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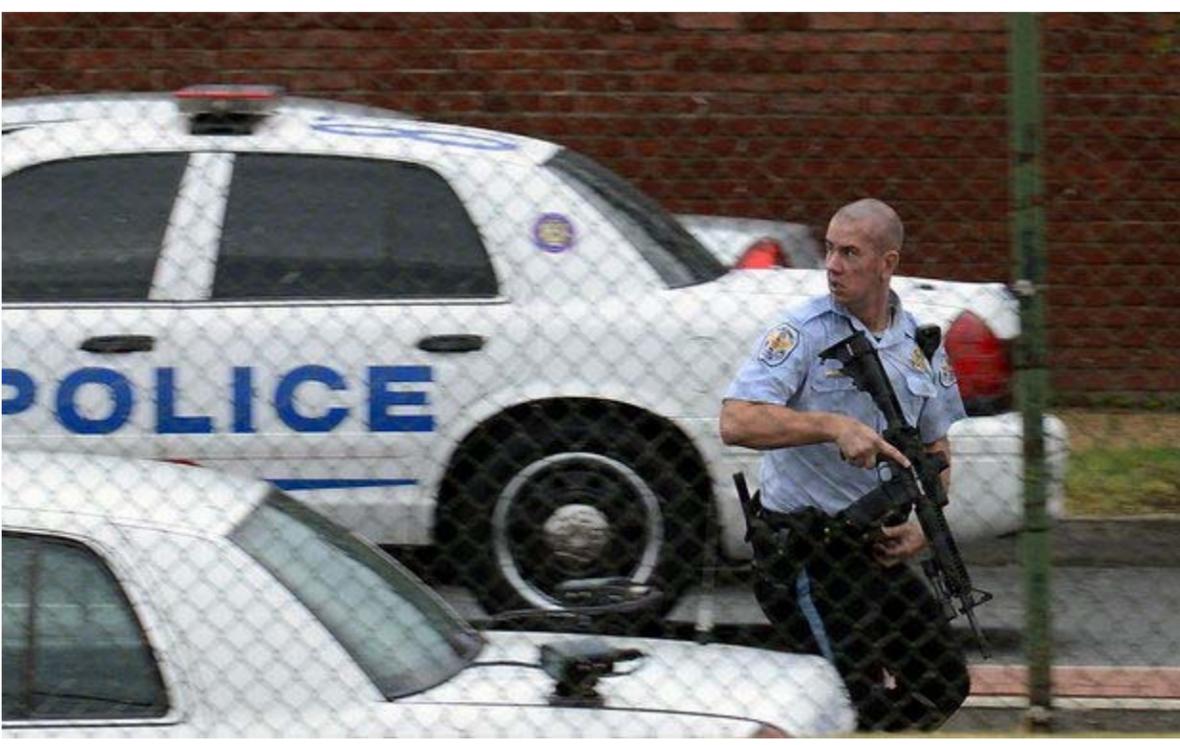
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# Shooting at Washington Navy Yard raises questions on security at U.S. military bases



At least 13 people died and several others were wounded after a shooter opened fire Monday at the Navy Yard complex in Washington. The incident represents the single worst loss of life in the District of Columbia since a 1982 airliner crash that killed 78. Here, a police officer runs along M Street near Sixth Street. (Astrid Riecken, Washington Post)

By [Cliff Pinckard, Northeast Ohio Media Group](#) [Print](#)  
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on September 17, 2013 at 8:00 AM, updated September 17, 2013 at 8:58 PM

There have been **16 mass shootings** -- defined by the FBI as involving four or more victims, not including the killer -- in 2013, including Monday at the Washington Navy Yard, where **Aaron Alexis reportedly killed 12 people** before dying in a gun battle with police.

There have been more than 200 mass killings ... including shootings, stabbings and other violence ... in the U.S. since 2006. That means the U.S. averages a **mass killing every two weeks**.

Incidents like the shooting Monday and the massacre at **Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.**, last December still shock Americans. And each time, shootings raise questions about **how it could happen**, especially on a military base.

Could Monday's attack have been prevented? Joseph Trevithick, a research associate at **GlobalSecurity.org** and writing for CNN.com, says it would be **extraordinarily difficult to prevent any attack** from occurring, particularly one committed by a "lone wolf":

Would the employees be willing to submit themselves to airport-style security checks? Multiple times? Would they be willing to have their car visibly searched or even partially dismantled without probable cause? Regardless of what measures are taken, they will also not necessarily deter 100 percent of such attackers. Those who commit acts of violence are unfortunately only bound by their resourcefulness. It becomes the unpleasant job of those who protect us against such violence to balance our security against a reasonable expectation of what can and cannot be prevented.

