Military-Trained Gang Members – Two Different Perspectives

by
Carter F. Smith

Abstract
Communities everywhere have experienced the negative effects of street gangs. The presence of military-trained gang members (MTGMs) in the community increases the threat of violence to citizens. The problem addressed was the growing presence of MTGMs in civilian communities in two locations. The purpose was to determine the perceived presence of MTGMs by two different groups. Gang investigators in Millington, TN and patrol officers in El Paso, TX were surveyed regarding their perceptions of the presence of MTGMs in their communities. Most respondents in both groups indicated that they had seen a recent increase in the number of military-trained personnel associated with gangs. Recommendations for policymakers included identifying gangs and related groups as Security Threat Groups (STGs) to limit the potential for the perception of racial bias in criminal gang investigations. Recommendations for military leaders included acknowledgement of the annual fluctuation in gang-related crime without arbitrarily quantifying the threat level. Recommendations for commanders included treating all drug trafficking cases as if gang members were in some way connected, whether in manufacturing or distribution. This article was developed from a paper submitted to the American Society of Criminology conference (November 2012).

Introduction
"The current generation of gang members are the first in a very long time to grow up during a time of high military activity. As a result, more gang members are now joining military service for a wide variety of reasons and are returning to the (civilian community) jurisdiction with basic military training at the very least. I have seen gang members in the military encourage others in their gang to enlist as well. The percentage of military trained gang members will continue to rise for the foreseeable future." Tennessee Gang Investigators' Association member, May 2010.

Training in advanced combat tactics has become more available to gang members in civilian communities. Military-trained gang members (MTGMs) introduce military tactics and training to local gang members, creating an increase in the level of gang violence within the community (NGIC, 2007). Whether trained in

combat arms, logistics, finance, or other military occupational specialties, gang members with military experience should be considered more advanced and dangerous than gang members without military experience, and the potential threat that MTGMs pose to law enforcement is significant (NGIC, 2009). The threat to communities continues to increase because all MTGMs were or will be discharged from the military at some point, either due to inappropriate activity (e.g. conduct contrary to military discipline, criminal actions) or because their commitment to military service was satisfied (Smith & Doll, 2012). Gang members have enlisted in the military as an alternative to incarceration. Others joined the military to recruit members into their gang, obtain access to weapons, and learn how to respond to hostile gunfire (NGIC, 2013).

There were roughly 1.4 million gang members in the United States at the end of 2010 (NGIC, 2011). Military Criminal Investigative Organizations (MCIOs) in the U.S. report that less than 1 percent of their felony investigations conducted in fiscal year 2011 involved gang members and their associates. The MCIOs have identified military personnel with gang membership or affiliation in every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces; however, their presence does not appear to be widespread or organized (NGIC, 2013). Approximately 10% of gang members in civilian communities have military training (Smith & Doll, 2012). The most common military gang-related crimes involved drug trafficking, aggravated assaults, housebreaking and larceny cases, attempted homicides, and sexual assault investigations (CID, 2006-2011; NGIC, 2009; Sazonov, 2011).

On September 11, 2001, terrorists reminded our country that we weren't as secure as we thought we were, and the gang problem in the U.S. military became, understandably, less of a priority (Smith, 2011a). Unfortunately, such a shift in focus without a corresponding decrease in gang activity appears to have led to an increasingly larger gang problem in the military (CID 2005-2010). As a result, the military stopped any recognizable proactive gang intelligence collection effort until two deaths occurred in 2005 – one in Alaska and one in Germany – that were clearly gang-related (CID, 2006; Smith, 2011a). In the years since the post-9/11 decline in tracking and investigating non-terrorism related gang activity, there has been a growing increase in academic and practitioner interest and detected events involving military-trained gang members.

The data reported in this paper was collected with a survey designed in preparation for the Military Gang Perception Questionnaire (Smith, 2011b), and was administered to two groups of law enforcement professionals. Participants in the first group were members of the Tennessee Gang Investigators Association (TNGIA). Participants in the second group were members of the El Paso, TX Police Department. The intent was to determine whether gang investigators in the area of a south-central U.S. metropolitan area (Memphis, TN) with a mature gang presence perceived the type of MTGM activity being reported by street level officers near the Texas-Mexico border. The survey instrument included general questions involving crime in general, gang crime, and crime associated with gang members who were also in the military.

Literature Review: Theories explaining gang crime.

Gangs are unique organizations and their members represent both themselves as individuals and the gang as an organization. Gang members who are or have been in the military are adults, and as such have not been studied by the vast amount of

research on youth street gangs and gang members. The theories from what has been referred to as the *Chicago School* were determined to be most applicable to the adult gang members found in the military, and include the following:

Sutherland (1940) proposed a social learning theory called differential association. The principles included the premise that behavior (with criminal and anti-criminal patterns) was learned in communication with others within intimate personal groups and involves all the mechanisms involved in any other learning process (Sutherland, 1940).

