

Running head: THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY POLICE

The Role of the Military Police

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Outline

Topic: Military Police Role

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Thesis: Even though there is a perception that Military Police are trained more in law enforcement than in combat operations, Military Police should be used in combat operations because they move seamlessly from garrison to combat operations and Military Police are combat multipliers.

Opposing Thesis: Although they may perform an important role in combat operations, military police receive more training in law enforcement and therefore should not conduct combat operations. In addition, the Army already has training combat arms Soldiers performing raids

Military Police Role

I. Introduction

II. Historical perspective of combat successes-(SGM Robledo)

A. Vietnam

B. Iraq

III. Training -(MSG Cook)

A. The TRADOC MP

B. The Garrison MP

C. The Deployed MP

D. The Doctrinal Gap

IV. Detainee Operations (SGM Lawson)

A. Detainee operations

- B. Military Intelligence role
- C. MP Run DIV / Corp Holding Areas
- D. BN/BDE Holding Areas

V. Military Police lack the training for Direct Combat Missions-Opposition (MSG Kouneski)

- A. Combat Role
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- C. BNCOC and ANCOC Training, Skill Level 2,3,4
- D. Combat Arms

VIII. Conclusion

Abstract

Its no mistake that since the beginning of the Civil War the United States Army has activated the Military Police (MP) at the onset of every major conflict and deactivated it at the end of every major conflict up to the end of World War II. The inference is that the Army needs Military Police in Combat. Given that premise in 1942 Congress made the Military Police Corps a permanent branch in the U.S. Army. Their role in combat is clearly necessary as proven by their repeated successes conducting combat operations throughout a variety of theaters.

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This research paper addresses how the Military Police (MP) Corp conducts combat operations and is not limited to the combat support role of law enforcement only. The unique doctrine that allows the flexibility of the MP to transition from one role to another has made the Military Police Corps an invaluable asset to the Army throughout history since the inception of the Continental Army in the late 1700s.

We will discuss the reality that the Military Police are perhaps the most versatile military occupational specialty in the Army's inventory. They have the unique ability to transition from a garrison mission to combat operations in theater. We will examine how the MP Corps is enforcing the law in garrison as well as forward deployed, conducting direct combat operations in theater and training foreign national police organizations (Iraqi Police) simultaneously. The Military Police Corps is a proven combat multiplier. They bring exceptional skills and flexibility to the Combatant Commander.

In order to provide a complete and unbiased view we will provide a counterpoint to the idea of the evolving doctrine of the MP Corps. Understanding that the Military Police perform an important role in combat operations, military police receive more training in non-combat related tasks and therefore should be limited to combat support operations.

Throughout history inferior forces have faced and defeated great Armies on the battlefield with surprising success. In fact the Continental Army is the earliest example in American history of an insurgency using unconventional warfare against a superior enemy and succeeding in defeating that enemy. Defeating asymmetric warfare is nothing new to the United States, we faced in during the Civil War, the War of 1812 in the pursuit of Poncho Villa, the Indian Wars tracking Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, during Vietnam and most recently in the War on

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Terrorism. With asymmetric warfare comes a lack of a clearly defined enemy and a clearly defined line of battle. There is no forward line of own troops (FLOT) or forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). In a war where the enemy is everywhere and nowhere the need for mobile, lethal and agile forces has never been greater. The Military Police Corps is a force that offers those characteristics to a commander on the ground. Allowing Military Police to conduct combat operations would significantly enhance a commander's ability to neutralize an unconventional force that is employing tactics, techniques and procedures that are capable of mitigating the enormous advantages the U.S. has in personnel, firepower, and technology.

Conducting combat operations is not foreign to the MP Corps. On 20 October 1967 the 720th Military Police Battalion became the first MP unit to take control of a Tactical Area Of Responsibility (TAOR) in the Republic of Vietnam. Operation STABILIZE as it was known called on the MPs to use infantry tactics such as: patrolling, conducting ambushes, reconnaissance, using listening post/observation post (LP/OP) to secure a 22 square mile area of South Vietnam. Operation STABILIZE was an offensive operation which consisted of day time mounted patrols, night time dismounted movements to contact and ambush patrols. MPs from the 720th worked hand in hand with the indigenous population ensuring maximum cooperation from the local Vietnamese people. Operation STABILIZE proved to be a huge success for the Military Police Corps, by killing hundreds of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Soldiers, confiscating large weapons caches designed to further the insurgent effort in South Vietnam. This would not be the last combat success for the Military Police Corps (Young, p. 108).

