unlawful use of force or violence in support of extremist activities, with the intent to support such promotion or threats.

c) Knowingly communicating information that compromises the operational security of any military organization or mission, in support of extremist activities.

d) Recruiting or training others to engage in extremist activities.

e) Fundraising for or making personal contributions through donations of any kind (including but not limited to the solicitation, collection, or payment of fees or dues) to, a group or organization that engages in extremist activities, with the intent to support those activities.

f) Creating, organizing, or taking a leadership role in a group or organization that engages in or advocates for extremist activities, with knowledge of those activities.

g) Actively demonstrating or rallying in support of extremist activities (but not merely observing such demonstrations or rallies as a spectator).

h) Attending a meeting or activity with the knowledge that the meeting or activity involves extremist activities, with the intent to support those activities:

1) When the nature of the meeting or activity constitutes a breach of law and order;

2) When a reasonable person would determine the meeting or activity is likely to result in violence; or

3) In violation of off-limits sanctions or other lawful orders.

i) Distributing literature or other promotional materials, on or off a military installation, the primary purpose and content of which is to advocate for extremist activities, with the intent to promote that advocacy.

j) Knowingly receiving material support or resources from a person or organization that advocates or actively participates in extremist activities with the intent to use the material support or resources in support of extremist activities.

k) When using a government communications system and with the intent to support extremist activities, knowingly accessing internet websites or other materials that promote or advocate extremist activities.

l) Knowingly displaying paraphernalia, words, or symbols in support of extremist activities or in support of groups or organizations that support extremist activities, such as flags, clothing, tattoos, and bumper stickers, whether on or off a military installation.

m) Engaging in electronic and cyber activities regarding extremist activities, or groups that support extremist activities—including posting, liking, sharing, re-tweeting, or otherwise distributing content—when such action is taken with the intent to promote or otherwise endorse extremist activities. Military personnel are responsible for the content they publish on all personal and public Internet domains, including social media sites, blogs, websites, and applications.

n) Knowingly taking any other action in support of, or engaging in, extremist activities, when such conduct is prejudicial to good order and discipline or is service-discrediting.¹²⁷

The previous version of DODI 1325.06 was more ambiguous when it came to identifying which extremist activities are banned, hence the ordered update. The updated DOD instruction makes it easier for COs to identify when a service member violates the orders and regulations concerning extremism. Furthermore, the DOD instruction codifying which extremist activities are prohibited provides continuity across all branches of service, including the USCG. This prevents different regulations existing between each of the branches, thereby reducing any ambiguity determining banned extremist activities.

2. DOD Instruction 1304.26 – Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction

Establishing standards to ensure that recruits at least have the minimum qualities necessary for service is a pivotal step in keeping those with extremist viewpoints out of the U.S. armed forces. DODI 1304.26 is the primary instruction that sets these minimum standards. Furthermore, a policy withing DODI 1304.26 assists in the DOD’s policy on FRE mentioned in DODI 1325.06. Therefore, it is necessary to assess this instruction’s

¹²⁷ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 10–11.

efficacy. That policy, according to DODI 1304.26, is to “Judge the suitability of individuals to serve in the Military Services on the basis of their adaptability, potential to perform, and conduct.”¹²⁸ The U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPS) is responsible to the DOD and the service branches for enforcing the standards this instruction establishes.¹²⁹

Among other things, the character and conduct section of this instruction should be the dominant standard keeping those with extremist ideologies out of the armed forces. When it comes to character and conduct, DODI 1304.26 states:

The underlying purpose of these enlistment, appointment, and induction standards is to minimize entrance of persons who are likely to become disciplinary cases, security risks, or who are likely to disrupt good order, morale, and discipline. The Military Services are responsible for the defense of the Nation and should not be viewed as a source of rehabilitation for those who have not subscribed to the legal and moral standards of society at-large.¹³⁰

The DOD’s concerns regarding those with questionable character and conduct can be linked to the attributes of many types of people, especially those who advocate for the proliferation of far-right extremist ideology, as was illustrated throughout each of the case studies.

The DOD offers a conduct waiver to those who may have gotten in trouble with law enforcement in the past which may be allowing applicants with past extremist behavior the ability to join the armed forces. DODI 1304.26 states, “the Military Services may require information about the ‘who, what, when, where, and why’ of the offense in question; and letters of recommendation from responsible community leaders, such as school officials, clergy and law enforcement officials, attesting to the applicant’s character or suitability for enlistment.”¹³¹ The DOD has 4 categories of offenses: traffic offenses,

¹²⁸ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, DOD Instruction 1304.26 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), 2.

¹²⁹ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 5.

¹³⁰ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 9.

¹³¹ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 11.

non-traffic offenses, misconduct offenses, and major misconduct offenses.¹³² An applicant is required to submit a conduct waiver if they have committed one or more major misconduct offenses, two or more misconduct offenses, or if there has been a pattern of misconduct.¹³³ Patterns of misconduct are delineated as, “one misconduct offense and four non-traffic offenses,” or “five or more non-traffic offenses.”¹³⁴ However, a conduct waiver is not always authorized. DODI 1304.26 emphasizes an applicant is ineligible if they have, “a State or federal conviction, or a finding of guilty in a juvenile adjudication, for a felony crime of rape, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, any other sexual offense, or when the disposition requires the person to register as a sex offender.”¹³⁵ These are the only specified crimes that can prevent someone from applying to the armed forces. As it relates to FRE, an applicant is able to submit a conduct waiver for past offenses involving hate crimes and violations of civil rights. There are many other offenses that could relate to extremism like unlawful assembly or vandalism however, there is no direct mention of extremism.¹³⁶

3. DODI 1304.23 – Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record for Military Recruiting Purposes

Reviewing criminal records helps prevent recruits with FRE ideologies from joining the armed forces. Investigating each recruit’s criminal history is a required phase in the recruiting process. DODI 1304.23 governs background checks for members of the armed forces. More specifically, DODI 1304.23 is the directive requiring all persons applying for military service to submit to a background check which makes assessing the efficiency of this instruction important to this thesis. The directive states, “It is DOD policy that the Military Services review the background of applicants for enlistment and

¹³² Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 13-16.

¹³³ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 11.

¹³⁴ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 11.

¹³⁵ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 9.

¹³⁶ Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 13-16.

participation in special access programs.”¹³⁷ The DOD states that it wants to identify applicants:

- a) Whose backgrounds pose questions as to qualification for service...or suitability for participation in special access programs;
- b) Whose backgrounds indicate they may pose a threat to national security or have links to terrorist or criminal organizations;
- c) Who may not enlist in the Military Services unless an exception is authorized;
- d) Who try to enlist fraudulently.¹³⁸

Per the instruction, “information is used to determine whether applicants are acceptable for military service and for consideration of assignment to special access programs.”¹³⁹

There are three guidelines the military services must follow to obtain and handle criminal history records. First, records can only be gathered from two sources, the criminal justice system and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).¹⁴⁰ Second, confidentiality of the records must be ensured and may only be disclosed for the purpose of recruiting.¹⁴¹ Additionally, the OPM, with the help of MEPS, is responsible for providing to the service branches the results of the background check that will then determine whether applicants are a good fit for serving in the military.¹⁴² Furthermore, the OPM is responsible for providing the Central Adjudication Facilities with two pieces of information, the National Agency Checks with Law and the Credit and Single Scope Background Investigations, that

¹³⁷ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, DOD Instruction 1304.23 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2005), 2.

¹³⁸ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 2.

¹³⁹ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 5.

¹⁴¹ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 5.

¹⁴² Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 5.

will help determine whether a recruit is eligible for a security clearance that is necessary for accessing classified information.¹⁴³ The final guideline simply states that this information should all be provided in accordance with the DOD's Personnel Security Program.¹⁴⁴ Alone, however, the criminal background check will likely not find extremists who do not possess a criminal record.

4. Memo – Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks

Secretary Austin released this memo to the entire armed forces as the first response to the January 6th attack that occurred at the Capitol. Assessing this memo will help determine if the DOD is trending in a direction that helps reduce extremism in the ranks. The purpose of this memo was to reinforce “the importance of the constitutionally required oath of office for all members of the Total Force and underscored the incompatibility of extremist activities with that oath.”¹⁴⁵ In essence, the goal of this memo was to recalibrate all service members to remind them of the DOD's stance on extremism. Commanders were instructed to address their entire commands within 60 days.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, commanders were directed to utilize the now revised DODI 1325.06, formerly known as “Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces,” as a guide to drive the discussions during the stand-down.¹⁴⁷ The intent of these discussions were: 1) to reiterate the oath of office all service members take, 2) to illustrate prohibited behaviors and activities, and 3) to outline the procedures necessary for reporting extremist behavior as described in DODI 1325.06.¹⁴⁸ This memo also directs commanders to attentively listen

¹⁴³ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 5.