Security on military bases has improved after the **2009 attack at Fort Hood, Texas**, in which 13 people were killed. But experts tell the Baltimore Sun **that more could be done**:

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Chris Grollnek, founder of Countermeasure Consulting Group, said some installations have made more progress on security than others. The Texas-based group has trained private contractors who staff post entries. "It's not a one-size-fits-all," Grollnek said. Grollnek said the Army has been proactive in training personnel to deal with on-base shootings. But, he said, trying to prevent incidents before they take place can be tricky because it's usually impossible to identify suspects in advance. "They're black, they're white, they're men, they're women -- no one knows what the profile is," he said.



Monday's shooting reveals that **many military facilities in the U.S. have "soft underbellies"** when it comes to security, says Yochi Dreazen of Foreignpolicy.com:

At military posts like the sprawling Marine base in Quantico, Virginia, for instance, virtually anyone with one of the Common Access Cards (CAC) issued to troops, civilian Defense Department employees, and government contractors can enter the facility without being patted down or made to go through a metal detector. Aaron Alexis, the primary suspect in the Navy Yard shootings, was a Navy information technology contractor, but it's not yet clear whether he had a CAC card of his own or made his way onto the Navy Yard by stealing one from a colleague. Figuring out how Alexis managed to enter the compound with at least one semiautomatic weapon is a top priority for the FBI agents leading the investigation into the shootings.

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The improvements in security since the terrorist attacks in 2001 were drawn up mainly to guard against terrorist sleeper cells, reports the Washington Post, although military personnel or people employed in the defense industry **likely pose a more serious threat**:

On Monday, with many key questions about the latest attack unanswered, lawmakers and defense officials vowed to move swiftly to determine whether new safeguards are needed. Rep. John Carter (R-Tex.), who called for enhanced training for first responders after the shootings at Fort Hood, which is in his district, said there is no foolproof way of keeping military facilities safe from lone gunmen. "Unfortunately, we don't live in the sweet world of the 1950s," he said. "There are a lot of bad people doing a lot of bad things."

Monday's attack **occurred in a very secure area**, according to Politico.com. (Although Ezra Klein of the Washington Post interviews a former Air Force official who says people might have **misperceptions of what the Navy Yard is really like**.) And security expert James Atkinson says his company tested newly installed security gates at the Navy Yard in 2009 **and discovered numerous problems**:

More broadly, in two dozen probes over previous years, Atkinson's firm found major security lapses throughout the facility, among them doors jammed open with pieces of cardboard, "crisscrossed" video cameras pointed at one another, too few cameras and bad lighting at night. "The security there is extraordinarily poor," Atkinson said. "They need more cameras, better door security, better lighting. The access controls were appalling. The Washington Navy Yard has security that is below the level of security you see at Harvard or MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) or Boston University or any other major campus."

Monday's attack has **Dayton-area U.S. Rep. Mike Turner concerned** about security on military bases:

"Given the disturbing events of today, I am highly concerned that the access control systems at our nation's military installations have serious security flaws," wrote Turner, whose district includes Wright Patterson Air Force base. "It is my understanding the IG report indicates the Navy may have implemented an unproven system in order to cut costs. I also learned that potentially numerous felons may have been able to gain unrestricted access to several military installations around the country, due to insufficient background checks, increasing the risk to our military personnel and civilian employees."

For now, authorities are **trying to determine what motive** the gunman might have had. People in Washington and across the nation **struggle to make sense** of another

