

Spring 2014

# Cyber Bullying Evolved: Bullying in the Military Workcenter

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**Regis University**  
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CYBER BULLYING EVOLVED:  
BULLYING IN THE MILITARY WORKCENTER

by

Dayna M. Friend

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Criminology

REGIS UNIVERSITY

February, 2014

CYBER BULLYING EVOLVED:  
BULLYING IN THE MILITARY WORKCENTER

by

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February, 2014

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# BULLYING

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### Abstract

The purpose of this project was to inform readers about the progression of cyber bullying into the military work center. This research has been compiled to aid the thesis topic for the capstone project in the Regis University Criminology program. The proposal relates the involvement of adults (any person over the age of 18) in the epidemic that is cyberbullying. A comprehensive literature review analysis was created on the current research available on cyberbullying in adolescents and the issues that exist within it. It was found that the majority of the research is still in the understanding of the topic both proactively and reactively. It has been understood that the absorption of the Internet and the cyber world into the work center has brought the threat of cyberbullying. This research proposal will review literature that discusses what cyber bullying is, what it does to a work environment and why the issue is so serious. The methodology is then mapped out on how this research plans to be carried out. The author plans to review four research questions which are: How prevalent is cyber bullying in today's military? How does cyber bullying affect military members? What forms of cyber bullying affect military members the strongest? And what programs, if any, can be edited or created to combat the threat of cyber bullying in our work force? Content analysis will be used to see what differences exist or fail to exist. The collection method of using academic search engines is outlined in detail. This research would be to the overall body of research

*Keywords:* Cyber Bullying, Military, Work Center

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## **Cyber Bullying in the Military Work Center**

### **Chapter I**

#### **Introduction**

While doing slight research on military current issues the author stumbled upon an article written in the *Observer* in February 2014 that was entitled “Bullying in armed forces on rise, MoD (Ministry of Defense) figures reveal” this article was written by Mark Townsend who stated “one in 10 military personnel claim to have fallen victim to discrimination, harassment and bullying in a service environment within the last year. This study’s sample looked at officers and enlisted personnel and had 12,500 study members. With 8% reporting claims it leaves to question what else is plaguing today’s military. The author chose to select looking into cyber bullying in the Air Force to understand its relevance to work place bullying. Most of today’s military survives on a technology strong environment where virtually everything is done on a computer, which could leave our servicemen and women at risk.

#### **The Problem**

The problem that exists is that military members are being subjected to cyber bullying, which impacts the individuals in a work, home and deployed environment. When an individual is mentally distracted it could have disastrous consequences. Almost all military personnel work in a hi-tech or prominently computer based work environment regardless of career field they hold, which adds to more time being susceptible to cyber threats and bullying. This preliminary study will cover bullying to understand the impact cyber bullying can reach, cyber bullying involvement and the workplace.

### **Significance.**

Cyber bullying or cyber stalking is motivated by the stalked wanting to control their victim. Cyber stalking is crime that is committed by any person ranging in ages that can affect someone they know or a complete stranger. The bullying or stalking process can be as simple as constantly communicating or even using servers that will harass an individual repeatedly. This aspect of cyber bullying is always to attack a victim who cannot defend themselves (Sourander, Brunstein, Klomek, Ikonen, Lindroos, Luntamo, Koskelainen, & Helenius, 2010).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The overriding problem is that cyber bullying affects everyone and is starting to affect our military members. The population sample in this study will be a convenience sample of military members. This will be a study based on people's opinions, and data will be collected via a survey. The possible outcome of this study will show the impact of cyber bullying in the military. Presently no military programs exist specifically to combat this issue.

There is a problem in the military. Despite programs existing in the civilian front there is no military program designed to help combat, understand or prevent cyber bullying. Perhaps a study which investigated the military and their involvement in cyber bullying will remedy the situation and programs will be developed when and if warranted.

### **Research Questions**

This study will focus on understanding the impact that reaches the armed forces by focusing on how real the threat of cyber bullying is. The literature reviewed in this study reveals that cyberbullying in the military workplace has received minimal if any research. This research proposal aims to respond to four relevant questions.



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Research Question 1: How prevalent is cyber bullying in the military?

Research Question 2: How does cyber bullying affect military members?

Research Question 3: What forms of cyber bullying affect military members the strongest?

Research Question 4: What programs, if any, can be edited or created to combat the threat of cyber bullying in our work force?

### **Definition of Terms**

In order to understand what cyber bullying is the author refers to the definition of Bully as provided by Dan Olweus. A person is bullied when he/she is exposed, repeated and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more person. Negative action is when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through words or in other ways. Bullying is an overt and covert behavior (Olweus, 1994). Cyber bullying in the workforce is just like traditional bullying except it happens with electronic devices and online communications. Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to: Malicious emails, text messages, and social media, electronic communications joking about ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, uncomfortable topics, public shaming via email, sharing offensive images or video and spreading lies or gossip (Northeastern University, 2013). Workplace bullying consists of all aspects described by Olweus in terms on bullying but applied in any area that can be deemed a workplace environment which is not limited to an office arena but also consists of the flight line work and any area in between. A final term is military. The military will include only active duty military personnel, predominantly Air Force personnel and their dependents (spouse or child) who is over the age of 18.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This proposed study will have limitations due to the concept of cyber bullying having varying levels of relation and involvement. The success of the proposed study completely relies on the honesty of the individuals. This sample of military members may favor one gender or age groups over another due to desire to display honesty. The limitation placed on this study is effective because it focuses on one military installation which can build a good basis to estimate all military bases. The delimitations of this study are important to establish boundaries. The first delimitation is participants which will just be the personnel out of one base; the personnel include Active Duty Air Force personnel and their dependents over the age of 18. Another delimitation this study focuses on is the questionnaires given and geographical placement. All three of these delimitations will be beneficial for the study the author has proposed in order to create a product that is efficient and does not stall out

### **Chapter Summary**

The author of this research seeks to identify if the military work force is being plagued with cyber bullying much like their civilian counterparts. Studies have been published displaying the issues with cyberbullying specifically focused on adolescents and studies have been focused on work cyber bullying but there have been no studies that have focused specifically on the military population. This presentation seeks to identify the issues that surround the military and the cyber bullying world to understand the range in victimization this crime takes. Cyberbullying is an emotional and psychological crime and the impact remains long after the bullying stops.

