

The Military Police Brigade, Operational Art, and the Army Operating Concept 2016-2028

**A Monograph
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Abstract

THE MILITARY POLICE BRIGADE, OPERATIONAL ART, AND THE ARMY OPERATING CONCEPT 2016-2028, by MAJOR Jon P. Myers, United States Army, 42 pages.

The purpose of this monograph is to illuminate the role in, and support to, operational art by military police brigades and demonstrate their viability as a bridging mechanism to the operating concepts of wide area security and combined arms maneuver. Historical case studies from World War II, the Vietnam War, and early Operation Iraqi Freedom demonstrate that military police brigades not only supplement operational art but also are well suited to support the Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028. In particular, the Vietnam War served as the formative experience for the military police brigades.

The key elements of operational art that military police continually support are: protecting friendly operational centers of gravity, performing stability mechanisms as part of the theater operational approach, sustaining tempo of operations, supporting simultaneity and depth by generating momentum in the rear area, and by enabling operational reach through preservation of lines of communication. Most importantly are the stability mechanisms that military police brigades support through the application of law enforcement expertise and capability.

As part of the Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028, military police brigades enable combat forces in conducting combined arms maneuver by supporting operational reach, tempo, and simultaneity and depth. Military Police brigades also support wide area security through the performance of stability mechanisms, protecting friendly operational centers of gravity, protecting lines of communication, and preventing culmination during counter-insurgency operations. Most importantly, military police brigades bring law enforcement expertise critical to building a nation's police forces during stability operations. This expertise is currently cultivated throughout the active duty military police corps using the annual law enforcement field training and certification program for all company grade military police Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers.

Military Police brigades are a viable bridging mechanism between a counter-insurgency operational focused force to one better trained, organized, and equipped to perform all full spectrum operational concepts. As Army doctrine continues to change in reflection of the operating concepts of wide area security and combined arms maneuver, military police brigades will fill crucial peacetime and conflict roles for the Army.

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Introduction

At H-Hour on June 6, 1944, the Allies began retaking the European continent from the Third Reich and at the forefront were Army military police, landing with the first assault wave and establishing routes of advance for follow-on infantry to assault German positions.¹ This is an early example of the Army operations concept of combined arms maneuver as it entails the “integration and sequencing of all actions...to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.”² It is also an example of military police enabling operational reach and sustaining tempo in the European Theater as a function of protection and “enhancing flexibility.”³ Throughout World War II, Army military police supported operational art by performing rear area security, handling of enemy prisoners of war, and providing traffic circulation control that enabled combat forces to rapidly defeat Germany and Japan. The operational groundwork laid in World War II matured in Vietnam, where the military police brigade gained primacy in securing lines of communication and critical facilities, to Operation Iraqi Freedom where the military police became the theater main effort in rebuilding a decimated police force. In each historical case study, military police enabled operational art and as the Army looks to wide area security and combined arms maneuver for the future, military police will support those operational concepts.⁴

As shown in World War II, in Vietnam and in the first two years of Operation Iraqi Freedom, military police brigades performed a wide array of tactical and operational tasks that helped bridge offensive and defensive operations with stability efforts. Military police brigades in each of these eras were instrumental in the accomplishment of tactical and operational objectives. Their organizations performed roles and functions according to the needs of the theater commander, from securing the corps tactical zones of Southern Vietnam to resurrecting the national police forces in Iraq.

¹ Stars and Stripes, *MP: The Story of the Corps of Military Police* (Paris: Draeger, 1945), http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/militarypolice/index.html (accessed March 22, 2011).

² Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028* (Fort Monroe, VA: Department of the Army, 2010), 13.

³ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008), 6-16.

⁴ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 6.

The military police brigade is a critical organization enabling both the application of Army operational art and the execution of the Army Operating Concept, 2016 to 2028. It is uniquely situated for the transition of the Army of 2010, focused on counter insurgency, to the Army of 2016-2028, focused across full spectrum of operations using the operating concepts of combined arms maneuver and wide area security “to accomplish military missions on land” at the “operational and tactical levels of war.”⁵ Within the elements of operational art, the military police brigade provides crucial bridging mechanisms to operational art and to the Army operating concepts of wide area security and combined arms maneuver. These bridging mechanisms are also in line with the seven “supporting ideas” for combined arms maneuver and wide area security.⁶

Particular to the Army operating concept, military police are uniquely suited to support wide area security and consolidating “tactical and operational gains to set conditions for achieving strategic and policy goals” as well as to “protect forces, populations, infrastructure, and activities.”⁷ In addition, military police brigades enable maneuver units to conduct combined arms maneuver by securing lines of communications and critical installations as well as helping to secure populations. Military police brigades also establish and cultivate host nation security forces and are able to command and control large combat arms and combat support units. Finally, military police brigades provide law enforcement specific skill set enablers from the tactical level to the operational level of war. To fully understand the capability of the military police brigade, it is necessary to look at the past to determine the future, by correlating Army operations methodology in during World War II, Vietnam, and early Operation Iraqi Freedom to the period specific military police operations support role. This allows for a more thorough understanding of the importance of military police brigades in the Army operating concept of 2016 to 2028.

This study will first examine the military police roles in World War II in both the European and Pacific Theaters of Operation. This includes military police support to the occupations of Germany and

⁵ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Japan, providing examples of wide area security and protection specific functional roles in that era. Then the study will look at military police contributions in Vietnam, limited to the period 1966 to 1972, with sole focus on the 18th Military Police Brigade and emphasis on that brigade's support to operational art. The same general limit applies to Operation Iraqi Freedom and the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne), in 2003 to 2005. This period shows the operational and tactical capabilities of a military police brigade in protecting lines of communication and performing area security but also in executing the stability mechanism of influence required to rebuild local, provincial, and national police forces. Within that context, the focus is on the lines of communication from Kuwait to Baghdad and it will address the brigade's national level effort in establishing the Iraqi Highway Patrol.⁸ Finally, it is necessary to delimit the case study of Operation Iraqi Freedom due to a general lack of operational reports, after-action reports, and senior officer debriefs that characterized the Vietnam War.

Throughout the three historical case studies, the mission, organization, and operational characteristics of military police brigades allow for correlation to period specific Army doctrine and operational art. Within Chapter 7, Change 1 to Field Manual 3-0 *Operations*, the elements of operational art correlate to specific military police mission, roles, and contributions during each case study. For this monograph, the definition of mission is "the task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore" which will drive the analysis of military police actions during the case studies.⁹ Operational characteristics defined are "connected with execution of military...operations in campaign or battle" which in this monograph's context will focus on the ways military police operations evolved from World War II until the present day.¹⁰

Within the context of TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The Army Operating Concept*, it is necessary to define wide area security and combined arms maneuver as they pertain to future operational art.

Combined arms operations defined is "the combination of the elements of combat power with the

⁸ MAJ Jim Carlson, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team with Combat Studies Institute, 15 May 2008, transcript, Fort Leavenworth, KS, digital recording stored on CD-ROM at Combined Army Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 5.

⁹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 1-02, Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2004), 140.

¹⁰ Ibid.

integration and sequencing of all actions, activities, and programs necessary to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative in the context of full spectrum operations.”¹¹ Wide area security defined is “the application of the elements of combat power in coordination with other military and civilian capabilities to deny the enemy positions of advantage; protect forces, populations, infrastructure, and activities; and consolidate tactical and operational gains to set conditions for achieving strategic and policy goals.”¹² Finally, within the concepts of combined arms maneuver and wide area security are the seven supporting ideas: operate decentralized, conduct continuous reconnaissance, conduct air-ground operations, expand capabilities at tactical levels, inform and influence populations, conduct effective transitions, and enhance unit cohesion, each of which, military police brigades support and conduct across the full spectrum of operations.¹³

The existing literature that discusses World War II, the Vietnam War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom does not discuss military brigades in great detail or examine the mechanisms that military brigades enable in operational art. World War II literature is extensive in covering the European Theater of Operations and the Pacific Theater of Operations but does not discuss the military police group impact on corps and theater level operations.¹⁴ Rick Young in *Combat Police* gives a detailed description of military companies and battalions conducting operations in the Vietnam War but he does not address the operational impact of the 18th Military Police Brigade or its contributions to operational art in general. Finally, Gregory Fontenot in *On Point The U.S. Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* and Donald Wright in *On Point II Transition to the New Campaign: The U.S. Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005* give a thorough account of chronological employment of combat units during Operation Iraqi Freedom as well as the operational objectives used in the 2003-2005 period, but neither author covers the impact of military police brigades in operational art used during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

¹¹ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴ There are no specified accounts of military police group contributions to operational art in the European Theater of Operations or the Pacific Theater of Operations in popular World War II historical works, see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997) and Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War, 1937-1945* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2000).

Each of the three period case studies will examine the specific elements of operational art which military police groups and brigades enable. Following this analysis, this monograph will correlate the ability of military police to continue to support the elements of operational art, operational art itself, and the Army operating concepts of combined arms maneuver and wide area security for the next 20 years.

The Military Police Battalion / Group and Operational Art in World War II.

During World War II, military police battalions and groups supported operational art in both the European and Pacific Theater of Operations. Several key tendencies of military police support to operational art emerged from World War II. First, military police protected corps and theater rear areas from sabotage and infiltration from enemy agents which according to Simon Naveh, helps generate momentum, a key to extending operational reach and protecting Allied centers of gravity.¹⁵ Second, military police secured and controlled ground lines of communication, especially in the European Theater of Operations, which further enabled operational reach as well the tempo of operations. Finally, military police secured and safeguarded enemy prisoners of war which freed combat units to execute their lines of operations and prevent culmination. World War II was a turning point for the Military Police Corps and the formation of the first operational level military police headquarters, the military police group, was an important organizational manifestation.