¹⁴⁵ Department of Defense, *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Lloyd Austin, “Stand Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks.”

¹⁴⁷ Lloyd Austin, “Stand Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks.”

¹⁴⁸ Department of Defense, *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense*, 6.

to any “concerns, experience, and possible solutions” offered by their subordinates.¹⁴⁹ Frank conversations in the armed forces are needed from time-to-time to help address problems it may be facing.

5. Memo – Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group

Two months after ordering the extremism stand-down, Secretary Austin issued a second memo targeting extremism throughout the DOD. As with the first memo, assessing this memo will further help determine if the DOD is trending in a direction that helps reduce extremism in the ranks. Secretary Austin’s second memo concentrated on two main areas: 1) Immediate Actions, and 2) the Countering Extremism Working Group (CEWG).¹⁵⁰ The memo orders changes to be made at all levels of service, from recruits to active-duty members to veterans, to make it more difficult for extremism to consider the armed forces a safe haven which is in accordance with the DOD’s policy on FRE.

Secretary Austin directed four immediate actions. The first was to revise DOD Instruction 1325.06, updating the definition of prohibited extremist activity (which Section A.1 of this chapter describes in detail).¹⁵¹ Concurrently, the DOD is considering the idea of implementing regulations aimed at DOD employees.¹⁵² If approved, civilians working for the DOD will be held accountable if they sympathize with extremist ideologies. Second, regarding service members who are leaving active-duty, each military branch was required to provide training to the soon-to-be veterans on the possibility of being targeted by extremist groups.¹⁵³ This immediate action also includes the development of a process in which veterans may report recruitment attempts by these extremist groups, however, this

¹⁴⁹ Department of Defense, *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁵¹ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁵² Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁵³ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

process will only be voluntary.¹⁵⁴ Training opportunities like this would be beneficial to the armed forces in that service members would be able to provide counterintelligence on the methods in which extremist groups target veterans. Additionally, keeping veterans away from extremist groups is beneficial in that these groups would not be able to use a veterans' knowledge and training to advance extremist ideologies. Third, the memo required that, "The Secretaries of the Military Departments will update and standardize accession screening questionnaires to solicit specific information about current or previous extremist behavior."¹⁵⁵ Updated questions should be able to collect information that ensures only the best are recruited for military service and clarifies that providing answers that are knowingly false is grounds for punishment through the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) under fraudulent enlistment.¹⁵⁶ Lastly, Secretary Austin's memo ordered the commissioning of a study by an outside organization to study extremist behavior throughout the entirety of the DOD.¹⁵⁷ The goal of this study was to understand the extent of the extremism problem within the DOD.¹⁵⁸ Determining the scope of extremism in the DOD is a necessary immediate action that will likely lead to further action reducing its presence.

Secretary Austin's memo also created the "Countering Extremism Working Group" within the DOD.¹⁵⁹ The establishment of the CEWG had two purposes. The first was to "oversee the implementation of the immediate actions" outlined in the memo.¹⁶⁰ The

¹⁵⁴ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁵⁵ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁵⁶ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁵⁷ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁵⁸ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁵⁹ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁶⁰ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

second was to develop “mid-term and long-term recommendations for continued engagement” with extremism within the DOD.¹⁶¹ The recommendations were to be made focusing on four main efforts, or as the memo refers to them, “Lines of Effort” (LOE).¹⁶² LOE 1 focused on “military justice and policy.”¹⁶³ Specifically, it sought to analyze whether current regulations and the UCMJ are sufficient or require updating.

LOE 2 centered on “Support and Oversight of Insider Threat Program” and has three components.¹⁶⁴ First, according to the memo, this LOE focused on methods the DOD could use to aid in improving information gathering and dissemination with the DODs Service Insider Threat Programs, law enforcement and security agencies, and military commanders and civilian supervisors.¹⁶⁵ Second, in regards to reporting dangerous behaviors with DOD personnel, civilian and military, the CEWG worked towards improving and promoting Insider Threat Programs and Direct Awareness Campaign.¹⁶⁶ Lastly, this LOE directed the CEWG to “explore standards of conduct and expectations for social media use and reporting in the Department.”¹⁶⁷

Screen Capability is the topic for LOE 3, which focused on those wanting to join the military and those already in the military looking to fill billets that fall under the national security umbrella.¹⁶⁸ The focus with this LOE was to provide recommendations

¹⁶¹ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶² Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶³ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶⁴ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶⁵ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶⁶ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶⁷ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

¹⁶⁸ Lloyd Austin, “Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group.”

in the establishment of methodology that can screen publicly accessible information, including information gathered from social media platforms.¹⁶⁹

Finally, LOE 4 is aimed towards Education and Training.¹⁷⁰ This line of effort did two things. First, it updated training for countering extremist activity and Insider Threats at all levels of DOD leadership. Second, using the lessons learned from the extremism stand-down, the CEWG was to make recommendations on upgrading training and education requirements.¹⁷¹ Together, these immediate actions and efforts will likely improve the DOD's posture against extremism.

B. EVALUATING DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INITIATIVES ON EXTREMISM

The memos and instructions put forth by the DOD and Secretary Austin appear encouraging in progressing towards the vision of an extremist-free armed forces. Regarding the DOD's efforts, Casey Bubala agrees, "The current efforts being taken to eradicate extremism from the U.S. armed forces are a promising first step."¹⁷² However, it will likely take some time and patience to understand their full impacts. Evaluating the current DOD doctrine on extremism is an important step in providing recommendations the DOD can improve upon.

The reviewed instructions provide some great methods in countering extremism. However, the instructions also have some areas that need to be addressed. Regarding DODI 1325.06, the improved list of prohibited activities and what constitutes active participation is an excellent addition, but there is currently no way to validate whether service members

¹⁶⁹ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁷⁰ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁷¹ Lloyd Austin, "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group."

¹⁷² Casey Bubala, "White Nationalism Among U.S. Armed Forces: An Analysis of DOD Response Effectiveness" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2022), 57, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/71048>.

are abiding by those prohibitions, even with criminal background checks directed by DODI 1304.23.

DODI 1304.26 does an excellent job in thoroughly laying out the type of recruits the DOD is looking for, but issues arise when discussing conduct waivers. There is no mention of extremism in the lists of offenses provided by the DOD in which conduct waivers are granted. There are only two offenses mentioned which may be extremism related, hate crimes and violating someone's civil rights, which are offenses that can be waived. Being found guilty of sexually violent crimes cannot be waived however, being found guilty of extremism-related behavior can be waived. Extremism-related behavior should, like sexually violent crimes, not be eligible to be waived. On one hand, the DOD's conduct waivers are a good way to offer recruits an escape from tough living situations and to change their lives through military service. On the other hand, however, conduct waivers could technically allow extremists into the armed forces.

DODI 1304.23 does well enough in implementing criminal background checks though two issues arise with this instruction. First, it is outdated, having not been updated since 2005.¹⁷³ Secondly, it only requires criminal background checks. Technology and the American culture have changed significantly since 2005. For instance, social media has taken over many aspects of everyday life, a criminal background check alone may not be enough to vet individuals for extremist activity, a social media review may be necessary. The DOD needs to understand that not every extremist has a criminal background, but it is more likely for extremists to have a social media presence on the internet.

Each memo penned by Secretary Austin identified appropriate actions that were expeditiously executed. These quick responses were necessary considering the magnitude of the civil-military relationship in the country at that time following the attack on the Capitol. The American public needed assurances from the DOD which required quick, decisive actions and that is what the memos produced.

¹⁷³ Department of Defense, *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*, 1.