Social disorganization theory held that social disorganization produced weak institutional controls, which in turn loosened the constraints on individuals' natural propensity to deviate, and that delinquency was passed on through the generations in the same way language, roles, and attitudes were transmitted (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

Glaser's (1956) theory of differential identification, suggested "a person pursues criminal behavior to the extent that he identifies himself with real or imaginary persons from whose perspective his criminal behavior seems acceptable" (p. 440). This tells us that prior identification and present circumstances affect our ability to associate with one group (e.g., a criminal street gang), while maintaining employment by or membership in a second group whose institutional values and norms oppose those of the first group (e.g., the military).

Differential opportunity theory (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960) focused on the intervening variables that account for the forms crime and deviance can take. Illegal activity requires learning and expressing the beliefs necessary for support from the particular subculture, and belief that money is the means for success and the gap between ability and desire provides an inclination toward criminal involvement (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960).

The concept of differential integration was based on the commonality of emphasis on group affiliation in both structural and subcultural approaches (Knox, 1981). Differential integration states that the explanation for why exoffenders return to criminal activity (recidivate) involves both the limited opportunities they face and the attraction of the deviant subculture to which they are exposed.

The theories, as applied to the study of gang members in the military, have provided a framework with which to examine simultaneous membership in organizations with conflicting roles in society. The theories serve to explain the troubles associated with the social integration of gang members into legitimate sectors of opportunity, i.e. the disciplinary structure of the military, while having membership in not only a deviant group but also a possibly violent and criminal lifestyle.

Academic coverage of MTGMs.

Since Smith's (2011c) comprehensive literature review, there has been additional academic interest in the topic of military-trained gang members. Sazonov (2011) examined the attitudes of soldiers towards gang-affiliated members who served with them. The study focused on various methods active gang members used to recruit comrades into a gang. Gang members engaged in a variety of criminal and delinquent behaviors, including distribution of illegal narcotics, theft, assault, assault battery, intimidation, vandalism, extortion, blackmail and conspiracy (Sazonov, 2011). A few gang and non-gang affiliated participants stated that some military officers engaged in gang activity and allowed lower ranking gang members

to conduct gang activity. One Gangster Disciple respondent stated he personally engaged in weapons theft and battery for which he was never caught. A Crips member stated that he did not personally engage in weapons theft but knew of other gang-affiliated personnel who did (Sazonov, 2011). Another Gangster Disciples member admitted to shooting an individual and committing a burglary while in the Army. One respondent, an admitted gang member, engaged in property theft and distribution of marijuana and methamphetamine (Sazonov, 2011). If non-gang affiliated personnel observed or reported a gang member, retaliation in the form of assault and battery was likely to follow (Sazonov, 2011). Additionally, a Sergeant who was a member of the Gangster Disciples said there were instances of gang related stabbings that took place on and off military installation (Sazonov, 2011).

MCIO coverage of gang crime.
Military interest in MTGMs has continued steadily since 2005. The CID (2011) and NCIS (2012) conducted investigations and assessments of gang activity in the military and reported their findings. The most recent available research by the AFOSI was completed in 2007. The 2010 CID gang assessment (2011) noted most subjects of gang-related activity were enlisted, single, males, between the ages of 18-24. That fit the official description of an average Army soldier (CID, 2011). Most (68%) of the subjects of gang-related crimes had prior Army law enforcement contact (CID, 2011). The Army experienced a slight (6%) decrease in all gang-related investigations and a significant (68%) decrease in felony investigations with an Army connection. There was no satisfactory explanation for the decrease, which occurred after five consecutive years of significant increases, though the authors of the report speculated that the decrease might be attributed to the continued awareness of gangs and extremists by commanders or the elimination of identified members from the Army, or it might be correlated to the 14% decrease in all CID felony investigations. The decrease in all crimes was not explained further. Though the results of following assessments were not yet available, it was suspected that the drop in the number of gang-related investigations was an anomaly, which can be expected when employing a reactive strategy to a gang problem.

The states with the highest number of incidents reported were Georgia, Texas, Washington, and Hawaii. Most (82%) of the subjects were Caucasian, while only 9% were African-American and 9% were Hispanic (CID, 2011). The 2009 CID gang assessment showed more (49%) African-Americans were subjects of gang investigations. The next highest race represented was Whites with 30%. There was no explanation for the drastic change, nor was there a year-by year comparison in the 2010 report (CID, 2011). Nowhere in either report was there information regarding the number of gang members that had been prosecuted or otherwise removed from the military nor was any mention of notifying law enforcement in the civilian community that received the discharged MTGM. The U.S. Army has conducted gang threat assessments covering the years since 9/11, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 Cumulative tally of CID felony and non-felony (other) investigations 2002-2010.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ROI	7	5	5	10	16	17	27	34	11
Other	22	8	4	13	44	62	92	109	102

It was noteworthy that the number of felony reports of investigations (ROIs) showed a general increase in most years following a slight decrease from 2002-2003. Other, non-felony investigations also steadily increased over the previous 8 years after a decrease in 2002. Neither of these phenomena was explained in any of the assessments, and no year-to-year analysis was conducted.