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## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

The literature review begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework of this paper, followed by the normative beliefs about cyber aggression amongst adults (Wright & Li, 2013). The paper will then look into the workplace bullying as addressed to employers (Schenk, L. 2012) The paper will then look into workplace bullying among nurses, to gain a workforce bullying schema, (Johnson & Rea 2009). In a world run by technology society as a whole needs to be aware of the common threats that exists for ourselves, society and even our children. Cyber bullying can happen to anyone there are no exclusions. The purpose of this literature review is to look into the current research on cyber bullying and discuss the issues that surround it and cyber bullying in the work place as the focus. Cyber bullying is not just an at home online crime that people need to be aware of this type of bullying transfers from the internet, to social media, text messaging and even morphs back into workplace bullying

### Theoretical framework

A popular theory the author presents in her paper is a social disorganization theory. Due to the military acting as its own community it sees crime and delinquency occurring where there is a breakdown in communal institutions such as: pool closures, school closures, too much privilege, and change in pay periods and leadership style changes. The military functions on a strong social control theory which strives for conformity. In the military the social control theory focus is on the regulation of human behavior. If there is no strict policy then the fear when committing the crime is low. When a zero tolerance one strike you are out policy is enacted the crime lessens and reduces due to the deterrent in place which is the potential loss of a career. (Wiatrowski, Griswold & Roberts, 1978)

### **Cyberbullying: a TAFE Perspective**

The study by Reeckman and Cannard sought to look at the perceived behavior and consequences of cyber bullying in 2007. The authors of the study looked into adults in secondary education in Northern Melbourne Institute. At the beginning of their study there was a perceived future problem, after publishing the term and crime sky rocketed. This research looked at various data such as: what people are doing online, where they are going online, how they go online and their experience by being victim, bully, both, or the option to decline. It seems that bullies favored the use of mobile phones and instant messaging as their means of attacking. A majority of the internet use was being done at home and in the NMIT library by looking at emails, instant messaging and a profile page (social media). At the conclusion of the study many people came forth after learning about cyber bullying and taking the assessment and noted that cyber bullying happens in video games unrelated to school, students viewing a violent assault on a mobile phone and doing nothing (bystander), and another didn't report the attacks for fear of expelled, threatened, annoyed, afraid and worried at lunchtime if they responded to the cyber bullying, This person in particular felt belittled and disrespected. What came out most surprisingly from this study is that when a person discovers who the cyber bully is the impact only is strong when it is a known threat and not an anonymous or unknown threat (Reeckman, & Cannard, 2009)?

This study greatly adds to the overall body of the research because it focused on where exactly the threat is coming from and how much of a threat it will actually cause. If SSgt Price cyber bullies his best friend SSgt Dune and Dune finds out it could have devastating emotional pain as opposed to a random person Dune had never met. It appears trust and friendship plays a very big role into the effects of a cyberbully. It was noted in the above study that the term Cyber bully is a confusing one and does not have the same effect or impact as using other words, it was

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said in the study words such as attacking, belittling, or a not similar work harassing gained more attention to them.

### **Normative Beliefs about Cyber Aggression**

In the longitudinal study by Wright and Li done in 2013 examined the normative beliefs of aggressive (face to face and cyber). It was concluded that cyber aggression had developmental outcomes such as psychosocial maladjustment (depression, loneliness), delinquency and substance abuse. Findings from this stud indicate that face to face aggression is associated with cyber aggression and cyberbullying both concurrently and longitudinally. 90% of young adults spend time online with over 1/5 acting aggressively online at least once within the 6 month timeframe of the study. The authors of this study looked at the co-construction theory which linked face to face aggression with cyber bullying and it postulated that individuals act the same in digital and day to day interactions. The positive association between the two aggressions can be expected. This study was the first to consider how social cognitive mechanism about online behaviors, normative beliefs about cyber aggression, relates to cyber aggression. This study brought insight into “who” is bullying online, which can be assumed is the standard bully who transitions into an online environment and displays the same actions (Wright & Li, 2013).

This research study had a connection between online and face to face bullying keeping the perpetrator similar in both cases. This study was one of the first of its kind by looking at the two aggressions and finding similarities. This study is relevant to the author’s proposal because almost the entire workforce utilizes internet on a day to day basis with at least 1/5 being the aggressor. Due to the military being around 1% of the population it can be assumed that the odds will be high that military aggressors and victims are present.

## Work Place Bullying

This portion will review the literature composed by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (SHARP) in April 2011 discusses workplace bullying and disruptive behavior. Workplace bullying is the repeated and unreasonable actions of an individual or a group directed towards one employee which are used to intimidate, degrade, humiliate or undermine. These actions create a risk to the health and safety of an employee (SHARP, 2011). Workplace bullying often involves the abuse or misuse of power. The bullied personnel are then suffering from defenselessness and injustice which violates their dignity at work (SHARP, 2011). It is important to note a touch or hard boss is not a bully unless they are not respectful and not fair. A study was conducted on US workers which reported that 41% (47 million workers) of people reported physiological aggression in at work in the last year. Nearly 13% (15 million workers) reported feeling the aggression of a weekly basis. Some example of bullying in the workplace is: unwarranted criticism, blame with justification, being treated differently, being sworn at, and exclusion, being humiliated, excessive micro-managing and unrealistic deadlines (SHARP, 2011). Corporate bullying becomes existent when the previously mentioned actions become immersed into the workplace culture. Four important moments that have a high risk for bullying behavior are: organizational change (restructuring), worker characteristics (ages, gender, culture, experience levels etc.), workplace relationship (lack of information flow), and work systems (high intensity work, interpersonal conflict, role conflicts). Bullying affects the victim physically and mentally, signs of this are: PTSD, financial issues, absence, reduced self-esteem, phobias, sleep/digestive problems, increased depression, self-blame and family tension or stress (SHARP, 2011). Bullying causes a breakdown in trust which creates an environment of low morale and motivation. It is important to note that harassment and bullying are not the same;