The DOD takes an optimistic view of the results on the extremism-stand down. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the stand-down had the desired effects. Then Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby explained during a press conference that the stand-down had two goals, “to reinforce our values and, specifically, the importance of the oath that everyone takes here to the Constitution and what that oath requires of you.”¹⁷⁴ He continued, “And it was a chance to revisit what we’ve all promised to do, and what we’ve all promised to serve.”¹⁷⁵ It was reiterated that this stand-down was by no means a method to collect data. Secretary Kirby made it a point to explain, “It’s just a first step—not meant to be a panacea, not meant to solve problems—just to reorient everybody to the importance of service to this country in the Defense Department and the chance to listen to them.”¹⁷⁶

The extremism stand-down had two accomplishments in addressing FRE in the ranks of the armed forces. It reminds all members of the oath they took when they joined the armed forces as well as the established prohibitions on extremism in the DOD. More importantly, by encouraging participation from every single service member, this memo indirectly engages personnel in rooting out FRE. Involving everyone shows it is not just the high-ranking leadership’s responsibility but every DOD employees’ duty to contribute to eradicating extremists from the armed forces, thus aiding to achieve the DOD’s policies against extremism.

Where the first memo institutes a reflection period for the DOD, Secretary Austin’s second memo directs changes to be made to further realize the DOD’s anti-extremism policy. Eight months after its publishing, updates to DODI 1325.06 were completed. The memo directs the necessary outline guiding the improvements of the DOD’s infrastructure against extremism. Without this memo’s guidance, the direction in which the DOD intends to put forth change may not have been as clear which may have resulted in changes taking a longer time to institute.

¹⁷⁴ C. Todd Lopez, “Extremism Stand Downs Focus on Oath, Not Data Collection,” Department of Defense, last modified March 30, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2555883/extremism-stand-downs-focus-on-oath-not-data-collection/>.

¹⁷⁵ Lopez, “Extremism Stand Downs Focus on Oath, Not Data Collection.”

¹⁷⁶ Lopez, “Extremism Stand Downs Focus on Oath, Not Data Collection.”

C. U.S. NAVY INITIATIVES

In the hierarchical military chain of command, the DON is directly subordinate to the DOD. The DON has the authority to develop its own regulations in regards to any subject, including FRE. Where the DOD may issue a generally broad regulations, the DON may issue regulations that are more specific for the Navy. However, these regulations cannot be less strict, meaning the DON cannot allow something that the DOD prohibits. At a minimum, the DON must be fully aligned with the DOD, but the DON has the ability to restrict further if deemed necessary. This section identifies and assesses three Navy-specific regulations that directly and indirectly impact extremists' ability to operate within the fleet.¹⁷⁷ Assessing the Navy's regulations helps this thesis provide recommendations.

1. U.S. Navy Regulations – Article 1167: Supremacist Activities

The DON unequivocally bans all personnel from participating in any type of FRE. Article 1167 of the U.S. Navy Regulations, added in 1997, is titled Supremacist Activities and, similar to DODI 1325.06, is the primary regulation banning extremism in the Navy.¹⁷⁸ Article 1167 is similar to DODI 1325.06, except that it prohibits FRE behavior specifically

¹⁷⁷ In addition to U.S. Navy Regulations - Article 1167, MILPERSMAN Article 1910-160, and MILPERSMAN Article 1920-070, the Navy published NAVADMIN 082/16 which details its policy towards tattoos. Far-right extremists may get tattoos to show their allegiance to the specific FRE groups they are members of and/or display who their extremist views target. With the popularity of tattooing on the rise it is important for those who are responsible for recruiting to know the limitations so tattoos can be effectively screened to bar those whose tattoos exhibit extremist ideologies from joining the armed forces. Screening tattoos is a difficult task for recruiters due to the variance and ever-evolving nature of tattoo art. However, effectively screening tattoos may be the only way to identify an individual's extremist views and participation in extremist activities. Disseminating a clear and concise policy regarding tattoos is the responsibility of each military service. These policies are necessary to remove any ambiguity that may arise when categorizing tattoos appropriate or acceptable. For further reading, see: Department of the Navy, *Navy Tattoo and NWU Type II and III Ball Cap Policy Change*, NAVADMIN 082/16 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2016), <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Messages/NAVADMIN/NAV2016/NAV16082.txt>; Katherine Schaeffer and Shradha Dinesh, "32% of Americans Have a Tattoo, Including 22% Who Have More Than One," Pew Research Center, last modified August 15, 2023, [https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/08/15/32-of-americans-have-a-tattoo-including-22-who-have-more-than-one/#:~:text=More%20broadly%2C%20Americans%20overall%20%E2%80%93%20including,less%20accepting%20of%20tattooed%20people](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/08/15/32-of-americans-have-a-tattoo-including-22-who-have-more-than-one/#:~:text=More%20broadly%2C%20Americans%20overall%20%E2%80%93%20including,less%20accepting%20of%20tattooed%20people;); and Chris Jackson, "More Americans Have Tattoos Today than Seven Years Ago," Ipsos, last modified August 29, 2019, <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/more-americans-have-tattoos-today>.

¹⁷⁸ Department of the Navy, *U.S. Navy Regulations*, Article 1167, (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1997), <https://www.secnave.navy.mil/doni/navyregs.aspx>.

in the DON.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, assessing Article 1167 allows this thesis to explore the Navy's position towards extremism and helps form the basis in which recommendations are provided.

Though not a lengthy regulation, Article 1167 succinctly states, "No person in the naval service shall participate in any organization that espouses supremacist causes; attempts to create illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin; advocates the use of force or violence against the government of the United States or the government of any state, territory, district, or possession thereof, or the government of any subdivision therein; or otherwise engages in efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights."¹⁸⁰ Regarding the meaning of "participate," the Navy defines it as, "acts or conduct, performed alone or in concert with another, such as demonstrating, rallying, fundraising, recruiting, training, or organizing or leading such organizations."¹⁸¹ The regulation continues, "The term 'participate' also includes engaging in any other activities in relation to such organizations or in the furtherance of the objectives of such organizations, when such activities are detrimental to good order, discipline, or mission accomplishment."¹⁸² Article 1167 provides the foundation for all other subordinate Navy-specific instructions concerning FRE. As U.S. Navy Regulations Article 0103 explains, "Other directives issued within the Department of the Navy shall not conflict with, alter or amend any provision of Navy Regulation."¹⁸³ Therefore, all other instructions regarding FRE must be based on Navy Regulation Article 1167.

2. MILPERSMAN 1910–160 and 1920–070

MILPERSMAN Articles 1910–160 and 1920–070 are the enforcement methods in which the Navy can separate sailors and officers who violate its zero-tolerance ban on

¹⁷⁹ Department of the Navy, *U.S. Navy Regulations*.

¹⁸⁰ Department of the Navy, *U.S. Navy Regulations*.

¹⁸¹ Department of the Navy, *U.S. Navy Regulations*.

¹⁸² Department of the Navy, *U.S. Navy Regulations*.

¹⁸³ Department of the Navy, *U.S. Navy Regulations*, Article 0103, (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1990), <https://www.secnnav.navy.mil/doni/navyregs.aspx>.

extremist behavior. Therefore, assessing these articles is a must to ensure the Navy can adequately remove sailors from service for violating regulations prohibiting FRE behavior. The MILPERSMAN is a set of documents that dictates the Navy's policies and standard operating procedures concerning human resources. The 1910 series articles cover separations for enlisted personnel while the 1920 series covers separations for commissioned officers. There are two articles that direct the separation of service members from the Navy for supremacist or extremist conduct, the 1910–160 and the 1920–070. These articles were last updated in November of 2021 in response to the January 6th attack on the Capitol.

Article 1910–160 states that sailors must be separated from military service “for any substantiated incident or serious misconduct resulting from participation in supremacist or extremist activities.”¹⁸⁴ The misconduct “must relate to (1) illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin; or (2) advocating the use of force or violence against any federal, state, or local government or agency thereof, in violation of federal, state, or local laws.”¹⁸⁵

There are three ways in which an incident of extremism involving a sailor can be substantiated. First, the sailor must be found guilty by either a military court-martial or by civilian courts.¹⁸⁶ The next way extremist activity can be substantiated is during a process known as NJP, commonly referred to in the Navy as “Captain’s Mast.”¹⁸⁷ The Military Law Center describes NJP as a procedure that “enables a commander to administer punishment for misconduct or minor offenses that do not rise to the level to be adjudicated in a court setting.”¹⁸⁸ During NJP, a preponderance of the evidence is all that is needed for

¹⁸⁴ Department of the Navy, *Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*, MILPERSMAN 1910-160 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021), https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Reference/MILPERSMAN/1000/1900Separation/1910-160.pdf?ver=VBfMqgPbOU4ii4k5_yanZw%3d%3d.