The U.S. Navy (2012) conducted a review of NCIS criminal investigations and criminal intelligence reports produced during calendar year 2010 and 2011. The number of reports identifying gang activity largely stayed the same from 2010 to 2011, and gang activity did not appear to pose a significant threat to the operational readiness of the U.S. Navy (USN) or U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). The report addressed the threat to the civilian community post-service only by referencing media reports suggesting gang members purposely entered the military to gain skills they could teach fellow gang members (USN, 2012). In contrast to the U.S. Army, the Navy survey experienced a slight drop in all gang-related investigations but a slight increase in those, presumably felonies, with a Navy connection, as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2 Review of gang-involved NCIS criminal investigations

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
Navy Nexus	12	64	78	79
Other	67	130	120	115

For 2011, there were twenty-one (21) gang-related investigations and fifty-eight (58) gang-related intelligence reports with a Navy connection, or nexus, resulting in seventy-nine (79) total (USN, 2012). It was noted that in the last 3 years reported, the number of investigations by the Navy appeared to exceed those of the Army, although the Navy was a smaller branch, and did not conduct annual assessments.

Agents of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) reported (2007) their efforts at intelligence collection to determine if Air Force personnel or resources were adversely affected by gang activity. The agents reported that gang members joining the military were a problem over the previous decade (AFOSI, 2007). Gang members were becoming increasingly more sophisticated in their recruitment of young people, including military dependents, using popular hip hop culture, websites, and chat rooms. That was seen as problematic because gang members may seek to join the military for weapons training, and use of combat tactics such as evasive skill and cover and concealment (AFOSI, 2007). Additional information was not included in this report because of the length of time since it was reported.

MTGMs addressed by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

The FBI's National Gang Intelligence Center periodically published an assessment of the gang posture in the U.S. As of June 2013, the NGIC identified at least 60 gangs whose members or associates had either enlisted or attempted to gain employment in the military or various government agencies (NGIC, 2013). The NGICs 2013 survey showed 16 law enforcement agencies reported a gang presence on military installations adjacent to their jurisdictions. Law enforcement in 38 jurisdictions report that the Black P Stones, Bloods, Crips, Gangster Disciples, DMI, Latin Kings, Sureños, and OMG groups such as the Bandidos, Hells Angels

Motorcycle Club (HAMC), Pagans, Untamed Rebels, Vagos, Warlocks, and Wolf Pack MCs encouraged members without criminal records to enlist in the military to obtain weapons expertise, combat training, or access to sensitive information (NGIC, 2013).

Gang members exploit military installations to perpetuate their criminal enterprise, and encourage their relatives and associates to follow suit (NGIC, 2013). Gang presence in the U.S. military posed a criminal and security threat to law enforcement and the community as members may gain access to or master advanced weapons systems, develop combat skills and, gain access to sensitive items and material (NGIC, 2013). Gang members in the military engage in a host of criminal activities both on and off military installations. Gang members in the military, like their civilian counterparts, commit crimes, to include: drug trafficking, assaults, threats, intimidation, weapons trafficking, robberies, thefts, burglaries, fencing stolen goods, vandalism, and homicides (NGIC, 2013).

The MCIOs have identified military personnel with gang membership or affiliation in every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces; however, their presence does not appear to be widespread or organized (NGIC, 2013). The CID, AFOSI, and NCIS report that less than 1 percent of felony investigations conducted in fiscal year 2011 involved gang members and their associates (NGIC, 2013). Despite the low rate of gang-related activity observed by the MCIOs on DOD installations, the threat of gang members joining the military to gain combat-related skills to enable their criminal conduct is too serious to discount. Countering this potential threat requires consistent training, surveillance, and information sharing (NGIC, 2013). The MCIOs encourage federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to report information concerning military personnel in their communities who have suspected gang affiliations. DOD Instruction 1325.06 designates extremist group or gang participation as prohibited activities for U.S. Armed Forces personnel and provides commanders the authority to take administrative and disciplinary actions for that participation, and commanders can take action based solely on evidence of active participation in a gang (NGIC, 2013).

Legislation to limit gang activity in the military. Legislative efforts to prohibit street gang members from joining the military were added to Public Law 110-181, 2008. The legislation included the provision to add active membership in a street gang to the standing prohibition against active group membership by military members in extremist groups. The legislation was intended to extend the prohibitions of Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction (DoDI) 1325.6, which has its history in preventing members of organizations considered subversive and openly anti-government from joining the military in the interests of national security (Executive Order 10450, 1953). Use of this legislation appeared to demonstrate a lack of understanding of the history, given the requirements for limiting the negative impact of gangs on military communities.