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Harassment is illegal discrimination such as racial jokes/slurs. A bully's target is often someone they are threatened by and the bullying is usually covert (SHARP, 2011)

When personal use of social media spills into the workplace it becomes a problem of the employer. Facebook posts/blog posts/tweets etc. made from one employee about another which other employees can access and comment on can quickly escalate. 48% of business allows social media while at work (SHARP, 2011). Due to this large social media acceptance each workplace should impose a lawful policy addressing cyber-bullying such as: "If you decide to post work-related complaints of criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, audio, video that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, disparaging or could be deemed to be bullying. Examples of such conduct might include: offensive posts meant to harm someone's reputation, could contribute to a hostile work environment, or any statutes that violates company policy. "

### **Bullying Amongst Nurses**

This portion of the literature review will focus on the Bullying among nurses article Written by Johnson and Rea in 2009. This will aid to the authors research by focusing on bullying in the workplace environment that is very demanding. Workplace bullying is often called lateral/horizontal violence in nursing, workplace relations have been found to have profound impacts on the emotional and physical health of its employees. It can be understood that additional items such as withholding information, not returning phone calls, and ignoring a person can be considered bullying. Additional work related bullied personnel might see an increase in meaningless tasks, tasks beneath their competency level ore by removing them of key responsibility. In the studies view by Johnson and Rea it was determined that the US has the largest amount of workplace bullying and typically the bully is a manager or a supervisor. It can

be eluded that Scandinavian countries have the lowest amount of workplace bullying due to their feminist and egalitarian work environment (Johnson & Rea, 2009).

It is said that there are two leadership styles that cause/create a highly susceptible work environment to bullies; these styles are highly authoritarian and laissez-faire. It is also important to note those environments where intimidation is evident will cause less worker participation. In short bullying in the workplace is a serious problem and needs to be addressed (Johnson & Rea, 2009)

### **From Bully to Cyberbully**

In the following article written by Piotrowski in 2012 it discusses the transition from traditional bully to modern bully in a work environment. Due to limited information existing between cyber bully and the work environment this study is important. This paper reviews major findings that have been discovered, an analysis of cyber stalking and the most recent literature on the cyber issue. The focus is on the workplace and maintaining productivity and bullying behaviors that occur during work hours. Due to the hi-tech work environment that occurs it appears that cyberbullying is the preferred mode of bullying amongst employees. Bullying seems to be an irritant but the abuse taken from cyber bullying is a more serious issue. Overall all bodies of research conducted display a problematic issue when it comes to bullying and the psychological long term affect from loss of employment to loss of quality of work (Piotrowski, 2012). By examining all bodies of literature that exist on workplace bullying Potrowski was able to look at all outcomes of each study and highlight the most effective concept learned in each trial.

The research Piotrowski uncovered by reviewing the work done by Meloni and Austin in 2011 is a key aspect to my research. It was placed in a hospital setting that experienced high



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levels of cyber bullying. The program established a zero tolerance policy and within three years saw improvement. A zero tolerance policy is the most effective policy in a military environment because it informs the potential attacker just how serious they will take the issue and it acts as a very effective deterrent.

### **Individual Effects of Exposure to Bullying at Work**

Exposure to bullying in the work environment has been classified as social stress and is the worst work-related stress. Many individuals claim the bullying at work is a major cause of suicide. In clinical observations done by Leymann in 1990 it was determined work bullying led to: social isolation, maladjustment, psychosomatic illness, depression, compulsion, helplessness, anger, anxiety and despair? It was assessed that work place bullying is a daily thing but it only becomes systematic when the bullying is repeated to a specific person continuously. These responses are felt worldwide in various studies and are most commonly found in highly aggressive work environments such as a domineering boss. This study looked at the study done by Brodsky in 1976 which classified three responses to work harassment. The first is vague physical symptoms like aches, fatigue loss of strength while the second had depression, lack of self-esteem and sleepless ness the last group had psychological symptoms like hostility, social withdrawal and hypersensitivity. Each category of bullying reaction patterns are system and lead to PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) often resulting in absenteeism and medical sickness typically after 5 years of the bullying. It is still under question if bullying falls into the PTSD category because most don't witness or experience an actual or threatened death/injury (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003).

The research compiled by Einarsen and Mikkelsen in 2003 is a key aspect in this research project due to it looking at the aftermath of exposure. There is significant research that bullying

at work can lead to suicide and altered mental states. Presently the military suicide rate is higher than any civilian suicide rate. From 2004- 2009 for every 100,000 member's deployed there were 30 successful suicides as well as 30 stateside successful suicides. The army alone reflect about ¼ of its population suffers with a psychiatric disorder and 1/3 of the suicides were mental disorder related (Brown, 2014). While the focus of this paper does not focus solely on military suicides it is a good link between those bullied now and who makes that decision later in life, presumably around 5 years later as data predicts. What makes workplace bullying so drastic is the effect is not placed solely on the victim it affects peers and bystanders as well resulting in lowered job satisfaction, low productivity, and the daily strain of the reduced efficiency caused by bullying and the mental stress associated. The bystander can also develop mental issues due to feeling helplessness for the intended victim.

### **Chapter Summary**

These literature reviews all build to gain a better and stronger understanding of the threat that exists in cyber bullying in the workplace. Cyber bullying is not just something that people need to get over it is a serious and long term crime that leaves victims suffering in agony for the rest of their lives. The mental and emotional destruction that is left behind is a struggle to endure, handle and overcome and without treatment could lead to depression or suicide.

