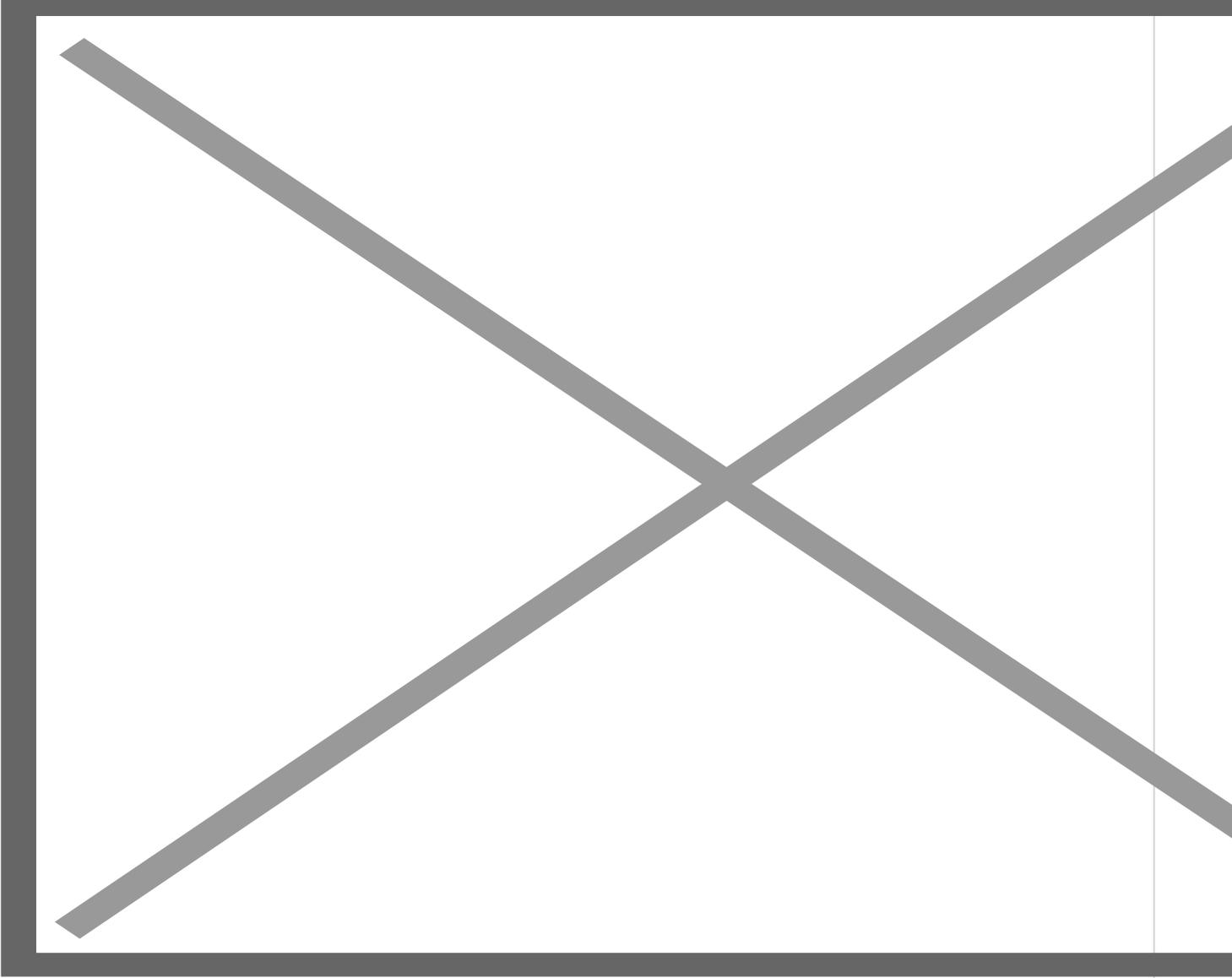


Twelve National Guard troops pulled from U.S. presidential inauguration

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Members of the National Guard patrol near the U.S. Capitol building ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration. (Photo: Andrew Kelly / Reuters)

Washington, January 19 (RHC)-- Twelve U.S. Army National Guard members have been removed from the presidential inauguration security mission after they were found to have ties with right-wing militia groups or posted controversial views online, news agencies reported on Tuesday.

The Associated Press news agency reported that officials, a senior intelligence official and an army official briefed on the matter, did not say which fringe group the Guard members belonged to or what unit they served in. The officials, according to the AP news agency were not authorised to speak publicly and had spoken on condition of anonymity.

Their removal from the enormous security presence at the nation's capital comes as the FBI worked to vet all of the 25,000 National Guard troops headed to the area for Biden's inauguration on Wednesday.

U.S. military officials have been worried about a potential insider attack or other threat from service members following the deadly riot at the US Capitol on January 6th by Trump supporters that shocked the nation.

Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller said in a statement on Monday the vetting of National Guard troops continues and the Pentagon has found no intelligence so far that would indicate an insider threat.

The Secret Service issued a bulletin over the weekend about what it sees as an "uptick" in National Guard troops posting pictures and details of their operations online.

Early on Tuesday morning, the FBI sent a list of names to the National Guard Bureau who were identified as having ties to fringe right-wing groups or had posted hardline views online. The information was passed from the National Guard Bureau to the DC National Guard.

Last week, the Virginia National Guard said Jacob Fracker, an off-duty police officer charged in connection with the violent riots at the Capitol, was a corporal in the state's Guard and serves as an infantryman.

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