Prior to the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the military police corps was not a permanent branch in the army but rather a rapidly scalable organization that expanded during war time and then demobilized following the conclusion of hostilities. The American Expeditionary Force in World War I generated military police units, but only after a military police training school formed in France.¹⁶ Following the end of World War I, the military police units demobilized and the Army only maintained a

¹⁵ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Oxon: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997), 311.

¹⁶ Robert Wright, *Army Lineage Series: Military Police* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 9.

small provost marshal presence in the interwar years with no fixed table of organization. The War Department printed Field Manual, Field Service Regulation 100-5, *Operations*, in May 1941 as the Army's doctrine update following the Louisiana Maneuvers in 1941.¹⁷ There was no mention of military police as there was no involvement of military police units in the Louisiana maneuvers however. This delayed military police doctrinal development as military police units developed operational support methodologies while engaged in combat operations to properly support Army operations on battlefields across Europe and the Pacific.

The Army designated the Military Police Corps as a basic branch on September 26, 1941, in part due to the recognition of the need for echelon-above-corps control of military police assets.¹⁸ According to the 1944 edition of Field Manual 19-5 *Military Police*, the military police battalion provides "to the commanding general of a service command, defense command, port of embarkation, overseas department, or theater of operations" to assist primarily with security within the command on top of the normal military police duties.¹⁹ The operational considerations of this doctrinal mission set supported operational reach through preserving momentum for Army forces, as well protecting the logistical center of gravity in the two theaters of war. Although the War Department identified the Corps of Military Police as the strategy setting entity for military police and the military police battalion as the largest organizational headquarters, the need for a brigade type headquarters emerged later in the war. This need resulted in the formation of the military police group, an entity that would survive until today as specialized military police units such as criminal investigation division or customs organizations.

Military police battalions supported both the European Theater of Operations as well as the Pacific Theater of Operations by performing the primary wartime functions of 1) enforcement of Army regulations, 2) maintain order in Army formations, and 3) conduct traffic and circulation control.²⁰ Of

¹⁷ Combat Studies Institute, *War Department Field Service Regulations Operations, May 1941 Reprint* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1992), 3. This 1941 manual, based on lessons learned during the Louisiana Maneuvers and the first American incorporation of tanks into formations, categorized Army operations as Offensive, Defensive, Retrograde Movements, and Special Operations.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹ War Department, *Basic Field Manual 19-5 Military Police* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1945), 179.

²⁰ Wright, *Army Lineage Series: Military Police*, 11.

these tasks, the conduct of traffic and circulation control impacted operational art through maintaining tempo of operations and achieving simultaneity and depth as demonstrated during the D-Day landings. Depth in the Allied rear area is a key component to preserving and generating momentum. The War Department created the provost marshal position at corps, army, and theater level with the duty to advise the commander on employment of military police units.

Military police groups supported the European Theater of Operations with prisoner of war evacuation and with traffic circulation and control beginning with the D-Day invasion at H-hour.²¹ Throughout 1944, military police traffic control points ensured circulation control for V Corps and 3rd U.S. Army, supporting the Normandy break-outs and subsequent operations into Belgium.²² This assured a flexible tempo of operations as well as preventing culmination due to logistical shortages for front line combat units. Military police escort guard companies handled over 25,000 German prisoners of war within the Normandy peninsula alone and these units working at for the theater communications zone, would safeguard, evacuate, and guard over 3,000,000 prisoners of war by Victory in Europe day.²³ According to the General Board established by General Orders 128, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, “the number of military police escort guard companies provided for operation *Overlord* was inadequate” and the vast number of prisoners of war led to increased numbers of guard companies at each Corps, Army, and in the Communications Zones.²⁴ This capability shortfall potentially threatened culmination of Allied ground operations due to congestion of lines of communication and reduced tempo from enemy prisoners of war congestion in the divisional areas.

In November 1944, 15th United States Army conducted a study to determine the requirements for the occupation of the Rhineland.²⁵ In October 1945, General George C. Marshall forwarded a plan to General Dwight D. Eisenhower recommending a “super Military Police organization” composed of

²¹ Draper, *MP: The Story of the Corps of Military Police*.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The General Board, United States Forces, European Theater, *The Military Police Activities in Connection with the Evacuation and Detention of Prisoners of War, Civilian Internees, and Military Personnel Recovered from the Enemy* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1945), 15.

²⁵ Headquarters, United States Constabulary, *The Establishment and Operations of the United States Constabulary* (Washington, D.C.: United States Constabulary, 1947), 12.

German civilian forces supervised by American military police in key positions with regimental combat teams as tactical reserves.²⁶ The United States Zone Constabulary was the result, comprised of 38,000 former combat troops with the mission to “maintain general security within the United States Zone of Occupation in Germany (Austria).”²⁷ Specifically the Constabulary forces were formed to “support and reinforce” military police missions in Germany and Austria as part of the U.S. military government.²⁸ The Constabulary force continued until March 10, 1949, when all of its units reorganized into tactical units and the military police units alone continued the original Operation *ECLIPSE* mission sets.²⁹

Following the surrender of Germany, military police units established civil law and order in addition to their distinct military duties. As part of planning for Operation *ECLIPSE*, 7th Army planned for military police to execute a three-part plan for the occupation of Germany.³⁰ The first portion, *Internees and War Criminals*, detailed the requirements for 7th Army military police to process, safeguard, and transport war criminals for later trial, which supported the center of gravity of legitimacy of the occupation. The second portion, *Traffic and Maintenance of Law and Order*, detailed the military police requirement for the orderly control of Germany’s vast surface transportation routes to include using civilian German police to control non-military routes.³¹ This supported the ability to accomplish occupation lines of effort in rebuilding German, restoring its population to normalcy, and applying the stability mechanisms of compel, control, and influence. The third portion of Operation *ECLIPSE* designated military police as responsible for *Investigation and Security* and stipulated the use of all three military police battalions’ investigative sections to investigate minor crimes.³² Military police performed all of these missions with Constabulary forces in reinforcement and support. This enabled the U.S.

²⁶ Ibid., 13.

²⁷ Headquarters, U.S. Zone Constabulary, *Trooper’s Handbook*. Prepared by Louis Zuckerman (APO 46: United States Constabulary, 1946). 1.

²⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁹ Historical Division European Command, *Reorganization of Tactical Forces: V-E Day to 1 January 1949* (Karlsruhe, Germany: European Command, 1950), 45.

³⁰ Headquarters, 7th United States Army, *Planning Directive, Operation ECLIPSE* by W.G. Caldwell (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, 7th United States Army, 1945), 17.

³¹ Ibid., 19.

³² Ibid., 21.

military government and U.S. units performing the occupation to apply stability mechanisms in occupied Germany.

As part of the 1945 occupation of Germany experience, the Army recognized the need for a more capable military police battalion. As a result, the European Theater of Operations Provost Marshal Conference in December 1945 recommended the creation of the “Military Police Battalion (Army)” to fulfill the diverse military police roles within the European Theater of Operations and in the communications zones.³³ This military police battalion (Army) continued to serve the Army through the occupations of Germany and Japan, in the Korean War, and into the Vietnam War as the largest corps tactical zone military police organization prior to the activation of the first military police brigade in 1966.

In the Pacific Theater of Operations, military police companies and battalions supported the island-hopping campaigns as well as the operations in China and Burma. In 1945, there were twenty-six military police battalions supporting the Pacific Theater of Operations and beginning the occupation of Japan. Some battalions, like the 800th Military Police Battalion, participated in combat operations on Luzon and New Guinea, suffering high causality rates directly supporting these campaigns, ensuring tempo and operational reach continued during the landings and subsequent ground offensives.³⁴ During planning for the occupation of Japan, the Far East Command Provost Marshal requested an additional seventeen-thousand military policemen, which were required to support General MacArthur’s three-point plan for performing the occupation with military police.³⁵ First, the number of planned prisoners of war resulting from the invasion of Okinawa and later the Japanese mainland formed an operational requirement that military police were uniquely enabled to affect. Second, the use of military police for the occupation of Japan would also allow combat forces to transition to follow-on combat missions or redeploy and apply the stability mechanisms of control and influence. Finally, use of military police for

³³ C.E. Stadtman, R.L. Hayes, and J.A. Lewis, *Table of Organization and Equipment Number 19-55, Military Police Battalion*, 34.

³⁴ Global Security, “800th Military Police Brigade (EPW) (USAR).”

³⁵ U.S. Army Forces, Far East Command, General Headquarters, *The Provost Marshal’s History, Campaigns of the Pacific, 1941-1947*.

occupation duties decreased operational risk as they were suited for protecting the center of gravity of legitimacy and normalcy within the Japanese population, in line with stability mechanisms General MacArthur envisioned.

In contrast to General Eisenhower in Europe and the establishment of the U.S. Constabulary, General MacArthur desired to place occupation law enforcement duties strictly with U.S. military police as he transformed Japan from “totalitarian feudalism to representative democracy.”³⁶ This directly required military police to execute stability mechanisms to achieve operational level goals of demilitarization and set conditions for the rebuilding of the damaged Japanese civilian infrastructure and government. However, the sheer number of military police required to carry the bulk of occupation duties far exceeded those available and the pre-occupation plans shifted to using combat forces in theater. This caused the Far East Command to weight available military police forces to key areas of the Japanese mainland and conduct constabulary operations with front line combat troops in all other areas. The initial plan for the occupation of Japan as envisioned by the Joint Chiefs, involved the land occupation of the four main Japanese Islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku) as well as one thousand smaller adjacent islands.³⁷ The large number of geographically separated islands required a force of 200,000 troops to occupy the Japanese islands as shown in the 6-month assessment of the initial occupation organization and force structure.³⁸

The missions, organizations, and operations of military police during World War II scaled from the tactical level (providing traffic control and handling enemy prisoners of war), to the operational level of war in coordinating theater circulation control and executing protection functions in the rear areas. The number of military police companies and battalions caused the War Department to adopt the formation of military police groups, which directly supported theater and corps tactical zone commanders, and better coordinated military police supporting efforts. This formation of the military police group was a

³⁶ Eighth United States Army, *Eighth U.S. Army in Japan, 30 August 1945 – 1 May 1946* (Japan: Eighth U.S. Army Printing Plant, 1946), 12.

