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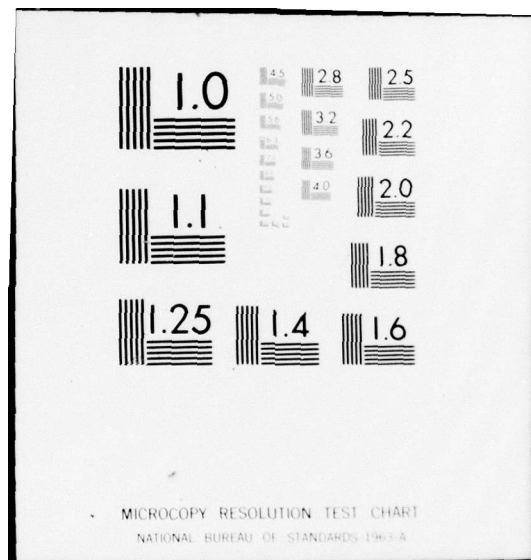
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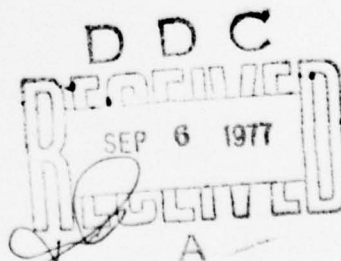
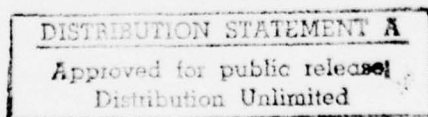
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ROLES OF THE MILITARY POLICE
IN BUILT-UP AREAS

A Student Study Project

by

Johnnie E. Wilson



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The unfortunate occurrence of World War I can be credited for the early establishment of the Military Police Corps. On 6 April 1917, the U.S. Congress formally declared war against the German Government. At the same time the Commander-in-Chief was authorized to temporarily increase the military establishment of the United States.¹ This act served as the authority for the eventual organization of a Military Police Corps. The prospects of American troops in Europe hastened the implementation of the Provost Marshal General's office and the Corps.

After studying the staff organization of the British and French Armies (11 July 1917), the War Department authorized a provisional police force of two companies and 208 men (aggregate). At the same time, Lieutenant Colonel Hanson E. Ely, Infantry, was selected as the first Provost Marshal General of the American Expeditionary Forces.² The principal instructions provided to the military police operating in urban centers on the continent was to "maintain discipline among members of the American Expeditionary Forces."³

The Provost Marshal General and the Military Police Corps were dismantled after World War I. As a result of World War II, however, the U.S. Army again reassessed its military might, and in 1942 the Military

¹ Jacob B. Lishchiner, "Origin of the Military Police," Military Affairs, Summer 1947.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Police Corps returned--to stay.

Since its birth, the Military Police Corps has undergone many changes in organization, numbers, and mission. Even today, one of the most pressing questions being discussed is that of the role of the military police in built-up areas. This paper discusses that particular question as it relates to the division military police company.

A recent review of FM 90-10 (Draft) (see Appendix 1) by the Concepts and Studies Division, U.S. Army Military Police School, resulted in the following missions being identified as appropriate for military police in built-up areas:⁴

A. Security

1. Provide security of MSR within AO
2. Provide convoy security
3. Provide security for critical areas/facilities/persons
4. Provide route reconnaissance

B. Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW) Operations

1. Provide temporary collection point for EPW
2. Assist in evacuation of EPW

C. Circulation Control

1. Provide control of stragglers
2. Provide refugee control
3. Provide traffic control
4. Provide control of civilian movement
5. Provide escort of convoys through congested areas

D. Police Information

1. Establish police information nets
2. Integrate with other United States intelligence sources

⁴MAJ Billy B. Pinkerton, "Military Operations in Built-Up Areas Study" (U.S. Army Military Police School, 7 January 1977).