At the time the instruction was initially published in 1969, the DoD was concerned with the infiltration of anti-war and anti-military organizations. The directive focused on dissident and protest activities within the military, and especially on activities such as underground newspapers, demonstrations involving military service members, and serviceman organizations. In 1986, the Secretary of Defense updated the directive. The directive's language prohibited "active" participation in "extremist organizations." This comes from language in Executive

Order (EO) 11,785 issued in 1953, during the height of the Cold War, when the government feared Communist infiltration. It was later changed to forbid designating any groups as "totalitarian, fascist, Communist, or subversive" and forbade any circulation or publication of a list of such groups.

Military gang investigators have had problems linking the DoD instruction to gangs because of its history (Smith, 2011a). It should be noted that the 2010 CID assessment included the word *Extremist* in the title – the first time in recent history that was done. It was clear what actions the original legislation was designed to prohibit – there was no mention of gangs or any other organized crime group.

Methodology/Methods

The research question addressed was whether gang investigators in the area of a south-central U.S. metropolitan area (Memphis, TN) with a mature gang presence perceived the type of MTGM activity as gang investigators in a more central U.S. location street level police officers near the Texas-Mexico border. Participants for the study were active members of the Tennessee Gang Investigators Association (TNGIA) attending training in Millington, Tennessee in 2009 and street-level police officers with the El Paso, TX Police Department in 2009.

Of the TNGIA group, about 68% were assigned in either investigation or patrol, most participants (84%) were sworn officers, and about 70% were working at the local level. From the population of 75 in attendance at the training, a total of 63 completed the paper survey, a response rate of 84%. In the El Paso study, the survey instrument was distributed on-line to patrol officers who primarily worked field patrol duty. From the population of 509 police officers who worked patrol, a total of 54 officers responded to the survey, a response rate of 11%.

The author examined perceptions of members of the TNGIA. Celaya, De La O, and Zamora (2009) examined perceptions of members of the El Paso, TX police department. The questionnaires included many of the same questions (See Appendix A), several of which were compared and contrasted below.

Results

The below analysis distinguished the two groups as gang investigators (Millington, TN) and patrol officers (El Paso, TX).

1) . . . there has been an increase in gang-related activities in my jurisdiction.

The gang investigators were asked about the previous 5 years, and 77% reported they had seen an increase. Most (85.2%) of the patrol officers indicated that within the last 12 months, they had seen an increase in gang activity.

2) There are gang members in my jurisdiction that are currently in the military.

One-fourth (25%) of the gang investigators indicated that there were gang members in their jurisdiction that were currently in the military. Most of the patrol officers (88.9%) indicated that there are gang members in their jurisdiction that were currently in the military.

3) . . . what percentage of crime in your jurisdiction is committed by military personnel.

Of the gang investigators that answered, the majority (28%) reported up to 10% of crimes were committed by military personnel. Two-thirds (66.6%) of the patrol officers estimated that up to 25% of crimes committed in their jurisdiction

were committed by military personnel.

4) If you have encountered active-duty military members in gang-related activities, what pay grade/affiliation were they?

The gang investigators reported 36% of their MTGMs were in the lower-enlisted (E-1 – E-4) ranks, and estimated an additional 12% were non-commissioned officers (E-5 and above). The patrol officers who encountered gang members that were in the military, indicated that the majority of subjects were junior enlisted (E-1 – E-4)

5) If you have encountered military gang members, what types of crimes were they suspected of committing?

The gang investigators indicated that 42% of the crimes committed by military personnel affiliated with gangs involved drug offenses, 23% involved assaults, and only 10% were involved in weapons offenses. The patrol officers indicated that 83.3% of the crimes committed by military personnel affiliated with gangs involved drug offenses, 79.6% involved assaults, and 72.2% involved in weapons offenses.

6) To the best of your knowledge, were these individuals gang members when they joined the military?

Most (31%) of the gang investigators indicated they thought military personnel with gang affiliations had those affiliations prior to joining the military. All of the patrol officers indicated they thought military personnel with gang affiliations had those affiliations prior to joining the military.

7) There is pressure from supervisors to downplay any connection between gang related activities and the military.

Some (28%) of the gang investigators disagreed that there was pressure to downplay the military connection, while most (59%) of the patrol officers did.

8) When a crime involves an active-duty military gang member, the military is very forthcoming with information and assistance.

Only 13% of gang investigators agreed, while 21% disagreed that the military was forthcoming with gang information. For patrol officers, 43.2% agreed, while 35% disagreed that the military was forthcoming with information regarding gangs.

9) Does your agency have a working relationship with military authorities (e.g. CID, NCIS, OSI or Military Police)?

Many (37%) of the gang investigators indicated that their agency had a working relationship with military authorities. Most (67.3%) of the patrol officers indicated that their agency had such a working relationship.