³⁷ Chief of Naval Operations, *Report of Surrender and Occupation of Japan and Korea*. (Washington, D.C.: Chief of Naval Operations, 1946), 11.

³⁸ Ibid.

precursor to the formation of military police brigades during the Vietnam War and was a reflection of the need for operational level command and control necessary to coordinate and resource operational level military police functions. From handling millions of prisoners of war to re-establish law and order and supporting civilian law enforcement during the occupation of Germany and Japan, military police battalions and groups directed supported the theater commanders' objectives and goals. In recognition of the need for military police to continue active duty service following World War II, Congress established the Military Police Corps as a permanent, basic branch of the Army in Public Law 581 on 28 June 1950.³⁹ Military police support to operational art continued during the Korean War but with the military police group as the highest tactical military police organization in the Army until the Vietnam War.

In conclusion, there are several key aspects of operational art and military police support provided during World War II that carry through time to Vietnam and Operation Iraqi Freedom, specifically resulting in the creation and employment of the military police brigade. First, the creation of the military police group, which coordinated and synchronized protection to theater and corps rear areas from sabotage and infiltration, replaced the military police battalion as the largest tactical organization. Military police rear area security was critical in Europe where intermixed populations harbored German sympathizers and agents until the end of the war in Europe. This capability directly applies to sustaining and consolidating operational and tactical gains within the auspices of wide area security. Within the elements of operational art, the security of the rear area generated momentum, protected US and Allied logistical centers of gravity, supported tempo and operational reach, and set conditions for the eventual occupation of Germany and Japan. As the occupation of Germany and Japan commenced, these protection functions fulfilled the stability mechanisms of influence and control, which the military police group was able to coordinate and synchronize at the theater level.

Second, the introduction of the military police group enabled the coordinated protection of lines of communication and critical installations against enemy attack. In both Europe and the Pacific, military police consistently interdicted attempts by enemy agents and small units to disrupt friendly lines of

³⁹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 19-5 The Military Policeman* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1969), 9.

communication. This applies today in wide area security specifically in protecting the force. This also reinforces the operational art elements of lines of operation and tempo as well as supporting stability mechanisms. Third, military police units performed critical stability mechanisms in the occupations as they helped host nation police forces reconstitute, reequip, and assume responsibilities for law and order. The military police group was essential for coordination during the occupation. Finally, the ability of military police to safely, securely, and speedily conduct retrogrades of enemy prisoners of war from front-line combat areas. In both theaters, the ability of military police guard companies to rapidly secure and move enemy prisoners away from the fighting to safety in theater and communications zones long-term camp was instrumental in the overall war fighting effort by enabling combined arms maneuver. The military police group emerged to control these guard companies in the handling of millions of German and Japanese prisoners of war and the operation of numerous camps and confinement facilities during 1944 to 1945. Operationally, this set conditions for occupation and preserved tempo and simultaneity for ground combat forces by delimiting the time front line units handled enemy prisoners of war.

The Military Police Brigade and Operational Art in the Vietnam War, 1966 to 1973.

During the Vietnam War, military police brigades emerged as part of the Army force structure and these units adapted to the non-contiguous environment of South Vietnam. Although many World War II era trends continued in Vietnam, military police also introduced new tendencies in supporting tactical and operational level commanders. First, the detailed geographic orientation of military police brigades was a first and this resurfaced during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This orientation enabled the military police brigade to perform stability mechanisms like influence on the Vietnamese police forces and protect friendly centers of gravity through coordinated action. The ability for military police brigades to plan, coordinate, and execute rear area security missions helped generate and preserve momentum and preserve U.S. operational reach. Second, as mentioned previously, the Army activation of the 18th Military Police Brigade, the first in U.S. Army history, emphasized the importance and scope of military

police missions in the Vietnam War. Operationally, the military police brigade demonstrated the ability to simultaneously protect friendly logistics centers of gravity as well as execute stability mechanisms such as influence and control alongside the Republic of Vietnam National Police. Third, as in World War II, the critical military police functions of convoy escort and route security emerged as a primary military police mission. These rear area type missions provided United States Army-Vietnam with operational - reach and the maintenance of tempo of combat operations. Finally, military police in Vietnam demonstrated the unique ability of military police brigades to plan, resource, coordinate, and execute a wide variety of training and operational missions with host nation civilian, national, and military police. These stability mechanisms directly supported the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam's pacification operational approach. Each of these tendencies, added upon the experience of World War II, would garner the military police corps into a combat support branch and ultimately lead to the successful employment of military police brigades during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The year 1966 marked a drastic increase in the number of American military forces deployed to the Republic of Vietnam as conventional operations gained dominance in American military strategy. General William Westmoreland prioritized the defense of American and Vietnamese facilities in Saigon with the newly arrived 25th Infantry Division, continued to seek and destroy North Vietnamese units, and accelerate efforts to find and counter the Viet Cong support bases and training camps.⁴⁰ Since 1961, Military Assistance Command-Vietnam organized the Republic of Vietnam into four Corps Tactical Zones: Corps Tactical Zone I in the northern provinces and centered on Da Nang, Corps Tactical Zone II along the eastern coast of South Vietnam centered on Qui Nhon, Corps Tactical Zone III centered in and around Saigon, and Corps Tactical Zone IV on the southern coast of South Vietnam centered on Can Tho.⁴¹ Each Corps Tactical Zones grew in 1966 as the bulk of 385,000 U.S. forces flowed into Vietnam under President Johnson's solution to a deteriorating situation.⁴²

⁴⁰ Graham A. Cosmas, *MACV The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962-1967* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2006), 405.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Army doctrine in 1966 operated within the framework of the 1962 edition of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, which retained the same basic mission set as the 1954 post-Korean War edition, but included definitions for larger Army units as well as specific roles for each of the Army's branches.⁴³ Specific to the Military Police Corps, the 1962 edition of *Operations* cited basic missions as highway traffic control, stragglers, enemy prisoners of war, investigation of crime, and the control of individuals and military prisoners. These were mostly unchanged since World War II and not reflective of the complex non-contiguous environment in South Vietnam.⁴⁴ Of these missions, each impacts the ability to protect friendly centers of gravity, promote operational reach through the preservation of momentum, and help combat units maintain tempo.

In 1966, Military Assistance Command-Vietnam focused the divisions and combat brigades on search and destroy missions and General Westmoreland continued to push an offensive attrition strategy.⁴⁵ The 18th Military Police Brigade would support these operations by securing key main supply routes such as Highway One and enabling the smooth flow of new units from the port staging areas into their Corps Tactical Zone areas of responsibility. Military police units operated within the framework of the 1959 edition of Field Manual 19-5, *The Military Policeman*, based on the then-current 1954 edition of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. The major functions of circulation control and securing installations would scope military police operational level support to all four South Vietnam corps tactical zones from 1966 to 1969, especially in and around Saigon in Corps Tactical Zone III and as direct combat support in Corps Tactical Zones I and II.⁴⁶

⁴³ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1962), 56, 69. Army missions were categorized as offensive, defensive, retrograde, and special operations.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 180.

⁴⁶ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 19-5 The Military Policeman* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1959), 5. There were nine core military police functions: discipline law and order of Army units, crime prevention and investigation, handling of military prisoners, conducting traffic control, apprehension of military absentees, circulation control of individuals, handing enemy prisoners of war, securing installations and operations, and fighting as infantry when required.

Department of the Army Message number 756636 dated 23 March 1966 provided the authority for the activation of the 18th Military Police Brigade.”⁴⁷ Prior to the brigade’s activation, the 89th Military Police Group supported each Corps Tactical Zone with one military police battalion with three-thousand one-hundred personnel, performing security of ports, vessels, and convoys and also performing traffic control and main supply route security.⁴⁸ The 18th Military Police Brigade assumed command and control of the 89th Military Police Group upon arrival in Vietnam on September 26, 1966, bringing with it the ability to centralize operations in the four Corps tactical zones in support of the theater and corps commanders throughout South Vietnam.⁴⁹ Concurrently with the assumption of responsibility by the 18th Military Police Brigade, the 16th Military Police Group also activated and assumed half of the corps tactical zones from 89th Military Police Group.⁵⁰ This command relationship would remain in place for the duration of the Vietnam War except for the addition of the Military Police Group (Criminal Investigation) Provisional needed to investigate the large amount of drug related and black market crimes present in United States Army-Vietnam.⁵¹

The 18th Military Police Brigade performed numerous direct support missions to the divisions flowing into Vietnam, enabling sea port de-embarkation activities, securing staging areas, and securing convoys and convoy routes. Operationally, the securing of arriving division trains ensured the protection of logistics centers of gravity for United States Army-Vietnam as well as promoting operational reach and tempo of operations within the four Corps Tactical Zones. These special support missions included: Operational Plans 65-67 (Operation *DUCK*), 63-67 (Operation *MEADOWLARK*), and 64-67 (Operation *WREN*), in which the brigade supported the personnel and equipment shipments and processing of 4th Infantry Division, 9th Infantry Division (Republic of Korea), and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

⁴⁷ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, HQ, 18th Military Police Brigade* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1967), 2.

