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Military-Trained Gang Members in the Volunteer State in the United States: Revisiting the Issue after Four Years

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Abstract

Communities everywhere have experienced the negative effects of street gangs, domestic terrorists, and outlaw motorcycle gang members. When they have military training, the threat increases significantly. The purpose of the study was to address the presence of military-trained gang members (MTGMs) in civilian communities. The problem addressed was the growing presence of MTGMs in civilian communities. A survey of members of the Tennessee Gang Investigators' Association was conducted in 2010 and 2014 to measure perceptions regarding the presence of MTGMs. There was a statistically significant increase in the perceived presence of most MTGM factors, but no significant difference in the MTGM score from the 2010 and 2014 surveys. Further research should include an extended longitudinal examination of the effect of MTGMs on the community, including states in the United States with a different history of gang activity, to determine the perceptions regarding the presence of gang members currently in military service, and with more analytic detail.

Keywords: Military Trained Gang Members, Street Gangs, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Domestic Terrorist Extremists, Gangs and the Military.

Introduction

United States Military Criminal Investigative Organizations (MCIO) – the Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID), Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) – have identified military personnel with gang membership or affiliation in every branch of the U.S. military (National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC], 2013). While military laws prohibit active membership, street gangs, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs), and Domestic Terrorist Extremist (DTE) groups all have members who have or are enlisted in the military. Gang

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members and associates may join the military to get away from the gang lifestyle and the criminal temptations associated with it. They may also join to try to acquire military training and access to weapons and sensitive information (NGIC, 2013). Military members deploy and serve all over the world.

According to the 2015 NGIC report on gang activity in the U.S., military-trained gang members (MTGMs) pose a serious threat to law enforcement and to the public. They learn combat tactics in the military and then return to the civilian community to utilize those new skills against rival gangs or law enforcement. Military training could ultimately result in more sophisticated and deadly gangs, as well as deadly assaults on law enforcement officers. Additionally, military members' access to weapons and their perceived ability to move easily across borders may render them ideal targets for recruitment (NGIC, 2015).

This paper aims to increase awareness of the relationship between the presence of gang members in the military and the presence of MTGMs in the community. We report and analyze the findings from the 2010 and 2014 administration of the Military Gang Perception Questionnaire (MGPQ) and Modified Military Gang Perception Questionnaire (M-MGPQ), respectively. The hypotheses tests and correlations indicate that military leadership should pay more attention to the presence of gang members in the military and have better communication with civilian community law enforcement agencies. Local law enforcement agencies should also be aware of gangs in their jurisdictions with military-trained members.

Military-trained gang members: Literature Review

At present, the literature lacks much empirical research regarding the presence of MTGMs in society and gang investigators' perceptions regarding the growing phenomenon. In 1992, Knox conducted an exploratory study of a sample of convenience comprised of 91 members of an Illinois National Guard unit. An incident involving the death of a child had occurred in a large public housing complex that was known for gang violence, and public officials suggested the possibility that the National Guard could have been called to assist in suppressing the gang problem (Knox, 2006). Survey respondents estimated that gang membership in the military ranged from a low of zero to a high of 75% with a mean of 21.5% (Knox, 2006). The responses indicated that the Army National Guard was thought to have the highest percentage of former or current gang members in its ranks (a mean of 21.5%). The Coast Guard was thought to have the lowest percentage, with a mean of 6.3%.

McMaster (1994) examined attitudes towards gangs on a military base in Arizona and found there was no significant difference regarding perceptions of the severity of the gang problem between ranks of the respondents. In the 1993 study, 63.5% of the respondents did not believe that gangs were a serious problem in their on-base or off-base neighborhoods. Few of the respondents reported direct contact with gangs, and 83.59% reported they were never a target of gang violence (McMaster, 1994). Few significant differences were identified in how military personnel living on and off base responded to questions regarding their perceptions of the severity of a gang problem.

In 1996, in response to the racially-motivated homicides by white soldiers of an African-American civilian couple, members of a Department of the Army task force evaluated the effects of extremist groups and reported that, "gang-related activities appear

to be more pervasive than extremist activities as defined in Army Regulation (AR) 600-20" (U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], 1996, para. 16). At the time, there was no prohibition against gang membership by U.S. service members. DoD Directive 1325.6 (later changed to DoD Instruction (DoDI) – Guidelines for Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces) prohibited active membership in extremist groups, and many leaders and investigators considered street gangs to be extremist groups although neither of the documents specifically mentioned street gangs.

