



Of Course We Must Arm Our Troops

When Mohammad Youssuf Abdulazeez rammed his car through the gate at the Navy Operational Support Center and Marine Corps Reserve Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and opened fire, the people he shot couldn't defend themselves. Thanks to a 23-year-old Department of Defense [policy](#), they were unarmed.

By the time police arrived and killed the intruder, four Marines were dead. This followed a previous attack by Abdulazeez at a military recruitment center in a strip mall a few miles away. One sailor later died of the wounds he received that day.

Back in 1992, when our military originally ordered the soldiers stationed in recruitment centers not to carry any weapons, such a pacifist policy may have made sense. After all, accidents can happen. And individual loonies may have tried to seize a weapon and create mayhem.

But such a policy looks ludicrous today, when Islamic jihadists are openly calling for their adherents to launch attacks in this country. We don't know if that's what motivated Abdulazeez's murderous assaults. But we do know that our soldiers were unable to defend themselves when he opened fire on them.

That policy has to stop now.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) was absolutely right when he said in a statement: "By disarming the Armed Forces, gun-free policies at military facilities have made our men and women in uniform easy targets for terrorist attacks." It's time to give them a chance to protect themselves — and us! — by going armed when they're on duty.

After the attacks in Chattanooga, Tennessee Congressman Scott DesJarlais says he is drafting legislation, which he is calling the "Enhancing Safety at Military Installations Act," that will repeal bans on military personnel carrying firearms on military bases and at recruitment centers. Defense Secretary Ash Carter has asked the military services to draft reports by the end of this week on what steps the armed forces should take to increase safety at military installations and recruitment centers. I hope that going armed will be at the top of the list.

In the meantime, governors in at least six states aren't waiting for the federal government to act. The governors of Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, Florida, Oklahoma and Arkansas have all signed orders allowing members of the National Guard to carry firearms at their installations. Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on July 21, 2015

explained her action:

It is painful enough when we lose members of our armed forces when they are sent in harm's way, but it is unfathomable that they should be vulnerable for attack in our own communities. I want to make sure that our National Guardsmen are authorized to arm themselves at our military facilities.

Florida Governor Rick Scott went one step further. In addition to ordering National Guardsmen in his state to be armed, he also directed that recruitment centers in the state be moved from storefront locations into state armories, while other security improvements are explored.

In Washington, the leaders of the armed services committees — Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and House Armed Forces Chairman Mac Thornton (R-Texas) — said they are working on legislation that will improve the ability of service personnel to protect themselves. Their joint statement said: "Together, we will direct the Pentagon to end the disconnect between the threats our warfighters and their families face and the tools they have to defend themselves."

None of this will come in time to save the lives of Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Sullivan, Staff Sgt. David Wyatt, Sgt. Carson Holmquist, Lance Cpl. Squire Wells, or Petty Ofc. Randall Smith. But it just could save someone else — military or civilian — from being murdered.

Let's face the world that exists today. We need to arm our troops and let them protect us from enemies, both foreign and domestic. Isn't that why they enlisted in the first place?

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

Chip Wood was the first news editor of The Review of the News and also wrote for American Opinion, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of Personal Liberty Digest. This article first appeared on [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.