⁴⁸ Department of the Army, *Operational Report on Lessons Learned for Period 1 May to 31 July 1966, 89th Military Police Group* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1966), 11.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁰ Department of the Army, *Operational Report - Lessons Learned, HQ, 504th Military Police Battalion (Army)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1966), 3.

⁵¹ Department of the Army, *Operational Report for MP Group (CI) Prov for Period Ending 31 July 1968 RCS CSFUR-65 (RI)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1966), 4. Summary of this report for the first half of 1968 shows over 900 CID cases initiated during this period with the three biggest categories as drug crimes, diversion of U.S. property, and black market activities. The provisional CID group conducted over 60 joint raids with Republic of Vietnam police forces during this period.

through port security, route security, and traffic control points between September and December 1966.⁵² Additionally, the 18th Military Police Brigade assumed United States military prisoner operations as well as the enemy prisoner of war mission for all of South Vietnam.⁵³ The brigade also provided criminal investigators and military working dogs performing sentry guard duty around major installations and facilities, and formed relationships with United States Air Force security forces, United States Navy military police, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces military police, and the Vietnamese National Police.

The brigade received and integrated new military police battalions and separate companies during its first year in Vietnam, arrayed within two military police groups each covering two Corps Tactical Zones.⁵⁴ The 720th Military Police Battalion, integrated into Corps Tactical Zone II, relieved military police platoons and squads desperately providing support to areas such as Bien Hoe and Xuan Loc. The battalion's missions in Corps Tactical Zone II, like the rest of the 18th Military Police Brigade, included control of traffic and stragglers, protection of property, route and convoy security, rural pacification, and provide a rapid reaction force.⁵⁵ Of note the 720th maintained responsibility for operating the rural pacification program in a small area of Corps Tactical Zone II. This directly contributed to the pacification program through the stability mechanisms of control and influence. Additionally, this prevented culmination of the pacification line of effort in Corps Tactical Zone II.

⁵² Department of the Army, *Operational – Report – Lessons Learned, HQ 18th Military Police Brigade*, 12-13. This is a summary of key 1966 missions performed by the 18th Military Police Brigade: 1) OPLAN 78-66, Operation *ROBIN*: provide port and shipping security for reception of 4th Infantry Division; OPLAN 61-67, Operation *STABLE*: provide convoy and route security for movement of 9th Infantry Division (Republic of Korea) into Dong ba Then; OPLAN 63-67, Operation *MEADOWLARK*: provide convoy and route security and traffic control for movement of 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment into Loh Binh; OPLAN 64-67, Operation *WREN*: provide convoy and route security for Phillippion Civic Action Group Vietnam to Tay Ninh; OPLAN 65-67, Operation *DUCK*: movement of 9th Infantry Division into Boar Cat. The Brigade also assumed responsibility for US prisoner of war program on 26 September 1966.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁴ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 16th Military Police Group, Period ending 30 April 1970* (Washington D.C: Department of the Army, 1970), 5. Due to the span of area and number of military police battalions and separate companies, the brigade used the 16th Military Police Group and the 89th Military Police Group to support two Corps Tactical Zones each. The 16th Military Police Group provided support to Corps Tactical Zones I and II with the 720th Military Police Battalion, the 97th Military Police Battalion, and the 504th Military Police Battalion. The 89th Military Police Group provided the same support in Corps Tactical Zones III and IV with the 92nd Military Police Battalion, the 95th Military Police Battalion, and the 716th Military Police Battalion.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

Throughout 1966 and 1967, military police units in Vietnam continued to focus on a mission set and functions that were generally unchanged since World War II. This mission set expanded to supporting 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) in Operation *PERSHING* along Highway One, 1st Infantry Division and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment near Dau Tieng, and in a United States Army-Vietnam mission into Laos, Operation *CONDOR*.⁵⁶ In each of these operations, military police provided protection to logistical centers of gravity; enhanced mobility to ensure the operational approach; and performed stability mechanisms in certain areas. As the 18th Military Police Brigade expanded, the need for convoy and route security continued to grow and the brigade provided support to replacement units, personnel movements, and to combat operations throughout 1967.

That all changed in January 1968 with the launch of the communist forces' offensive during Tet, a turning point for the United States Army in Vietnam. An important note for the synchronization of United States Army-Vietnam military police support, investigative support, and military working dog support was the dual role the Commander, 18th Military Police Brigade played as the Provost Marshal, United States Army-Vietnam. This relationship allowed the brigade commander great flexibility as the owner of military police forces and the senior advisor to the commanding general. This enabled synchronization across the four Corps Tactical Zones specifically in convoy protection and combined police operations. Within operational art, this relationship supported the application of stability mechanisms in all four Corps Tactical Zones which complimented the United States Army-Vietnam's operational approach.

At the beginning of 1968, the 18th Military Police Brigade commanded a total of two groups with seven military police battalions, the provisional criminal investigation group, seven infantry companies, a water transportation company, and independent sentry dog companies.⁵⁷ United States Army-Vietnam supported the brigade with two rotary wing assets for command and control, route reconnaissance surveillance, route security, convoy control, and criminal investigation activities along with the seven

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11-13. Support to Operation *CONDOR* was convoy escort and traffic control.

⁵⁷ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period Ending 31 July 1968* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1968), 22.

infantry companies for static security of key installations and depots.⁵⁸ At the operational level, the Army totaled over 497,000 troops in South Vietnam and General Westmoreland continued to push offensive actions against the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong.⁵⁹ Specifically, General Westmoreland saw progress in the escalating engagements against Communist forces in the north and the continued growth of security in the South Vietnam hamlets through the rural pacification of 1967.⁶⁰ The 18th Military Police Brigade continued to work with the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces military police and the Vietnamese National Police to combat black marketing of American products and the use and trafficking of narcotics. Operationally, this combined police effort used the stability mechanisms of control and influence and preserved operational reach for all four Corps Tactical Zones.

The Tet Offensive of 1968 began with attacks throughout thirty-six of South Vietnam's forty-four provincial capitals to include major South Vietnamese population centers such as Saigon and Hue with a combined Viet Cong and North Vietnamese force of 84,000.⁶¹ The 716th Military Police Battalion fought from 30 January to 2 February throughout Saigon against up to two-thousand Vietnamese regulars. Combat around the American Embassy, Bachelor Officer Quarters #1, and the Phu Tho Race Track resulted in ten military police killed and over fifty-six wounded in action.⁶² Throughout the Republic of Vietnam, military police fought alongside regular combat units until the Tet offensive ended on February 11, 1968.⁶³ As a result of the actions in and around Saigon during the Tet offensive, the military police corps was designated a combat support branch of the Army effective October 14, 1968, after an endorsement from the Commanding General, United States Army-Vietnam.⁶⁴ The Tet Offensive

⁵⁸ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period Ending 31 July 1968* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1968), 12 and 19.

⁵⁹ Graham A. Cosmos, *MACV The Joint Command in the Years of Withdrawal, 1968-1973* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2006), 10.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶² Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period Ending 31 July 1968*, 5 and 9.

⁶³ Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 239. Reference is to 11 February 1968 Tet Offensive end date.

⁶⁴ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period Ending 31 July 1968*, 12. The commander 18th Military Police Brigade forwarded a letter to the Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam in early 1968, who approved the request and sent to the Department of the Army with a focus on improving the Brigade's field priority for equipment and to improving MP capability in Vietnam.

demonstrated the ability of military police to prevent culmination, conduct combined arms maneuver, and prevent the degradation of stability mechanisms in urban centers.

The 18th Military Police Brigade continued to provide military police support to the “Free Forces” in 1968 and expanded the joint interoperability with the Vietnamese National Police and the Army of Vietnam Military Police through the “Combined Police Agreement.”⁶⁵ This combined police agreement was a direct result of the successful application of stability mechanisms in all major population centers. The brigade also orchestrated the conversion of the provisional military police group into the 8th Military Police Group (Criminal Investigative) to deal with narcotic and black market crime in South Vietnam.⁶⁶ The brigade maintained a tactical area of responsibility adjacent to Long Binh Post as well as a fifty-soldier military police response force to defend the installation and respond to stockade civil disturbances.⁶⁷ The activities of 1968, especially the establishment of the Military Police Corps as a combat support branch, and the various tactical actions by military police units, drove the emergence of new military police doctrine. *The Military Policeman*, revised in 1969, reflected the Vietnam experience of military police units, especially in the Tet Offensive. The mission of the military police corps, as outlined in the 1969 edition of Field Manual 19-5, was “to support all elements of the Army and the Department of Defense, as required, in the maintenance of discipline, law and order and in support of combat operations.”⁶⁸ This demonstrates the doctrinal role of military police to support Army operational art and the Army Operating Concept.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 12. The Combined Police Agreement was the first trilateral agreement between the major police agencies within Vietnam and specifically focused on the collection and sharing of police intelligence and the conduct of joint police operations such as investigations and raids.

⁶⁶ Department of the Army, *Operational Report for MP Group (CI) Prov for Period Ending 31 July 1968 RCS CSFUR-65 (RI)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1966), 7.

⁶⁷ Department of the Army, *Operational Report, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period ending 31 January 1969* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1969), 12 and 14.

⁶⁸ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 19-5 The Military Policeman* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1969), 6. There were eight functional military police missions in the 1969 edition of FM 19-5: discipline, law, and order, traffic control, civil disturbances, confinement and correctional treatment of prisoners, prisoners of war and civilian internees, prevention and investigation of crime, physical security, and rear area protection. It was the last functional area, rear area operations, which military police brigades performed with vigor in all four Vietnam corps tactical zones. This reduction in functional missions from nine in the 1959 edition of Field Manual 19-5 to eight in the 1969 edition demonstrates the further codification of military police missions during Vietnam, especially after the intense combat of the Tet offensive.

