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Military Police

Gangs and Extremist Groups— A Handbook for Commanders, Parents, and Teachers

Applicability. This pamphlet applies to Army in Europe personnel.

Suggested Improvements. The Chief of Staff proponent of this pamphlet is the Office of the Provost Marshal, HQ USAREUR/7A (AEAPM-LE, 381-8949). Users may send suggestions to improve this pamphlet on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to the Commander in Chief, USAREUR, ATTN: AEAPM-LE

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Summary. This pamphlet provides information about criminal street-gangs.

Distribution. Distribute according to DA Form 12-88-E, block 0877, command level A, and to Garrison Provost Marshal offices for further distribution.



1. Purpose

a. The intent of this handbook is to educate concerned commanders, parents, and school teachers on typical gang characteristics and the warning signs indicating a soldier, family member, or student is drifting into gang-like activity. We hope you, the reader, can apply the information in this handbook to help civilian and military professionals discourage the formation of gangs or gang-like groups and deter gang-related incidents through-out USAREUR.

b. The Office of the Provost Marshal, HQ USAREUR/7A, developed this handbook using source documents written by military and civilian criminal justice administrators and educators.

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2. Gang Overview

a. Definition and History

(1) For the purpose of clarity and continuity, this handbook defines a gang as a unified group with recognized leaders that shows its unity through outward, public displays and demonstrates activity that is part of an organized, ongoing criminal enterprise. Criminal gangs have plagued major cities in many countries for centuries. Gangs have a long history in most metropolitan areas of the United States. The roots of criminal streetgangs can be traced back to the 1920s. Criminal streetgangs as we know them to-day first emerged in the United States in the late 1960s.

(2) The highly publicized West Coast gang movement started in Compton, California, between two rival high schools. These groups adopted the names "Bloods" and "Crips." The Bloods wore the color red to denote their gang affiliation and the Crips wore the color blue. It wasn't long before violence erupted, as these gangs grew in size and began competing for revenue, recruits, and territory.

(3) Some gangs have evolved into extremist organizations. Groups such as the "Skinheads" and "Aryan Youth Movement" are driven by prejudice and bigotry. White supremacy is the basis for their existence and actions.

(4) Gangs have expanded across the United States as an extension of their drug-trafficking efforts. Because the military is a reflection of our society, gangs have, in one form or another, infiltrated some military communities (primarily in the United States).

(5) Gang and extremist-group activity rose to the limelight in the U.S. Army on December 7, 1995, when soldiers from Fort Bragg were charged with two racially motivated murders in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In the aftermath of these murders, the Secretary of the Army formed a task force to investigate extremist-group activity in the Army's ranks. The task force visited 28 major Army installations in the United States, Germany, and Korea during January and February 1996. After conducting over 7,000 interviews and 17,080 written surveys, the task force concluded that there was minimal evidence of extremist-group activity in the Army.

(6) Provost marshals report few gang-related incidents in their communities. When incidents do occur on USAREUR installations they are usually carried out by former soldiers or juvenile family members. Most of these gang-related incidents are actually committed by people who imitate gang members rather than actual hard-core gang members. It is important to note that little evidence exists of gang activity that is part of an organized, ongoing criminal enterprise. Most gang activity in USAREUR is best described as delinquent or simple criminal behavior.

b. Stages of Development

(1) Gangs are defined by stages of activity or development that range from experimental to final stages.

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(2) Youths, typically between the ages of 10 and 12, experiment with gangs because they are looking for a peer group to associate with. Youths who do not grow out of the gang mentality may move to other stages of gang development. Often these other stages of development include an initiation called "jumped in" or "sexed in." "Jumped in" is a ritual normally involving the gang candidate either being beaten by the gang members or performing some violent crime. "Sexed in" is a ritual normally involving a female having sexual intercourse with several gang members. After the youth is jumped in or sexed in, the young gang member becomes a "foot soldier."