¹⁸⁵ Department of the Navy, *Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*.

¹⁸⁶ Department of the Navy, *Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*.

¹⁸⁷ Department of the Navy, *Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*.

¹⁸⁸ “Non-Judicial Punishment,” Military Law Center, accessed September 2, 2023, <https://militarylawcenter.com/administrative-actions-military-law-center/article-15-non-judicial-punishment/>.

a sailor to be found guilty by the CO. Preponderance of the evidence means it is more likely than not a sailor has committed the offense or misconduct they are suspected of. NJP allows a CO to maintain good order and discipline throughout their unit. Lastly, behavior can be substantiated by a convening authority through the preponderance of the evidence standard.¹⁸⁹ A convening authority is a position in the chain-of-command who can decide to convene a court-martial for a violation of the UCMJ, laws all service members, officer and enlisted, are subjected to.

The officer version of this article, MILPERSMAN Article 1920–070, is nearly identical. The exception is that commissioned officers can violate more UCMJ articles by taking part in extremist activity.¹⁹⁰ There are UCMJ articles that apply specifically to commissioned officers. For example, Article 133 is titled “Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.”¹⁹¹ Article 133 of the UCMJ states, “Any commissioned officer, cadet, or midshipman who is convicted of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.”¹⁹² UCMJ articles like Article 133 illustrate the higher standard to which officers of the armed forces are held. These articles are integral components for ridding the DON of far-right extremists.

D. EVALUATING DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY EFFORTS ON EXTREMISM

The DON’s doctrine used to counter FRE appears promising. The regulations are clearly defined, are logical, and most importantly, support the overarching DOD policy regarding FRE. Like the DOD evaluation, the evaluation of Navy doctrine on extremism helps this thesis provide recommendations, if necessary, to the DON.

¹⁸⁹ Department of the Navy, *Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*.

¹⁹⁰ Department of the Navy, *Separation of Officer Personnel by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*, MILPERSMAN 1920-070 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021), <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Reference/MILPERSMAN/1000/1900Separation/1920-070.pdf?ver=uxFgp4TZKTsobjkSMjiOlg%3d%3d>.

¹⁹¹ Department of Defense, *Uniform Code of Military Justice*, Article 133: Conduct Unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2019), [https://jsc.defense.gov/Portals/99/Documents/2019%20MCM%20\(Final\)%20\(20190108\).pdf?ver=TFbspKKmTQwFpVQBqr4ow%3d%3d](https://jsc.defense.gov/Portals/99/Documents/2019%20MCM%20(Final)%20(20190108).pdf?ver=TFbspKKmTQwFpVQBqr4ow%3d%3d).

¹⁹² Department of Defense, *Uniform Code of Military Justice*.

Article 1167, being the cornerstone of the DON's stance rejecting FRE, clearly explains the behaviors its sailors are forbidden to partake in. The Navy would likely benefit, however, by including sexual orientation to its areas of prohibited discrimination. Members of the LGBTQ community serve in the Navy and the armed forces writ large. In a 2015 survey, it was found that 9.1 percent of sailors identify with the LGBTQ community, by far the largest contingent of all service branches.¹⁹³

The MILPERSMAN articles 1910–160 and 1920–070 appear to be effective means to separate officer and enlisted sailors who are found to have violated Article 1167 from the Navy. Similar to the assessment of Article 1167, the Navy would likely benefit from including sexual orientation to its list of illegal discrimination. Finally, the Navy's tattoo directive clearly dictates its view on appropriate tattoos. These initiatives together provide an optimistic view of the Navy's ability to remove sailors who sympathize with extremism from its ranks.

E. CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter is to identify and evaluate DOD and DON doctrine countering extremist behavior in the active-duty population of the military and doctrine blocking extremists from being recruited. Clear and concise policy and guidance from the DOD should trickle down to each of the service components in a top-down approach, which appears to be happening. Developing and implementing effective instructions and regulations banning those who participate in FRE is the first line of defense necessary in realizing the DOD and the Navy's vision in keeping extremists out of the armed forces. The DOD must continue to maintain a solid foundation in its FRE policy so the other services can develop their regulations in tandem with one another allowing for a full-frontal assault on extremism. Ambiguous regulations and directives will likely be exploited by far-right extremists in their quest to recruit others and receive tactical training.

¹⁹³ Sarah Meadows et al., *2015 Health Related Behaviors Survey: Sexual Orientation, Transgender Identity, and Health Among Active-Duty Service Members*, RB-9955/6-OSD (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RB9955.6>.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Since the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the DOD has made modest administrative changes regarding extremism. Specifically, the DOD has updated its instruction on extremism, implemented new questionnaires to make it easier to separate new recruits, and facilitated the process for veterans to voluntarily report recruitment attempts by extremist groups, just to name a few measures. However, this project's presentation of case studies involving FRE in the armed forces and review of DOD and DON instructions and guidance shows current approaches towards countering extremism are insufficient. They make clear the DOD and the DON should consider enacting more measures to harden the key institutions of American national security against FRE. This chapter identifies and proposes ideas to this end.

The research here illustrated through case studies that FRE is present in all branches of the U.S. armed forces. Additionally, it has shown that FRE harms the armed forces by damaging morale and combat readiness, discipline and the ability to follow orders, and public trust in confidence with the U.S. military institutions.¹⁹⁴ The cases of Joseph Manning and Michael Chesney, Christopher Hasson, Cory Reeves, Killian Ryan, and the Navy ships in Chapter 2 illustrated the damage FRE does to the DOD. In each case, the public's trust and confidence in the DOD likely deteriorated. The American public, which includes people with all types of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, logically loses trust each time a case of FRE is uncovered. In addition, service members who follow far-right extremist ideologies would have a hard time following orders from superiors who also happen to be minorities. Morale and combat readiness likely suffered because of the increased probability of dissatisfaction service members feel when they are aware of the fact they are working with other service members who follow FRE.

Furthermore, this thesis has evaluated that the steps the DOD has taken since January 6th to address extremism are promising, but it will take time to feel their full impact

¹⁹⁴ Department of Defense, *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*, 9.

against FRE. Also, this thesis identified some areas where the DOD and DON can improve their ability to counter FRE. These areas include expanded screenings with periodic checks, a system to collect data involving U.S. service members involvement in extremism, and the establishment of extremism task force units embedded within each branches investigative service. Chapter 3 illustrated how the immediate actions implemented by Secretary Austin were undoubtedly positive. Reorienting the entire U.S. armed forces during the stand-down to remember their oaths and to reject extremism while also updating the instruction regarding extremism were positive steps. However, Chapter 3 also showed there are issues that remain. Criminal background checks alone will not identify extremists who possess a clean criminal history. The DOD will never understand the scope of extremism without proper data collection, which is non-existent at this time. Finally, the DOD will be more successful at searching for and removing far-right extremists who infiltrate the armed forces by employing dedicated extremism professionals to search out and remove them. The following are recommendations that the DOD can make that would expand its efforts to address extremism.

A. EXPANDED SCREENING MEASURES WITH PERIODIC CHECKS

The DOD and the DON should expand the scope of screenings for new recruits wishing to join the armed forces. Because the DOD along with each service branch are responsible for screening their recruits, this is going to take an all-hands effort to make meaningful change. Expanded background checks and more thorough screenings that include social media would likely help to keep extremists out of the armed forces.¹⁹⁵ As the case study with Killian Ryan shows, a more thorough background investigation may

¹⁹⁵ In addition to checking social media activity, the DOD should also consider a standardized policy of screening tattoos for new recruits. The DOD should consider establishing an extremist tattoo database to be utilized by military recruiting organizations and military investigative services. During her testimony, Beirich again points out that, “there is no extremist tattoo database in the military to use to identify these things, and, as a result, investigators aren’t trained on what these symbols are.” Currently during initial screening, the services rely on recruits to self-report and self-describe tattoos. If recruiters deem it necessary, they can reach out to the FBI to assess questionable tattoos, but there is currently no requirement. For further reading, see: H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*; Department of Defense Inspector General, *Audit of the Military Service Recruiting Organizations’ Efforts to Screen Applicants for Extremist and Criminal Gang Behavior* (Alexandria, VA: Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, 2023) 3–4, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Aug/07/2003276219/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2023-103.PDF>.

have been able to prevent him from joining the Army. In addition, the services must periodically re-screen current service members, active-duty and reserve, to monitor for possible activity with extremist ideologies.