The authors of the 2006 U.S. Army Gang Activity Threat Assessment (GATA) reported an increase in both gang-related investigations and incidents in 2006 over previous years. The most common gang-related crime was drug trafficking, which encompassed 31% of the gang-related offenses reported for the year (CID, 2006). The report did little to distinguish the types of gangs with members in the military. More recent investigations have yielded much the same results. In the FY2011 Gang and Extremist Activity Threat Assessment (GEATA), the U.S. Army CID Command started distinguishing Street Gangs from Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG) and Domestic Terrorist Extremist (DE) groups in their annual reports.

Street Gang Members in the Military

For the purposes of military prohibitions and investigations, street gangs are an association of three or more individuals who collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity and engaging in criminal activity using violence or intimidation to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation, or economic resources (NGIC, 2013). While there is much diversity in street gang membership, most contemporary street gang members are African American or Hispanic (Smith, 2017).

According to the 2015 NGIC report on gang activity in the U.S., gangs seek employment within the military to secure power. Since the previous (2013) report, known or suspected gang members from over 100 jurisdictions had applied for positions or gained employment with the U.S. military, law enforcement agencies, corrections facilities, and within the judiciary. Employment with the U.S. military ranked as the most common, followed by corrections. Members of all gang types have been reported to have military connections or training (NGIC, 2015).

In the most recent U.S. Army CID *Gang and Domestic Extremist Activity Threat Assessments* (GDEATA), from FY 2012–2015, ninety-four total felony reports of investigation involved members of street gangs. Drugs were the focus of forty-eight of the investigations; fourteen were homicide-related; and ten were sex crime-related. The remaining cases included robbery, assault, extortion, larceny, and failure to obey. There were ninety subjects identified, fifty-eight of them were soldiers, forty-eight of whom were active duty. Most of the street gang subjects were 20–24 year old, single, black males who were in the junior enlisted ranks (E1–E4) (Smith, 2017).

Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (OMG) Members in the Military

OMGs are criminal organizations whose members engage in criminal activities such as violent crime, weapons trafficking, and drug trafficking. OMGs range in size from single chapters with five or six members to hundreds of chapters with thousands of members worldwide (NGIC, 2013). OMGs differ from street gangs primarily in their demographics and typical mode of transportation, although they may be prosecuted under laws designed

for street gangs. Most OMG members are older, white, and male. There are OMG members of other races, but they are predominately white.

According to the 2015 NGIC's report on gangs in the U.S., OMGs such as the Hells Angels, Vagos, and Mongols, have successfully gained access to military installations; recruited several active duty military personnel; and associated regularly with active duty military personnel. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) reported that OMG members have been employed as federal employees and contractors, active duty military, reservists, and National Guardsmen, enabling growth of their criminal organization (NGIC, 2015).

In the FY 2012–2015 GDEATAs, Army CID conducted twenty-five felony investigations involving OMGs with twenty-eight subjects. All but one of the subjects were active duty soldiers. The investigations involved the offenses of murder, wrongful distribution of drugs, assault, fraud, and failure to obey. Most subjects in the felony OMG investigations were white males who were 20–24 years old and senior enlisted (E5–E9) (Smith, 2017).

Domestic Terrorist Extremists (DTEs) in the Military

The U.S. Code (Section 2331[5]) defines Domestic Extremists as individuals in the U.S. who engage in activities known as domestic terrorism, including crimes that are dangerous to human life, intended to intimidate or coerce others, influence government by intimidation or coercion; or affect the conduct of government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

Domestic terrorism includes acts within the territorial United States that are dangerous to human life, violate federal or state criminal laws, have no actual connection to international terrorists and appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence domestic government policy through intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of our government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping. Domestic terrorism cases often involve firearms, arson, or explosive offenses; crimes relating to fraud; and threats and hoaxes.