(3) In the final stage of gang development, individuals strongly identify with a specific gang, are used as part of the main workforce, and are frequently used for the sexual gratification of older gang members.

c. Types of Gangs

(1) Gangs are typed by activity, race, and gender. There are many types of gangs. Some examples of the major gangs found in the United States include the following:

- (a) Black gangs ("Bloods" and "Crips").
- (b) Hispanic gangs – also referred to as Latin gangs ("Latin Souls" and "Orchestra Albany").
- (c) Asian gangs ("King Cobra Boyz" and "Ba Hala Na").
- (d) White gangs ("Stoners," "Skinheads," and "Bad Boy Club").
- (e) Immigrant gangs ("V.C. Boys" and "Vietnam Trouble Makers").
- (f) Hybrid gangs ("Campbell Boys" and "C-Notes").

(2) Some individuals and groups experiment with the gang lifestyle, but are not actual gang members. These individuals and groups are called "wannabes." They can, nevertheless, pose a challenge to communities and law enforcement. Most wannabes move from one group to another without committing themselves to a specific group or gang. Wannabes and groups develop styles of dress and communication closely resembling that of real gang members. This can place them in danger of being mistaken for rival gang members and being tagged as imposters or infiltrators. The commitment and physical violence associated with gangs in the United States keep many wannabes from seeking real gang membership.

3. Gang-Activity Indicators and Warning Signs

a. When soldiers, family members, or students begin drifting toward gang-like activity, commanders, parents, and teachers should see indicators or warning signs. Commanders should deal quickly with graffiti, a sudden increase in violent crime, and illicit drug activity in their communities.

b. A sudden change of attitude, dress, or poor job or academic performance may be more than just a phase an individual is going through. The following are warning signs that commanders, parents, and teachers, should watch for:

* Gang-related graffiti (gang names, signs, or symbols) appearing in communities or near soldier or family quarters.

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* The sound of "hard" gangster rap, punk, or heavy-metal music full of profanity coming from soldier or family quarters or automobiles.

* A significant increase in the number of drug offenses or racial incidents.

* Unregistered weapons being found in units or schools.

* A significant increase in the number of "informal social groups" with unusual names (for example, "Woodland Heights Posse," "Rip Off A Rule," "18th Street Crew").

* Increased use of alcohol or drugs.

* Soldiers, children, or students—

- Wearing certain colors or styles of clothing or jewelry, or brandishing strange tattoos or burns.
- Wearing beepers or bringing cellular telephones to work or school.
- Engaging in physical confrontations, showing a sudden poor performance at work or school, or drawing graffiti on folders or schoolbook covers.
- Using a nickname or attaching a prefix to their name.
- Suddenly buying or wanting clothing of one color (especially black, blue, or red).
- Suddenly developing a rebellious attitude toward superiors, parents, or teachers.

- Changing their hairstyle or dress.
- Having new friends with the same hairstyle or dress.
- Being secretive.
- Showing new interest in graffiti symbols and displaying symbols in bedroom.

- Changing routines, without explanation, when with new friends.

- Changing hangouts or leisure activities.

- Going out with unusually large groups of friends.

- Showing indications of drug use (for example, mood changes, the smell of inhalants on breath, unusual drowsiness or excitability).

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- Having an increase in possessions such as clothes, hats, and money.
- Changing their attitude about school and hobbies.
- Having disciplinary problems at work or school.
- Receiving telephone threats against family members.
- Having an abnormal fear of police.
- Showing defiant or unusually argumentative behavior.

4. Gang-Oriented Music and Communication

a. "Gangster" Rap Music. "Gangster Rap" is music that glorifies the gang lifestyle. Recordings often bear "Parental Advisory" labels. This music can be a powerful propaganda tool used to promote the life that gang members live. Profits from illegal activities may finance the music careers of these rap singers. Rap music is often categorized as either "hard" or "soft."

(1) Hard rap addresses gang-member experiences in inner-city America.

