

Arrest of Wisconsin National Guardsmen marks fourth currently enlisted soldier charged in January 6 attack on Capitol

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On Monday, May 3, the US Justice Department arrested and charged Wisconsin National Guardsmen Abram Markofski with attacking the Capitol on January 6, making him the fourth active soldier to be charged for their role in the attempted coup.

Previously arrested active soldiers who participated in the attack include neo-Nazi Timothy Hale-Cusanelli, one of two Army reservists arrested, and a former Rocky Mount police officer and corporal in the Virginia National Guard, Jacob Fracker.

According to Major Joe Trovato, a spokesman for the Wisconsin National Guard, Markofski enlisted in 2019 and is currently an infantryman assigned to the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment. In August 2020, the unit returned to Wisconsin after completing a 13-month deployment to Afghanistan; it is unknown at this time if Markofski was part of that deployment.

In a five-page probable-cause affidavit released on Monday, it was revealed that the Justice Department had charged Markofski and an associate, Brendan Nelson, with four counts related to the attack on the Capitol, including violent entry or disorderly conduct and entering restricted spaces. According to the affidavit, the FBI received an anonymous tip on January 7 that Nelson had penetrated the Capitol on January 6. During an interview with FBI agents on January 18, the government alleges that Nelson admitted to breaching the Capitol on January 6 with “his friend,” Markofski.

During the same interview, Nelson allegedly admitted to driving with Markofski from Madison, Wisconsin to Washington D.C. beginning on January 5. The FBI says the pair arrived in D.C. the morning of January 6 and attended former president Donald Trump’s speech

outside the White House. After Trump spoke, the pair marched to the Capitol, with Nelson telling agents that “police were guiding some people in” to the Capitol, where Nelson said he and Markofski remained for about 40 minutes before leaving.

Markofski was then interviewed by the FBI, during which he allegedly admitted to occupying the Capitol for about 40 minutes. However, Markofski did not state that police were letting people in, instead telling agents that the police told them, “I can’t make you guys leave. However, for your safety, you should leave.”

The affidavit states that after obtaining a search warrant, the FBI used a combination of Google location services, GPS data, Wi-Fi access points and Bluetooth beacons to determine that the mobile device associated with Markofski’s Google email account was “present in areas that are at least partially within the US Capitol building between approximately 2:15 p.m. and 3:41 p.m. on January 6.” Photos taken from inside the Capitol appear to show two males identified as Nelson and Markofski wearing red “Make America Great Again” baseball caps.

Markofski’s LinkedIn profile confirms that he is an infantry soldier with the Guard based in the La Crosse-Onalaska area, on the banks of the Mississippi River, and that he attended Viterbo University. Markofski’s “Interests” on his profile include military contractors like Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, along with several Special Forces groups such as the 75th Ranger Regiment, US Army Special Operations Command, and the 1st Special Forces Group.

A recent NBC News investigation revealed that thousands of Special Forces members in private Facebook groups, three months after the attempted

coup, frequently share fascistic QAnon memes and promote Trump's "Big Lie" that the election was stolen.

The arrest of Markofski is the latest confirmation of the outsized role current and former members of the police and military played in the attempted coup. Of the over 400 arrests made so far in connection with January 6, Markofski is at least the 43rd current or former soldier to have been charged for his role in the attack. According to the US Census Bureau, in 2018 about 7 percent of the US population were veterans, while less than 1 percent of the population is in the military.

The fact that so many current and former military members participated in the coup attempt prompted Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to declare a 60-day "stand-down" to discuss the problem of growing extremism in the ranks, which ended last month. Those facing the most serious charges so far in the Capitol attack are members of the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys militia groups, both of which boast of the numerous police and military members.

Despite the fact that the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, prior to the events of January 6, had been summoned to D.C. in November and December by Trump for rallies that turned violent, high-ranking police and intelligence officials within the FBI, the Capitol Police, the D.C. Metropolitan Police and the Department of Defense, have claimed that there was "no intelligence" that Congress would be targeted by fascists, white supremacists, and militia groups on January 6.

During a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing discussing the attack on March 2, FBI Director Christopher Wray lamented the fact the FBI had not penetrated the group, telling Senator Amy Klobuchar that he "absolutely" wished the agency had known about the Proud Boys' plans beforehand.

Wray's lying testimony, which no one the committee challenged, had already been disproven by the time of the hearing. Reuters reported in January that the FBI had multiple informants within the Proud Boys, including the chairman of the group Henry "Enrique" Tarrío. By the end of March, it was revealed that Iraq Army veteran and InfoWars correspondent Joseph Biggs was also in contact regularly with the FBI. Tarrío's relationship with the domestic intelligence agency dates back to at least 2014, while Biggs'

lawyers claim he has been feeding information to the Bureau on "antifa" activities since at least July 2020.

Further proving the FBI's culpability in facilitating the attack, Reuters revealed last week that they had identified two more FBI informants within the Proud Boys. According to Reuters, one former member, "Danny Mac" told the Proud Boys leadership at the end of December that he had been an informant for two years.

Two unidentified Proud Boys members confirmed to Reuters that Danny Mac had been paid by the FBI for information on antifa, but that recently the FBI had begun asking for information on the Proud Boys themselves, which prompted Mac to "come clean" on his relationship. While not confirming the identity of Danny Mac, in an interview with Reuters, Tarrío said that a former member, "was in touch with law enforcement" but that he was rooted out of the group over his "leadership style."

Reuters was also able to confirm that a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Proud Boys, who goes by the moniker "Aaron PB," wrote on private Proud Boys Telegram channel in January 2019 that he was looking to gathering information about "antifa" and other "info we want to send our FBI contact."

In the same article, Reuters revealed that they had interviewed Biggs on January 4. While Biggs refused to tell Reuters what plans the Proud Boys had for January 6, he said he would be more than willing to discuss the coming fascist assault with his FBI handler: "If the guy that I know called me and had any questions, I would respond."



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