The U.S. Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice typically use the terms extremist and terrorist interchangeably, likely because they all use the U.S. Code definition. Because of the multiple and potentially confusing uses of the terms terrorist and extremists, in addition to other qualifiers that may or may not be used consistently by all U.S. government entities, unless inappropriate based on definition or context, we will use the term Domestic Terrorist Extremist (DTE) to identify such groups and their members.

While street gang and OMG members clearly commit crimes as part of their group membership, DTE members are more likely to be political. The Department of Justice does not publish or maintain a list of DTE organizations, partly due to First Amendment concerns. The NGIC identified three main types of DTEs: Black separatist extremists, sovereign citizen extremists, and white supremacist extremists. From 2012–2015, the U.S. Army CID conducted twenty-two DTE investigations, involving drug-related offenses, murder, assault, communicating a threat, provoking speech or gestures, threats, and failure to obey. Four investigations involved members of white supremacist groups, two involved militia groups, and one involved an anti-government group. There were fifteen subjects identified, with twelve soldiers, all on active duty. Most DTE-related subjects were 20 to 24-year-old white males, single, and junior enlisted (E1–E4) (Smith, 2017).

Military service and criminal activity

Military members with simultaneous membership in a gang have a dilemma. On the one hand, they agree to support and defend the Constitution of the U.S. and obey the orders of the President and officers appointed over them (U.S. Department of Defense, 2007). Simultaneously, street gang leaders require a sworn oath to the beliefs and laws of the members of their street gang (Knox, 2006).

When trying to understand how gang members can have strong allegiance to two very different organizations, the theory of differential association provides a foundation. Sutherland (1940) proposed the theory in contradiction to the often-held contemporary notion that the commission of crime was limited to those in the lower social classes. The principles of differential association include the premise that criminal behavior is learned in communication with others within intimate personal groups. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all the mechanisms involved in any other learning process (Sutherland, 1940).

A modification to Sutherland's differential association theory resulted in the observation that individuals model their behavior based on how others see them, rationalizing their behavior when role-conflicts exist. Glaser (1956) identified that as differential identification, which means "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). Prior identification and present circumstances play key roles in the selection of people with whom we identify, and affect the ability to associate with one group (a criminal street gang), while maintaining employment by or membership in a second group (like the military) whose institutional values and norms oppose those of the first group.

Recent attention has been paid to the relationship between service in the military and desistance from criminal activity. Galiani, Rossi, and Schargrodsky (2009) examined the process of drafting young men into military service in Argentina. They looked at a cohort of males born between 1958-1962. Galiani *et al.* (2009) determined that military service increased the likelihood of developing an adult criminal record, both during peacetime and wartime. They identified positive effects of military service:

- Military service teaches obedience and discipline, which can limit criminality
- Military service might improve labor market prospects, preventing the inclination to commit property crime.
- Military service serves to incapacitate young men from the ability to commit crimes while in the service.

Galiani *et al.* (2009) also proposed alternative, negative effects of military service:

- Military service delays entrance into the labor market, limiting opportunities.
- Military service provides firearms training, reducing the entry costs to crime.
- Military service provides a social environment that is prone to violent responses.

Albaek, Leth-Petersen, le Maire, and Tranaes (2013) found that military service reduces the likelihood of criminality for those previously disposed to commit crime. In a study of Danish youth who were born in 1964 and drafted into the military while they were between ages 19-22, military service was found to reduce property crime for up to five years. Albaek, *et al.* (2013) found no effect on the commission of violent crime from

military service, and no effect for most draftees.

Teachman and Tedrow (2015) suggested that voluntary military service did not affect the risk of committing or being convicted of violent crimes. In the first study to focus on the effect of military service on crime in the twenty-first century, Teachman and Tedrow (2015) found that voluntary military service reduced the likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system, especially for men with a history of delinquent or criminal behavior prior to enlisting. They studied a cohort of men born between 1980 and 1984. Teachman and Tedrow (2015) found that voluntary military service significantly reduced the risk of committing or being convicted of non-violent crimes.