Discussion

Military personnel affiliated with gangs. There is a general consensus among military gang specialists that the presence of active gang members in the military ranks may result in a disruption of command, low morale, disciplinary problems, and a broad range of criminal activity. Gang-affiliated military personnel . . . facilitate crime on and off military installations, and are at risk of transferring their weapons and combat training back to the community to employ against rival gang members and law enforcement officers (NGIC, 2007). The threat to communities continues to increase because all MTGMs were or will be discharged from the military at some point, either due to inappropriate activity (e.g. conduct contrary to military discipline, criminal actions) or because their commitment to military service

was satisfied (Smith & Doll, 2012).

Summary of Responses

Question	TENN.	TEXAS
Seen increase in gang activity	77% yes	85% yes
Any gang members in military	25% yes	89% yes
Percent crime by military	10% (by 28%)	25% (by 67%)
Rank of military gang members	Most E1-E-4	Most E1-E-4
What crimes by MTGM (Drugs, Assaults)	> 50%	80%
Gang member in gang before military	31% yes	100% yes
Pressure to downplay gang-military connection	28% No	59% No
Military assists when active duty gang member	13% yes	43% yes
Agency working relationship with military	37% yes	67% yes

Crimes committed by military members affiliated with gangs. Drugs, Robberies, and Assaults were the crimes most often committed by MTGMs according to respondents in both groups. The finding was similar to the data compiled from the MCIOs (NGIC, 2009; CID, 2005-2011; Sazonov, 2011; U.S. Navy, 2012). Gang members in the military engage in a host of criminal activities both on and off military installations. Like their civilian counterparts, MTGMs typically commit crimes including drug trafficking, assaults, threats, intimidation, weapons trafficking, robberies, thefts, burglaries, fencing stolen goods, vandalism, and homicides (NGIC, 2013).

Law Enforcement Perception. The respondents' perceptions may not depend on their gang investigations experience. Few studies have directly examined percentage of time spent on anti-gang activities as a variable, and one that examined it recently (Smith & Doll, 2012) found no statistically significant positive relationship between perceptions of the presence of MTGMs and level of participation in anti-gang activities. That study was unable to show a relationship between anti-gang efforts and the perception of gang investigators regarding MTGMs in their jurisdictions. As most MTGMs were adults and thought to be more advanced than many youth gang members, they may not be as easily detected by gang investigators, regardless of the percentage of time the investigators are able to commit to anti-gang activities. With the experience of concealing their gang affiliation while in the military, MTGMs in civilian communities would be experienced in avoiding detection in the presence of gang investigators. The indicators and effects of MTGMs may need to be incorporated into gang investigator training programs.

Relationships with the military and military's involvement. Respondents in both groups reported there was a degree of pressure to downplay military gang involvement and a limited perception that military representatives were forthcoming with information. Regulations direct MCIOs to ensure that within their area of responsibility there is close coordination and mutual exchange of criminal intelligence between their unit and other military and civilian law enforcement agencies on matters of common interest (U.S. Army, 2009). Those questions were included to gauge perception of a need and not to grade a public service. The author of this report is aware of the manpower commitment that would be necessary for such reporting to occur. Additionally, the hurdles caused by legal and regulatory requirements that distinguish a known or suspected gang member from a service

member who has committed a crime can be confusing.

Recommendations

   Recommendations for government leaders and policymakers. Policymakers should consider identifying gangs and related groups as Security Threat Groups (STGs). A typical STG is a group of three (3) or more persons with recurring threatening or disruptive behavior including but not limited to gang crime or gang violence (Knox, 2012). Most of the gang members identified in previous gang assessments were single, African-American males around age 20 (CID, 2007; CID, 2008; CID, 2009). The racial composition of military gang members in felony investigations previously trended from 65% African-American and 21% Caucasian (2007) to 67% African-American and 14% Caucasian (2008) to 47% African-American and 30% Caucasian (2009). In 2010, 9% of the subjects were African-American, 82% were White. The 2006 CID assessment did not identify the racial breakdown, though other demographics were included. None of the authors commented further on the abnormally disproportionate representation of African-Americans relative to the U.S. population or the demographics of the U.S. military, nor did the authors address the significant drop in African-American gang members identified from 2008 to 2009 and again to 2010.

   There appeared to be an aversion to address the data, possibly due to a desire to avoid focusing on the sensitive issue of race. Identifying groups known otherwise as gangs as Security Threat Groups, as has been done by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and many state departments of corrections for many years would limit the potential for the perception of racial bias in criminal gang investigations. Investigators would then be able to engage in a multi-jurisdictional cooperative effort using federal, state, and local law enforcement to identify all MTGMs – including street gang members, prison gang members, and members of outlaw motorcycle gangs. As an additional benefit, by identifying them as STGs, any recognition they may draw from publicity about their group or its activities can be eliminated. Also, the term accurately describes how these groups can impact the security of military operations and law and order. This recommendation was previously identified (Smith & Doll, 2012).