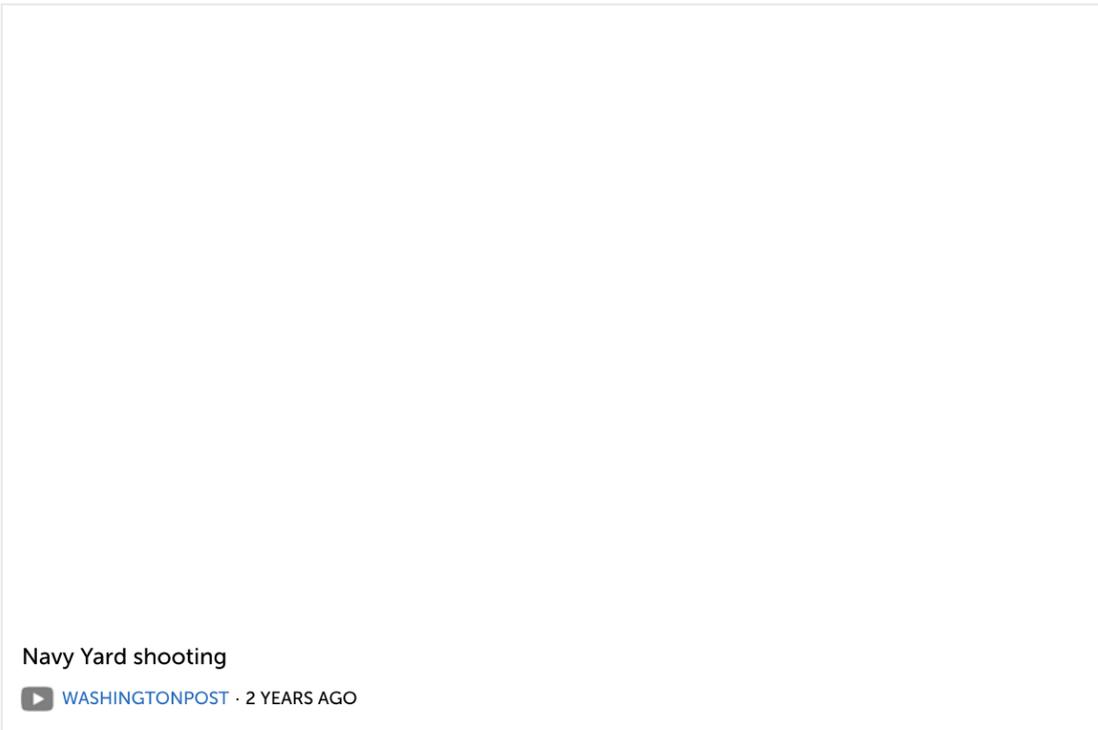
mass shooting. The **gun control debate** is renewed. Will anything result in a significant change? From **editorial board of the Washington Post**:

Life does go on, through Columbine in 1999, through Virginia Tech in 2007, through Sandy Hook in 2012. Each atrocity provides a jolt to the nation and then recedes with little effect, until the next unimaginable event occurs, except each time a little more imaginable. Everything was supposed to change after a man with a semiautomatic weapon mowed down 20 elementary school children in their classrooms last December. But for the politicians, nothing changed. Now, another massacre, another roster of funerals. Again, again, again.

by cpinc40 2 years ago

# Shooting at the Washington Navy Yard

People on social media offer condolences to the victims of Monday's mass shooting in Washington.



Navy Yard shooting

 WASHINGTONPOST · 2 YEARS AGO



**Cassadee Pope**  
@CassadeePope

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This Navy Yard shooting is so disturbing. Why anyone would want to harm the ones who protect us day in and day out is beyond me. Horrible.

3:50 PM - 16 Sep 2013

662 338

DValdez23

@DValdez23

Before I sleep. I wanna give out my condolences to those people affected by the Navy Yard Shooting.

 2 YEARS AGO



**sharon carr**  
@theHelmetShack

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Our prayers go out to all involved in the shooting at the Navy yard. God Bless you all.

2:52 AM - 17 Sep 2013



Profiling Emerging of Navy Yard Shooting Suspect

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**farkoleo fark** Sep 26, 2013

It should be a criminal offense to disarm your workforce like they did at the Naval Yard. This shooting, by one account, took thirty minutes to conclude! In the first few seconds you have panic and shock, but after that someone should have been able to do something! We should be able to prepare for it, and then react when it happens. I even just read a book on it, Fight, Flight, or Hide, by John Forsythe, but I'm sure there's lots of resources out there that would be just as helpful. <http://www.amazon.com/Fight-Flight-Surviving-Shooting-ebook/dp/B00B9J8FL2> **Fight, Flight, or Hide. The Guide to Surviving a Mass Shooting More about this product**

**cmorton.gm** Sep 18, 2013

The fact that serving military officers and senior non-commissioned officers weren't allowed (much less required) to be armed is a measure of the contempt and fear directed toward service members by Bill Clinton and Barack Hussein Obama.

**necron99** Sep 17, 2013

Article headline raises questions editor quality

**Old Corps Grunt** Sep 17, 2013

"Shooting at Washington Navy Yard raises questions security" This is a military reservation and should be run as such. Go back to Marines under arms guarding U.S. Navy installations, with roving two man patrols and a platoon-sized reaction force.

**Old Corps Grunt** Sep 17, 2013

Lax security and indifference by the Navy allows people like Aaron Alexis access to U.S. Navy installations. Tell it to the Marines... <http://news.yahoo.com/cost-cutting-may-have-played-role-in-navy-yard-shooting-134106229.html>**Pentagon audit: Navy cost-cutting making bases and facilities less safe**<http://news.yahoo.com/cost-cutting-may-have-played-role-in-navy-yard-shooting-134106229.html>A Pentagon audit takes the Navy to task for penny-pinching when it came to security clearances for outside contractors at military facilities - including the Washington Navy Yard.

**solarian** Sep 17, 2013

To those who serve I my prayers are with you. To the families my prayers go to ease your pain.

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