In 1969, the 18th Military Police Brigade continued its 1968 mission set as the overall reduction in American combat units began as President Nixon exerted his new Vietnam policy. The 18th Military Police Brigade tested the experimental XM-706 wheeled armored vehicle in convoy and route security missions to improve firepower and survivability of critical convoy movements in Vietnam.⁶⁹ In Thailand, brigade units worked with United States Air Force security force personnel to secure air force interests through joint patrolling and policing of surrounding areas.⁷⁰ LTG Mildren, Deputy Commanding General, United States Army-Vietnam, highlighted the importance of military police in the command's drug suppression program.⁷¹ This program applied stability mechanisms and the protection of combat power to preserve momentum throughout all four Corps Tactical Zones through education and enforcement. In sum, 1969 was a transition year for the 18th Military Police Brigade as military police took an ever increasing combat role in securing installations, ports, and main supply routes in all four military regions (Corps Tactical Zones) as American combat units began to withdraw out of Vietnam. These tasks supported operational tempo, simultaneity and by enabling constant US presence in key areas throughout South Vietnam, the brigade continued to perform stability mechanisms in conjunction with Vietnamese police forces.

In 1970 and 1971, the 18th Military Police Brigade supported the withdrawal of American combat forces out of Vietnam. The 97th Military Police Battalion and the 93rd Military Police Battalion refined the convoy escort methodology on key routes such as Highway One, recommending an increase of mobile V100 armored car patrols rather than fixed escorts to counter an increase in ambush and mining activity.⁷² This concept of mobile highway patrolling vice escorting convoys would surface again in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 to 2005, an enduring methodology for protecting logistical centers of gravity and preserving tempo. Elsewhere, anti-United States demonstrations in cities such as Qui Nhon escalated and

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁰ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 40th Military Police Battalion, Period Ending 31 October 1969* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1970), 8.

⁷¹ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Frank T. Mildren, DCG, US Army Vietnam for Period 22 June 1968 to 1 July 1970* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1970), 27.

⁷² Department of the Army, *Operational Reports. Lessons Learned, 97th MP BN, 93rd MP BN, for Period Ending 30 Apr 1971* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1972), 8.

military police units responded as part of the combined police effort to maintain order, a direct application of stability mechanisms of control and compel within the continuing operational approach of pacification.

A critical function military police units filled during the American troop withdrawal phase was providing security as the last element of a unit left theater. BG Wallace Witter, Commander 18th Military Police Brigade from January 1970 through June 1971, observed that “problems of security and discipline increase rapidly in the latter stages and the concentration of military police has proven essential.”⁷³ As the troop drawdown accelerated in 1971 and 1972, military police, both organic divisional units and elements from the 18th Military Police Brigade ensured the orderly movement of troops, equipment, and supplies out of South Vietnam. This preserved combat power to maintain momentum and sustained the operational tempo of the withdrawal.

In 1972, with most American ground combat forces withdrawn or in the process of withdrawal, the 18th Military Police Brigade continued with its general mission set of convoy security, route security, law and order, and installation protection. By providing area coverage across the four corps tactical zones / military regions, the brigade continued to enhance the ability of United States Army–Vietnam to wage its counter-insurgency campaign and transition the war to Republic of Vietnam forces.⁷⁴ The brigade expanded the Vietnamese National Police and the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Military Police, however, the lack of a binding agreement between the various law enforcement agencies continued to deter effective, coordinated action and cooperation. As ground forces continued to leave Vietnam and the remaining American units collapsed onto larger population centers, military police units performed installation security as the need for fluid combat reverted to Vietnamese forces.⁷⁵ Up to the last combined operation, military police executed stability mechanisms throughout South Vietnam, supported tempo and prevented culmination.

⁷³ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Wallace K. Wittwer, CG, 18th Military Police Brigade and Provost Marshal, USARV, Period 4 January 1970 thru 15 June 1971* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1971), 7.

⁷⁴ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Paul M. Timmerberg, Commander, 18th MP Brigade and Provost Marshal, Vietnam, 15 Jun 71 – 30 May 72* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Adjutant General., 1972), 6.

⁷⁵ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period Ending 31 Oct 72, RCS CSFOR-65(R3)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1974), 6.

In conclusion, the 18th Military Police Brigade performed a wide variety of mission sets during the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1972, and the scope and depth of these missions grew as Army and military police doctrine evolved to reflect operations in Vietnam and operational art. There are several important developments during the Vietnam War in the mission, organization, and roles of military police forces that support today's Army operating concept. First, the concept of geographically assigned military police forces developed in 1966 and allowed the 18th Military Police Brigade to provide minimum essential coverage to base camps and installations as forces drew down in 1971 and 1972.⁷⁶ Additionally, geographic coverage allowed military police battalion commanders to tailor response forces, resulting in combat support successes like those seen in Saigon in 1968. This geographic orientation continued as AirLand Battle developed and it applies to the Army operating concept's supporting idea to "operate decentralized."⁷⁷ It also allowed military police to properly coordinate and synchronize the stability mechanisms of pacification.

The second important development during the Vietnam War was another organizational one, the authorization and employment of the 18th Military Police Brigade as the senior military police headquarters supporting United States Army–Vietnam. This development in 1966 allowed for one commander to effectively plan, coordinate, and command all non-divisional military police in performing combined police operations, critical convoy and route security, and area military police support.⁷⁸ The Commander of the 18th Military Police Brigade was also designated the Provost Marshal, United States Army–Vietnam and this senior commander / senior advisor coordinated military police support across all four corps tactical zones. An important note was the designation of military police battalion commanders as provost marshals for each corps tactical zone / military region. This relationship allowed for vested interest in both military police tactical missions and law enforcement missions from the United States

⁷⁶ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Wallace K. Wittwer, CG, 18th Military Police Brigade and Provost Marshal, USARV, Period 4 January 1970 thru 15 June 1971*, 7.

⁷⁷ Training and Doctrine Command. *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 16.

⁷⁸ Department of the Army, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 18th Military Police Brigade, Period Ending 31 July 1968*, 22. This task organization shows the largest iteration of the 18th Military Police Brigade during the Vietnam War. The Brigade directly controlled three groups composed of seven military police battalions and separate companies and detachments.

Army–Vietnam command level down through each military region and correlates with combined arms maneuver as “a complementary and reinforcing manner to achieve physical, temporal, or psychological advantages over the enemy.”⁷⁹ Within operational art, this command arrangement not only supports stability mechanism in the operational approach but also helps maintain simultaneity and depth.

The third tendency of military police support that emerged during the Vietnam War was the critical operational function of convoy escort and route security.⁸⁰ In a non-contiguous environment found in Vietnam, the ability of heavily armed military police escorts to protect, guide, and react to enemy attacks on high priority personnel and equipment movements relieved the major combat units of the responsibility. As the war progressed, military police commanders began to shift away from escorting convoys with limited assets such as the V100 armored car to sectoring up routes and patrolling heavily, rendering assistance to any convoy under attack in a particular sector.⁸¹ This geographic method of providing route security re-emerged during 2004 in Operation Iraqi Freedom as attacks increased on logistical convoys south of Baghdad. As in World War II, military police provided precursor functions to the Army operating concept of wide area security during Vietnam, specifically in force and infrastructure protection. Operationally, this concept protected logistical centers of gravity, helped maintain tempo of operations, and allowed for greater operational reach across South Vietnam.

The final key military police tendency in the Vietnam War was the ability for the 18th Military Police Brigade to support both the pacification programs of Military Assistance Command–Vietnam and the expansion and professionalization of the Vietnamese National Police and the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Military Police. Combined police operations with both the National Police and Vietnamese Military Police resulted in “the number of combined police stations, checkpoints, and patrols greatly expanded.”⁸² According to Brigadier General Paul Timmerberg, the combined police operations “produced many favorable and highly effective results” which is a direct manifestation of effective

⁷⁹ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 14.

⁸⁰ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Paul M. Timmerberg, Commander, 18th MP Brigade and Provost Marshal, Vietnam, 15 Jun 71 – 30 May 72*, 11.

⁸¹ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Wallace K. Wittwer, CG, 18th Military Police Brigade and Provost Marshal, USARV, Period 4 January 1970 thru 15 June 1971*, 9.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 11.

stability mechanisms such as influence applied by a military police brigade.⁸³ This relationship between military police brigades and host nation police forces is a key one that resurfaced in Operation Iraqi Freedom and will continue to act as a bridging mechanism in future applications of the Army operating concept as part of conducting “effective transitions.”⁸⁴ Within operational art, this effort shaped stability mechanisms of control and influence as well as protecting friendly combat power to maintain momentum and thereby preserving operational reach.

The Military Police Brigade and Operational Art in Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003 to 2005.

As in World War II and Vietnam, certain operational tendencies emerged as part of the employment of military police brigades. First, the number of military police required for Operation Iraqi Freedom led to military brigades of immense scope and span of control. This helped synchronize operations and directly support stability mechanisms following the end of major combat operations as well as preserving logistical centers of gravity. Second, military police were once again critical in securing the coalition lines of communication, from Kuwait into southern Iraq and eventually north to Mosul, Iraq. This enabled operational reach during the invasion by preserving momentum and tempo and assisting with operations in depth. Third, military police quickly began re-establishing Iraq’s shattered local and provincial police forces. This entailed stability mechanisms of control, compel, and influence to support the operational approach and it also helped prevent culmination. Finally, the shortage of Army military police companies and battalions led the Army to using in-lieu of military police units and increasing the size of the active-duty military police force structure. This development shapes the capability of military police brigades to support the Army Operating Concept 2016-2028 and the elements of operational art.

⁸³ Department of the Army, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Paul M. Timmerberg, Commander, 18th MP Brigade and Provost Marshal, Vietnam, 15 Jun 71 – 30 May 72*, 10.

