Neo-Nazi networks exposed across US military

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Over the past two months investigations published by *Unicorn Riot* and the *Huffington Post* have exposed eleven members of Identity Evropa, an American neo-Nazi organization, operating freely within the US military. The latest exposure reveals the extent to which reactionary forces are allowed to cultivate, fester and recruit within the United States armed forces across all branches and ranks.

In March 2019, independent media outlet *Unicorn Riot* published more than 770,000 Discord chat messages from chat servers associated with Identity Evropa. Discord is a messaging service popular with computer video game players. Combing through the chat logs, *Huffington Post* reporters have so far been able to identify 11 members from the white supremacist organization who are currently serving in the US military.

The chat logs reveal that all of the participants are well versed in fascist ideology and are actively recruiting throughout the United States. Members of the group frequently shared anti-Semitic memes and glorified Adolf Hitler. Photos posted in the chat logs and on Twitter show members postering on college campuses with racist slogans, proclaiming to potential recruits, “It’s OK to be white.”

One fascist exposed in the logs is currently a master sergeant in the Air Force named Cory Allen Reeve. Reeve lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he was outed by anti-fascist activists in a flyer that was distributed throughout the community. Reeve frequently posted in the chat, encouraging members to pay more than the $10 monthly membership dues. He also shared photographs of himself at the Aurora Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center & Detention Facility in Aurora, Colorado, where he posted signs thanking the Gestapo-like border police “for all that you do for our country.”

Two Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) college students were also exposed in the chat. Jay C. Harrison, 20, is currently enrolled at Montana State University at Bozeman and is a member of the Army National Guard. In the logs, he espoused anti-Semitic lies, discrediting the veracity of the Holocaust, and commenting, “I wish the Holocaust was real.” Another ROTC recruit, 23-year-old University of Rochester student and Army reservist Christopher Hodgman, was identified as a member of the group. In the fall of 2018, Hodgman was responsible for posting Identity Evropa flyers and stickers throughout Brighton, New York, including on the Brighton Memorial Library and Town Hall.

Identity Evropa was founded in 2016 by Nathan Damigo, a former Marine who participated in two tours in Iraq. The Marines are the least racially diverse branch of the military, with over 80 percent of its recruits identifying themselves as “white.”

During Damigo’s two tours in Iraq, he became radicalized and suffered from PTSD following the loss of three close friends. In October 2007, one month after completing his second tour, Damigo, severely inebriated after celebrating the anniversary of the death of one of his fellow soldiers, robbed a taxi driver at gunpoint of $43 for “looking Iraqi.” Damigo was discharged from the military and convicted of armed robbery. He was then sentenced to five years in prison, where he was introduced to white supremacist literature, including Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke’s *My Awakening*.

Upon his release from prison in 2014, Damigo began attending classes at California State University at Stanislaus. While in college, he affiliated with various

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white supremacist groups before forming his own organization, dubbed Identity Evropa, in 2016.

Borrowing the reactionary language and methods of identity politics promoted on campuses by post-modernist professors and the pseudo-left, Damigo was able to cultivate a following with a small membership. He also began to affiliate with prominent racists, including neo-Nazi and white supremacist Richard Spencer.

This relationship bore its terrible fruits in the culmination of the fascist riot in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017, during which 32-year-old Heather Heyer was murdered by a 20-year-old Hitler admirer who rammed his car into a crowd of counter-demonstrators.

Following the fascist rampage in Virginia, Damigo stepped down from his leadership position within the group, which has since passed on to current leader Patrick Casey. In a rebranding attempt following the disclosure of the chat logs, the group is calling itself the "American Identity Movement."

The exposure of this latest group of fascists within the military exemplifies a wider trend.

In November 2018, Pro Publica, in conjunction with PBS, exposed another neo-Nazi network, with members who are either active in the military or who previously served. This militant fascist organization calls itself the Atomwaffen Division and has focused its recruitment on college campuses and online message boards. The group gained prominence in 2016 by distributing flyers urging students to "Join Your Local Nazis!"

The Atomwaffen Division has been implicated in five murders dating back to 2017. Its members have also been tied to plots to bomb synagogues and nuclear power plants.

This week saw the Marines open another investigation—the second this year—regarding Marines posting Nazi iconography and slogans. Private First Class Anthony D. Schroader posted a picture on Instagram of himself and at least four other soldiers forming a swastika with their combat boots. Earlier this year, Lance Corporal Mason Mead was put under investigation by the corps after he posted images of himself in blackface along with a swastika he had formed with C-4 plastic explosives.

It is unknown exactly how many of the 2.1 million soldiers currently in the US military and reserves have fascist sympathies or are active members of a far-right organization. However, a 2017 poll conducted by the *Military Times* found that nearly 25 percent of service members surveyed stated they had encountered white supremacists within their ranks. That same poll found that 30 percent of those surveyed viewed "white nationalism" as a bigger threat to the United States than the wars in Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq.

The abundance of fascists within the US military verifies what white supremacist terrorist Brenton Tarrant, who carried the massacre at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, alleged earlier this year in his now censored manifesto. Tarrant travelled throughout Europe and Asia, openly meeting with neo-Nazis. Tarrant estimates that there are "hundreds of thousands" who hold similar views as he throughout the police and armed forces.

The cultivation and promotion of far-right forces within American society by President Trump, who hailed the rampaging white supremacists in Charlottesville as "good people," marks a conscious and violent shift of the ruling elite to the right. Similar to disaffected German soldiers following World War I, American veterans and active duty soldiers returning from war who are physically and psychologically broken are being cultivated from the top to serve fascistic interests in the name of preserving bourgeois class rule.

The multi-billion-dollar US spy apparatus is more than capable of identifying and rooting out public and private communications. The fact that so many of these fascists have been outed by independent reporters speaks to the complicity of the US government in shielding these forces from exposure.

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