



# Gateway Gazette

Volume X, Issue 2

*An optimist is the human personification of spring – Susan J Bissonette*

May 2009

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## Gangs in the U.S. Military

A report released in January 2007 by the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that the presence of street gangs within the Military are increasing at a faster pace than ever before.

According to the report within every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces are members associated with the Bloods, Crips, Black Disciples, Gangster Disciples, Hells Angels, Latin Kings, The 18th Street Gang, Mara Salvatrucha, Mexican Mafia, Nortenos, Surenos, Vice Lords and a variety of white supremacist groups. The report documents military members who have affiliation or direct connection to street gangs serving on U.S. Military Installations home and abroad. The report indicated that the highest concentration of street gang members was in the Army, partly because it is the largest branch and partly because of relatively lax recruitment requirements.

Some additional findings by the F.B.I. include that gang members may enlist in the military to escape their current environment or gang lifestyle. Some gang members may also enlist to receive weapons, combat, and convoy support training; to obtain access to weapons and explosives; or as an alternative to incarceration. Upon discharge, they may employ their military training against law enforcement officials and rival gang members. Such military training could ultimately result in more organized, sophisticated, and deadly gangs, as well as an increase in deadly assaults on law enforcement officers.



Gang members commonly

target dependent children of military personnel for recruitment. Military children are considered potential candidates for gang membership because of the transient nature of their families often making them feel isolated, vulnerable and in need of



companionship.

The report concludes with the fact that while gang members serving in the military will temporarily increase recruiting numbers, but their ability to disrupt discipline and ultimately contribute to violence in U.S. communities may jeopardize the safety of other military

Source: NGIC-Gang Related Activity in the U.S. Armed Forces Increasing

## Dad Tattooed 7-Year-old with Gang Sign

Police in California are looking for a man accused of holding down his 7-year-old son while another man tattooed the child's belly with a street gang sign.

The boy's mother reported it to Fresno authorities on April 21st.

The Father, Enrique Gonzalez faces six charges, including



mayhem, child abuse, false imprisonment, battery, participating in a criminal street gang and committing a crime for the benefit of a gang.

Police have arrested the man they say is the tattoo artist. He faces similar charges.

The dog paw insignia tattooed on the boy represents the Bull-

dogs, Fresno's largest criminal street gang.



Source: Associated Press 4/27/09

## Highlights from the 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment

The National Gang Intelligence Center in conjunction with the National Drug Intelligence Center publishes each year its Gang Threat Assessment. The 2009 Gang Threat Assessment.



The Gang Threat Assessment is conducted through joint efforts from the National Gang Intelligence Center and the National Gang Targeting, Enforcement & Coordination Center (GangTECC). The principal sources were 3,052 state and local law enforcement agencies from the 2008 National Drug Threat Survey, information from other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and gang-related federal criminal investigative information.

**“One Million gang members nationwide!”**

Here are their key findings:

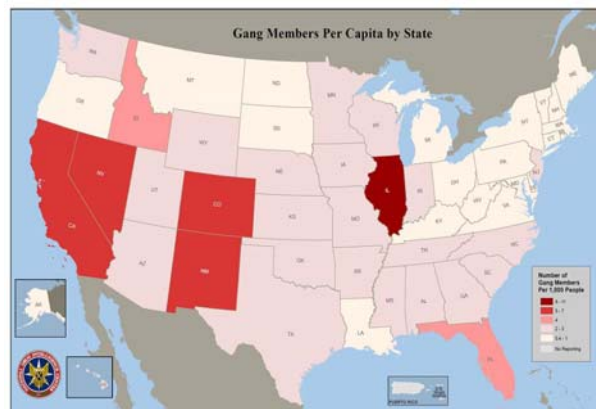
- Approximately 1 million gang members belong to more than 20,000 gangs were criminal active within all 50 states and the District of Columbia as of September 2008.
- Local street gang members or neighborhood-based street gangs, remain a significant threat because they continue to account for the largest number of gangs nationwide.
- 58% of state and local law enforcement agencies reported that criminal gangs were active in their jurisdictions, up 13% from 2008.
- Gangs are migrating from urban areas to suburban and rural communities, expanding the gang's influence in most regions.
- Criminal gang commit as much as 80 percent of the crime in many communities, according to law enforcement officials throughout the nation.
- Gang members are the primary retail-level distributors of most illicit drugs.
- U.S. based gangs members illegally cross the U.S.—Mexico border for the express purpose of smuggling illicit drugs and illegal aliens from Mexico into the United States.
- Many gangs actively use the Internet to recruit new members and to communicate with members in other areas of the United States and in foreign countries.