⁸⁴ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 19. Effective transitions are defined as operational adaptability.

“On March 17, 2003, President Bush issued a forty-eight-hour ultimatum for the regime of Saddam Hussein to relinquish power and leave Iraq.”⁸⁵ This proclamation marked the transition from a U.S. led effort to disarm Saddam Hussein’s regime by political will to an armed effort to forcibly remove Saddam Hussein from power and free the Iraqi people from tyranny. As Army and Marine forces flowed into Kuwait in 2003, the 18th Military Police Brigade supported V Corps. The 18th Military Police Brigade employed five military police battalions comprising over twenty-three military police companies and the 377th Theater Support Command employed two additional military police brigades performing theater support military police operations.⁸⁶ The total number of military police initially supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom was over ten-thousand four-hundred, a majority of the Army active duty, National Guard, and reserve military police corps.⁸⁷ The wide variety of missions performed during the first two years of Operation Iraqi Freedom interchanged well with protection in the Army’s operating concept. Collectively these military police brigades enabled operational reach through protecting friendly logistics nodes and ensuring operational tempo.

In the spring of 2003, the United States Army was operating under the full spectrum of operations construct as delineated in Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*. Within the 2001 edition *Operations*, full spectrum operations consisted of any combination of offensive, defensive, stability, or support operations that effected “joint, multinational, and interagency environments.”⁸⁸ The previous rendition of Army Operations was the 1993 edition of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, which delineated army operations as either war or operations other than war.⁸⁹ This change in Army operational methodology marked a review of the post-Cold War environment and a methodology reflecting a diverse range of less-than-war operations characterized by actions in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo in the 1990’s.

⁸⁵ Thomas Donnelly, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: A Strategic Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research: 2004), 22.

⁸⁶ Gregory Fontenot, E.G. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 476-477 and 486-487. Reference to the Combined Forces Land Component Command Order of Battle on 1 May 2003.

⁸⁷ David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era*. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 157.

⁸⁸ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), Paragraph 1-48.

⁸⁹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1993), 15.

Military police doctrine at the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom was Field Manual 3.19-4, *Military Police Leaders' Handbook*, published in 2002. This field manual delineated five battlefield missions for military police: maneuver and mobility support, area security, internment/resettlement, law and order, and police intelligence operations.⁹⁰ The previous edition of military police doctrine was the 1993 edition of Field Manual 19-4, *Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations*. This manual focused military police support to divisions, corps, and theater commanders by providing battlefield circulation control, conducting rear area security operations, and handling enemy prisoners of war across a wide range of collective tasks.⁹¹ As a precursor to the modern day police intelligence operations, which military police would play a critical part during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 1993 version of Field Manual 19-4 did address military police roles in “contributing to the rear area intelligence preparation of the battlefield.”⁹² This focus on rear area operations preserves combat power across the depth of the battlefield while generating combat power through stability mechanisms applied to the host nation population.

When the 18th Military Police Brigade began parallel planning with V Corps, the initial mission set required over fifty military police companies.⁹³ A large portion of the mission reflected the estimated number of Iraqi military enemy prisoners of war, which ranged from 18,200 to over 57,000 according to the Combined Forces Land Component Command G2 plans. The 377th Theater Support Command, with its two military police brigades and ten battalions, planned for long term detention of enemy prisoners of war.⁹⁴ The other major missions V Corps expected 18th Military Police Brigade to perform included “high-value asset security, area security operations, and main supply route regulation and enforcement.”⁹⁵ On 16 March 2003, when the V Corps Commander, LTG William S. Wallace, called for a commander’s conference with all division and brigade commanders, the 18th Military Police Brigade had only “two

⁹⁰ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.19-4 Military Police Leaders' Handbook* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 200), 1-2.

⁹¹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 19-4 Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1993), 47-48.

⁹² Ibid., Appendix G.

⁹³ Lesley Kipling and Ted Spain, “From Kuwait to Baghdad,” *Military Police: The Professional Bulletin*, (April 2004): 21.

⁹⁴ Fontenot, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom.*, 69.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 70.

military police companies with equipment, four military police companies without equipment, a mechanized infantry battalion, a battalion headquarters, and the brigade headquarters” readily available.⁹⁶ This is the task force the 18th Military Police Brigade began the way with, as the remainder of the military police battalions and companies arrived in Kuwait, quickly joining their battalions forward.⁹⁷ This small task force delimited the ability to fully support the elements of operational art, especially early stability mechanisms would prevented the goals of the V Corps Phase IV and Phase V operational approach in early 2003.

Thomas Donnelly identified the lack of military police units, with their modified table of organization and equipment allocation, on ground at the beginning of the Operation Iraqi Freedom as a strategic issue in a 2004 American Enterprise Institute assessment.⁹⁸ Donnelly reported that “military police...units were often pushed lower down the deployment schedule that normally acceptable to army doctrine” and this reflected the unique circumstances the 18th Military Police Brigade, as well as the other military police brigades in the 377th Theater Support Command, faced in the first three-months of Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁹⁹ This is denuded operational art at the theater level as the shortage of military police brigades initially deployed led to the culmination of Phase IV stability operations and this lack of Time-Phased Force Deployment List planning desynchronized the phase transition from Phase III to Phase IV. After the initial push to Baghdad, military police units continued to flow into Iraq, aligning with the 18th Military Police Brigade’s battalions from Mosul in the north, Baghdad in the center, and throughout southern Iraq, transitioning to stability mechanisms within the theater Phase IV operational approach.

During 2003 – 2005, Army military police secured Main Supply Route Tampa from Kuwait through Mosul and provided tactical communications to support convoy movements along that corridor, a

⁹⁶ Kipling, “From Kuwait to Baghdad,” 21

⁹⁷ Fontenot, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 70.

⁹⁸ Donnelly, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: A Strategic Assessment*, 45.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

critical function that enabled logistics movements to and from Kuwait into key locations within Iraq.¹⁰⁰ As early as April 2003, the 220th Military Police Brigade assumed responsibility for protecting convoys from Kuwait to Baghdad, specifically with the 504th Military Police Battalion.¹⁰¹ The battalion's area of responsibility for route security expanded north "from Convoy Support Center Scania to the intersection of Main Supply Route Tampa and Alternate Supply Route Jackson, south of Baghdad."¹⁰² This area, dubbed the triangle of death, is a sector south of Baghdad that Muqtada al-Sadr's Shia forces used in attacking coalition forces and convoys in 2004 and 2005.¹⁰³ Since the 504th Military Police Battalion's assumption of this area in May 2003, the intersection of Main Supply Route Tampa and Alternate Supply Route Jackson would require significant military police forces throughout 2003-2004 and into the first quarter of 2005. The military police focused on this area preserved the friendly logistics center of gravity (Baghdad) and enabled combat power to project in depth across Iraqi as opposed to committing forces to route security.

In the north, elements of the 18th Military Police Brigade supported the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq. The 503d Military Police Battalion (Airborne) provided training to Iraqi Police at the Mosul Police Training Academy and also provided direct law and order to the citizens of Mosul during the summer of 2003.¹⁰⁴ This was one of the first nationally recognized security force academies and required both influence and control from the battalion. In Baghdad, the 18th Military Police Brigade along with the 519th and 709th Military Police Battalions performed basic law and order and shaped the reconstruction of Iraq's shattered civilian police forces.¹⁰⁵ Again, this demonstrated military police brigades performing stability mechanisms, protecting friendly centers of gravity, and sustaining Phase IV operational tempo for V Corps. Also in Baghdad, the 800th Military Police Brigade, responsible

¹⁰⁰ Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-10, Joint Security Operations in Theater* (Washington, D.C: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), V-7.

¹⁰¹ John Voorhees and Adria Toth, "The Long Road to Baghdad: The 504th Military Police Battalion Secures the Iraqi Theater Main Supply Route," *Military Police: The Professional Bulletin*, (April 2004): 17.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰³ Associated Press, "Triangle of Death South of Baghdad," MSNBC, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6530940/ns/world_news-mideast/n_africa/ (accessed March 5, 2011).

¹⁰⁴ Coalition Provisional Authority, *A Historic Review of CPA Accomplishments* (Baghdad, Iraq: Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004), 16. Identifies the Mosul Public Service Academy, which the 156th Military Police Detachment, 503rd Military Police Battalion (Airborne) established in 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Kipling, "From Kuwait to Baghdad," 21-23.

for theater enemy prisoner of war operations during 2003, operated the Abu Ghraib Prison facility for enemy prisoners of war and other detained persons. This brigade also guarded anti-Iranian resistance group, the Mujahedin-e Khalq, north of Baghdad in Diyala province.¹⁰⁶ As a theater asset directly supporting V Corps, the 800th Military Police Brigade's complicated command and control situation contributed to the Abu Gharib prison scandal.¹⁰⁷ This was a negative influence stability mechanism and it curtailed tempo for V Corps during Phase IV operations.

Due to the sudden rise of insurgent activity in Fallujah in May 2003, V Corps tasked 18th Military Police Brigade to provide military police forces to Task Force Gauntlet, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.¹⁰⁸ This task force represented the first of many specific operations that military police supported throughout 2003-2005, more specifically, Army military police supporting 1st Marine Expeditionary Force due to an organic lack of military police capability. Aside from stability mechanisms of compel and control, these military police units also performed some defeat mechanisms within the various operational approaches. In the south, the 220th Military Police Brigade assumed responsibility for the security of logistics movements from Kuwait to Baghdad International Airport and Camp Victory as part of the 377th Theater Support Command.¹⁰⁹ This brigade ensured the safe and efficient movement of sustainment convoys and unit movements along Main Supply Route Tampa into the southern approaches of Baghdad, a responsibility that would transition to the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) in early 2004. This effort protected the friendly logistics center of gravity as well as ensured preservation of tempo and operational reach for the Corps.

