

Overview of the Investigation Ordered by the Commander of United States Army Reserve
Command Following the Mass Shooting in Lewiston, Maine.

On October 25th, 2023, Robert R. Card II, a Sergeant First Class in the United States Army Reserve, carried out a mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine, killing 18 and wounding 13. Two days later, local authorities found SFC Card deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. This tragic act of violence has forever impacted people in the State of Maine and across the country. At the time of the mass shooting and suicide, SFC Card was not on duty nor under the direct control of the U.S. Army. He was a civilian who also happened to be in the U.S. Army Reserve.

SFC Robert R. Card enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve in December of 2002 as a Petroleum Supply Specialist. For approximately two weeks a year, from 2014-2022, SFC Card served as a combat weapons trainer at the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, New York. He never deployed to combat. In the fall of 2022, SFC Card began to experience a series of emotional events and behavioral health challenges, including auditory hallucinations, the use of new hearing aids and interpersonal conflicts with others, including fellow USAR unit members.

In May 2023, SFC Card's family reported his deteriorating mental health to local law enforcement. In July 2023, SFC Card reported to his Annual Training event at West Point where he displayed troubling signs of mental instability and was quickly ordered to complete a Command Directed Behavioral Health Evaluation.

The behavioral health evaluation identified the need for more advanced follow-on care at Four Winds Hospital, a civilian facility in Katonah, New York. SFC Card received in-patient care for 19 days between July 16th and August 3rd, 2023. During that time, he was diagnosed with a "Brief Psychotic Disorder" and medical providers prescribed psychiatric medication and recommended follow-on treatment. A court hearing to involuntarily commit SFC Card to Four Winds was cancelled, and on August 3rd, Card was released. This investigation was unable to determine the reason for SFC Card's release due to the hospital staff declining to speak with the investigating officer.

Shortly after his release from the hospital, SFC Card effectively ceased communication with medical personnel. He also withdrew from his social circles and had few communications with family, friends, coworkers, or his chain of command.

On October 25th, SFC Card committed the worst mass shooting in Maine's history and two days later Card was found dead.

On November 2nd, 2023, in accordance with Army Regulation 15-6, the Commander of United States Army Reserve Command (USARC) ordered a thorough investigation into SFC Card's suicide, including his on and off duty conduct in the months leading up to the mass shooting. It is important to note that the U.S. Army did not have the legal authority to serve as the sole investigator into the mass shooting; however, Army leadership felt there was a moral and ethical

imperative to investigate all actions and events leading to SFC Card's suicide, including the mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine.

The investigation also reviewed the actions of SFC Card's chain of command and relevant military medical commands. The Army's investigation was conducted by a senior Military Intelligence Officer, and supported by a Judge Advocate, a Nurse, and an Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Agent. These investigators interviewed 43 witnesses, collected over 3,300 pages of documentation, and requested expert assistance from the Department of Forensic Psychology at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

The USARC investigation identified multiple communication failures between military and civilian hospitals, as well as with SFC Card's chain of command. These communication failures impacted SFC Card's continuity of care. The investigation recommended adverse administrative action be taken against three officers in SFC Card's chain of command for dereliction of duty. The adverse actions have been completed. The nature of the adverse administrative action can effectively preclude further military advancement for these officers. In accordance with policy, the Army will not release the names or further details of the disciplinary action taken because the officers are in the rank of colonel and below.

Finally, the investigation also recommended updates to standard operating procedures, retraining, and new policies to better handle the complexities of behavior health care for our USAR soldiers. The Army remains committed to working with stakeholders to improve key areas of concern.

1. What Happened

SFC Card joined the U.S. Army Reserve on December 14, 2002, as a Petroleum Supply Specialist. He did not deploy or mobilize while in the U.S. Army Reserve. As a Reserve Soldier, SFC Card would serve in an active, or "duty", status for approximately 38 days per year and he was a civilian for the remainder of the year. During his mandatory Annual Training from 2014 – 2022, he trained USMA cadets on hand grenade and heavy weapon ranges. SFC Card served on the hand grenade range during his two weeks of Annual Training for five years of the eight-year span.

Until the final months before his death, SFC Card's military record did not have any reports of disciplinary action or major injuries. The investigation revealed that in 2008, while in a civilian status, he fell from a roof and broke his neck. SFC Card also had persistent hearing issues which seemed to be worsening.

Unit members described him as kind, calm, friendly, and generous. In his civilian capacity, SFC Card was a truck driver.

In January 2023, around the same time that friends and family reported a decline in his mental health, SFC Card received new hearing aids.

The investigation determined that SFC Card's family, friends, and coworkers all began noticing a decline in SFC Card's mental health beginning in January of 2023. Witnesses testified that SFC

Card began to hear voices of people, often strangers, but sometimes friends, family, and coworkers, that he believed were ridiculing him behind his back, on social media, and directly in his presence. While everyone he accused vehemently denied these allegations, even when multiple witnesses were present, SFC Card nonetheless seemed to believe that most of his friends, family, and coworkers had turned against him in a cruel and unexplained manner.