E. Stability Operations

1. Provide advisory assistance to host country's military and civil police forces
2. Participate in cordon and search operations
3. Assist in civil disturbance control
4. Establish patrol areas and perform joint United States/host country police operations
5. Provide assistance to civil affairs operations
6. Support psychological operations

F. Provide for Temporary Internment of Civilians

G. Discipline, Law, and Order

1. Perform appropriate actions for crime prevention
2. Enforce military laws, orders, and regulations
3. Provide temporary detention of United States military prisoners
4. Conduct military police investigations

H. Tactical Operations

1. Provide defense of specified key terrain
2. Carry out cordon and search operations
3. Plan for military police assistance in defense of urban areas
4. Eliminate residual pockets of enemy resistance and sniper activity as required

This writer concurs with the above missions; however, an important point to consider is that accomplishment of many of the above missions will depend upon the task organization. This writer contends that, in most cases, the above missions may require a large portion of a TOE-sized company (ALO II, 172 personnel).

Another factor that may restrict the role of military police in built-up areas is their limited anti-armor capability (see Appendix 2). In illustrating this point, the situation that follows is hypothesized. If a small number of enemy armor were to be successful in infiltrating

the division's front lines during the night and then descend upon a built-up area predominated by the military police, chances are the area would quickly fall due to the lack of anti-armor firepower by the military police. TOE 19-027H authorizes a total of eight 90mm recoilless rifles (R96484), and its most current change at this time, Change 10, deletes the one recoilless rifle listed in company headquarters. This writer believes that a reduction in this area is a drastic mistake, especially in view of the varied functions delineated above for the military police.

In all probability the military police operating in built-up areas will be tasked to service enemy armor that may appear on the periphery. Seven recoilless rifles would not be able to adequately cover the circumference. Additionally, the small number would not allow massing the needed firepower at the required time. One must also consider the reliability of the weapon; that is, if a weapon is down for maintenance its capability is further degraded. The non-operationally ready status of an end item is further compounded by the type of repair required. It is difficult to identify a specific number of weapons for a unit; however, one might look at the assets available to an infantry company, which, of course, has a different mission.

An infantry company is authorized two TOWs, nine Dragons, an unlimited issue of LAWs, attachments from the combat support company, and normally an attached tank platoon. The reasons given for the large anti-armor arsenal authorized the infantry unit are its mission and the

expectation that it will encounter a large number of enemy armor. Also, Soviet doctrine dictates that Soviet armor avoids built-up areas. This writer contends that on occasions the Soviets are likely to be forced to deviate from doctrine. If that should occur, it may result in irreparable harm to the personnel being protected by an ill-equipped military police force. If the military police are to operate within a combat area, the U.S. Army has a commitment to ensure that they are properly equipped. Consequently, this writer believes a reevaluation of the firepower authorized for the military police should become one of the Army's high priorities.

Another potential role of the military police would be population control.⁵ American installations in western Europe are located within or are in close proximity to built-up areas. It is visualized that in times of alert the civilian community will be competing with the military for access of the highways/autobahns. If such a situation should arise, the local police may not have the assets to control the situation. Also, many of the local authorities may be more concerned with relocating their families from the threatened area than controlling the population. As a result, the United States military would have to assume control of the various highway arteries, thereby insuring free movement for military traffic. Also, coordinated effort by the military police would prevent an occurrence such as the one U.S. Forces

⁵ U.S. Army Military Police School, FM 19-4 (March 1976).

experienced during the infamous Battle of Schmidt, Germany (World War II). During this battle American units suffered countless casualties due to the uncontrolled traffic on the highways. This traffic prevented the reinforcements from moving through in a timely manner. If an element had been tasked to control the population and military movement, this unfortunate incident could have been averted.

At this point this writer would like to explore seven potential roles the military police may assume.

Provide assistance in security of logistical sites. In the past the Division Support Command elements have provided their own security by each element (maintenance, supply, and medical) assuming areas of responsibility. As the battlefield becomes more fluid, the demands for the logistical support will increase. We have adopted the concept of repair and supply as far forward as possible to support the battle. This will result in fewer people available for security missions. Consequently, someone has to fill the void, and presently the only capable element would be the military police.