### **Contribution this study will make to literature**

This study is important because it will add to the limited research that exists on adult cyber bullying. The military inclusion of this study will be the first of its kind that will look at the military work environment and assess the threat of cyberbullying that exists. This study could incite future studies that focus on the issues that surmise from the data learned in this research. If

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it is learned that the military is affected due to the lack of a program being in place to prevent and cope with cyberbullying the study could aid as a backbone to getting one initiated.

## **Chapter III**

### **Research Methodology**

The purpose of this project was to understand the occurrence of cyber bullying amongst military personnel. The studies were collected anonymously and were used to gather the following information: access to technology (location, quantity and type), opinions on cyber bullying definitions and what constitutes as cyber bullying, where do you think cyberbully affects military members more (deployment or home station), do you believe this is a threat, in your opinion do you believe there should be a military program created for this issue?. In your opinion of workplace bullying how serious is the issue (very serious., no idea or non-issue) what is your opinion on how your leadership would answer that question (very serious, no idea, or non-issue). The data looked at bullying and victimization (Seals & Young, 2003), and cyber threats (Willard, 2007). The data collected from this survey was sorted utilizing Microsoft Excel and the Survey Monkey assessments.

### **Procedures**

The procedures in this study were to create and disseminate a questionnaire using survey monkey and through word of mouth to military members working in different career fields and of different rank and culture. To ensure confidentiality and honesty the surveys were anonymous. The survey was designed to capture quantitative data using single response and multiple choice questions. Qualitative data was procured by having open forum based questions such as the individual's perception of what cyber bullying means, the impact of it and what they believed workplace bully was (Maxwell, 2005).

### **Sample**

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The sample consisted of 51 military maintainers and 1 dependent who were all experts in their respective career fields. Each member was chosen to paint a full picture of the problem by incorporating from brand new military members to seasoned veterans and every stage in between. This study did not ask for individual sex so there is no breakdown between male and female responses.

### **Instrumentation**

The study was conducted using word of mouth and survey utilizing the website survey monkey. The given survey can be found in Appendix 1. The survey was developed to analyze the age range, years in the military, how easy they were able to access technology and how serious the issue of workplace bullying was. There were three open ended questions that asked what an individual's perception of what: cyber bullying means, the impact of cyber bullying and workplace bullying. Some individuals chose to input situations that occurred to them that they believed were examples and others placed a self-created definition. The survey mentioned that it was anonymous and their participation was voluntary. At any time the survey respondent could stop if the information being given made them uncomfortable in any way. The survey was administered to 51 military personnel and 1 dependent. The survey itself contained 15 questions with three being qualitative based.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected within a 20 minutes time frame and was done either online or on a print out that did not leave the option to include personal information such as name, exact age, location etc. to ensure confidentiality and anonymity to prevent any need to lie or pretend to save face. The information will not be forwarded or used by any party other than the researcher.

### **Data Analysis Method**

These study results provided a qualitative approach due to the all questions being opinion based. A list was compiled of the independent variables military member or dependent over 18 years old and the answers to the survey. The dependent variable is the opinion of the cyber bully threat amongst the work center No surveys were administered to any person under the age of 18 so no parental consent or additional measures needed to happen. All submissions presented are analyzed in this study. The survey contained both single and multiple response questions. For example there were questions on age, military affiliation, years in service and an individual's belief in where cyber bullying affects military members most all had single answers. The open ended questions were: What does cyber bullying mean? What is the impact? And what is workplace bullying. There were two options for how to take the survey which was emailed and handed out to willing participants or the link to survey monkey. Only one participant selected using survey monkey. At the conclusion of the study people were asked why they chose print outs as the most popular way and it was noted "I don't sit at a computer all day but if I have something printed I can answer it during downtime at work"

### **Summary**

At the conclusion of this study the author believes that future studies should be presented to narrow down the affected age group in further detail and attempt to correct the issue before the age of vulnerability. This study looked at the overall usage with internet and cell phone usage but did not focus on internet use while at a deployed location due the physical removal from an environment as well as an online environment can pose a serious threat. Further studies specifically focused on military members being the bully would be beneficial in the study to understand the correlation between military and cyberbullying. A good follow on study would focus on the military involvement in cyber bully cases that occur on military bases, this study

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would lead to increasing the involvement and awareness to military officials on the intensity of the problem at their base.

### **Conclusion**

This study contributed to the extant literature on bullying in several conceptual areas. First, cyberbullying is a bullying problem occurring in a new territory. Few research studies have examined the cyber bullying issue and the inclusion of military environments. This study was administered using 53 participants and analyzing the 53 different responses submitted. The astonishing high percent of young adults (those under 28) who had experiences of cyberbully observed in this study suggests that cyberbullying is becoming an increasingly vital problem for society. This reasoning led to this research paper on cyberbullying to adults, specifically in the military.

This study aimed to take an overall view of the cyber bully issue without any one question being answered. The close tie amongst bullies, cyber-bullies, and their victims found in this study underscores the importance of holistic approaches for the research and possible intervention programs related to cyberbully issues.