The 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) and the 89th Military Police Brigade continued the work started by the 18th and 220th Military Police Brigades as III Corps assumed control from V Corps on

¹⁰⁶ Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 243 – 244.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁰⁸ John Hammond, "Military Police Operations in Fallujah," *Military Police: The Professional Bulletin* (April 2005): 8-12.

¹⁰⁹ Voorhees, "The Long Road to Baghdad: The 504th Military Police Battalion Secures the Iraqi Theater Main Supply Route," 2. As part of the 377th Theater Support Command, the 504th Military Police Battalion assumed control of Main Supply Route Tampa from Convoy Support Center Scania located in the Northern section of Babil Province to the Baghdad International Airport.

February 1, 2004.¹¹⁰ The 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) assumed control of military police forces in western Baghdad and those in southern Iraq and 89th Military Police Brigade assumed control of military police forces in eastern Baghdad and northern Iraq. Both brigades were responsible for a mixture of area security, route surveillance and enforcement, convoy security, critical site security, and enemy prisoner of war handling and detention. This general support relationship would continue into 2005, through the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi government on June 28, 2004 and through the Shia uprising in and south of Baghdad.¹¹¹ Enabling stability mechanisms such as the transfer of sovereignty, both military police brigades continued to support the operational approach and prevent culmination in 2004.

In preparation for the retaking of Fallujah in November 2004, Lieutenant General Richard F. Natonski, Commanding General of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, requested “an Army brigade with a military police battalion to help surround the city, block the forces, and protect our rear areas.”¹¹² III Corps assigned this task to the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) which provided two military police companies as part of the Army contribution to *Al Fajr (PHANTOM FURY)*.¹¹³ Elements of the brigade were critical in the securing the Marines’ lines of communication to Baghdad and Camp Victory, which demonstrated military police capabilities in protecting logistical centers of gravity as well as preserving operational tempo and reach. Upon completion of *PHANTOM FURY*, those military police units executed select stability mechanisms by assisting 1st MEF in establishing Iraqi Police stations.

The 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) also began the recruitment, training, and equipping of the newly authorized Iraqi Highway Patrol in the spring of 2004 to achieve a “MP type police capability” with “interlocking stations” that could provide “support, having freedom of maneuver for goods, service,

¹¹⁰ Wright, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005*, 625.

¹¹¹ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Iraq Timeline,” British Broadcasting Corporation, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/737483.stm (accessed February 27, 2011).

¹¹² LTG Richard Natonski, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team with Combat Studies Institute, 5 April 2007, transcript, Fort Leavenworth, KS, digital recording stored on CD-ROM at Combined Army Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 5.

¹¹³ Wright, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005*, 345. Reference is to *Al Fajr* rough composition of two mechanized battalions plus other Army units.

and people” along Iraq’s highways.¹¹⁴ This stability mechanism required brigade commander influence with various key leaders in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior to achieve Iraqi acceptance of their highway patrol. Throughout 2004, both the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) and the 89th Military Police Brigade continued to build the Iraqi Police Service through training and partnering and continued to provide key lines of communication and convoy security.¹¹⁵

The 18th Military Police Brigade replaced the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) in December 2004, experiencing an escalation of violence in 2005 and eventually, a corps-level shift to functional mission orientation for both military police brigades. January 30, 2005, marked Iraq’s first free election since Saddam Hussein rose to power as over 8 million Iraqis voted for a Shia-United Iraqi Alliance majority.¹¹⁶ This is another example of military police brigade support to stability mechanism of control and influence which supported III Corp’s operational approach. In the fall of 2005, the two Military Police brigades transitioned to functional roles, with the 18th Military Police Brigade forming Task Force 134 in charge of all detainee operations and the 49th Military Police Brigade performing all general support and Iraqi Police Service partnering.¹¹⁷ This continued performance of stability mechanisms during the transition and phasing is a key contribution to operational art.

In conclusion, there are several key tendencies that emerged during 2003-2005. These provided tactical and operational support to both the Corps and Multi-National Force–Iraq, is a result of sixty years of combat experience, and now readily supports the Army’s operating concept. First, all of the military police brigades deployed to Iraq commanded very large formations, ranging from three to six military police or infantry battalions. From an initial mission set of fifty military police companies, or over ten-thousand military policemen, the three military police brigades in 2003 also commanded infantry and

¹¹⁴ MAJ Jim Carlson, interview by Operational Leadership Experiences Project Team with Combat Studies Institute, transcript, 6.

¹¹⁵ Wright, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005*, 263. One of the major developments during 2004 was the Army’s practice of training National Guard Engineer, Armor, Cavalry, Artillery, and Air Defense Artillery units as military police to fill the large deficit in follow-on military police units to replace the initial set of military police battalions and companies.

¹¹⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Iraq Timeline,” British Broadcasting Corporation, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/737483.stm (accessed February 27, 2011).

¹¹⁷ Grace Edinboro, “The 49th Military Police Brigade in Iraq,” California State Military Department, <http://www.militarymuseum.org/GWOT49MPBde.html> (accessed 26 November, 2010).

armor attachments. This command and control capability allows for the co-creation of content and fits into the supporting idea of decentralized execution within the Army's operating concept as well as the "application of the elements of combat power in coordination with other military and civilian capabilities" of wide area security.¹¹⁸ Operationally, this allows military police brigades to synchronize stability mechanisms, maintain tempo, protect friendly centers of gravity, and enable operational reach.

Second, military police brigades operating in geographic areas of operation were operationally critical in securing lines of communication from Kuwait to Baghdad by allowing brigade combat teams freedom of maneuver. As in Vietnam, the military police brigades ensured logistical freedom of movement and protection of critical supply and personnel movements into Baghdad. The use of military police elements in specific line of communication protection for operations in Fallujah in 2004 also reinforces the robust combat capability of military police. This responsibility would continue until the fall of 2005 when the urgent need for detainee operations and Iraqi Police Service development would cause Multi-National Forces–Iraq to functionally orient the two military police brigades in theater. Military police brigades surfaced as critical frameworks in supporting and conducting wide area security for the greater force, at the operational and tactical levels of war. This in turn, freed up combat arms assets to conduct combined arms maneuver in Iraq as well as protecting US forces and the Iraqi population, which fits into the role of protection units within the Army operating concept. Military police brigades protect logistical centers of gravity and enable operations in depth with uninterrupted flow of supplies and units, supporting operational art for the Corps.

Third, military police units immediately began their key role in the resurrection of the Iraqi Police Services, and more specifically, the inception of the Iraqi Highway Patrol as a mechanism to secure Iraq's highways with military police like capabilities. Similar to the 18th Military Police Brigade in Vietnam, the unique capability of military police to conduct training and combined operations with host nation law enforcement is a critical function in Operation Iraqi Freedom. There are real limitations, however, especially in Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to Catherine Dale in the Congressional Research

¹¹⁸ Training and Doctrine Command. *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 14.

Report *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress*, military police “generally do not have the requisite policing skills and thus rely on collaboration with civilian International Police Advisors.”¹¹⁹ As the number of Civilian Police Advisory Training Team advisors were too few to effect police development outside of Baghdad, the military police brigade filled the that role and continued to do so well into 2009. The notion that military police are unable to properly rebuild a country’s civilian law enforcement structure are viable, however, the 2010 effort by the Provost Marshal General to conduct standardized, annual law enforcement certification will change this negative tendency. This fits into the Army operating concept of wide area security, specifically on protecting the population and setting conditions for political and strategic goals. Operationally, this demonstrates the ability of military police brigades to apply stability mechanisms as part of the Corp’s operational approach and prevent culmination during counter-insurgency campaigns.

Finally, the shortage of follow-on military police forces to replace the initial 2003 force structure in Operation Iraqi Freedom highlighted the important functions of military police companies, battalions, and brigades in Iraq. As shown in a 2008 Congressional Report for Congress, the Army will increase the military police force structure by fifty-eight companies by 2012.¹²⁰ This comes at a decrease in force structure from field artillery, air defense artillery, signal, armor, and some logistics units. This trend began in 2004 when the in-lieu of military police concept materialized due to a capacity shortfall in replacement military police units and continued well into 2006. By 2009, the number of military police companies and battalions achieved sufficiency for sustained rotations into Operation Iraqi Freedom. This increase in force structure will ensure availability of sufficient military police forces within the Army operating concepts of wide area security and combined maneuver in future operations. Operationally, the shortage of military police curtails operational tempo and reach as well as delaying implementation of synchronized stability mechanisms.

¹¹⁹ Catherine Dale, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Services, 2008), 19.

¹²⁰ Andrew Feickert, *Does the Army Need a Full-Spectrum Force or Specialized Units?* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 11.

The Military Police Brigade as a Bridge within Operational Art and the Army Operating Concept

What then is the future of the military police brigade within Operational Art and the Army Operating Concept for 2016 to 2028? The true value of the military police brigade stems from its ability to provide both technical expertise in the performance of military police missions and operations and enough requisite headquarters structure to command and control with little external augmentation. This fits into the Army Operating Concept of combined arms maneuver and wide area security as it assures freedom of movement, protects against level I and II threats, and supports intelligence developments for the co-creation of content. Additionally, protecting friendly centers of gravity, especially logistical frameworks and lines of communication as well as generating momentum for operational reach are two operational art components which military police brigades compliment.