Finally, Boucai (2007) made the argument that active recruitment of criminals would provide a recruitment pool for the military and provide a disciplinary foundation on which individual criminal reform could be attempted. Boucai (2007) noted that the U.S. Military regularly provides waivers for recruits with misdemeanor and felony crimes on their record. Additionally, the enlistment process often depends on the recruit to tell the truth about their criminal history, as juvenile records may be off-limits. As a result, some service members enlist with criminal histories and neither request nor receive a waiver. Most of those service members do well to avoid committing crime during the term of their enlistment, Boucai (2007) noted, as military service has been shown to help reduce an individual's criminal propensity (see, for example, Teachman & Tedrow, 2015). Why not, then, Boucai (2007) wondered, change the informal policy of allowing recruits with criminal history and actively solicit them?

When scholars have examined the various aspects of gang life, loyalty within the gang organization has received little attention. Service members who trained to fight in battle were not the only positions in which the loyalty of a gang member would be an issue (Valdez, 2009). Service members who control the finances and personnel assignments, as well as those who oversee logistics shipments can exploit their military positions for the gang's benefit. The indoctrination phase of the military cannot be accurately compared to those used by gangs. Individuals who hold positions in both present a threat to the security of the military unit and community (NGIC, 2007). Some soldiers become members of or affiliate with gangs after joining the Army, while others join the military specifically for certain training.

Method

The 2010 Survey

In 2010, a survey was conducted of members of the Tennessee Gang Investigators' Association (TNGIA). The original study on was designed to examine a specific type of gang member that had been neglected in gang research: military-trained gang members (MTGMs). The problem the studies addressed was the growing presence of MTGMs in civilian communities. The purpose of the original study was to determine the perceived presence of MTGMs and examine whether there was a relationship between the perceptions of gang investigators regarding the presence and the size of their jurisdictions, the proximity of their jurisdictions to a military installation, and the extent to which investigators participate in anti-gang activities (Smith & Doll, 2012).

Research Questions

Only two of the seven research questions examined in the first study resulted in a statistically significant correlation between variables.

1. Is there a statistical significant relationship between gang investigators' perceptions of the presence of MTGMs in their jurisdictions and the size of their jurisdictions?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gang investigators' perceptions of the presence of MTGMs in their jurisdictions and the proximity of the gang investigators' jurisdiction to a military installation?

The null hypothesis stated there was no statistically significant relationship between the perceived presence of MTGMs in the community and the size of their jurisdictions or the proximity of the gang investigators' jurisdiction to a military installation.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was achieved by including the link to the online survey embedded in the introductory email, with the phrase *your consent to participate in this study is implied when you complete and return this survey*.

Confidentiality

As the original survey was e-mailed, there was no face-to-face or verbal contact. Only the email addresses of the members were collected, not the names, though many people use their names in their email addresses. All files provided in the context of the study that contained email information were deleted upon completion of the data collection period. In addition, the participants were free to disregard the survey without fear of reprisal or confrontation.

Results of 2010 Survey

Because only limited research previously existed regarding gang-related variables, the earlier study used the researcher-developed Military Gang Perception Questionnaire (MGPQ) to collect data. The MGPQ was designed using the current literature, interviews with gang investigators and MTGMs, and the practical experience of the researcher as a guide (Smith, 2011). Subject matter experts (retired high-ranking military leaders, university professors with professional experience in gang investigations and activities, and law enforcement officials who were gang specialists) assisted with development and refinement of the survey for length, format, scope, and content validity. A pilot test was conducted to further validate and assess the reliability of the MGPQ (Smith, 2011).

The independent variables in the study were the size of the gang investigators' jurisdiction, the extent to which gang investigators participated in anti-gang activities, and the proximity of the gang investigators' jurisdiction to a military installation. The dependent variables were *MTGM Presence Based on Ratings*, the sum of seven of the questions from the MGPQ, and *Percent Presence*, which measured the investigators' perceptions of the percentage of gang members in their jurisdiction, who were MTGMs.

Other variables (i.e., anti-gang experience, age, race, and military experience) were assessed as control variables.

Data were sought from the population of 260 members of the TNGIA (Smith & Doll, 2012). The final sample consisted of $N = 119$ participants who answered all or almost all the questions on the survey. Using a sample size calculator (Creative Research Systems,

2009), a confidence level of 95%, and a desired precision of $\pm 5\%$ for a population of 260 gang investigators in the TNGIA, the required sample was 155. An additional sample size calculation was computed for a multiple regression analysis involving seven predictors, a significance level of .05, a power of 80%, and a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$). That power analysis indicated that $N = 103$ was sufficient to detect the size of effect.