## Chapter IV

### Results

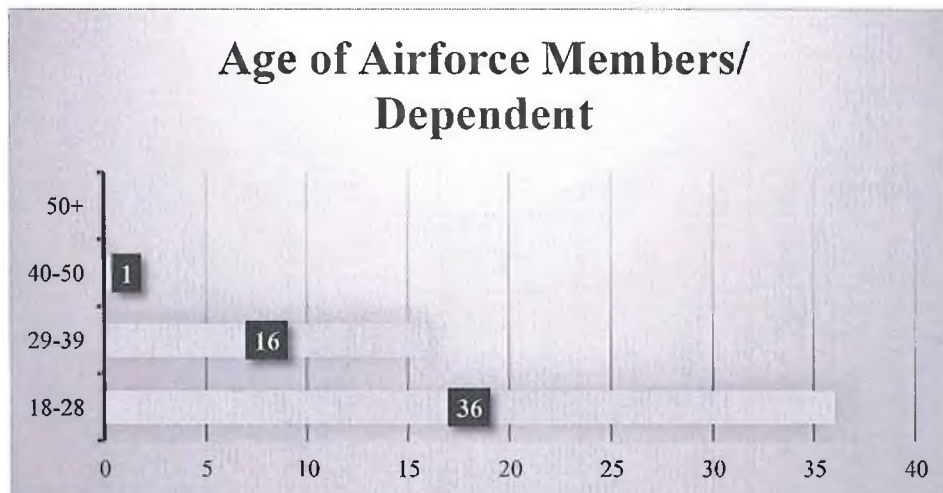
The purpose of this project was to develop an understanding of the military's perspective and vulnerability to cyber bully in the work place by focusing on answer the four research questions of: How prevalent is cyber bullying in today's military, how does cyber bully affect military members, what forms of cyber bullying affect military members most and what programs can be created to combat this threat. The study was administered to 52 military personnel and 1 dependent and their focus was on 15 questions that ranged from multiple choice to open forum questions. The study itself with consent form that each person received is located in Appendix 1.

The study's questions progressed from simple demographic based questions to opinion based questions on what the specific verbiage is : cyber bullying, and workplace bullying meant and concluded with a few questions to see how big of a threat cyber bullying was overall. After careful review of the released questionnaire it was noted that all responses were coming from 39 and younger air force members (Figure 1). It appeared that most respondents had varying responses to all questions. Typically it was noted that most military members have full access to the internet while at work or at home but it was found that a few major physical labor jobs such as jet mechanics had reduced access to the internet while at work noting "we are on the line too often and don't get the opportunity to check email or surf the web, if we have important emails someone usually will tell us in roll call or a text"-anonymous aircraft maintainer. (Figure 2). A surprising statistic that was found is where the vulnerability to cyber bullying was affecting or perceived as affecting military members was at home station. It was noted that a higher threat prevailed because people are doing too many things at once and they don't have the



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communication security that is essential while deployed. It was noted that people felt safer at home station and the perceived safety that implies with being around friends and family that put initials at risk. (Figure 3). In figure 4 the study revealed that all military members studied view cyber bullying as a common dangerous threat but half believed that there should not be a military program that exists because the military just should not tolerate it. The final figure that this paper focused on is figure 5 which shows an overall lack of communication up and down the chain of command. The individuals that participated in the study ranged from people with less than 3 years of service all the way to people with more than 20 years of service and no one understands where their leadership falls into place in terms of the problem of cyber bullying. This final figure shows how social disorganization theory is applying itself. There is a lack of communal relationship in terms of enacting a positive behavior and response to cyber bullying.



