

# Analysis showed Maine mass shooter had blast-related brain damage

March 7 2024, by Ernie Mundell

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The perpetrator of a mass shooting in Maine last fall had extensive brain

damage from "thousands of low-level blasts" tied to his work at an Army Reserve hand grenade training range, a new report shows.

On Oct. 25, Robert Card, 40, killed 18 and injured another 13 in a deadly rampage in the town of Lewiston after opening fire in a bowling alley and then a restaurant.

After a two-day manhunt, Card was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Card was a U.S. Army Reservist who had long been an instructor at the hand grenade training range, where it is believed he was exposed to constant low-level blasts on a daily basis.

In a [statement](#) released Wednesday, the nonprofit Concussion Legacy Foundation said Card's family was releasing the findings of a tissue analysis conducted on Card's brain "in an effort to help prevent future tragedies."

The analysis had been performed at the request of the Maine Chief Medical Examiner's office and was led by [Dr. Ann McKee](#), of the Boston University CTE Center.

"Robert Card had evidence of traumatic brain injury," McKee said in the statement. "In the [white matter](#), the [nerve fibers](#) that allow for communication between different areas of the brain, there was significant degeneration, axonal and myelin loss, inflammation and small blood vessel injury. There was no evidence of chronic traumatic encephalopathy [CTE]."

[CTE](#) is a degenerative brain condition sometimes found in postmortem studies of people who have suffered multiple concussions, such as football players, boxers or [military personnel](#).

Despite the absence of evidence for CTE, McKee said the brain analysis results "align with our previous studies on the effects of blast injury in humans and experimental models. While I cannot say with certainty that these pathological findings underlie Mr. Card's behavioral changes in the last 10 months of life, based on our previous work, brain injury likely played a role in his symptoms."

Card had been acting erratically in the months and weeks leading up to the mass shootings, *CNN* reported. In July, police were called to Camp Smith in Cortlandt, N.Y., the military base where Card worked, because he had been acting " "belligerently and [was] possibly intoxicated," a source told *CNN*.

Card had said he had been "hearing voices" and had thoughts about "hurting other soldiers," a federal law enforcement source told the news agency.

Another source in the National Guard said Card had been sent to Keller Army Community Hospital at the United States Military Academy for "medical evaluation," after Army Reserve officials reported Card for "behaving erratically."

These incidents happened more than a week after Card bought the high-powered rifle used in the October massacre, *CNN* said.

In the Concussion Legacy Foundation statement, Card's family said that "by releasing these findings, we hope to raise awareness of traumatic [brain injury](#) among military service members, and we encourage more research and support for military service members with traumatic brain injuries. Our hearts remain with the victims, survivors and their families."

**More information:** Find out more about the long-term effects of

concussion at the [University of Utah](#).

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