The maturity of the gang problem in larger urban areas appears to attract MTGMs, or at least makes them more visible to gang investigators. The size of the jurisdiction was considered relevant for observations of gang members presently in the military and observations of MTGMs who have left the military and resided in or near urban areas. The implication was that gang investigators who work in large jurisdictions were more likely to perceive MTGMs in their jurisdictions. That was not surprising, as gang activity is more often seen in larger urban areas (Wells & Weisheit, 2001).

The 2014 Survey

On 25 Aug 2014, a follow up survey was conducted of attendees at the TNGIA annual training conference in Chattanooga, TN. The survey instrument, the Modified Military Gang Perception Questionnaire (M-MGPQ), contained questions designed to identify the respondents' perceptions of the presence of MTGMs in their jurisdictions.

Because certain measurements were deemed irrelevant or yielded results that were not statistically significant in prior surveys (Smith & Doll, 2012), questions regarding perceptions of the dangerousness of adult gang members, ties to other gangs, and use of anti-gang prohibitions were removed from the MGPQ. Subsequent coordination with the National Gang Intelligence Center and gang intelligence analysts with the MCIOs resulted in adding and expanding certain questions, namely the number of street gangs, OMGs, and DTEs offered as non-other choices, the source of the respondents' information regarding MTGMs, the use of categorical answer options for the estimated percentage of MTGMs in the respondents' jurisdictions, and proximity of respondents' jurisdiction to a military installation. Some more demographic questions were also removed, such as percentage of time respondent dedicated to anti-gang activities experience (length of service) with anti-gang activities, size of department, branch of service and length of time served if military, race, and age of the respondent.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. Is there an increase in the perceived presence of military-trained gang members (MTGMs) in the community? The null hypothesis is there is no change in the perceived presence of MTGMs in the community between 2010 and 2014.
2. Is there a positive relationship between the perceived presence of gang members in the military branches and the perceived presence of MTGMs in the community? The null hypothesis is there is no relationship between the perceived presence of gang members in the military branches and the perceived presence of MTGMs in the community.
3. Is there a statistically significant association between military-related gang activities (DVs) and MTGM related characteristics (IVs)? The null hypothesis is there is no association between military related gang activities and MTGM related characteristics.

The survey asked for responses to questions using a Likert scale to assess the level of

agreement with the statement/question (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, No Opinion, Agree, and Strongly Agree). The survey questions specifically referred to the respondents' perception of use of military weapons, equipment, and tactics by gang members in the respondents' jurisdictions. Questions were asked to assess indicators of MTGMs, whether they directly obtained the training or training was passed on by someone else who received the training directly, and the knowledge and sources of knowledge regarding MTGMs in the respondents' jurisdictions. Limited demographic and employment-related questions were asked.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was achieved by providing a cover letter with the phrase *your consent to participate in this study is implied when you complete and return this survey*.

Confidentiality

No identifying data were collected in the 2014 survey. In addition, the participants were free to disregard the survey without fear of reprisal or confrontation.

Results of 2014 Survey

Data were sought from the population of 164 members of the TNGIA attending the 2014 Association conference. The final sample consisted of $N = 70$ participants who answered all or almost all the questions on the survey. The response rate provided a 95% confidence level and an 8.9% margin of error. For this survey, Tennessee was considered a mature gang state. That means that gangs and related groups have a significant presence in the state and that there has been acknowledgement of their presence and an official counter-response by most law enforcement jurisdictions. The 2014 survey served as a follow-up to the 2010 survey of the TNGIA membership, although no measures were taken to determine if or ensure that the same respondents were surveyed. It should be noted that the character of the sample limited its external validity. The findings cannot be generalized beyond Tennessee, as that was the population that was studied.