In the early months of 2023, these auditory hallucinations were mostly reported to family and close friends who tried to reassure SFC Card that he was not being ridiculed nor was there a conspiracy to spread malicious rumors about him. These auditory hallucinations persisted through March and April of 2023, SFC Card did not attend his Annual Training validation exercise in April 2023.

By May of 2023, SFC Card's family reported at least four alarming mental health incidents to a high school resource police officer, who then referred the matter to the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Office, the law enforcement agency with criminal jurisdiction over SFC Card. This information included the fact that they believed SFC Card had 10 to 15 rifles and/or handguns at his residence. At this time, SFC Card continued to refuse any assistance and he remained upset and frustrated by the auditory hallucinations he believed were real. On May 3rd, local law enforcement officers informed SFC Card's chain of command about the situation and his deteriorating mental health. In June, SFC Card attended his mandatory U.S. Army Reserve Battle Assembly (sometimes referred to as "weekend drill") but no one in his chain of command discussed his mental health challenges with him and unit members reported that he seemed normal.

SFC Card was ordered to attend his July 2023 Annual Training event because his unit leadership believed the training was mandatory and that his mental health challenges weren't a detriment to his military job. When ordering SFC Card to attend his Annual Training amidst his mental health challenges, the unit leadership did not consider the fact that he missed the unit validation exercise or that SFC Card was scheduled to serve as an instructor for a machine gun range.

Within 24 hours of reporting to his Annual Training, SFC Card demonstrated signs of a deteriorating mental state and was ordered by his command to undergo a Behavioral Health Evaluation at Keller Army Community Hospital (KACH), a military hospital, at USMA. After an initial screening at KACH, the medical professionals determined that he needed higher level care and transported him to Four Winds Hospital, also in New York.

On July 20th, four days after he was checked into Four Winds hospital, the Army Reserve Medical Management Center (ARMMC) placed SFC Card on a 90-day behavioral health profile, which restricted SFC Card's access to military issued weapons. Medical professionals at Four Winds also recommended removing SFC Card's access to personally owned weapons. SFC Card's chain of command attempted to coordinate the removal of Card's weapons from his home, but they lacked the authority to legally compel the removal of any firearms or weapons.

SFC Card was hospitalized at Four Winds Hospital for a total of 19 days from July 16th to August 3rd and was diagnosed with a "Brief Psychotic Disorder." The medical professionals at Four Winds prescribed psychiatric medications and follow-on treatments. On July 27th, SFC

Card requested release from Four Winds and the hospital initiated steps under New York state law to involuntarily commit SFC Card for continued care. To involuntarily commit SFC Card, a court hearing was scheduled for August 2nd, but SFC Card rescinded his request to leave, and the court hearing was cancelled. Four Winds Hospital nevertheless released SFC Card on August 3rd, to a Soldier and friend from his unit. This investigation was unable to determine the reason for SFC Card's release due to the hospital staff declining to speak with the investigating officer.

August 3rd, 2023, was the last day SFC Card was in a duty status with the U.S. Army Reserve.

After his August 3rd discharge from Four Winds Hospital, SFC Card complained to friends and family that he was very upset about being sent to the hospital and he began to communicate vague threats of violence. Two days after his discharge from the hospital, he tried to pick up a firearm silencer he had ordered online a month earlier. The store employees refused to sell SFC Card the silencer after he self-reported that he was just released from a psychiatric facility.

On August 11th, SFC Card stated to a nurse care manager from Keller Army Hospital who had contacted him that he stopped taking his prescribed medication because it made him feel lazy.

Also on August 11th, the U.S. Army Reserve Psychological Health Program (PHP) contacted SFC Card and Card expressed his displeasure with the fact that his hospitalization was limiting his ability to purchase firearms. He also reported he had not yet started prescribed therapy. This conversation on August 11th, eight days after his release from Four Winds Hospital, was when SFC Card ceased communication with medical professionals. The PHP closed SFC Card's case at the end of August because he was unresponsive to their efforts to contact him, which was the standard policy at the time.

In August and September of 2023, SFC Card communicated increasingly violent, yet vague, threats and rhetoric to friends and family. He often described how many people he could hurt with his weapons or what locations he could "shoot up." By September 14th, SFC Card's auditory hallucinations appeared to further impact his mental health, so much so that SFC Card violently assaulted his best friend, who was in his reserve unit. Realizing just how bad things had gotten, SFC Card's best friend contacted the unit chain of command and told them he was concerned that SFC Card would conduct a mass shooting at his unit or somewhere else. Within 24 hours of hearing from Card's best friend, SFC Card's leadership informed local law enforcement of the threats. SFC Card's chain of command conducted these notifications in their civilian capacity because they were not on reserve duty at the time. Local law enforcement attempted to conduct two wellness checks on SFC Card but failed to engage with him.