At 1115 on 25 August 1968 in the vicinity of Tay Ninh city a convoy escorted by C Company, 720th Military Police Battalion was ambushed in a mile long kill zone. A ten hour battle ensued, NVA mortars pounded the 81 vehicle convoy from the beginning. For more than

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three hours C Company along with Soldiers from the 48th Transportation Group and the 25th Infantry MPs engaged what would later be identified as three NVA battalions. The enemy positions were well camouflaged along the side of the road and engaged the convoy with small arms fire, grenade and rockets and mortars. The ambush blocked 51 vehicles from passing through the ambush and after escorting the remaining 31 vehicles out of the kill zone the MPs returned to continue fighting the enemy. Additional support arrived in the form of tanks and armored personnel carriers and at 2120 that night contact was finally broken with the NVA. The death toll was reported as 96 enemy KIA, six U.S. KIA, 51 U.S. WIA. This is a clear example of the ability of the Military Police Corps to engage, maintain contact and destroy the enemy (Young, p. 115).

During the defense of Saigon the Military Police Corps would prove its mettle while conducting some of the fiercest urban combat to date. Not only did the MPs defend the U.S. Embassy from attack they were also heavily engaged in ten major battles throughout the city in a 24 hour period that would ultimately be the most devastating day in MP Corps history. Following the last major battle at the bachelor officers quarters the heroic actions of the 18th Military Police Brigade would result in the MPs being awarded one Distinguished Service Cross, one Silver Star, 89 Bronze Stars, 64 Army Commendation Medals and 71 Purple Hearts. The unit also received the Presidential Unit Citation. 27 Military Police lost their lives that day the most in a single day in the history of the MP Corps (Young, p. 125).

More recently the Military Police have again proven they are worthy of conducting combat operations in a theater of operations against an unconventional forces employing asymmetric strategies. In March 2005 two squads from the 617th Military Police Company, Kentucky National Guard was conducting convoy operations in the vicinity of Salmen Pak, just south of

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Baghdad, Iraq. After being attacked several days prior along the same route, the unit attached an additional squad to the convoy to shadow the convoy in the event they made contact with the enemy again. As the convoy proceeded up a major supply route (MSR) it came under enemy fire. The squad that was shadowing the convoy immediately responded to the gunfire, placing its vehicles between the civilian vehicles being escorted. As this was being done elements from the support squad began providing suppressive fire and maneuvering across the kill zone of the attack. Initially one of the vehicles was disabled by an RPG, however the gunner continued to provide a base of fire that allowed the remaining two vehicles to continue to move toward the direction of the enemy fire located in a trench line parallel to the MSR. Once the two vehicles reached the trench line the disabled vehicle lifted fire and disabled seven vehicles located to the rear of the trench line that were staged for use by the enemy to evacuate the area. As the two vehicles reached the trench line the MP's one team member engaged and killed a sniper from an adjacent building with an AT-4 rocket. The two teams then dismounted and began clearing the trench line using M4 rifles, M203 Grenade Launchers and M249 Squad Automatic Weapons. At one point while clearing the trench line SSG Nein and SGT Hester returned to their vehicle to get more ammunition and continue clearing the trench line. For their actions on that day the Squad known as RAVEN 42 received three silver stars, one being awarded to SGT Hester the first female to be awarded the country's third highest award for valor since World War II, three Bronze Stars with Valor, and an Army Commendation Medal with Valor. The death toll inflicted on the insurgents was 27 KIA, 6 WIA, and 1 captured along with hundreds of rounds of ammunition, numerous RPGs and rifles confiscated (Crisp, 2005).

While these examples of Military Police successes on the battlefield do not justify the MP Corps exclusively conducting combat operations. As most would agree that is better left for the

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Infantry and the Armor forces of the United States, there is a good argument to employ the Military Police in a capacity that compliments and augments our combat forces. With the ever changing and unpredictable wars our nations continues to engage and the unconventional tactics being using against our traditional elements allowing the Military Police to conduct combat operations can only improve our Army's ability to do what is designed to do, when called upon, fight and win our nations wars.