The primary questions were designed to determine the perception of the respondents regarding the presence of MTGMs in his or her community. The questions were as follows:

- 1) *Gang members in my jurisdiction are increasingly using military-type weapons or explosives.*
- 2) *Gang members in my jurisdiction use military-type equipment (body armor, night-vision, etc.).*
- 3) *Gang members in my jurisdiction use military-type tactics.*
- 4) *Gang members in my jurisdiction commit home invasions.*
- 5) *Gang members in my jurisdiction commit armed robberies.*
- 6) *There are gang members in my jurisdiction that currently serve in the military.*
- 7) *There are gang members in my jurisdiction that have served in the military in the past.*
- 8) *Military representatives advise our department when gang members are discharged.*

The results were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Responses to Primary Questions

	Weapons	Equipment	Tactics	Home invasions	Armed robberies	Current military	Past military	Advise
SD	9%	6%	3%	0%	3%	0%	1%	20%
D	16%	21%	21%	6%	4%	16%	7%	46%
NO	17%	34%	40%	3%	0%	37%	26%	27%
A	37%	23%	21%	51%	47%	29%	47%	4%
SA	14%	7%	3%	40%	46%	17%	17%	0%

Legend:

Weapon: Question 1	SD: strongly disagree
Equipment: Question 2	D: disagree
Tactics: Question 3	NO: no opinion
Home invasions: Question 4	A: agree
Armed robberies: Question 5	SA: strongly agree
Current military: Question 6	
Past military: Question 7	
Advise: Question 8	

Presence of gangs in the military

Street gangs, OMGs, and DTEs were represented by the MTGMs in respondents' jurisdictions (2014).

- Street gangs represented by the MTGMs in respondents' jurisdictions included (reported as the percentage of respondents reporting a presence):

Street Gang	2010	2014
Bloods	54.5%	64%
Crips	51.9%	67%
Gangster Disciples	66.2%	61%
Vice Lords	39%	50%
Mara Salvatrucha	13%	17%

- OMGs represented by the MTGMs in respondents' jurisdictions included:
 - Outlaws 88%
 - Hells Angels 20%
 - Black Pistons 16%
- DEs represented by the MTGMs in respondents' jurisdictions included:
 - White Supremacists 87%
 - Sovereign Citizen 71%
 - Racist Skinhead 26%
 - Black Supremacists 11%

In 2010, neither OMGs nor DTEs were separately measured, and 36.4% of respondents answered *other* in addition to the listed street gangs. Criminal investigations that MTGMs reportedly had some level of involvement with included: Drugs, Sexual Assaults, Assaults, Weapon Smuggling, Homicides, and Robberies. In 2010, the reports were similar.

Most (43%) of the 2014 survey respondents reported 1-10% of the gang members in their jurisdictions were MTGMs. Some (9%) respondents estimated the number was as high as 20%, and many (23%) reported none (0%) of their gang members were MTGMs. Survey respondents in 2010 reported a mean of 11% of their gang members were MTGMs. In 2010, it was estimated that more than 1 in 10 (11.10%) of the gang members in the respondents' jurisdictions were MTGMs. Responses ranged from 0 to 40%.

In response to a follow up question, most (44%) respondents reported the MTGMs in their jurisdiction received military training directly, as a member of the U.S. military. Some (10%) reported the MTGMs in their jurisdiction received military training indirectly, from a member or former member of the U.S. military. One (1%) reported the MTGM they identified received training directly, from another military. In 2010, that question was not part of the questionnaire.

Analysis

The first step of the data analysis involved testing the trend (change) of the MTGM presence (hypothesis 1). Two methods were administered to test the argument that the MTGM presence is increasing – contingency tables and comparison of MTGM mean scores. The contingency table was constructed for MTGM related characteristics between two surveys (2010 and 2014) and the association was examined using Chi-square test for the significance of association and Cramer's V for the magnitude of the association. For this analysis, the MTGM variables were recorded into three categories (strongly disagree/disagree, no opinion, agree/strongly agree). The test result revealed that the perceived presence of MTGM factors has increased since 2010 and the changes were statistically significant differences in most responses. The magnitude of the associations, however, was weak (0.10 to 0.19) or moderate (0.20 to 0.29). For the second method, MTGM score was calculated by adding five MTGM related variables –weapons, military equipment, tactics, current military, and past military score ranging from 0 to 20. Then an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the MTGM score for 2010 and 2014 survey. The test revealed that there was no significant difference in the scores for 2010 ($M=8.62$, $SD=4.35$) and 2014 ($M=9.44$, $SD=5.14$) surveys. Therefore, in this study, null hypothesis 1 was not rejected.