The prospective recruits of today are members of a generation for which social media is a part of everyday life, just like driving a car or using a cell phone. In 2021, 72 percent of American adults used some type of social media.¹⁹⁶ Military aged adults were found to use social media at a higher rate. In that same year, over 80 percent of adults ages 18 to 49 use social media.¹⁹⁷ People are posting all sorts of things on social media nowadays, including extremist ideology related material. As the case study with Ryan shows again, he was using Instagram, a social media platform owned by Meta, to communicate with racially motivated extremist groups. In the last decade, there have been substantial increases in the number of followers extremist groups are receiving via major social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.¹⁹⁸ According to one expert, from 2012 to 2016, there was a 600-percent increase in people following American white nationalists on Twitter from approximately 3,000 to 25,000.¹⁹⁹ Towards the end of 2022, X, formerly known as Twitter, reinstated the accounts of thousands of white supremacists and neo-Nazis whose accounts had previously been suspended.²⁰⁰ These extremists pretty quickly built back up their followers which not only gave them back their platform, but also legitimized their presence on what had been one of the most popular and prolific social media apps.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Brooke Auxier and Monica Anderson, “Social Media Use in 2021,” Pew Research Center, last modified April 7, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/04/07/social-media-use-in-2021/>.

¹⁹⁷ Auxier and Anderson, “Social Media Use in 2021.”

¹⁹⁸ Maura Conway et al., *Right-Wing Extremists’ Persistent Online Presence: History and Contemporary Trends*, (The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019) 6, <https://www.icct.nl/sites/default/files/import/publication/Right-Wing-Extremists-Persistent-Online-Presence.pdf>.

¹⁹⁹ Conway et al., *Right-Wing Extremists’ Persistent Online Presence: History and Contemporary Trends*, 6.

²⁰⁰ Alex Woodward, “Qanon, White Nationalists and Hate Speech: Experts Reveal How the Floodgates Opened on Elon Musk’s Twitter,” *The Independent*, last modified December 1, 2022, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/elon-musk-twitter-suspended-accounts-b2239851.html>.

²⁰¹ Woodward, “Qanon, White Nationalists and Hate Speech.”

Social media is likely becoming a more significant indicator of extremist ideology than criminal background checks signaling a shift the DOD must acknowledge. In her testimony at a Congressional hearing in February 2020, Heidi Beirich testified that social media, “is where you find most extremism nowadays.”²⁰² Therefore, the DOD must keep pace with the times and include some form of social media background checks in the recruiting process. Social media background checks may find something that criminal background checks alone will not turn up. Beirich further testified that the DOD must establish social media investigation procedures to review these accounts.²⁰³

Mandatory periodic checks on active-duty service members’ online activity is another step the DOD should take in protecting itself from FRE. Online activity refers to the websites someone visits while they are using the internet. The discovery of Christopher Hasson’s online activity, which found him visiting websites researching information on Hitler and Nazis, led to his arrest and subsequent imprisonment. As Beirich recommends in a reference to Hasson, “It might be wise to consider how the online activities of Active Duty troops are monitored. The recent arrest of a Coast Guard lieutenant who had all this kind of horrible stuff online tells us what this could lead to if we are not paying attention.”²⁰⁴ The Hasson case study suggests that DHS to some extent does conduct periodic checks on members’ work-computer activity. However, the DOD should consider adopting a systematic way to conduct periodic checks on members as well. Additionally, the DOD should ensure during its development this system is enacted in a manner in which the rights of service members are preserved so questions about its legality could not be raised.

Not all far-right extremists have a criminal history that would show up during a criminal background check. However, this does not make them any less dangerous. The DOD and the DON must look for alternative methods to ensure those they are recruiting

²⁰² H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

²⁰³ H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

²⁰⁴ H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

do not have any affiliation with far-right extremist groups. Social media background checks and periodic online activity checks may be the only way to identify these covert extremists.

B. EXTREMISM DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM

Identifying a dilemma and understanding the scope of the issue are important steps in solving problems, especially within the federal government. The bottom line is that solving issues at the top tier of government comes down to funding and resources. To get the appropriate amount of resources flowing in the right direction, the government must know the extent of the problem. Gathering and analyzing data to determine the extent of the extremism problem in the DOD would help Congress to appropriate the proper funding for countering extremism tools in the armed forces. Those tools would be used for both the prevention of extremists from entering service and the removal of those who make it through the screening process or radicalize while in service. Without such data, there is no way to know the extent of the FRE problem.

The DOD, in coordination with the service branches, must establish a process for in-depth data collection on extremist activity throughout the armed forces. In the aftermath of the insurrection at the Capitol, the DOD admitted it did not have a process in place to track the number of service members separated from service due to extremist activity.²⁰⁵ Since then, circumstances in the area of data collection have not improved much. A May 2022 DOD Inspector General (IG) report, evaluating the endeavors of the DOD to remedy the extremism problem in the armed forces, notes the persistence of a massive gap in the data collection.²⁰⁶ The IG report states:

As a result, the DOD is not able to accurately collect and analyze Service-level data and develop a DOD-wide understanding of extremist-related activity within the Armed Forces. In addition, senior officials cannot

²⁰⁵ John Kirby, “Pentagon Press Secretary Conducts Off-Camera Briefing,” Department of Defense, last modified February 3, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2494036/pentagon-press-secretary-conducts-off-camera-briefing/>.

²⁰⁶ Department of Defense Inspector General, *Evaluation of Department of Defense Efforts to Address Ideological Extremism Within the Armed Forces* (Alexandria, VA: Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, 2023) i, https://media.defense.gov/2022/May/12/2002995443/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2022-095_REDACTED.PDF.

determine the full extent of extremist activity to adequately address the issue within the Armed Forces.²⁰⁷

Based on this report, filling the data-collection gap should be of the utmost importance to the DOD in order to establish a complete and accurate picture of the FRE problem. Its likely that any of the extremists in the case studies presented in Chapter 2 may have been denied entry into the armed forces as a result of better funding based on properly maintained statistics.

Similarly, Daniel Milton and Andrew Mines suggest establishing a “centralized, internal documentation system for extremism-related incidents.”²⁰⁸ They suggest it would be beneficial for the system to be uniform across each of the services and with agencies external to the DOD.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the system would benefit from including data beyond criminal investigations into active duty and veteran service members conducted by each service branch’s criminal investigative service and the FBI.²¹⁰ If a CO chooses to take a service member to NJP instead of referring their case to their investigative service for questionable extremism-related behavior, that data should still be collected into the extremism database. They argue that data should include extremist incidents that do not necessarily meet criminal thresholds, cases that were resolved by the chain-of-command, instances where recruits are removed from service due to an extremism-related issue, and times when active-duty members are discharged under dishonorable conditions for participation in extremist activities.²¹¹

Beirich also concurs with this assessment. She testified:

There appears to be no process to track people expelled for ties to White supremacist groups. There is little data in the public domain to know how serious this problem is. All of these are serious issues, as well as it being

²⁰⁷ Department of Defense Inspector General, *Evaluation of Department of Defense Efforts*, i.

²⁰⁸ Milton, “‘This is War’: Examining Military Experience Among Capitol Hill Siege Participants.”

²⁰⁹ Milton, “‘This is War’: Examining Military Experience Among Capitol Hill Siege Participants.”

²¹⁰ Milton, “‘This is War’: Examining Military Experience Among Capitol Hill Siege Participants.”

²¹¹ Milton, “‘This is War’: Examining Military Experience Among Capitol Hill Siege Participants.”

unclear how information on extremists in one branch are shared with other branches or the Guard or the FBI.²¹²

Ultimately, it is clear the DOD must prioritize the development of a data-collection system.

To collect this data, the DOD should follow the IG's Recommendation B, which states, "develop and publish standardized policies, processes, and mechanisms to enable the DOD to identify, quantify, characterize, and report Service member involvement across the Services in prohibited activities that include active advocacy of and active participation in extremist groups and activities."²¹³ The DOD should be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of these policies.

Each of the service branches also bear responsibility for the identified gaps and should each be responsible for their implementation of these policies and standards. According to the IG report, the DON had not been tracking disciplinary action for sailors participating in extremism.²¹⁴ Therefore, this thesis recommends that the DON develops a robust process, in coordination with the DOD, to collect data on sailors who violate the DOD and DON policies on extremism. Each instance of extremism presented in the Navy's case study would qualify for inclusion in the data system even though some of those cases have gone unsolved. When a sailor who participates in extremism is separated, the DON should explicitly categorize their separation for extremist activity versus misconduct and report the data to the DOD.

