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Ohio Man Arrested for Soliciting the Murder of Members of the U.S. Military

An Akron, Ohio, man was arrested today on federal charges that he solicited the murder of members of the U.S. military.

Terrence J. McNeil, 25, appeared in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of Ohio after being charged with one count of solicitation of a crime of violence.

The charge was announced by Assistant Attorney General John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Steven M. Dettelbach of the Northern District of Ohio and Special Agent in Charge Stephen D. Anthony of the FBI's Cleveland Division.

“According to the allegations in the complaint, Terrence McNeil solicited the murder of members of our military by disseminating ISIL’s violent rhetoric, circulating detailed U.S. military personnel information, and explicitly calling for the killing of American service members in their homes and communities,” said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. “ISIL and its followers continue to use social media in an attempt to incite violence around the world, including in the United States. The National Security Division's highest priority is counterterrorism and we will use all of our tools to disrupt threats and acts of violence against our military members and their families.”

“As this nation honors our veterans, we must make clear that we will not tolerate threats of violence against our service members,” said U.S. Attorney Dettelbach. “This defendant is charged with urging harm to our men and women in uniform and will now answer for those threats.”

“While we aggressively defend First Amendment rights, the individual arrested went far beyond free speech by reposting names and addresses of 100 U.S. service members, all with the intent to have them killed,” said Special Agent in Charge Anthony. “We will remain vigilant in our efforts to stop those who wish to support these despicable acts.”

According to an affidavit filed in the case:

McNeil professed his support on social media on numerous occasions for the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

On or about Sept. 24, 2015, using a Tumblr account, McNeil reblogged a file with the banner “Islamic State Hacking Division,” followed by “Target: United States Military” and “Leak: Addresses of 100 U.S. Military Personnel.”

The file type is a .gif file, which allows multiple still images to be looped in one file, with a timed delay between each image. The text of the first file reads “O Brothers in America, know that the jihad against the crusaders is not limited to the lands of the Khilafah, it is a world-wide jihad and their war is not just a war against the Islamic State, it is a war against Islam...Know that it is wajib (translated to “necessary”) for you to kill these kuffar! and now we have made it easy for you by giving you addresses, all you need to do is take the final step, so what are you waiting for? Kill them in their own lands, behead them in their own homes, stab them to death as they walk their streets thinking that they are safe...”

The file then loops several dozen photographs, purportedly of U.S. military personnel, along with their respective name, address and military branch.

The final image looped is a picture of a handgun and a knife with text that reads “...and kill them wherever you find them...”

A charge is not evidence of guilt. It is the government’s burden to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt, and a defendant is presumed innocent until that time.

The case is being investigated by the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force in Cleveland. This case is being prosecuted by U.S. Attorney’s Office of the Northern District of Ohio and the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.