The survey used several key questions to frame the assessment. They included:

- What threat do gangs pose at the national and regional levels?
- How many gangs and gang members are in existence, and where are they located?
- Which gangs pose the greatest threat?
- Which gangs have ties to drug trafficking and transnational organizations?
- What types of criminal activity do gang members engage in?

### Street Gangs

There are currently 11 national-level street gangs identified in the United States. On the regional level street gangs



are increasingly distribute drugs at the wholesale level. At least five street gangs, specifically Florencia 13, Fresno Bulldogs, Latin Disciples, Tango Blast and

the United Blood Nation, have been identified as operating at a regional level.

Local street gangs, occasionally referred to as neighborhood-based gangs or neighborhood-based drug crews, pose a considerable problem for local law enforcement and a concern for federal law enforcement. Currently most street gangs are local-level gangs that operate in single locations.

### Gang Members in the Military

Members of nearly every major street gang and some prison gangs and Outlaw Motorcycle Groups have been identified on both domestic and international military installations. Deployments have resulted in gang members among service members and or dependents on or near overseas bases. Additionally military transfers have resulted in gang members, both serve members and dependents/relatives, moving to new areas and establishing a gang presence.

Gangs members with military training pose a unique threat to law enforcement personnel because of the distinctive military skills that they possess and their willingness to teach these skills to fellow gang members. While the number of gang members trained by the military is unknown, the threat they pose to law enforcement is potentially significant, particularly if gang members trained in weapons, tactics and planning pass this instruction on to other gang members.

The gangs are 18th Street, Asian Boyz, Black Disciples, Crips, Bloods, Florencia 13, Gangster Disciples, Latin Kings, Mexican Mafia, MS-13, Nortenos, Surenos' and Vice Lords. The prison gangs were Aryan Brotherhood, Mexican Mafia. The Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

Most regions in the United States will experience increased gang membership, continued migration of gangs to suburban and rural areas, and increased gang-related criminal activity. These increases are largely a result of the continued expansion of gang-operated criminal networks.

Gang-related violence is very likely to remain at high levels or increase as gangs expand their operations.

**Source: 2009 Gang Threat Assessment**

## The Traditional Gang Enforcement Model Does Not Work!

By Robert Tornabene

The traditional gang enforcement model that most agencies use today is either in effective and not closely monitored. Since the rise of the street gangs in the early 40's and 50's law enforcement has been tasked with attempting to address this issue. But each year the number of gang members, street gangs and gang related homicide's rise even when the economic situation was not as bleak as today.

It is difficult for law enforcement officials and politicians to admit, but the realities and numbers reflect the realities. One million estimated gang members, as of 2009, where previous estimates were in the range of 800,000 just a few years prior. To understand why it is ineffective a reflection on the types of tactics that law enforcement utilizes to address gang issues will be explored.

First, most agencies create a specialized unit. This specialized unit's responsibility is to address the gang problem. However what research has shown is that most of the officer's in these unit's lack the proper training, direction and oversight. Further more they begin to engage in "buffet" style policing, not taking cases because they believed it was beneath their attention. Even when the incident was gang related.

Most gang unit's function gravitated to-

wards intelligence and enforcement, while devoting less time to investigation and prevention. The gang unit also has no direction, or specified goal in which their mission is to be carried out. The typical response when asking what their unit's goal is involving gangs is "to eradicate the gang."

The gang unit typically is not effectively monitored, which results in the possibility of corruption and other criminal activity, as what has occurred in the Chicago, New York and Los Angeles Police Departments.

The gang unit also tends to be high isolated both from other unit's within the law enforcement agency but the community as well. In addition what was found based on this isolation is that many of these officers were poorly trained and had little or no direct exposure to gang members, in fact an average of one to three contacts for every eight hour shift worked.

The isolation also resulted in gang unit officer's rarely ever seeking input from the citizens within the community or in partnering with community organizations. The officer's within the unit's did not see a value in sharing information with non-criminal justice organization or they didn't recognize the value of sharing information.

Even from the gang unit's own department the officers outside of the unit observed that because of this isolation that the officer's

lacked any knowledge over successful operations or actions. The officer's outside of the unit believed their actions were ineffective and that they were doing little or nothing to reduce the gang presence in the community.

