



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 3, 2015

Chattanooga Shooting: Lieutenant Who Returned Fire to be Charged

Allen West, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Florida, waited to learn whether Lieutenant Commander Timothy White would be charged with violating Navy rules by carrying a personal firearm on federal property and then discharging it to defend himself and his fellow officers in the Chattanooga shooting on July 19. On Saturday, [he got the news](#):



Ladies and gents, resulting from the text message I received yesterday, I can confirm that the United States Navy is bringing charges against Lt. Cmdr. Timothy White for illegally discharging a firearm on federal property.

Details of the shooting indicate that Muhammad Abdulazeez, after firing dozens of rounds into an armed forces recruiting center at a strip mall (without hitting anyone), drove across town to a Navy support center.

According to FBI Special Agent in Charge Ed Reinhold, the attacker rammed his rented Mustang through the gates of the center, got out of the car, and stormed into the building carrying a semi-automatic rifle and a handgun. White, the center's commanding officer, saw Abdulazeez coming and fired his personal firearm at him. An autopsy report on whether White hit the attacker hasn't been released.

Abdulazeez then exited the center, entering a motor pool area where unarmed troops scrambled for cover. He fired indiscriminately at them, killing five people before armed local police ended the attack.

Two handguns were retrieved from the scene, one of which likely belongs to White, who has admitted carrying and drawing his weapon. The other may belong to one of the deceased Marines who also attempted to interdict the attacker before succumbing to his wounds.

For his efforts, White is likely to face two charges: illegally carrying a personal firearm on federal property, and illegally discharging it.

Once West received confirmation that White will be charged, he vented:

What kind of freaking idiots are in charge of our Armed Forces — pardon me, our “unArmed Forces”? What would they prefer ... that Abdulazeez had been able to kill all the Marines and Sailors at the Naval Support Reserve Center?...

Folks, this has become the Obama military that will not implement policies for our men and women in uniform to be protected — but will punish them if they do protect themselves. What ever happened to the Navy of John Paul Jones, Farragut, Halsey, and Nimitz? What has happened in our America where we believe that our men and women in uniform — especially the commanders — are just targets for these damn Islamic jihadists?



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Can you imagine the message this sends to ISIS and all the enemies of America? We are going to end his career and court-martial a man who drew his sidearm to protect his command, and the assigned Sailors and Marines!

J.E. Dyer, a retired naval intelligence officer blogging at Liberty Unyielding, was more restrained in his reaction to the news:

I'm all for good order and discipline myself, and Lt. Cmdr. White was apparently carrying a personal firearm on a federal compound, in violation of military regulations, at the time of the attack. He discharged it too, and that's a separate violation.

You just don't overlook the infractions here.

But this is a much bigger issue than the violation of a peacetime regulation ... it may be "by the book" to charge Timothy White and make an example of him ... but ... America's sailors and Marines are due better.

The real issue is the same one raised when Major Nidal Hasan attacked innocents at Fort Hood in November of 2009: No one was able to return fire because, beginning during the Clinton administration, all soldiers were prohibited from carrying personal firearms on base. And it's that policy that is finally, at long last, getting a little attention. On July 29, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter issued a memo "clarifying" that unit commanders may arm qualified troops at recruiting centers and other off-base sites.

Navy Captain Jeff Davis, a spokesman for Carter, said the memo directs commanders to address three separate areas of concern: personal security, which "includes the option of arming additional personnel," physical security of the installations themselves, and installing and using "mass-warning notification systems" to warn of an impending attack.

Carter said in his memo:

The tragic shooting on July 16 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, illustrates the continuing threat to DOD personnel in the U.S. homeland, particularly by Homegrown Violent Extremists. The incident and the ongoing threat underscores the need for DOD to review its force protection and security policies, programs and procedures, particularly for off-installation DOD facilities.

Within days of the attack, at least six governors either ordered their National Guard recruiting personnel to arm themselves, or directed them to remove those off-site locations to safer areas.

What about Lt. Cmdr. White? He'll likely face a court martial and be charged and convicted of violating those federal policies. He will probably be dishonorably discharged, permanently damaging his chances at future employment in the private sector. He has a wife and six children, with another on the way. But they'll manage. As White's wife, Francis, said: "He values human life enough to protect his sailors and others. I am honored to be his wife and stand by him 100 percent."

Perhaps this incident will succeed in provoking the change necessary: to allow soldiers the same freedom of self-defense guaranteed by the Second Amendment to all other American citizens. This, along with eliminating gun-free zones, will force other "homegrown violent extremists" to reconsider before attacking their targets.

UPDATE: According to [Stars and Stripes](#), "Lt. Cmdr. Tim White, the Navy officer who fired a sidearm in defense during the attack on Navy Operational Support Center in Chattanooga, Tenn., will not face charges, an official familiar with the investigation told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday." The U.S. Navy



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had posted on Facebook on August 1, “Stories of Navy personnel being charged with an offense are not true. There is still a long way to go in reviewing the facts of this tragic incident, but at this time we can confirm no service member has been charged with an offense.”

A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics.



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