The language used is often vulgar, obscene, and punctuated by four-letter references to sexual intercourse and the male and female anatomy. Hard rap music is banned by most American radio stations but can be purchased on tape or CD.

(2) Soft rap often contains a toned-down, more socially acceptable version of the hard-rap message. When children listen to rap tapes or CDs, parents may think they are listening to a soft version of a rap song heard on the radio. In reality, their children may be listening to a hard version of the same song available only by purchasing a tape or CD.

b. "Oi" Music.

(1) "Oi" means "hey" in Cockney. Skinhead messages are often delivered and glorified through "oi" style music.

(2) This music contains guttural messages that depict the life of unemployed, white, working-class British youth who aspire to follow the skinhead movement. This music paints the world in terms of "us" (the white race – insiders) against "them" (everyone else - outsiders).

c. **Heavy Metal and Punk Rock.** Heavy metal and punk rock music is often associated with white Stoner gangs. Their music, dance, and behavior are a reflection of the violence, anger, and anarchy they thrive on.

d. **Gang Communication.** Streetgangs communicate through their own style of language, clothing, graffiti, hand signals, and tattoos. Their unique dress, language, and symbols also reinforce gang cohesiveness and loyalty. A gang's image and the reputation of its members depend on this recognition.

(1) **Language.**

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(a) Gang language is slang that uses words or terms not commonly recognized by those outside the gang community. Gang words or terms are normally taken out of context and meanings are twisted. "Blood" may mean a non-Crip gang member; "H" may be substituted for the word heroin; "down" might mean to do the right thing for fellow gang members or to live up to their expectations.

(b) Words or terms that are unfamiliar, or seem to be used to describe something strange or different, may be a sign of gang-related activity. Commanders, parents, and teachers should discourage young people from using this type of slang. Gang language unknowingly used in front of a gang member could lead to physical violence.

(2) Clothing.

(a) Gang members reinforce their sense of gang membership by adopting a style of dress. Most members are proud of their gang and therefore openly display signs of membership.

(b) There are two basic types of gang clothing. The first type of gang clothing is designed to make observers believe the individual belongs to a gang without specifically identifying which one. This clothing may indicate the type of gang, such as Hispanic or black, but not name the particular gang. The second type of gang clothing identifies a particular gang. A gang name, color, or logo may appear on jackets or sweatshirts.

(c) Members of black gangs often identify themselves with specific colors of clothing. Members of the Bloods use the color red, while members of the Crips use the color blue. Colors can be represented on headgear, earrings, shoelaces, belts, handkerchiefs, bandannas, and even vehicles. Other than jeans, Bloods will avoid wearing the color blue. Likewise, Crips will avoid wearing the color red. Hispanic-gang members and white supremacists often wear black.

(3) Graffiti.

(a) Graffiti is not only a form of gang communication; it is also the most visible form of gang criminal activity. It can be seen in neighborhood parks and on buildings, fences, and retaining walls. Graffiti is also used by gangs to brag about crimes they have committed or intend to commit.

(b) There are two types of graffiti. The first type of graffiti is called "tagging." Many perceive this as a form of art or social expression. Tagging is usually very well done, and artists often sign their work with a nickname. Sometimes tagging is used to show disrespect to other gangs, or used to make death threats against rival gang members. The second type of graffiti is called "gang graffiti" and is usually done to mark territory or turf.

(c) Different gang types have different graffiti styles. For example, there are vast differences between the black- and Hispanic-graffiti styles. Black-gang graffiti often lacks the flair and attention to detail evidenced by Hispanic-gang graffiti. Graffiti writing, although improved in recent years, is often crude and contains profanity.

(d) Normally, graffiti found close to the center of a gang's area is less challenged. Graffiti found away from the center of a gang's area is more challenged, and crossouts may be observed. When a gang has its graffiti crossed out by another gang's graffiti, this indicates that the area where the graffiti is

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found is a contested location. In the United States, homicides have resulted when gang members are caught marking a rival's territory with their graffiti.