   Recommendations for MCIO commanders. Military leaders should acknowledge the annual fluctuation in gang-related crime affecting the military and address the problems caused for both military and civilian communities without attempting to arbitrarily quantify the threat level. Causes for fluctuation should be identified, examined, and reported. By quantifying the threat of gang crime in the military, MCIOs may increase the likelihood of misperception that they are applying a proactive strategy to reduce such numbers.

   The accurate identification of causes for increases or decreases in numbers was critical because over 10% of gang members in civilian communities have military training (Smith & Doll, 2012). This was especially advised because of the high percentage of felony drug investigations (CID, 2006; CID, 2009; CID, 2011) and the high percentage involvement of MTGMs in drug crime reported in the study.

   Commanders should consider treating all drug trafficking cases as if gang members were in some way connected, whether in manufacturing or distribution. This recommendation was previously identified (Smith & Doll, 2012). MCIOs report the number of gang-related cases as a percentage of all felonies, many of which involve illicit drugs. As there are no military gang-enhancement laws, it is unlikely

that a drug suppression team would expend the additional time to report members of the drug trafficking network who were also gang-involved, although a significant percentage of the drugs trafficked in the U.S. are in some way connected to gangs NDIC, 2005). This recommendation becomes increasingly necessary for accuracy if investigations regarding urinalyses are included in the number of felony investigations.

    Recommendations for military unit commanders. Military leadership should continuously examine the activities of all suspected military gang members to determine active gang affiliation for retention purposes while evaluating any gang affiliation for security clearances. Current guidance, specifically DoD Instruction 1325.6, prohibits active gang membership, yet the primary determination of such activity appears to be the presence of a criminal record. Not all gang members are caught by law enforcement each time they commit a crime.

    The proliferation of gang activity in communities adjacent to military installations has made it impossible to totally shield the military community. For service members requiring a security clearance, past gang affiliation should be prohibited, even passive or associate membership, unless accompanied by a complete, public renunciation of the gang and follow up evaluation by representatives of the appropriate medical authority. This recommendation was previously identified (Smith & Doll, 2012).

Summary

    Theories from the *Chicago School* provide a framework with which to examine simultaneous membership in organizations with conflicting roles in society. The theories help explain the troubles associated with the social integration of gang members into legitimate sectors of opportunity, i.e. the disciplinary structure of the military, while having membership in not only a deviant group but also a possibly violent and criminal lifestyle such as that found accompanying gang membership.

    Sazonov's (2011) study focused on various methods active gang members used to recruit comrades into a gang. Sazonov's respondents reported officers were involved in gang activity and recalled personally engaging in weapons theft, battery, shooting an individual, property theft and distribution of marijuana and methamphetamine, and committing a burglary (2011). Military interest in MTGMs has continued steadily. The MCIOs have identified military personnel with gang membership or affiliation in every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces; however, their presence does not appear to be widespread or organized (NGIC, 2013). The MCIOs report that less than 1 percent of felony investigations conducted involved gang members and their associates (NGIC, 2013). The NGIC learned that gangs were encouraging members without criminal records to enlist in the military to obtain weapons expertise, combat training, or access to sensitive information (2013).

    Most (77%) of the gang investigators and the patrol officers (85.2%) indicated that they had seen a recent increase in the number of military personnel associated with gangs. Most (31%) of the gang investigators and all of the patrol officers indicated they thought military personnel with gang affiliations already had the affiliations prior to joining the military. One in four (28%) of the gang investigators disagreed that there was pressure to downplay the military connection, while over half (59%) of the patrol officers did so. Regarding the forthcomingness of the military with gang information, more (21%) disagreed that the military was forthcoming, while more (43.2%) patrol officers agreed. Many (37%) gang

investigators and most patrol officers (67.3%) indicated their agency had a working relationship with military authorities.

Policymakers should consider identifying gangs and related groups as Security Threat Groups (STGs) to limit the potential for the perception of racial bias. Military leaders should acknowledge the annual fluctuation in gang-related crime affecting the military and address the problems caused for both military and civilian communities without attempting to arbitrarily quantify the threat level. Commanders should consider treating all drug trafficking cases as if gang members were in some way connected, whether in manufacturing or distribution. Military leadership should continuously examine the activities of all suspected military gang members to determine active gang affiliation for retention purposes while evaluating any gang affiliation for security clearances.

If it were possible to determine how many gang members were active in the civilian community at the target age of military recruits, and compare that number to the same population in the military, it would likely show that a similar percentage of each population has gang ties. This possibility does not excuse the existence of gang members in the military, it simply explains it. To excuse the existence of gang members in the military would be to say that the military, like McDonalds or Wal-Mart, with over a million youthful employees around the world, understandably draws a few into its ranks from the gang lifestyle. Neither McDonalds nor Wal-Mart runs a background check that rivals the security clearance conducted as standard fare by the military, and neither trusts their global employees with an issued weapon and ammunition. Thus, the presence of gang members in the military should be aggressively examined, questioned, and reported. Instead of accepting the existence of gang members in the military community, the goal should be to limit opportunities to join and be retained and subsequently released to the civilian community.