To test the hypothesis 2 that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the perceived presence of gang members in the military branches and the perceived presence of MTGMs in the community, Chi square test, the Cramer's V, and the odds ratio were utilized (Table 3). The test reported that there was a significantly strong positive association for both surveys. For the 2010 survey, the association between the two variables was strong according to the Cramer's V ($\chi^2(1) = 81.58$, $p < .001$, $\Phi_{\text{Cramer}} = .83$). For easier interpretation of the strength of the association, the odds ratio was calculated. Based on the odds ratio, the odds of having MTGMs in the community was about 174.36 times higher if there were gang members in any of military branches compared to no gang members in the military branches in their jurisdiction ($z=6.33$). The effect size for the 2014 survey was large as well ($\chi^2(1) = 19.58$, $p < .001$, $\Phi_{\text{Cramer}} = .53$).

The odds of having MTGMs in the community were 33 times higher if there were gang members in any of military branches ($z=3.27$). From the findings in this study, null hypothesis 2 was rejected and hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 2. MTGM Characteristics for 2010 and 2014 Surveys

	2010				2014				χ^2	Φ_{Cramer}
	SD/D	No Opinion	A/SA	Total (N)	SD/D	No Opinion	A/SA	Total (N)		
Weapons	27.4	34.2	38.5	117	26.2	18.5	55.4	65	*6.33	.19
Equipment	56.9	25.0	18.1	116	29.7	37.5	32.8	64	**12.48	.26
Tactics	46.6	31.0	22.4	116	27.4	45.2	27.4	62	*6.37	.19
Current military	36.8	33.3	29.9	117	15.9	37.7	46.4	69	**9.97	.23
Past military	20.9	30.4	48.7	115	8.7	26.1	65.2	69	*6.35	.19
Home invasions	8.6	13.8	77.6	116	5.7	2.9	91.4	70	*6.90	.19
Armed robberies	6.0	13.8	80.2	116	7.1	0.0	92.9	70	**10.57	.24
Discharge	82.2	13.6	4.2	118	67.6	27.9	4.4	68	5.93	.18

df=2; *= $p < .05$; **= $p < .01$

Table 3. Association between Presence of MTGM and Military Branches

		Presence of MTGM			
		2010		2014	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Gang members in the military branches	Yes	68 (89.5%)	2 (4.7%)	33 (64.7%)	1 (5.3%)
	No	8 (10.5%)	41 (95.3%)	18 (35.3%)	18 (94.7%)

For hypothesis 3, we tested the association between military related gang activities (DVs) and several MTGM related characteristics (IVs) for each survey year. IVs included perceived presence of gang members currently serving in the military, perceived presence of gang members who served in the military in the past, perceived presence of MTGMs in the jurisdiction, number of gangs represented by MTGMs, and number of military branches represented by the gang members. Three DVs were gang members in my jurisdiction use military or military-type weapons or explosives, gang members in my jurisdiction use military equipment (body armor, night-vision, etc.) and gang members in my jurisdiction use military-type tactics.

The survey of 2010 data, reported statistically significant positive association between each DVs and IVs except the association between the number of military branches that represented gang members and use of military equipment. For the magnitude of the association between DVs and IVs, Somer's d was used since we already assigned the DVs. The result showed moderately strong (.20 to .29) to strong (.30 and above) relationship. The strongest predictor for the use of military type weapon was the presence of gang members who have served in the military in the past. By knowing the presence of the gang members who have served in the military in the past, we improved prediction of gang members' use of military type weapons by 44 percent.

The same interpretation applied to the other DVs as well. For the use of equipment, knowing the presence of the gang members currently serving in the military improved the prediction of gang members' use of military type equipment by 31 percent. For the use of military type tactics, both current military and past military variables improved the prediction of gang members' use of military type tactics by 50 percent.

Due to the small sample size of the 2014 survey, only three tests were valid. These statistically significant associations all showed strong positive relationship between DV and IV. Upon partially approving hypothesis 3, the result of these tests demonstrated that the presence of gang members in the military both currently and in the past, is highly associated with the presence of MTGMs in the community and their use of military type weapons, equipment, and tactics.