(4) **Hand Signals.** Hand signals are another nonverbal method of gang communication that can identify the user with a specific gang. Gang hand signals are often outlawed on school campuses to prevent violence. "Flashing" or making hand signals is a face-to-face challenge between rival gang members. Asian and Pacific-island groups in the United States have their own hand signals and body language. When their hands are on their hips, elbows out, gang members may be making a threat. Hands crossed behind the back may indicate an insult or a way of wishing bad luck on another. If an islander takes off his shoes, this may be a challenge to do battle.

(5) **Tattoos.** Gangs use tattoos as a method of communication and identification. By displaying a tattoo, gang members carry the image of their gang. Traditional Hispanic gangs use tattoos extensively. Hispanic tattoos are usually visible on arms, hands, or shoulders. They may be as small as a homemade dot in the web of a hand, or large enough to cover an entire back or stomach. White-supremacist gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood have tattoos in the form of Nazi symbols, 666 (the biblical mark of the beast) or the initials AB. Bikers go for Harley Davidson tattoos and the symbols of their gang. Black-gang members do not usually use tattoos to identify gang membership.

5. Codes of Honor

a. Gang members must live by the gang's code of honor. Once people join a gang, the rules in the code of honor become their commandments. These codes of honor differ from gang to gang but contain similar themes of secrecy, loyalty, and respect for the gang and its traditions. Silence and secrecy are strictly maintained to keep sensitive information about illicit or illegal gang activity internal to the gang and away from parents, teachers, or law enforcement authorities.

b. Codes of honor must be viewed with a discerning eye. To the uninformed, they may look honorable, but they contain hidden meanings. Only those in the gang and those who actually live the life of a gang member will know the meanings.

(1) For example, a code of honor may state that a gang member should not disrespect another gang member. What the code of honor does not say is that if a gang member disrespects another gang member, the penalty may be death.

(2) Members of the Gangster Disciple Nation (a gang originating in Illinois) are told in their code of honor to read and become familiar with the Illinois criminal law and the State Constitution. This is encouraged so that members can find a way around the law.

c. Key words and terms in a code of honor may mean something entirely different than what they appear to mean.

(1) The word "community" may be used in a code of honor. The word "community" in a gang code of honor does not mean a civilian or military community. It means the gang community. The gang community is one of territory, turf, and a place where gang members engage in criminal activity.

(2) Another key term is "righteous endeavor." A righteous endeavor is not necessarily good nor legal. A righteous endeavor could mean participating in a drive-by shooting to avenge a violation of

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territory or turf by another gang.

6. Prevention

a. Gang culture can fill a void in young person's life. Gangs give their members feelings of belonging, identity, power, security, and even love. Once someone has joined a gang it may be difficult to leave, because of threats. For this reason, preventing youths from becoming gang members is very important. Some preventive measures to keep children from joining gangs are listed below.

PARENTS

* Spend sufficient time with your children. Convince them that they are an important part of the family.

- Insist on meeting your children's friends and the parents of these friends.

* Know where your children are going, with whom, how they are traveling, and when to expect them home.

• Set rules and enforce them. Children whose parents do not set and enforce rules will conform to a gang's rules because a gang will tolerate nothing else.

- Communicate with teachers. Ask them for information on gang-type behavior.
- Encourage legitimate out-of-school interests to make your children feel they are part of a group.

* Talk to your children about gangs, their recruitment tactics, and their activities. Explain why gangs are dangerous. Mention the constant threat of violence, the hatred gang members face from members of other gangs, gang-member drug use, and the chance of getting arrested or killed.

- Don't try to be an expert on gangs. No one has all the answers.