The role of the Military Police is constantly changing from typical law enforcement in order to meet the needs of the modern battlefield. This will affect the doctrinal training base and will compel the Military Police organization to re-structure, in order to meet current and future operational requirements. Today's Military Police (MP) unit is not only faced with the traditional role of law enforcement, but is also tasked with the arduous duty of training the indigenous police forces of Iraq.

Originally formed to police the rank and file of the U. S. Army and protect the rear areas from enemy operations, the role of the MP has grown in each conflict throughout history. As early as the organization of the Continental Army, the need for an organized law enforcement branch to reduce criminal activity, collect stragglers and control desertion was clearly necessary to maintain order and discipline. Additionally, the good sense to maintain a legitimate combat element in the rear area to guard against surprise attack made the concept of this organization a wise safeguard to potential catastrophe. These types of operations conducted by the MP Corp will continue to place MP units well within the possibility of contact with enemy forces and in a direct combat role.

The role of the Military Police unit is in a unique realm of military doctrine. The MP is tasked to enforce the law within its jurisdiction, yet must be prepared to conduct combat

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operations in theater. On today's modern battlefield, and especially involved in the Global War on Terror and fighting the insurgency in Iraq, the very nature of the MP duties places them in a potential combat scenario.

During the cold war, the Army's Airland Battle doctrine specified that the Military Police would be prepared to deal with small enemy units operating in the rear areas. This was based on the Soviet doctrine which relied upon small unit special operations to be conducted in rear areas. This meant that the MP unit conducting law enforcement needed to be trained and equipped to conduct deliberate combat operations. This drove the training doctrine of new soldiers as well as the leadership to be trained in both combat skills as well as their traditional and routine police duties.

Today, we see the MP on all levels of combat and combat support. Since the early years of the war in Iraq the MP has been involved in direct combat operations. On two occasions in Fallujah, 2003, the V Corp commander, with troops stretched thin, tasked the MPs with missions that are clearly combat operations in which the MP Corp is capable of performing. Tasked with two battalion sized operations and branded TF Gauntlet and Enforcer, the Military Police were involved in securing various rear areas. The Task Force Commander, LTC Hammond states, "My orders were to conduct unconventional military police operations in order to neutralize the organized criminal threat and the remaining Fedayeen Saddam and Baath Party forces operating in the region. This is conducted in conjunction with 3d ACR and 2d Brigade Spartans of the 3d Infantry Division." (p. 2) clearly this is not merely a combat support role. LTC Hammond's MP's were conducting combat patrols, direct action missions and developing actionable intelligence. Considering that LTC Hammond's soldiers were performing law enforcement duty back in garrison and are now conducting combat operations well beyond the doctrine of the

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Airland Battle doctrine, this example illustrates the broad range the MP is capable of. More importantly, the ability of this unit to quickly transition to a direct combat role provided the V Corp commander with a great combat multiplier.

As the situation in Iraq evolved, the necessity to establish law and order became evident throughout the country. The Iraqi police were corrupt, untrained, poorly equipped and unorganized; these issues are still obstacles today. The state in which the Iraqi Police (IP) was in, made it apparent the goals of the commanders in Iraq and the nation itself would never be able to bring about law and order without someone to intervene. There is no-one more suited for this task than the Military Police. The tasks became to train and equip the Iraqi Police in order to be able to establish self imposed law and order. In order to meet the demands of such a monumental task, the MP units began to organize the various IP into districts and train them. This placed small units of MPs into the insurgent filled operational realm and exposed to combat in the form of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and ambushes. The complexity of this endeavor is monumental in scope.

Although the role of the Military Police Corp is changing, it is a necessary role. To limit the MP to only combat support roles is unrealistic. The MP will become involved in a direct combat role simply by the nature of the battlefield. To assume to limit the capability of the MP is not only unrealistic; it would only serve to limit the Army as a whole.

As transformation is the hallmark of today's Army, we see the MP is an inherent component to the development of the Brigade Combat Teams or (BCT). As the conflict of today has brought about the evolution of doctrine, based upon insurgency and the Global war on Terror, we see the MP as an integral part of the BCT. The Brigade Combat Team has a forty man MP platoon as an organic element at the commander's disposal. This doctrinal

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improvement is a sound move toward units being able to conduct the operations that the BCT may be called upon to accomplish. Additionally, doing so serves to prove that the Military Police Corps is still relevant to the Army today.