Communities need to rethink how they want to address their gang problem. In order to be successful the law enforcement agency must first fully understand the gangs in their community. What, how and who operates within them. Secondly, they must train all of their officers in gang identification tactics.

Then they must balance their suppression activities along with Support activities. They must engage a broad range of stake holders into the effort including, schools, social services and the grass roots community groups to encourage a community wide strategy. Involve local university researchers to assist in developing and tracking the strategies and provide feedback on effectiveness and efficiency as the initiative grows.

Remember the primary focus of law enforcement agencies is the immediate solution to public safety. Not the long term solution to a long term social problem that has plagued this country over half a century.

## Teen Kills Brother for being member of rival gang

An 18 year old member of the Mara 18 gang, a rival of MS-13 killed his 13 year old brother.



The shooting occurred in Guatemala City, in a dangerous run down part of town. The two brothers who had been arguing for several days even-

tually ended up getting into a fire-fight.

The 18 year old brother was arrested several blocks from the scene. According to police officials both brothers had tattoos showing their allegiance to the rival gangs.

The Mara 18 and Mara Salvatrucha or MS 13 are the two largest gangs and have been fighting for control of territory for years. Both gangs are known of committing gruesome beheadings and execution style shoot-

Authorities in Guatemala say gang members are responsible for extor-

tions, assaults and murders.



In Guatemala, they have one the highest murder rates in Latin America with over 6,000 homicides last year for a population of just 13 million people.

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## 2009 Training Schedule

### May 2009

May 7 Gang Awareness & Recognition, Chicago

### June 2009

June 15-19 GATE Instructor Training, Cleveland, OH  
June 22-26 GATE Instructor Training, Philadelphia, PA

### July 2008

No Scheduled Training

### August 2009

No Scheduled Training

### September 2009

Sept 17 Gang Awareness & Recognition, Chicago

### October 2009

### November 2009

No Scheduled Training

### February 2010

Feb 10 Gang Awareness & Recognition, Chicago

### March 2010

No Scheduled Training

### April 2010

April 14 Gang Awareness & Recognition, Chicago

G.A.T.E. America Inc, is an organization that works daily to protect America's young people from violence. That violence can be youth on youth violence, adult on youth violence, racial intolerance and terrorism. Our goals are to provide law enforcement officers, educators and parents with the appropriate training in key issues. We achieve this through programs such as G.A.T.E., a school based gang education intervention/prevention program for grades 5th through 8th. The G.A.T.E. program has two new programs available GATE Kids for grades K-4 and RADICAL for teenagers.

In addition, we provide training to school administrators, teachers and parents about other current issues including Gangs, Internet Safety and Violence Prevention.

Our final goal is to better prepare law enforcement officers to deal with youth violence, in-service training and ultimately keep them safe. We achieve this through our training courses and networking opportunities such as Crisis Preparedness for Schools, Crisis Planning In the Workplace, Gang Awareness and Recognition, GATE Instructor Certification and our newest course, First Officer On A Major Incident and a host of more. Check out our website for other courses as they become available.

Check out our new website, we have a new improved look, with easy navigation bars and the resources for parents, instructors and teachers.

[WWW.OPENTHEGATE.ORG](http://WWW.OPENTHEGATE.ORG)

## Parent Tips

**These tips are for parents to tell their children when the issue of gangs or at-risk behavior comes up.**

1. Settle arguments with words, not fists or weapons. Don't stand around and form an audience when others are arguing. A group makes a good target for violence.
2. Learn safe routes for walking in the neighborhood, and know good places to seek help. Trust feelings, and if there's a sense of danger, get away fast.
3. Report any crimes or suspicious actions to the police, school authorities, and parents. Be willing to testify if needed.
4. Don't hang out with gang members and stay away from known gang hangouts.
5. Never go anywhere with someone you don't know and trust.
6. If someone tries to pressure you into joining a gang say no, get away, and tell a trusted adult. Remember, it's not the victim's fault.
7. Don't use alcohol or other drugs, and stay away from places and people associated with them.
8. Stick with friends who are also against gangs, violence and drugs, and stay away from known trouble spots.
9. Get involved to make school safer and better - having poster contests against violence, holding anti-gang and anti-drug rallies, counseling peers, settling disputes peacefully. If there's no program, help start one!
10. Help younger children learn to avoid being crime victims. Set a good example, and volunteer to help with community efforts to stop crime.