Discussion and Conclusion

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 (Smith, 2015).

The recent study focused on gang members' use of military type weapons, equipment, and tactics and how those activities were related to three factors: 1) the presence of military-trained gang members in the community; 2) gang members currently serving in the military; and 3) gang members who served in the military in the past. The study found that gang members' military type activities were highly related to all three factors even though some relationships were not statistically significant. One troubling finding was that most of the respondents (66%) did not believe that military representatives advised their department when gang members were discharged from the military. Considering how gang members' military type activities were significantly related to the presence of gang members in the military, the lack of communication and the exchange of information regarding the gang member's involvement in the military service will only worsen the situation.

Commanders should ensure there are designating persons in or accessible to their unit to screen new personnel for potential gang membership. New unit members who have gang affiliation may tattoo their bodies with gang symbols and wear clothing of a certain style or color to represent their group or they may be more advanced gang members, who cannot be so easily identified. Unit representatives and military police have public access to many resources to learn basic gang knowledge. More advanced and current gang training is available for military law enforcement and criminal intelligence personnel by

coordinating with their state and regional gang investigators association or another source of reliable gang training.

Military leadership should continuously examine the activities of all suspected military gang members to identify active gang affiliation for retention or discharge purposes while evaluating the degree or extent of any gang affiliation for security clearances. Current policy guidance, specifically DoD Instruction 1325.6, prohibits military service members from active gang membership, yet the primary determination of such activity appears to be the presence of a criminal record. That was a systemic weakness, as not all gang members are detected and arrested by law enforcement each time they commit a crime. For service members requiring a security clearance, any identified gang affiliation in the recent past should be considered as potential grounds for disqualification, even passive or associate membership, unless accompanied by a complete and public renunciation of the gang and follow up evaluation by representatives of the appropriate medical and criminal justice authority.

Commanders should also be aware that gang members might seek access to military-type weapons, ammunition, and explosives, as well as equipment. Periodic audits of inventory may limit access of these items to gang members. Enhanced security may serve to verify the trustworthiness of unit members. It was not assumed that gang members who use military weapons, ammunition, and explosives, are military members. Some military-type weapons can be purchased on the black market. The assumption was that if the security of the weapons were enhanced they would be less likely to be in the possession of a gang member – regardless of that gang member's military affiliation.

Although the increasing number of military trained gang members is alarming news to both criminal justice practitioners and the global community, most of the population does not realize that this trend is occurring, nor are they aware of the seriousness of the threat to the safety of the community. One of the purposes of the current study was to promote the awareness of the MTGM problem in our society and encourage scholars and practitioners to conduct research concerning this issue in other states and find strategies to control the problem or mitigate the effects. The hypotheses tests and correlations indicate that the military should pay more attention to the gang members in their unit and their whereabouts and have better communication with community law enforcement agencies since the presence of MTGMs is a significant predictor of serious and violent crimes.

Recommendations for future research

An extended longitudinal examination of the effect of MTGMs on the community was recommended. That type of study would shift the focus from the recruiting from the community phase to the returning to the community phase. Future research should be broadened to include other state, national, and international participant levels. Surveys focusing on police departments in larger jurisdictions both adjacent to and distant from a military installation should be considered for additional research, as should cities with varying experiences with gangs and those considered more geographically diverse.

Additional studies should include states with a longer history of gang activity (e.g. Illinois, California, and New York), and states and cities with a shorter history of gang activity (e.g. Arizona, Oklahoma, and Georgia), states outside of the southeast U.S. (e.g. Northeast, Midwest, and Northwest), and countries other than the U.S. with an MTGM presence (e.g. Mexico, Germany, and Australia). Research should be conducted military

wide to determine the perceptions regarding the presence of gang members currently in military service. That type of study could identify the existence of such gang members and may result in suggested organizational responses. The results of such a study could assist military commanders, community leaders, and criminal justice professionals.

Research should also be conducted with more analytic detail. Answers to questions like “Why do military service members join gangs?”, “Is there a defined trend that can be identified?”, “Are their racial or ethnic factors that influence this decision?”, “Are there geographic characteristics that can provide insight?”, “Does the branch of service and the character of military training or assignment affect the subsequent choice of gang involvement?” should be sought.

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