Although the MCIOs do well to identify the gang-related crimes committed in their ranks, the larger problem is not the presence, with or without criminal activity, of gang members in the military. *All military members are adults, and those who are gang members and military service members are unlikely to respond to attempts at intervention.* More significant than gang members in the military is the increasing presence of MTGMs in the civilian communities, and their ability to increase the dangerousness of the organized criminal element and avoid detection by law enforcement because of their skills.

References

Alvarez, L. (2007, February 14). Army giving more waivers in recruiting. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/14/us/14military.html

Celaya, C., De La O, E., & Zamora, M. (2009). *El Paso Gang Impact Study.* Unpublished Masters Capstone Project. University of Texas at El Paso.

Cloward, R. & Ohlin, L. (1960). *Delinquency and opportunity*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Executive Order 10450 (1953). *Security requirements for government employment*. National Archives. Retrieved from http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html

Glaser, D. (1956). Theories and behavioral images. *The American Journal of Sociology. 61*(5) 433-444. doi:10.1086/221802

Knox, G. W. (1981). Differential integration and job retention among exoffenders. *Criminology, 18*(4), 481-501. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.1981.tb01379.x

Knox, G.W. (2012). *The Problem of Gangs and Security Threat Groups (STG's) in American Prisons and Jails Today: Recent Findings from the 2012 NGCRC National Gang/STG Survey.* National Gang Crime Research Center. http://www.ngcrc.com/corr2012.html

National Drug Intelligence Center. (2005). Drugs and Gangs. Fast Facts. http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs11/13157/

National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC]. (2007). *National gang threat assessment*. Washington, DC: National Gang Intelligence Center.

National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC]. (2009). *National gang threat assessment*. Washington, DC: National Gang Intelligence Center.

National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC]. (2011). *National gang threat assessment*. Washington, DC: National Gang Intelligence Center.

National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC]. (2013). *National Gang Report.* Washington, DC: National Gang Intelligence Center.

National Youth Gang Center (2009). *National youth gang survey analysis*. Retrieved from http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis

Sazonov, S.A. (2011). *American soldier: Gangs in the military, a preliminary look at active gang members in the U.S. Armed Forces.* Unpublished Masters Thesis. John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Shaw, C. R. & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas.* Chicago, IL: University Press.

Smith, C. F. (2011a). View from the field: The early days of military gang investigating. *Journal of Gang Research, 18*(4) 46-52.

Smith, C. F. (2011b). Documenting the Pilot: the Military Gang Perception Questionnaire (MGPQ). *Journal of Gang Research, 18*(4) 1-17.

Smith, C.F. (2011c). A Comprehensive Literature Review of Military-Trained Gang Members. *Journal of Gang Research, 19*(1) 9-20.

Smith, C. F. & Doll, Y. (2012). Gang Investigators Perceptions of Military-Trained Gang Members. *Critical Issues in Justice and Politics, 5*(1), 1-19.

Sutherland, E. H. (1940). White-Collar Criminality. *American Sociological Review, 5*(1) 1. doi:10.2307/2083937

U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (2007). *AFOSI criminal analysis assessment: The threat of street gangs on/near USAF installations.*

U.S. Army. (2009). Criminal Investigation Activities. *Army Regulation 195-2.*

U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command. (2006). *Summary report gang activity threat assessment fiscal year 2004-2005: A review of gang activity affecting the Army*. Author.

U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command. (2007). *Summary report gang activity threat assessment fiscal year 2006: A review of gang activity affecting the Army*.

U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command. (2008). *Summary report gang activity threat assessment fiscal year 2007: A review of gang activity affecting the Army*.

U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command. (2009). *Summary report gang activity threat assessment fiscal year 2008: A review of gang activity affecting the Army*.

U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command. (2010). *Summary report gang activity threat assessment fiscal year 2009: A review of gang activity affecting the Army*.

U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command. (2011). *Summary report gang and extremist activity threat assessment fiscal year 2010: A review of gang and extremist activity affecting the Army.*

U.S. Navy (2012). *Gang Threat Assessment 2011- Criminal Intelligence Brief.* Naval Criminal Investigative Service Multiple Threat Alert Center.

About the Author

Dr. Carter F. Smith is a professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN. Carter is a retired Army Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Command special agent, and was involved in military and federal law enforcement, both in the United States and abroad, for over twenty-two years. He served fifteen of those years at Fort Campbell, KY, where he was instrumental in identifying the growing gang problem that began affecting the military community in the early 1990s. In 1998, he became the inaugural team chief for the Army's first Gang & Extremist investigations team.

