TERRORIST TRAINING CAMP BUSTED IN CENTRAL FLORIDA



Osceola County mugshot of Marcus Faella

In a series of arrests that began over the weekend, authorities in Central Florida have now arrested ten individuals tied to the racist skinhead organization American Front. Initial arrests included two on Friday and five more on Sunday. While the first two arrested have already been released on bail, there were three more arrests announced this morning.

From the AP report in the Miami Herald:

> Seven people with ties to what Florida law enforcement officials called a white supremacist and known domestic terrorist organization were arrested this past weekend on felony conspiracy and hate crime charges in a FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force operation.
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> Authorities arrested 39-year-old Marcus Faella, and wife 36-year-old Patricia Faella, on Friday, along with 29-year-old Mark McGowan and his wife 25-year-

> old Jennifer McGowan. Others arrested and taken to Osceola County Jail were 28-year-old Diane Stevens, 25-year-old Paul Jackson and 22-year-old Kent McLellan.
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> Each was charged with paramilitary training, attempt to shoot into an occupied dwelling and evidence of prejudices while committing offense, a first-degree felony.
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> It is a felony in Florida to participate in paramilitary training for use “in furtherance of, a civil disorder within the United States.” The “prejudices” charge falls under Florida’s hate crimes law.
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> Florida Ninth Circuit State Attorney Lawson Lamar said in a statement that his office will review the investigation and “will file the appropriate criminal charges.”

The article goes on to identify those arrested as belonging to the hate group American Front. A partially outdated description of the group can be found here on the Southern Poverty Law Center’s website. The ADL’s concise description of the group:

> The American Front is a racist skinhead group that is active in several states around the country. The group espouses an anti-Semitic, white supremacist ideology and disseminates its message in public events that demonize Jews, immigrants, and other minorities. Before the current leader took the helm of the group in 2002, American Front was unusual in that it espoused “Third Positionist” beliefs, a peculiar blend of right-wing extremism that rejects both capitalism and communism in favor of an ill-defined “third way.”
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> Although American Front is not

> particularly large, it is one of the oldest continuously active racist skinhead groups in the United States. However, few original members are still with the group; most of the current membership is new. American Front has a legacy of criminal activity that ranges from brutal hate crimes to acts of terrorism.

We learn more about the group in the SPLC's blog post on the initial arrests:

> Three Florida leaders of the American Front, a California-based group of racist skinheads known for its predilection for violence, have been arrested on conspiracy and hate crime charges, along with four other members of the gang.
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> Two of the leaders — Marcus Faella and his wife Patricia Faella — were arrested on Friday, while the third, Mark McGowan, was picked up over the weekend, as were the four lower-ranking group members. The three leaders were charged with instructing another person in the use of firearms or explosives while knowing that they would be used "in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder in the United States."
>
> /snip/
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> The American Front was started in the late 1980s. It became a well-known group in the early 1990s, but was associated with a large amount of violence, which may have accounted for its fading later in the decade as law enforcement brought several major cases. It saw a major resurgence around 2007 under David Lynch, a charismatic leader in Sacramento, Calif., who was one of the group's original founders But Lynch was murdered by an unknown attacker in his

> home on March 2, 2011, and in California, at least, the group has shrunk significantly since that time. Now, most of its activities – and, apparently, most of its members – are in Florida.
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> The American Front is known to have been associated with the Confederate Hammerskins, another racist skinhead group known for its violence. In 1993, Marcus Faella was the director of the Melbourne, Fla., chapter of that group.

Orlando television station WFTV reported on the three new arrests this morning, and also had chilling quotes from the mother of one of the suspects:

> WFTV learned that investigators believe the group was involved in paramilitary training that included weapons like AK-47's and they also trained inhand-to-hand combat for a coming race war.
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> The mother of one suspect said agents are wrong about what's been going on at a remote piece of property.
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> Mark McGowan Jr.'s mother, Norma Black, spoke with WFTV reporter Nancy Alvarez about a wooded area in St. Cloud that she said was a meeting place for bonfires and target practice.
>
> "What did they do out there on that property?" asked Alvarez.
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> "They just go out there to have fun," said Black.
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> During the interview, Black insisted her son was not violent, but admitted he shares her views about minorities.
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> "I don't like illegals and I don't like these troublesome blacks," said Black.
>
> "Is your son a white supremacist?"

> Alvarez asked.
>
> “No, none of them are,” said Black. “They don’t belong to any group, it’s just friends having fun.”

I guess it’s not racism if your idea of having fun is to train for and plan to kill troublesome blacks.

As a concluding note, it is interesting to note how matter-of-fact the AP article is in describing American Front as a “known domestic terrorist organization”. That is backed up by the participation of the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force. Perhaps there has been some progress in how the FBI and the press treat the issue after Marcy’s analysis of the treatment of the Hutaree indicated drastic differences in how Muslim terrorists and white terrorists have been treated by them recently.

Oh, and for the record, despite Norma Black’s claim that her son doesn’t belong to a white supremacist organization, the AP article linked at the beginning of this post notes that he is listed on Florida’s articles of incorporation for American Front, Inc. According to this link, McGowan is a director of the organization.