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

- Learn about gangs and obtain training on how to prevent them from forming.
- Look for changes in the community.
- Report graffiti to law-enforcement authorities and have them photograph it. Remove graffiti as soon as possible. Keep a file on graffiti.
- Develop and strictly enforce clear written rules and regulations that prohibit gangs.
- Ensure administrative staff, counselors, and teachers are visible and accessible to students.

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- Keep the school grounds clean.
- Minimize time between classes.
- Deal with rumors as if they were true.
- Keep the staff informed.
- Set up a security program that includes schools and the community.

b. If gang activity is suspected, immediate intervention is required. Parents should contact the agencies mentioned below for help, collect any gang-related clothing and accessories, and closely monitor (and restrict where necessary) their children's activities.

7. Referral Agencies for Dealing with Troubled Youth

a. When a soldier, employee, family member, or student is suspected of engaging in gang-like activity, commanders, parents, and teachers should immediately seek assistance from local professionals. These professionals can provide counseling and assistance or information on gang-like behavior. Many health-care professionals and school, church, and police leaders have access to, or training in, gang intervention and eradication programs.

b. Area support group and base support battalion (BSB) provost marshals have reporting and investigation services for criminal misconduct. Provost marshals can also provide youth-oriented crime-prevention programs (such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and (in some communities) Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)).

c. Adolescent substance abuse counselors (ASACs) are available in Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS). DODDS guidance counselors and school nurses are also available in DODDS and can refer parents to a trained school psychologist, if appropriate. Community counseling centers (formerly known as ADAPCs) in each BSB provide drug and alcohol-prevention and intervention programs for soldiers and family members.

d. Social-work services are available through local health clinics or hospitals. Military health-care professionals can give referrals to mental health services as appropriate. Military chaplains assigned to military units and community chaplains can also provide assistance.

e. Legal-assistance attorneys from local supporting law centers can answer questions from commanders, parents, and teachers on liability, criminal jurisdiction, and possible legal options regarding soldiers, DA civilians, and family members. Assistant civilian misconduct action authorities (ACMAA) provide administrative and investigative assistance to the civilian misconduct action authority (CMAA) (usually the BSB commander) for cases involving family members, DA civilians, and other personnel not subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

f. Gang activity can become a way of life. Education is the key to discouraging gang activity. Individuals and groups first need to recognize the destructiveness of their actions and then want to

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change. The professionals mentioned above are trained to educate and provide alternatives to gangs. The organizations listed below may be contacted for more information.

- Executive Director (Stephen Rickman), Executive Office for Weed & Seed, U.S. Department of Justice, 633 Indiana Avenue NW (3d floor, room 304S), Washington, DC 20531, telephone: (202) 616-1152.
- Foundation for Educational Resource, 100 Congress Avenue, Suite 2000, Austin, TX 78701, telephone: (512) 469-6322.
- Gang & Drug Intervention Counseling Component, Netro Centro, 937 West 12th Street, Dallas, TX 75208, telephone: (214) 948-8336.
- Gang & Drug Policy Training Program, National Center for State & Local Law Enforcement Training, building 67, Glynco, GA 31520, telephone: (912) 267-2345.
- Horizons Plus, Window to the World, Inc., Tidewater Project, 5300 Atlantic Avenue, VA Beach, VA 23451, telephone: (804) 428-7137.
- Law Enforcement Program Manager, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 633 Indiana Avenue NW (room 710), Washington, DC 20531.
- National Gang Suppression & Intervention Program, University of Chicago, 5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637, telephone: (312) 702-1134.
- National Criminal Justice Referral Service, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD, 20849-6000, telephone: (301) 251-5500.
- Safe Schools Coalition, Inc., 5351 Gulf Drive, P.O. Box 1338, Homes Beach, FL 34218-1338.
- The Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 1600 Research Blvd., Rockville, MD, 20850, telephone: (800) 638-8736 or (301) 251-5500.
- Youth Gang Intervention Program, Boys & Girls Club of America, 711 First Avenue, New York, NY 10017, telephone: (212) 351-5947.

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