*Figure 1*

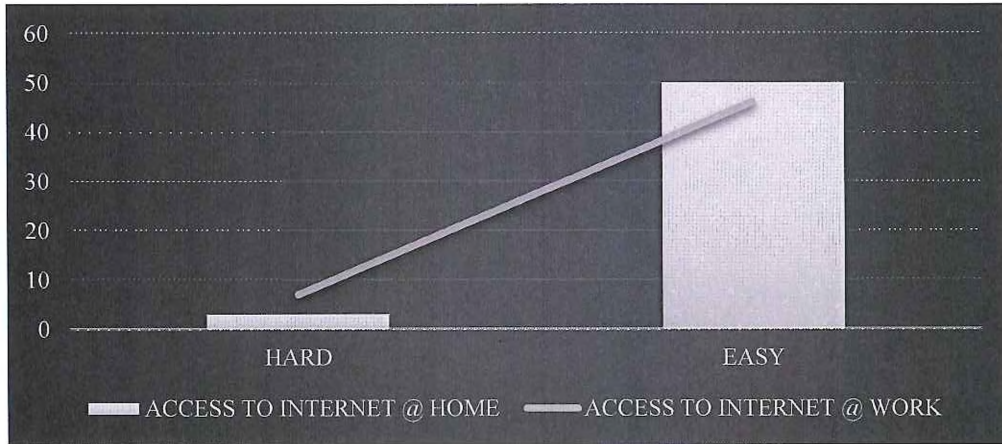


Figure 2

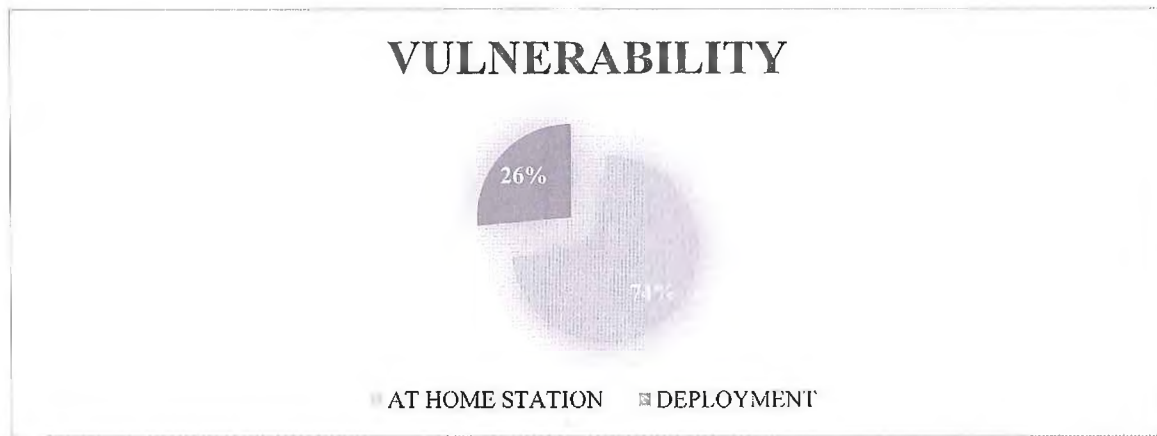


Figure 3

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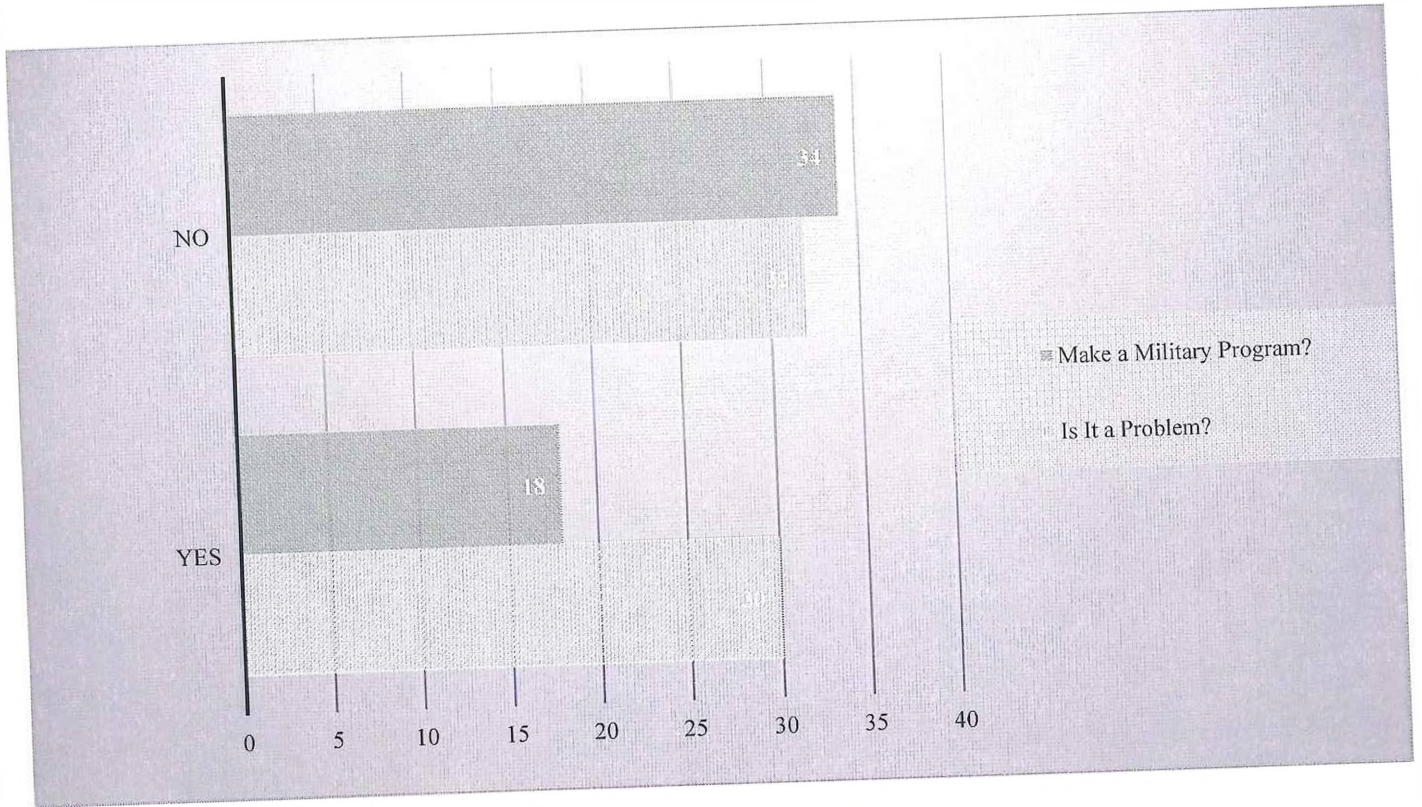