The investigation revealed that nearly everyone who knew SFC Card acknowledged how quickly his mental health declined from September through October of 2023 - to the point that he was accusing new, formerly trusted people, as part of his auditory hallucinations. SFC Card continued to withdraw from those around him and had irregular contact with family and friends during this time, other than a few select instances when he aggressively accused them of continuing to ridicule him. Even when he became virtually unreachable, family members continued to engage SFC Card, offering encouragement and support through text messages and voicemails.

In October 2023, ARMMC (the Army Reserve Medical Management Center) again attempted to contact SFC Card to follow-up with him about his treatment and wellbeing. Although ARMMC was unable to contact Card, they extended his behavioral health profile for another 90 days on October 17th, 2023.

On October 25th, 2023, Robert Card conducted a mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine, killing 18 people and wounding another 13. Robert Card was found two days later with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The toxicology report did not reveal any findings of toxicological significance other than caffeine and nicotine in his system.

2. Findings and Recommendations

It is important to note that while the Army's investigation was exhaustive and judicious, the investing officer and his team were unable to interview several key witnesses from Four Winds Hospital, SFC Card's family, and State of Maine law enforcement personnel. Because these individuals are not in the U.S. Army, the investigating officer had no legal authority to compel them to provide testimony, which they chose not to provide. Regardless, this investigation made several findings and subsequent recommendations in four categories.

First, unit leadership took several consistent and sustained actions to address SFC Card's deteriorating mental state. However, there were also a series of failures within the unit leadership. Members of the unit leadership were held accountable through appropriate adverse administrative actions taken against the officers found derelict in their duties. These adverse administrative actions can preclude further military advancement for those officers.

Second, the report identified procedural breakdowns in SFC Card's medical care, from the military hospital to the civilian hospital where he was committed. Four Winds informed Keller Army Health Clinic of its intent to release SFC Card on August 3rd; however, a KACH contracted nurse care manager did not inform unit leadership of SFC Card's release date. The nurse care manager also did not meaningfully communicate with unit leadership. In addition to the unresolved circumstances surrounding SFC Card's release, the investigation was unable to confirm if SFC Card received discharge instructions from Four Winds on August 3rd. Four Winds did not send signed discharge instructions to KACH until August 11th, 8 days after SFC Card's release. After receiving SFC Card's discharge instructions, the nurse care manager did not upload the documents into SFC Card's military medical record for another 10 days after receipt, or closely review the discharge instructions, which would have revealed troubling information that could have been relayed to the chain of command. These procedural breakdowns have been reported to the Defense Health Agency and the Army Surgeon General, and the Army is updating the procedures for case management of U.S. Army Reserve component Soldiers.

Third, the investigation found that several U.S. Army Reserve programs were insufficiently followed. For instance, procedures for serious incident reports were not followed. Next, the Psychological Health Program office did not adequately review SFC Card's medical records prior to closing his case due to unresponsiveness. The investigation determined the chain of command had an incorrect understanding of their authorities under the Health Insurance

Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The USARC Commander has ordered updates and reviews of those programs, as well as retraining of HIPAA and the Military Command Exception for all commanders and legal advisors in the 108th Training Command, the parent organization to which SFC Card was assigned.

Fourth, to better handle the complexities of behavior health care for our USAR Soldiers the investigation also recommended updates to policies and standard operating procedures, a review of the U.S. Army Reserve's behavioral health force structure, and comprehensive behavioral health retraining across the U.S. Army Reserve.

The investigation, and its subsequent findings, also highlight the limited legal authority that SFC Card's U.S. Army Reserve chain of command had over him and his actions. A U.S. Army Reserve Soldier is typically in a duty status for approximately 38 days per year. This is an important way for Soldiers to balance their Army service with their civilian life and profession, but there are legal limitations.

When a Reserve Soldier is not in a duty status, their chain of command has no legal authority to compel them to undergo medical treatment, follow-on care, or surrender personally owned weapons, regardless of the circumstances. All of these actions must be done in a civilian capacity, which is why SFC Card's chain of command as well as his family and friends, repeatedly worked with local law enforcement throughout this ordeal. This remains a unique challenge for U.S. Army Reserve leadership and encourages strong relationships with local governments and law enforcement personnel to handle difficult situations.

3. Way Ahead

The Army is committed to working with Congress, local and federal governments, and all stakeholders to prevent tragedies like this from recurring. It is important to note that the U.S. Army Reserve Command's investigation and the independent Army Inspector General's case review are not the only ongoing investigations. The entirety of this investigation was provided to the Department of Forensic Psychology at Walter Reed for a medical review and expert analysis.

While the Army has no jurisdiction over them, both the Maine State Police and the Maine Commission are conducting separate investigations.

It is Army leadership's sincere hope that these medical reviews and expert analysis, improved procedures and policies, updated training and information sessions, and adverse administrative action against those who were derelict in their duties, will help us determine how these events happened, and help prevent similar tragedies in the future.