In World War II, military police groups focused effort on rear area security and supporting operational art, as did the 18th Military Police Brigade in Vietnam and the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) in Operation Iraqi Freedom. These groups and brigades bridged the operational level of war to the tactical level of war, providing technical expertise and forces to Brigade Combat Team and Division Commanders and directly commanding military police forces to fulfill the Corps and Theater Commander's operational objectives. Due to this success, the military police brigade is an ideal bridging mechanism to help the Army move from a counter-insurgency focus to a more balanced full spectrum orientation, with specific focus on combined arms maneuver and wide area security, preserving freedom of action, exploiting success, and protecting "forces, populations, infrastructure, and activities."¹²¹ Operationally, military police brigades preserve friendly centers of gravity, generate momentum to support greater operational reach, perform stability mechanisms in all phases of a campaign, and are critical in setting conditions for the proper phasing and transitioning of campaign plans.

¹²¹ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, The Army Operating Concept 2016-2028*, 13 and 14.

In an almost parallel relationship to the military police groups during World War II, today's military police brigades are functional, echelon-above-corps organizations, expected to provide Corps and Theater commanders with technical expertise and command and control large military police formations as required. The ability for the military police brigade to move from host nation police support type missions within the stability spectrum to full combat operations against Level II size forces and back again, is unparalleled in the conventional Army force structure. As the Army transitions its focus on the combined arms maneuver, wide area security, and the co-creation of content, the military police brigade can help implement and orchestrate the changing foci. Each of these areas allow for the application of military police technical and organizational expertise without refocusing the military police corps on any one specific spectrum. This is the concern as the Army at large refocuses from conducting counter-insurgency operations to the full spectrum of operations.

Combined Arms Maneuver

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 *The Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, defines combined arms maneuver as “the application of the elements of combat power in a complementary and reinforcing manner to achieve physical, temporal, or psychological advantages over the enemy, preserve freedom of action, and exploit success.”¹²² Specifically to the functional element of protection, in which military police brigades play key roles, “combined arms maneuver depends on the ability to employ protection capabilities rapidly.”¹²³ TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-5 *The United States Army Functional Concept for Protection 2016-2028*, specifies seven supporting ideas for the concepts of combined arms maneuver and wide area security. These are 1) to operate decentralized, 2) conduct continuous reconnaissance, 3) conduct air-ground operations, 4) expand capabilities at tactical levels, 5) inform and influence populations, 6) conduct effective transitions, and 7) enhance unit cohesion.¹²⁴ Military police brigades

¹²² Ibid., 13.

¹²³ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-5, The United States Army Functional Concept for Protection 2016-2028* (Fort Monroe, VA: Department of the Army, 2010), 10.

¹²⁴ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016-2028*, 16.

support and conduct each of these within the overarching operating concepts of combined arms maneuver and wide area security. Within the elements of operational art, military police brigade support to combined arms maneuver focuses on protecting friendly centers of gravity and to generating momentum through logistical assurance which in turn increases operational reach.

Military police brigades, as shown in examples from the Vietnam War and Operation Iraqi Freedom, operated in a decentralized role. These decentralized operations allowed theater and corps commanders' maximum flexibility in the application of combat power to combined arms maneuver and ensured the application of military police functional expertise against the proper task and mission. Military police units participate in combined air-ground operations and help extend tactical level capabilities through direct fire power and military police specific skill set application. Through operations to protect the population and in working with host nation security forces, military police inform and influence local populations which also place these units in key positions to promote effective transitions.

During any full spectrum operation, the operational role of U.S. Army military police continues to focus on securing joint bases and lines of communications as codified in Joint Publication 3-10, *Joint Security Operations in Theater*.¹²⁵ Specific to offensive and defensive operations, the impetus is in retaining brigade combat teams for combat operations and using maneuver enhancement brigades and other brigade elements to ensure freedom of movement and lines of communication security. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 32nd Air and Missile Defense Command, supplemented by military police forces in Kuwait, conducted theater level force protection within the joint security area in Kuwait.¹²⁶ During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 377th Theater Support Command used two military police brigades for lines of communication security as well as theater detainee operations, however, serious synchronization difficulties emerged between corps and theater military police support. In Field Manual

¹²⁵ Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-10, Joint Security Operations in Theater* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), GL-16.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, II-2.

3-39, *Military Police Operations*, the military police command is a theater level (one per field army) organization capable of commanding and controlling three to five military police brigades.¹²⁷ This organization resulted from the desynchronized military police command and control in early Operation Iraqi Freedom and is a key resource for future large scale offensive or defensive operations.

Wide Area Security

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 defines wide area security as “the application of the elements of combat power in coordination with other military and civilian capabilities to deny the enemy positions of advantage; protect forces, populations, infrastructure, and activities; and consolidate tactical and operational gains to set conditions for achieving strategic and policy goals.”¹²⁸ Within the spectrum of stability operations, there are key functions specified in Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations*, which are specific to Army military police brigades. First, within the function of establishing civil control is the task of “support to law enforcement and police reform,” which military police groups and brigades demonstrated in World War II, Vietnam, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.¹²⁹ This entails military police brigades directly performing law enforcement and imposing civil control upon a country’s civilian population in concert with the host nation security forces. If those forces are absent or ineffective, then the military police brigades are able to enforce law upon the civil population as necessary to restore order. In terms of operational art, military police brigades provide subject matter expertise in the range of stability mechanisms through all phases of a campaign as well as ensuring tempo and simultaneity is capable in terms of host nation security forces.

Second, within the function of developing security forces, Army military police brigades develop law enforcement capability by “training and advising local police and establishing police stationing

¹²⁷ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-39, Military Police Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2010), B-3.

¹²⁸ Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, The Army Operating Concept 2016-2028*, 14.

¹²⁹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2010), 3-6.

operations."¹³⁰ Unlike other Army units, military police brigades possess a solid understanding in basic law enforcement techniques for both the basic patrolman and for smaller police stations. During Vietnam, military police brigades worked in unison with the Vietnamese National Police as part of the Combined Police agreement, which involved combined training of host nation law enforcement personnel. In post-conflict situations like Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004 and 2005, military police brigades employed organic skill sets to establish new Iraqi Police stations and in rehabilitating former regime police units. The limits of military police brigades are apparent when a host nation police force reaches maturity, and at that time, as in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the application of Department of State coordinated International Police Advisors supported by military police, help the host nation develop a comprehensive law enforcement structure, especially in large urban areas like Baghdad and Mosul. The implementation of the annual law-enforcement field training program will baseline all military police brigades and ensures stability and wide area security capability for the Army.

The Provost Marshal General directed the establishment of annual law enforcement training and certification program for all Army military police Soldiers (Master Sergeant and below) and officers (Captain and Lieutenants) in the spring of 2010.¹³¹ *Special Text 19-31B United States Army Military Police Field Training Manual* is the result and it sets forth a holistic training program that will encompass all military police brigades and military police personnel serving in other units throughout the active duty force. This training and certification program will ensure that all military police are well suited for performing garrison law enforcement but also in better performing stability mechanisms when working with host nation police forces. Due to the dispersed nature of garrison military police brigade force structure, military police brigades will execute training, readiness, and assessment of battalion field training programs across the force. Military police brigades will then apply these stability mechanisms to

¹³⁰ Ibid., 6-18.

¹³¹ Department of the Army, *Special Text 19-31B United States Army Military Police Field Training Manual* (Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri: U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010), 1-5 and 1-6. Goals and Objectives of the program explained.

achieve synergy in supporting wide area security and securing the host nation population while building up the host nation police force.

Conclusion

The organization, function, and role of the military police brigade evolved from its inception during the Vietnam War through Operation Iraqi Freedom in concert with the evolution of Army operations methodology. Within the elements of operational art, military police brigades perform and support the preservation of friendly centers of gravity, set end state conditions of stability operations, conduct stability mechanisms through all phases of a campaign, generate momentum to further operational reach, and help maintain tempo and simultaneity. This evolution revolved around the military police brigade's ability to task organize geographically oriented military police forces, perform critical lines of communication security, and execute combined police operations, to best meet the theater and corps commanders' needs. The unique combination of modular military police companies and battalions with the technical expertise of military police brigade staffs and commanders is an excellent bridging construct for the Army as it refocuses the force on the full spectrum of operations. Military police brigades allow brigade combat teams to focus on critical offensive-defensive-stability tasks without committing training time and resources for lines of communication security, convoy escort, and police training / operations. This allows the Army to quickly re-orient the force from the primacy of counter-insurgency to meeting the needs of the nation in the next two decades.

Specifically to the Army operating concept of combined arms maneuver and wide area security, military police brigades provide crucial linkages and functional mechanism to support ground commanders in all aspects of these two methodologies. These include 1) enabling maneuver forces by securing lines of communication and critical installations, 2) enabling maneuver forces by securing the host nation population, 3) conducting stability mechanisms by training and coaching host nation police forces, 4) commanding and controlling forces from theater to corps levels as required, and 5) by providing

military police specific skill sets to support stability mechanisms and wide area security through combined police operations. Military police brigades inherently support all aspects of the Army operating concept, both in combined arms maneuver and wide area security but also in all seven supporting ideas. Additionally, military police brigades are well suited to supporting joint and interagency operations which further support the Army operating concept as part of the joint force.

The military police brigade, beginning with its precursor the military police group, which helped shape and win World War II in both the European and Pacific Theaters of Operation as well as bringing success in the post-war occupations of Germany and Japan. In Vietnam, the military police brigade emerged as a part of the Army force structure as it planned, resourced, and executed tactical and operational level functions and missions that were instrumental in the conduct of that war. Finally, in Operation Iraqi Freedom, military police brigades again supported the tactical commanders and the operational commander throughout, conducting missions and functions that blend perfectly into the Army operating concepts of wide area security and combined arms maneuver which will continue throughout the next two decades of war fighting. The last sixty years of American war fighting built the military police brigade and now the military police brigade is ready and capable of bringing about a return to full spectrum operations within the Army operating concept 2016 to 2028.

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