Figure 4

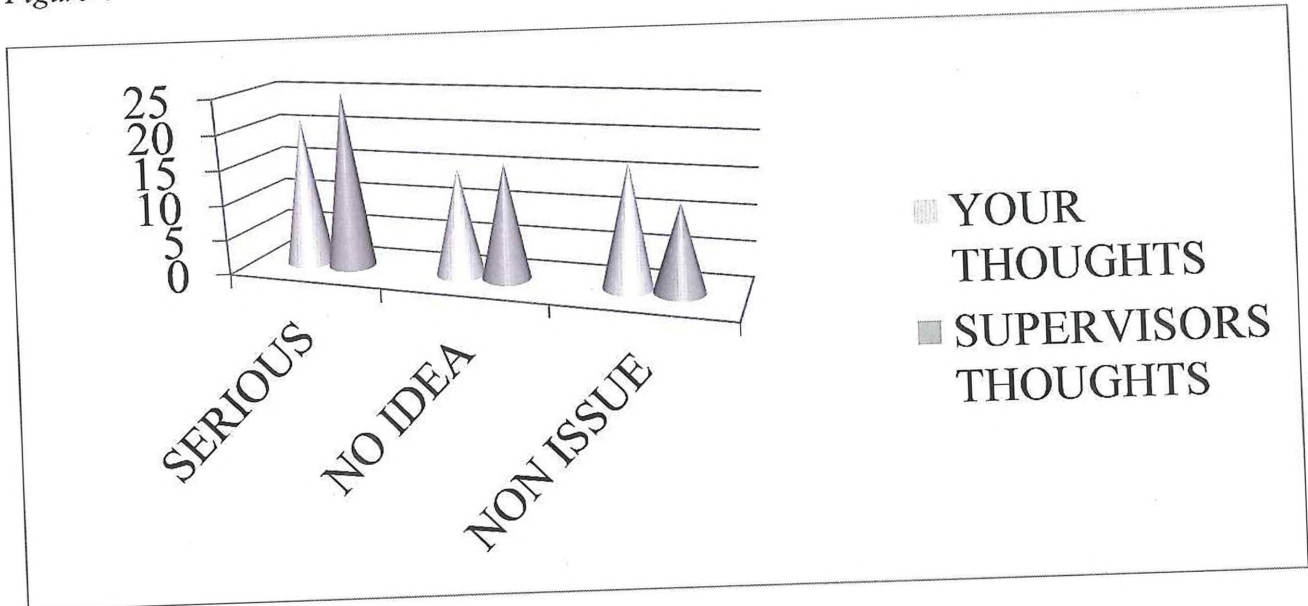


Figure 5

In the study presented there were three opinion based questions to gather the following information: What is your opinion of what the definition of cyber bullying is, What is your opinion of the impact that cyber bullying reaches and In your opinion what constitutes as workplace bullying? . These questions were posed to see if people even know what the threat is, if they are doing it and the repercussions of it. The following three tables depict what was learned . Table 1 displays what the opinion of what people felt the definition of cyber bullying is (or included). One of the anonymous responses that was presented by a senior non commission officer was “ Bullying is the unwanted, direct/indirect, physical or emotional attacking of another individual. Cyber merely means the above is done using social media, the internet or through cell phone messages instead of their traditional face to face method” This was one of the most insightful response that was received on the question which solidifies the understanding that military personnel are understanding the concept but the fact that most responses were unsure or they deviated from the understanding such as an anonymous hydraulic technician who stated “ If I call someone a faggot on line or send a picture of my dick to someone who doesn’t want it” The second half of that vulgar statement is not cyber bullying but sexual harassment. A second hydraulic technician said “ when someone made a MEME about my mothers hair and made fun of it online it hurt me because of the harsh comments “ As a whole there were some emotional stories shared on the definition of what cyber bullying is but most were quite accurate.

Table 2 discusses what the impact of cyber bullying can reach. The author was submitted a quote by a senior non commissioned officer who said “ Cyber bullying is impacting our children more than it is affecting adults. Bullying used to be an intimate attack with face to face contact typically with just two people. Recent technological advances has

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allowed anyone and everyone to hide behind a bveil and ridiculue others. Personally I think we bred a generation of pansies. Why would someone worry so much about what others think of the,? Everyone is too dependent on social stadning and images as proof with selfies” A second anonymous individual said “ cyber bullying hits emotionally...even the words people don’t say out loud are hurting too” Lastly, a third anonymous maintainer said “ there is not a problem with cyber bullying right now it is just kids theses days are getting softer and softer and we are supposed to combat that with programs like this.” The realization that cyber bullying is known to affect everyone its wake should deter the issue not allow it to continue to fester.

Table 3 focuses on what a person percieves as workplace bullying. The author was submitted many real world stories of things that were said/ done to them but did not react due to fear of reprisal or judgement. An anonymous person stated” yesterday when I messed up my coworker said “ is your butthole a natural charger for a flashlight battery can I test this flashlight out” , an anonymous jet mechanic stated “ The workload we put on new people isnt bullying its necessary its how they will learn”. Overall, most insight provided by this question leads the researcher to the assumption that people tend to think of workplace bullying as physical retaliation but typically don’t view bullying as a verbal or visual assault. Many of the responses prove that workplace bullying is a common occurance in the military work enviroment and show a demished morality because of the actions. People do not feel safe in an enviroment where many spend around 80 hours a week regardless of rank or position.

Table 1

Opinion on the Definition of Cyber Bullying	
Hiding behind a screen	19
Exploiting flaws with social media	16
Demeaning confrontation	9
Attacking "different" people	2
Humiliating people	9
Cowardly approaching someone	3
Visual/verbal harassment	19
Negative comments in a forum	10
Harassing text messages	1
Harassing over the internet	9
Coercion	1
Same as Bully	3

Table 2

Opinions on the Impact of Cyber Bullying	
Self Esteem Issues	20
Societal Impact/Issues	18
Self-Awareness issues	13
Self-loathing	6
Ostracizing	5
Morality Breakdown	4
Same as Bullying	8
Suicidal Tendencies	29
Does Not Happen/no effect	6
Happens only to children	8

Table 3

Opinions of What Constitutes as Workplace Bullying	
Social Media bashing	2
Maltreatment	4
Hazing	13
Discrimination	4
Ganging up on new people	11
Making offensive comments	5
Making people feel unwanted	6
Name calling	9
Ostracizing	2
Lied to	1
Harassment	2

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Intimidation	4
Undermining	3
Degrading others	4
Physical violence	2
Black mail	1
Coercion	1
Attacks to hurt emotions	3
Abuse of power/authority	9
Singling out people	4
Repeated offensive comments/actions	13

In the three tables above it is clearly obvious that people understand the impact cyber bullying has but there is confusion on what cyber bullying and work place bullying is. The perception military members have on bullying is not a universal understanding, what is seen as okay in one shop is being perceived as bullying in another. The most common ill placed work/understanding is the verbiage “harass”. Harassment and bullying are not intermingled terminology as understood by the article published by Dan Olweus in 1994(Olweus, 1994).

### Chapter Summary

This study took a preliminary view at cyberbullying in the military work force and brought to light some interesting and often unexpected data. The majority of this research looked at 18-28 year old members which make up a large percentage of the military work center. Typically these members will range from AB (E-1) thru TSgt (E-6) and they are the “work force” of the military and are involved in the micro aspect of the mission. Typically almost all members have access at work and at home in this day in age. One of the more surprising statistics taken is the vulnerability that is placed for cyberbullying. It is often briefed how much more security measures you need to take while encountering a deployment and is therefore assumed because the threat is higher but in reality there is no home station brief, this information alone can be alluded to why the vulnerability sits at 74% at home station. The majority of individuals believe

that cyberbullying is a problem but they don't believe that the military itself needs to develop a program. An anonymous member said "it just shouldn't be tolerated so we don't need a program". This statement makes the author believe that most military members have had an upbringing that discouraged bullying of any kind and there for this generation of individuals (Gen Y and older) have learned in general how to treat people. In the last figure posted most people understand the severity of the issue but they personally do not see the issue on the same level as their supervisor would.