C. BRANCH SPECIFIC EXTREMISM TASK FORCE UNITS

Establishing new investigative units within each service branch is a possible action that should be taken to improve the DOD's ability to counter extremism within the ranks. As was seen in the USCG and Air Force case studies with Christopher Hasson and Cory Reeves respectively, new investigative units whose sole focus is finding and investigating instances of FRE could give each branch's investigative service an advantage. Each service branch has its own investigative service responsible for investigating felony crimes that

²¹² H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

²¹³ Department of Defense Inspector General, *Evaluation of Department of Defense Efforts*, 19.

²¹⁴ Department of Defense Inspector General, *Evaluation of Department of Defense Efforts*, 16.

occur within the boundaries of each branch. The DON has NCIS to investigate crimes committed within the Navy and the Marine Corps.²¹⁵ The Department of the Army has the Criminal Investigation Division, CID, which is responsible for felony criminal investigations amongst its community along with a litany of other missions.²¹⁶ The Air Force has the OSI which is responsible for investigating crimes within its department.²¹⁷ With the investigative infrastructure already developed and operational, it is imperative that each branch establishes a counter-extremism task force unit within their respective investigative service that specializes in investigating cases involving potential extremism.

Establishing branch-specific counter-extremism units may have significant benefits. Branch-specific units may fare better than a joint unit in that each branch unit would be more familiar with the way their individual branch operates and the rules associated with that branch. As was illustrated in the case study with Hasson, his affiliation with the USCG made them better suited than any of the DOD services to conduct that investigation because the DOD is likely unfamiliar with the operations and policies of the DHS and the USCG. Similarly, the same can be observed with the Reeves case study and the Air Force. As mentioned in Chapter 3, because of the operational differences inherent with each of the service branches, they have the authority to develop branch-specific regulations that fit their mission as long as they do not violate the overarching DOD regulations. For example, a Navy investigator who is well versed with Navy operations and regulations may find it difficult to understand the ways in which the Army operates and their regulations. Furthermore, a joint unit may become oversaturated learning all the inner workings of each service branch within the entire DOD, to include the USCG.

The DOD would retain the overall responsibility in dealing with extremists within the military through oversight of the branch-specific units. Each branch unit would be

²¹⁵ “Core Mission Areas,” Navy Criminal Investigative Service, accessed August 15, 2023, <https://www.ncis.navy.mil/Mission/Core-Mission-Areas/Criminal-Investigations/>.

²¹⁶ “Our Mission,” Criminal Investigation Division, accessed August 15, 2023, <https://www.cid.army.mil/The-Agency/Our-Mission/>.

²¹⁷ “Fact Sheet Display,” Air Force Office of Special Investigations, accessed August 15, 2023, <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104502/air-force-office-of-special-investigations/#:~:text=AFOSI%20identifies%2C%20investigates%20and%20neutralizes,of%20meeting%20Air%20Force%20needs.>

responsible for the manning, training, and equipping of their agents as well as the investigations and data collection within their respective branch. The DOD would compile extremist data and provide the necessary resources to the units. The agents would need to be well trained and versed in counter-extremism. As Daniel Kohler explains, “Specially trained personnel, programs and procedures designed for different stages of radicalization processes, effective monitoring and evaluation procedures, and a widely spread awareness/knowledge about signs of concern and reporting mechanisms are just some of the more important components necessary to counter this potential threat.”²¹⁸ Because of the covert nature of extremism, it will take well-trained agents to accomplish the counter-extremism mission.

Another significant benefit of the extremism task force could be the establishment of a unit within the task force that deals with deradicalization. As Bubala explains, “Removing individuals from service without first addressing their racist beliefs could result in the servicemember seeking out a replacement group that validates their beliefs; racist extremist groups are one such group that could fill the void created by removal from military service.”²¹⁹ A service member who is separated from service who has not been deradicalized still poses a threat to the DOD and the public. The service member knows how their branch operates and may know specific tactics. It could be extremely dangerous if this knowledge falls into the hands of extremist groups. The DOD should have some responsibility in protecting the public from extremism when it removes a service member, deradicalization would likely accomplish that protection. As Lecia J. Brooks from the Sothern Poverty Law Center explained in her testimony alongside Beirich on Capitol Hill, “blunt the reach and impact of White nationalist and supremacist ideology by offering support services that work to deradicalize active-duty service members and veterans exposed to hateful and violent messages.”²²⁰

²¹⁸ Koehler, *A Threat from Within? Exploring the Link Between the Extreme Right and the Military*, 21.

²¹⁹ Bubala, “White Nationalism Among U.S. Armed Forces: An Analysis of DOD Response Effectiveness,” 63,

²²⁰ H.R., *Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy*.

Branch-specific extremism task force units are also necessary because the way the current system is set up puts too much pressure on COs to accomplish the counter-extremism mission. COs at various echelon levels should not be responsible for conducting counter-extremism missions on their ships or at their shore commands. To ease the burden on the COs, the appropriate response to extremism cases would be to involve the extremism unit in the investigation. As was seen in Air Force, USCG, and Navy case studies in Chapter 2, each of their investigative units was appropriately involved in the investigations of the service members. Once the investigation is complete and there is an individual or individuals who need to be held accountable, the CO and the extremism unit can decide whether NJP, court-martial, or some other form of punishment are the appropriate avenues for the violations. The only exception to involving the extremism unit in an investigation would be for Navy ships that are underway and because of operational requirements are unable to come back to port. In this situation, the CO would likely have to conduct the investigation however, they should still report the case to the extremism unit for data collection. There is quite enough responsibility already charged to these COs; making them responsible for a mission they likely know little about is why these counter extremism units are necessary.

D. CONCLUSION

The DOD's new initiatives to combat extremism are positive steps that will likely help reduce the number of extremists throughout the U.S. armed forces. Still, it will be difficult to quantify these efforts until the DOD establishes some form of an extremism database across all service branches. The reality is that extremists will most likely always exist in the military, but it's the DOD's responsibility to reduce that population as much as possible. The DOD would likely accomplish this reduction by expanding background checks and conducting periodic checks, establishing an extremism database of some manner, and establishing countering-extremism units in each of the service branches.

The best solution for the DOD is to keep up the pressure on the extremists. The DOD must continue to maintain a solid foundation in its FRE policy so the other services can develop their regulations in tandem with one another allowing for a full-frontal defense

against extremism. Ambiguous regulations and directives will likely be exploited by far-right extremists in their quest to recruit others and receive tactical training. As it stands, extremists applying for service may be able to utilize the “Conduct Waiver” to gain entry. Extremists with no criminal history but who have an extensive social media presence glorifying FRE ideologies may be able to be recruited if the DOD does not start screening their social media activity. The DOD and the Navy must review these directives often and make improvements where they see fit to ensure they are accomplishing their mission for an extremist-free armed forces. The DOD should never be satisfied with the status quo when it comes to extremism and should never lessen the standards preventing extremists from entering military service, even when recruiting shortfalls occur. A campaign of constant pressure on the extremist community through a multi-faceted approach with expanded screenings, proper data recording, and the incorporation of counter-extremism professionals is needed to keep extremists out of the armed forces. Combatting extremism is an “all-hands-on-deck” mission that will require coordination across all service branches to safeguard the entire U.S. armed forces.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adamczyk, Christopher. "God versus Titans: Ideological Indicators for Identitarian Violence." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020.
<https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/66032>.
- Air Force Office of Special Investigations. "Fact Sheet Display." Accessed August 15, 2023. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104502/air-force-office-of-special-investigations/#:~:text=AFOSI%20identifies%2C%20investigates%20and%20neutralizes,of%20meeting%20Air%20Force%20needs>.
- Anti-Defamation League. "1488." Accessed June 4, 2023. <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/1488>.
- Anti-Defamation League. "Identitarianism." Accessed July 17, 2023.
<https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/identitarianism>.
- Anti-Defamation League. "Identity Evropa." Accessed May 21, 2023.
<https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/identity-evropa>.
- Austin, Lloyd. "Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group." Official memorandum. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021.
<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Apr/09/2002617921/-1/-1/1/memorandum-immediate-actions-to-counter-extremism-in-the-department-and-the-establishment-of-the-countering-extremism-working-group.pdf>.
- Austin, Lloyd. "Stand Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks." Official memorandum. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021.
<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Feb/05/2002577485/-1/-1/0/stand-down-to-address-extremism-in-the-ranks.pdf>.
- Auxier, Brooke and Monica Anderson. "Social Media Use in 2021." Pew Research Center. Last modified April 7, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/04/07/social-media-use-in-2021/>.
- Bajza, Stephen. "Air Force Enlisted Ranks." Military.com. Accessed May 19, 2023.
<https://www.military.com/air-force/enlisted-ranks.html#:~:text=Enlisted%20Air%20Force%20ranks%20are,the%20grade%20of%20E%2D5>.
- Bajza, Stephen. "Enlisted Marine Corps Ranks." Military.com. Accessed July 21, 2023.
<https://www.military.com/marine-corps/enlisted-ranks.html>.