Provide security of civilian and military health facilities. In the European environment most health facilities will be located within built-up areas. Capture or disruption of these facilities by the enemy would seriously impact upon morale and would serve to disrupt the community. In the past we have not tasked a specific element to provide security. However, in this era of ever-changing warfare doctrine, we

should consider this area as a possible role for the military police.

Provide security to communications sites. Due to its complexity, modern-day communications equipment is now deployed within built-up areas. The enemy realizes this and will take all measures necessary to disrupt our facilities. In the past these areas have been secured by the personnel assigned to the communications units. The "tooth-to-tail concept" has created some personnel problems in that the number of personnel previously available have been reduced. This means that the assigned personnel will be required to perform mission-related tasks and they will have to receive an augmentation to satisfy security requirements. As a result, a military police squad/platoon may have to assume the security mission.

Establishment of a civilian and military police net. A police intelligence net should be developed. This net would allow the military and civilian authorities to interface on such topics as drug sales, weapon thefts and sales, and any other illegal activity that may impact upon military operations. With this information the military would be able to place identified areas "off limits" and/or keep them under surveillance. Further, enemy spies/intelligence agents would probably be located in such areas. This would provide us the opportunity of communicating false information to the enemy command and control elements, thereby causing them to take actions favorable to our scheme of maneuver.

Provide pipeline security. Traditionally, the military police have provided security for the main supply routes (MSR) within their sectors. These MSR have always been identified as major highways. Doctrinally, most pipelines are laid parallel to the MSR. This writer contends that fuel requirements within a fluid battlefield will be such that traditional deployment of pipelines will not be responsive. If it takes six hours to lay pipeline to a particular point by following the MSR and three hours by laying it cross-country, it would be more responsive (logistically) to select the latter alternative. We, then, encounter a pipeline and service station security problem. We can safely assume that the enemy will list our pipelines among his highest priorities. As a result, we need to specifically assign the task of pipeline security to some element. The most feasible decision would be the military police because of their communications and vehicular mobility.

Provide interrogation capabilities. At present, prisoner interrogation is the responsibility of the military intelligence community. This means that all indigenous personnel detained by the military police are held or transported to a central area for interrogation. This creates "bottlenecks" within the intelligence chain and may prevent needed information from being processed in a timely manner. Besides, we have two elements involved when one could complete the job. Since the military police operate roadblocks/checkpoints throughout built-up areas and are the first element to come into contact with these subjects, this

writer proposes that they also assume the mission of prisoner interrogation. This would contribute immeasurably toward providing timely information that may impact upon our operational scheme. It would minimize the "bottleneck" that presently occurs and would assist the military intelligence personnel by identifying personnel who required extensive interrogation.

Assume the role of the cavalry. The fluidity of the battlefield on some occasions may prevent the cavalry from being available to perform certain missions. This would create a requirement for the role to be assumed by another element. For example, the requirement may be to screen or scout for an advancing or retrograding force. The tasks of a screen mission are (1) to provide early warning of enemy approach, (2) to gain and maintain enemy contact and report enemy activity, (3) to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance units, and (4) to impede or harass the enemy with long-range fire. All of these tasks are within the capability of military police forces. They have the weapons (machine-guns and 90mm recoilless rifles), communications, and vehicles. The only significant shortcoming is their lack of expertise in fire support coordination and their lack of training in this field. However, with the rapid requirements that will be confronted on the battlefield, a commander will have to use all available assets. This writer visualizes this as a potentially real situation and believes that the four tasks mentioned should be considered as roles for the military police.

In summary and conclusion, the military police, without a doubt, have the most complex and least defined missions of all branches. Since the birth of the Military Police Corps, the U.S. Army has been attempting to define the role of the military police in various environments. In this year, 1977, the Army is still defining their role. As stated earlier, the role of the military police in built-up areas is limited by task organization, numbers, and anti-armor firepower. As we continue to reorganize and redefine the missions of our combat elements, this writer believes that more tasks will become the concern of the Military Police Corps.

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