The tables presented in this study should be stressed as important because their definition of cyber bullying, the impact and workplace bullying seem to be a grey area and encompass varying definitions. Harassment was the most common answer amongst the 53 members when harassment is not cyber bullying. For the majority participants hit the right answers for cyberbullying. The Impact of cyber bullying across the board is completely understood with self-esteem and suicidal tendencies ranking as common impacts which stress how serious the issue is. What gathered the most personable information was workplace bullying. The stories left behind anonymously without request were heartbreaking. In an environment that thrives on conformity and unity it is clouded by workplace bullying. In an environment where maintainers spend more than ½ of their day at least 5 days a week there is a lack of safety. Most individuals had different opinions on what they face or would face if work bullying occurred but the most popular was hazing and repeated offenses. Historically, hazing used to affect the military and across the board there are zero tolerance policies in place because of how serious some hazing rituals go. Some units used to haze new maintainers on their first deployment by throwing week old food on them or when someone gets a security badge they have to buy donuts. Some units have gruesome and mind numbing hazing rituals. While some hazing rituals remain in the military such as being



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punched with each new stripe pin on gruesome measures have been documented as illegal. An anonymous member commented on the hazing aspect "I think people will say hazing but we do it because new people need to learn and it's the best way to teach them, airmen these days are just getting weaker and we have to stop what we are doing to baby them to follow orders and instructions". What the hazing entails is undetermined due to the anonymity of the provider. All in all there is a problem with bullying in the workforce that is often repeated after hours using some form of cyber connection. One story shared was from a senior noncommissioned officer who said "I still feel bad for the female who was cyber bullied to the point where she had to move even though I was not personally involved. She should feel safe here, this is our home and this is our family and collectively we failed her, we failed our family. No one took her reported workplace bullying seriously when she complained that she couldn't bear coming to work because people constantly made fun of her stutter and when we did nothing the issue escalated. She was then cyber bullied by her coworkers and superiors on Facebook and in forums for her stutter... I just can't believe it, what has become of humanity?". The threat is real, the end results are equally as real and painful. Cyber bullying and bullying in the workplace have affected every member in some form or another and it is a rapidly spreading virus.

## Chapter V

### Discussion

The findings presented in this study show that overall cyber bullying and bullying in general are problems that have embedded themselves into a society that seems to function regardless of its interference. It would be wise to incorporate a military policy based on cyber bullying and workplace bullying due to the responses received by patrons that have been personally influenced and those that have no understanding of the issue which in time may disclose there is a larger issue. If people do not understand a problem it does not mean that a problem does not exist. The author believes that an implantation of a drop box, a yearly lesson or even an outlet to discuss these issues would benefit the military as a whole. As technology continues to grow and dominate our work environment the problem can be eluded to grow and dominate as well. The author presents the following items as outlets to gain further research: A survey designed around understanding specific bullying measures that a person felt. This will determine what the exact issue is and where it exactly occurs and the frequency. This preliminary study has overall enriched the present knowledge on the topic and it was essential as it is the first of its kind.

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## Appendix 1

The study that was administered with a consent which is as follows:

### Informed Consent Form

#### Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in a research study titled: Cyber Bullying Evolved: Bullying in the Military Workforce conducted by Dayna Friend, student from the Regis University Master of Science in Criminology program under the direction of Mary Muscari, Ph.D. The study uses a questionnaire designed to be completed at the convenience of your location and requests honest participation

#### Basis of Subject Selection

You are invited to participate because you are an active duty Air Force member or their dependent above the age of 18. This study excludes all other military members at this time.

#### Purpose of the Study

The author of this study wants to examine cyber bullying within the military.

#### Explanation of Procedures

You will complete a brief questionnaire that asks opinion based questions of the impact of cyber bullying. The time associated with completing this questionnaire is less than 15 minutes.

#### Potential Risks and Discomforts

There are no known anticipated negative risks or discomforts associated with you completing this questionnaire.

#### Potential Benefits

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The results of this study will advance the authors understanding of the impact cyber bullying has on the military. Other than showing you the results of this study if requested, you will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study.

### Financial Obligations

There is no cost associated with this study as it is done online.

### Assurance of Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked with your responses in any way. Information we get from this study will be published in a thesis manuscript and possibly in professional journals or presented at professional meetings, seminars and educational settings. In such publications or presentations, your identity will never be revealed.

### Withdrawal from the Study

Participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice from the researcher.

### Offer to Answer Questions

If you have any questions regarding this study please ask them by calling 210-204-9334

### Questions for personnel taking study

What is your affiliation with the military? Select one: Active Duty member or Dependent (over 18 yrs old)

What is your age: Select one: 18-28, 29-39, 40-50 or 50+

How long have you been in the military? Select one: under 6 years, under 10 years, under 15 years, under 20 years or more than 20 years.

What branch of the military are you (or your spouse in) : Air Force, Army or Marine.

What is your access to technology while at home? Select one: hard to come by or easy access

What is your access to technology while at work? Select one: hard to come by or easy access

What type of technology do you use? Select those that apply: Cell phone, desktop, social media or laptop

What is your opinion of what the definition of cyber bullying is: Comment box

What is your opinion of the impact that cyber bullying reaches: Comment Box

Where do you believe cyber bullying affects the military most? Select one: deployment or home station

Do you believe that cyber bullying in general is a problem? Y or N

In your opinion do you believe there should be a military program created to address cyberbullying? Y or N

In your opinion what constitutes as workplace bullying? Comment Box

In your opinion on workplace bullying how serious is the issue? Select one: very serious, no idea, non-issue

In your opinion how would your leadership answer that question? Select one: very serious, no idea, non-issue