- Baldor, Lolita. "Navy Commanders Address 2 Racist Incidents on West Coast." Associated Press. Last modified February 9, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-navy-lloyd-austin-e5ee69e5f9b67d0eddd0ac2b9f9d61fe>.
- Barroso, Amanda. "The Changing Profile of the U.S. Military: Smaller in Size, More Diverse, More Women in Leadership." Pew Research Center. Last modified September 10, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/09/10/the-changing-profile-of-the-u-s-military/>.
- Bjorgo, Tore, and Jacob Ravndal. *Extreme Right Violence and Terrorism: Concepts, Patterns, and Responses*. The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019. <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Extreme-Right-Violence-and-Terrorism-Concpets-Patterns-and-Responsed.pdf>.
- Bubala, Casey. "White Nationalism Among U.S. Armed Forces: An Analysis of DOD Response Effectiveness." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2022. <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/71048>.
- Bui, Lynh, Dan Lamothe, and Michael Miller. "Coast Guard Lieutenant Used Work Computers in Alleged Planning of Widespread Domestic Terrorist Attack, Prosecutors Say." *The Washington Post*. Last modified February 21, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/ex-coast-guard-lieutenant-ordered-held-for-14-days-while-government-weighs-terrorism-related-charges-in-his-planning-of-widespread-terrorist-attack/2019/02/21/57918f12-3573-11e9-854a-7a14d7fec96a_story.html.
- CNN. "Charlottesville Organizers Left Behind an 'Enormous' Paper Trail." Video, 7:13, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HV0131blj4U>.
- Cohen, Rachel. "Air Force Finds Hurdles to Success for Women, Hispanics, Other Minorities in Second Disparity Review." Air Force Times. Last modified September 9, 2021. <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2021/09/09/air-force-finds-hurdles-to-success-for-women-hispanics-other-minorities-in-second-disparity-review/#:~:text=As%20of%20June%2030%2C%20the,identify%20as%20Hispanic%20or%20Latino>
- Conway, Maura, Ryan Scrivens, and Logan Macnair. *Right-Wing Extremists' Persistent Online Presence: History and Contemporary Trends*. The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019. <https://www.icct.nl/sites/default/files/import/publication/Right-Wing-Extremists-Persistent-Online-Presence.pdf>.
- Counter Extremism Project. "Christopher Paul Hasson." Accessed May 16, 2023. <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/christopher-paul-hasson>.
- Criminal Investigation Division. "Our Mission." Accessed August 15, 2023. <https://www.cid.army.mil/The-Agency/Our-Mission/>.

Cullings, Forrest. “Alt-Right Influence on the Radicalization of White Nationalists in the United States, According to Significant Quest Theory.” Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020. <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/65496>.

Department of Defense. *Acquisition and Use of Criminal History Record Information for Military Recruiting Purposes*. DOD Instruction 1304.23. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2005.

Department of Defense. *Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces*. DOD Instruction 1325.06. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021.

Department of Defense. *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*. DOD Instruction 1304.26. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018.

Department of Defense. *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense*. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021.
<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Dec/20/2002912573/-1/-1/0/report-on-countering-extremist-activity-within-the-department-of-defense.pdf>.

Department of Defense. *Uniform Code of Military Justice*. Article 133: Conduct Unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2019. [https://jsc.defense.gov/Portals/99/Documents/2019%20MCM%20\(Final\)%20\(20190108\).pdf?ver=TFbspKKmTQwFpVQBqr4ow%3d%3d](https://jsc.defense.gov/Portals/99/Documents/2019%20MCM%20(Final)%20(20190108).pdf?ver=TFbspKKmTQwFpVQBqr4ow%3d%3d).

Department of Defense Inspector General. *Audit of the Military Service Recruiting Organizations’ Efforts to Screen Applicants for Extremist and Criminal Gang Behavior*. Alexandria, VA: Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, 2023. <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Aug/07/2003276219/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2023-103.PDF>.

Department of Defense Inspector General. *Evaluation of Department of Defense Efforts to Address Ideological Extremism Within the Armed Forces*. Alexandria, VA: Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, 2023.
https://media.defense.gov/2022/May/12/2002995443/-1/-1/1/dodig-2022-095_redacted.pdf.

Department of the Air Force. “Department of the Air Force Releases Reports on Racial Disparity Review Update, Second Disparity Review.” September 9, 2021.
<https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2769127/departments-of-the-air-force-releases-reports-on-racial-disparity-review-update/>.

Department of the Navy. *Navy Tattoo and NWU Type II and III Ball Cap Policy Change*. NAVADMIN 082/16. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2016.
<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Messages/NAVADMIN/NAV2016/NAV16082.txt>.

Department of the Navy. *Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*. MILPERSMAN 1910–160. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021.
https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Reference/MILPERSMAN/1000/1900Separation/1910-160.pdf?ver=VBFMqgPbOU4ii4k5_yanZw%3d%3d.

Department of the Navy. *Separation of Officer Personnel by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct*. MILPERSMAN 1920–070. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021. <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Reference/MILPERSMAN/1000/1900Separation/1920-070.pdf?ver=uxFgp4TZKTsobjkSMjiOlg%3d%3d>.

Department of the Navy. *Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks*. NAVADMIN 044/21. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2021.
https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Messages/NAVADMIN/NAV2021/NAV21044.txt?ver=uraz_jtpld6dok_jvryozq%3d%3d

Department of the Navy. *U.S. Navy Regulations*. Article 0103. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1990. <https://www.secnnav.navy.mil/doni/navyregs.aspx>.

Department of the Navy. *U.S. Navy Regulations*. Article 1167. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1997. <https://www.secnnav.navy.mil/doni/navyregs.aspx>.

Edmondson, Catie. “House Passes \$840 Billion Military Policy Bill.” *New York Times*. Last modified July 14, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/us/politics/house-military-policy-bill.html>.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. “Oklahoma City Bombing.” Accessed May 12, 2023. <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing>.

Finley, Ben. “FBI: Soldier Linked to Racist Post, Extremism.” The Associated Press. Last modified September 8, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/social-media-race-and-ethnicity-racial-injustice-north-carolina-0dd30cfedd6d9039c39cd27dd83e94f7>.

Garamone, Jim. “Austin Praises Nimitz Carrier Strike Group for Record-Breaking Deployment.” Department of Defense. Last modified February 25, 2021. <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2516467/austin-praises-nimitz-carrier-strike-group-for-record-breaking-deployment/>.

Gilday, Mike. “CNO Message to the Fleet Regarding Extremism.” The United States Navy. February 9, 2021. <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Statements/display-statements/Article/2498904/cno-message-to-the-fleet-regarding-extremism/>.