Carter has provided training on gangs and their impact on the community to many gatherings and conferences, including those sponsored by the Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Northwest, Oklahoma, and Tennessee Gang Investigators Associations, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, the National Crime Prevention Council, the Regional Organized Crime Information Center, the National Gang Crime Research Center, the Southern Criminal Justice Association, the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, the Department of Justice and the U.S. Army. He has been interviewed about gangs by several national as well as regional and local television, print, internet and radio news sources, and has appeared twice in the History Channel's Gangland series.

He was a founding (and still serving) board member of the Tennessee Gang Investigators Association, a member organization of the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations. He was a recipient of the CID Command Special Agent of the Year award, and a recipient of the Frederic Milton Thrasher Award of the National Gang Crime Research Center.

APPENDIX A: Perceptions of Military-Trained Personnel and Gang Activity

DIRECTIONS: Below you will find a series of questions regarding your perceptions and gang related issues. Please choose the ONE best answer for each question. If you change an answer, simply put an "X" over the wrong answer and fill in the circle of the correct response. You may use pen or pencil. Thank you in advance for your participation.

The answer key for this section is:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NO = No Opinion, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Please rate the level to which you agree with the following statements: SA A NO D SD

1. I am knowledgeable about gangs and gang-related activities.
    2. I know a lot about the gangs in my jurisdiction.
3. There is a gang problem within my jurisdiction.
4. Over the last five years there has been an increase in gang-related activities in my

jurisdiction.
5.   The supervisors within my jurisdiction believe there is a gang problem.
6.   The supervisors within my jurisdiction are actively involved in reducing gang-related activities in my jurisdiction.
7.   My peers believe there is a gang problem in our jurisdiction.
8.   The community that I serve believes there is a gang problem.
9.   There are gang members in my jurisdiction that are currently in the military
10. There are gang members in my jurisdiction that have served in the military.
11. Gang members in my jurisdiction are increasingly using military weapons.
12. Gang members in my jurisdiction are increasingly using military equipment
13. There is pressure from supervisors to downplay any connection between gang related activities and the military.
14. When a crime involves an active-duty military gang member, the military is very forthcoming with information and assistance.
15. There are not many gang members in my jurisdiction who have served in the military.
16. Active gang members should NOT be allowed to join the military
Please rate your level of concern regarding the possibility that military-trained gang members might:
      Strongly concerned   **Not at all concerned**
17. Have advanced weapons training
18. Have access to military weapons
19. Have International drug connections
Please rate your level of concern regarding the possibility that military-trained gang members might:
      Strongly concerned   **Not at all concerned**
20. Have International crime connections
21. Have leadership training
22. Have recruiting training
23. Have survival, escape, resistance and evasion training
24. Have interrogation training
25. Have self-defense or offensive tactics training
26. Have improvised explosive device (IED) detection training
27. Does your organization have or participate in a formal anti-gang team, section, or task force?
    O   Yes
    O   No
    O   Unsure
28. Are you personally involved in these anti-gang activities?
    O YesIf Yes, How long have you been involved?
    O No
29. To what extent do gangs in your jurisdiction commit crimes against non-gang members?
    1.   O   1-10 %
    O   11-25%
    O   26-50%
    O   51-100%
    O   Unsure

30. Does your agency have a working relationship with military authorities (e.g. CID, NCIS, OSI or Military Police)?
    1.   O   Yes
    O   No
    O   Unsure

31. Which of the following branches of the military are represented by the gang members in your jurisdiction? (Choose all that apply)
    O Army   O   Marines
    O Air Force   O   Coast Guard
    O Navy   O   Other (Please specify)

32. If you have encountered active-duty military members in gang-related activities, what pay grade/affiliation were they? (Choose all that apply)
    O   Junior enlisted (E1-E4)   O   Commissioned Offic-
ers
    O   Non-commissioned officer (E5-E6)   O   Civilian
    O   Senior NCOs   O   Dependants/Family
members

33. How did you become aware of the gang members' military affiliation? (Choose all that apply)
    O   Personal interview
    O   Other police officer
    O   Non-law enforcement credible source
    O   Non-law enforcement source with unknown credibility
    O   I am not aware of this

34. To the best of your knowledge, were these individuals gang members when they joined the military?
    1.   O Yes
    O No
    O Unsure

35. If you have encountered military gang members, what types of crimes were they suspected of committing? (Choose all that apply)
    O   Drugs   O   Sexual Assaults
    O   Assaults   O   Weapon Smuggling
    O   Homicides   O   Other (Please specify)
    O   Robberies   O I have not encountered a military gang member

36. Please estimate what percentage of crime in your jurisdiction is committed by military personnel?
    1. O   1-10%   O   Over 51%
    O   11-25%   O   Unsure
    O   26-50%   O   None

37. Please estimate what percentage of gang activity in your jurisdiction involves dependents (family members) of active-duty military.
    O   1-10%   O   Over 51%
    O   11-25%   O   Unsure
    O   26-50%   O   None