

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Situation: White supremacist attacks US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

On 10 June 2009, 88-year old James Wenneker Von Brunn entered the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC armed with a .22 caliber rifle. The ensuing exchange of gunfire with the museum's security officers left one security guard dead and an additional bystander injured.

Von Brunn was a conspiracy-minded anti-Semite with a violent past and prison record. It is possible the attack was precipitated by a recent visit of President Obama to Buchenwald Concentration Camp. Since the Holocaust Museum opened in 1993, it had been the focal point of several threats and potential attacks.



The attack at the Holocaust Memorial Museum, as well as other active shooter attacks at locations such as Columbine High School and Virginia Tech University, demonstrates that not all terrorist type attacks are conducted by organized groups. Many attacks are conducted by individuals with a personal political agenda or suffering from mental instability.

If you find yourself in an active shooter situation and cannot escape the scene of the incident, find cover behind something solid. If the situation involves the use of firearms you should crouch down but not lie on the floor; ricocheting bullets tend to hug the floor. If grenades or explosives are being used, you should lie flat on the floor as shrapnel tends to rise.



At 12:44 on 10 June 2009, James Von Brunn double parked his red 2002 Hyundai in front of the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. As Von Brunn approached the Museum entrance, Special Police Officer (SPO) Stephen Tyrone Johns, who was employed at the museum as a security guard, opened the door for Von Brunn. With his .22 caliber rifle, Von Brunn fired and struck SPO Johns in the chest. An additional bystander also received minor injuries from shattered glass.

Continuing through the door, Von Brunn raised his weapon to fire; however, two additional SPOs, Harry Weeks and Jason

McCuiston, returned fire hitting Von Brunn in the face and knocking him backwards through the entrance. The injured security guard, SPO Johns, was taken to George Washington Hospital where he died of his wounds two hours later.

Had it not been for the quick response of SPOs, the death toll could have been greater. The museum was crowded with tourists, including children on school field trips. Also, visitors had gathered to see the opening of a play on the life of Anne Frank. Security personnel safely evacuated tourists out of the building through emergency exits.

In an active shooter situation, you should follow the instructions of security personnel and first responders.

Historical Threat

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Von Brunn had a long history as a white supremacist, anti-Semite, and neo-Nazi, and was involved in anti-government activities. In 1981, Von Brunn attempted what he called a "citizen's arrest" of members of the Federal Reserve Board in retaliation for raising interest rates. In Von Brunn's view, the Federal Reserve Board was unconstitutional and treasonous. As a result of this attempted armed kidnapping, Von Brunn spent six years in prison.



In 1999, Von Brunn self-published a book entitled Kill the Best Gentiles. The book praises Adolf Hitler and denies the Holocaust ever occurred. These sentiments were echoed numerous times in Von Brunn's website The Holy Western Empire.

In the latter years of his life, Von Brunn associated with the Aryan Nation and the American Friends of the British National Party, a pro-white group in England. Von Brunn believed that 9/11 was orchestrated by the US Government and that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States and not constitutionally eligible to be President. The FBI was aware of Von Brunn's history, but his actions prior to the attack were considered protected under the Constitution as free speech.

[If you feel an individual's behavior constitutes a threat, contact law enforcement or installation security.](#)



After the incident, Von Brunn was transported to George Washington Hospital where he was admitted in critical condition.

In Von Brunn's car, investigators found a notebook containing other potential targets in Washington DC, including the White House and the Capitol. The notebook included phrases pointing to his motivation including "The Holocaust is a lie," "Obama does what his Jew owners tell him to do," and "Jews captured America's money."

For Von Brunn's attack against the Holocaust Museum, a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, DC issued a seven count indictment including first degree murder, civil rights and hate crimes violations, and gun charges. However, Von Brunn, suffering from chronic heart disease and the effects of the wounds he received during the shooting, died on 6 January

2010 in a hospital in North Carolina close to the federal prison where he was being held.