- Groves, Isaac. "Marine Booted Over White Nationalist Ties, Alleged Role in Planning Charlottesville Rally." Task & Purpose. Last modified April 19, 2018. <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/michael-chesny-charlottesville-white-nationalism/>.
- Gumbel, Andrew. "The Domestic Terrorism Threat in the United States: A Primer." Occasional paper, George Washington University, 2015. <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/Gumbel.pdf>.
- Hall, Abigail, Jerod Hassell, and Chivon Fitch. "Militarized Extremism: The Radical Right and the War on Terror." *The Independent Review* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 225–242. https://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir_26_2_05_hall.pdf.
- Ismail, Aymann. "We Know Exactly Who the Capitol Rioters Were." *Slate Magazine*, January 4, 2022. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2022/01/january-6-capitol-riot-arrests-research-profile.html>.
- Jackson, Chris. "More Americans Have Tattoos Today than Seven Years Ago." Ipsos. Last modified August 29, 2019. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/more-americans-have-tattoos-today>.
- Jackson, Matthew. "America's Three Domestic Threats and the Need for a Reform of Domestic Intelligence." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020. <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/66087>.
- Jenkins, Aric. "Man to Be Kicked Out of Marines after Unfurling White Supremacist Banner." *Time*. Last modified September 13, 2017. <https://time.com/4940709/joseph-manning-marines-white-supremacist-confederate-rally/>.
- Kennard, Matt. *Irregular Army: How the U.S. Military Recruited Neo-Nazis, Gang Members, and Criminals to Fight the War on Terror*. New York: Verso, 2012.
- Khan, Mariam and Luis Martinez. "More than 5,000 Muslims Serving in the U.S. Military, Pentagon Says." ABC News. Last modified December 8, 2015. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/5000-muslims-serving-us-military-pentagon/story?id=35654904>.
- Kirby, John. "Pentagon Press Secretary Conducts Off-Camera Briefing." Department of Defense. Last modified February 3, 2021. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2494036/pentagon-press-secretary-conducts-off-camera-briefing/>.
- Koehler, Daniel. *A Threat from Within? Exploring the Link Between the Extreme Right and the Military*. The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019. <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2019/09/ICCT-Koehler-A-Threat-from-Within-Exploring-the-Link-between-the-Extreme-Right-and-the-Military.pdf>.

- Kunzelman, Michael. "Marine Capitol Rioter Gets 1 Hour of Community Service for Each of 279 Marine Civil War Casualties." Associated Press. Last modified September 11, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/hellonen-coomer-abate-marines-capitol-riot-sentencings-d8a7f1a228dd94a82f4381d318fe7b2f>.
- Kunzelman, Michael. "Sentence Upheld for Former Coast Guard Officer Tied to Terror Plot." Navy Times. Last modified February 22, 2022. <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2022/02/22/sentence-upheld-for-former-coast-guard-officer-tied-to-terror-plot/>.
- Lehrfeld, Jonathan. "Hangman's Noose Discovered Aboard Norfolk-Based Destroyer." Navy Times. Last modified March 1, 2023. <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2023/03/01/navy-responds-to-hate-symbol-incidents-on-norfolk-based-destroyer/>.
- Levinson, Nan. "The U.S. Military Has an Extremism Problem." *The Nation*. Last modified July 19, 2023. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/us-military-extremism-teixeira/>.
- Lopez, Todd C. "Extremism Stand Down Focus on Oath, Not Data Collection." Department of Defense. Last modified March 30, 2021. <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2555883/extremism-stand-downs-focus-on-oath-not-data-collection/>.
- Losey, Stephen. "Demoted Master Sergeant with White Nationalist Ties is Now Out of the Air Force." Air Force Times. Last modified September 9, 2020. <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/09/09/demoted-master-sergeant-with-white-nationalist-ties-is-now-out-of-the-air-force/>.
- Maycock, James. "War Within War." *The Guardian*. Last modified September 14, 2001. <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2001/sep/15/weekend7.weekend3>.
- Meadows, Sarah, Charles Engel, Rebecca Collins, Robin Beckman, Matthew Cefalu, Jennifer Hawes-Dawson, Molly Waymouth et al. *2015 Health Related Behaviors Survey: Sexual Orientation, Transgender Identity, and Health Among Active-Duty Service Members*. RB-9955/6-OSD. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RB9955.6>.
- Military Law Center. "Non-Judicial Punishment." Accessed September 2, 2023. <https://militarylawcenter.com/administrative-actions-military-law-center/article-15-non-judicial-punishment/>.
- Milton, Daniel and Andrew Mines. *"This is War": Examining Military Experience Among Capitol Siege Participants*. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, 2021. https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/This_is_War.pdf.

- Myers, Meghann. “Domestic Extremism is Rare in the Military, ‘But It Is an Issue.’” *Military Times*. Last modified December 7, 2022. <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2022/12/07/domestic-extremism-is-rare-in-the-military-but-it-is-an-issue/>.
- Navy Criminal Investigative Service. “Core Mission Areas.” Accessed August 15, 2023. <https://www.ncis.navy.mil/Mission/Core-Mission-Areas/Criminal-Investigations/>.
- Navy Recruiting Command. “United States Navy Recruiting.” Accessed June 15, 2021. <https://www.navy.com/>.
- New York Times*. “Extremists in Uniform Put the Nation at Risk.” November 13, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/13/opinion/us-police-military-extremism.html>.
- Pape, Robert. “The Jan. 6 Insurrectionists Aren’t Who You Think They Are.” *Foreign Policy Magazine*, January 6, 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/06/trump-capitol-insurrection-january-6-insurrectionists-great-replacement-white-nationalism/>.
- Pew Research Center. “Social Media Fact Sheet,” April 7, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>
- Rawnsley, Adam and Seamus Hughes. “The Justice Department Got Creative to Rid the Army of a Self-Avowed ‘Nazi.’” *Rolling Stone*. Last modified September 2, 2022. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/military-extremism-nazi-arrest-justice-department-1234586141/>.
- Richer, Alanna and Michael Kunzelman. “Elected Officials, Police Chiefs on Leaked Oath Keepers List.” *The Associated Press*. Last modified September 7, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/oath-keepers-leaked-membership-rolls-2ca4195ed3a10e45dd189bf98f3e5a26>.
- Roza, David. “Air Force Finally Kicks Out Senior NCO Demoted for White Nationalist Ties.” *Task & Purpose*. Last modified September 10, 2020. <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/air-force-white-nationalist-discharged/>.
- Schake, Kori and Michael Robinson. “Assessing Civil-Military Relations and the January 6th Capitol Insurrection.” *Orbis (Philadelphia)* 65, no. 3 (2021): 532–534. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2021.06.013>.
- Schaeffer, Katherine and Shradha Dinesh. “32% of Americans Have a Tattoo, Including 22% Who Have More Than One.” *Pew Research Center*. Last modified August 15, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/08/15/32-of-americans-have-a-tattoo-including-22-who-have-more-than-one/#:~:text=More%20broadly%2C%20Aericans%20overall%20%E2%80%93%20including,less%20of%20tattooed%20people>.

- Schogol, Jeff. "USS Lake Champlain Crew Member Admits to Hanging a Noose at a Black Sailor's Bunk." Task & Purpose. Last modified February 3, 2021. <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/sailor-uss-lake-champlain-noose/>.
- Sforza, Lauren. "Number of People Charged in Jan. 6 Rioting Surpasses 1,100." The Hill. Last modified August 10, 2023. <https://thehill.com/policy/national-security/4147038-number-of-people-charged-in-jan-6-rioting-surpasses-1100/>.
- Shepherd, Katie. "An Airman was Accused of Spreading White-Nationalist Propaganda. He's Been Demoted but is Allowed to Continue Serving." *The Washington Post*. Last modified November 20, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/11/20/air-force-airman-accused-white-nationalist-propaganda-identity-evropa-demoted/>.
- Simi, Pete, Bryan Bubolz, and Ann Hardman. "Military Experience, Identity Discrepancies, and Far Right Terrorism: An Exploratory Analysis." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 8 (2013): 654–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2013.802976>.
- Sunstein, Cass. *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- United States Army. "Black Americans in the U.S. Army." Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://www.army.mil/blackamericans/#:~:text=present%20day,representation%20in%20the%20U.S.%20population>.
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Military Naturalization Statistics." Accessed July 24, 2023. <https://www.uscis.gov/military/military-naturalization-statistics>.
- Vitali, Joshua. "Fueling the Fire: An Examination of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States Over the Last Decade." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2020. <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/65460>.
- Ware, Jacob. "The Violent Far-Right Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Military." Council on Foreign Relations. Last modified January 31, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/violent-far-right-terrorist-threat-us-military>.
- Woodward, Alex. "Qanon, White Nationalists and Hate Speech: Experts Reveal How the Floodgates Opened on Elon Musk's Twitter." *The Independent*. Last modified December 1, 2022. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/elon-musk-twitter-suspended-accounts-b2239851.html>.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
Fort Belvoir, Virginia
2. Dudley Knox Library
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California



DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

WWW.NPS.EDU

WHERE SCIENCE MEETS THE ART OF WARFARE