In conclusion, the Military Police will always have a combat role. The unique niche that the MP fills will always be necessary. Ensuring that the MP unit is properly trained and equipped for both roles is important for the overall mission success of combatant commanders.

Military Police and their missions continue to evolve as the military's war on terrorism extends from year to year. We see this as it pertains to Somalia, and the current war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. History would have depicted them as a rear echelon element providing security to our Division/Corp and higher assets. Today, we see them in a multifaceted role. MP's provide security to convoy missions, security to our Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities (SCIF), law enforcement operations (writing tickets, enforcing laws) and providing command and control at Division and higher Detainee Facilities. MP's and Military Intelligence (MI) personnel continue to see a seamless interaction when it comes to detention facilities. Distinctive roles emplaced pertaining to MI and MP personnel can thwart another Abu Ghraib incident.

The Military Police (MP) and Military Intelligence (MI) can now define their roles as it pertains to Detainee Operations. The updated changes to FMI 3-19.40 specifically defines the senior military police officer's role as to how MP's provide command leadership from the Brigade, Division or Higher Detainee Facilities. The Senior Military Police Officer is the commander of operations at that level. The Brigade Holding Areas (BHAs) fall under the command of the Brigade commander with the attached MI Company's guidance. The BHA is

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comprised of Counter Intelligence (CI), Human Intelligence (HUMINT) personnel, along with a selected staff from within the battalions directly organic to the Brigade for which it supports.

Military police and military intelligence have fostered a new relationship over the past year. There was indecisiveness between the two branches as to what role, limitations, and command authority to which each had in reference to detainee operations. Policy and doctrine changes have evolved and a change to the publication of FMI 3-19.40 has been established. FMI 3-19.40 states the senior military police officer at each echelon will be in charge of all assets within the Initial Detainee Collection Point (IDCP), Detainee Holding Area (DHA), Theater Interment Facility. (TIF) or Strategic interment facility (SIF). All other assets (Military Intelligence, Medical Personnel etc.) will have a relationship through an operational control (OPCON) or tactical control (TACON). However, when it comes to Medical or Military Intelligence (MI) issues, Medics or MI will have the final say as to the importance of that detainees issue and its relevance.

Now with the documentation of specific duties and responsibilities written, (FM 3-19.40, 2007) another Abu Ghraib should not occur. The abuses incurred by detainees early on, in the War on Terrorism should not repeat it. The atrocities that occurred were a result of leadership, MI, and MP's not knowing the extent of their roles. An excerpt from the -15 conducted by MG Fay stated if both parties would have had a focus on their specific roles, Abu Ghraib might not of happened. With MI focusing specifically on their defined mission, they will conduct their interrogations and interpret raw intelligence into analyzed information to inform the commander and his/her troops of continuous operations on the battle field to save lives of our Soldiers. The main event that went wrong was no one was in charge. Civilian contractors, other agencies,

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MP's, and MI were all trying to run the operations. Even at one point, MP's were responsible for interrogations under the old regulations. But now with their specific roles of initially accepting Prisoners of War at transition points and being in charge of confinement operations along with the senior MP in charge of the facilities all will go smoothly.

Now with military documents in place, the success of military police regardless of where they are located will succeed. Guantanamo Bay, Cuba most commonly known as (GITMO) is the highest level of detainee facilities within the combat/national level operational arena. High Level detainees are kept there. GITMO is a fine example of how the new regulation FM 3-61.40 incorporates the roles and responsibilities. Military police are in control of the everyday operations of the facility along with known what all other agencies are accomplishing. With the military police commander in charge, there is one and only one person that will decide key factors of how the operations are accomplished. Now GITMO has had its own issues, but the regulation has been exercised and proven itself over and over again. Each agency by going through the military police commander will not be able to run rouge on its own or coerce other groups to do their bidding as with Abu Ghraib.

Therefore, you can see that although they play an important role in detainee operations, military police should not conduct interrogation operations or detention facility operations solely on their own for a couple of reasons. First, the military police a specific role in detainee operations in the security and welfare of the detainees and should focus solely on that mission. Second, the military police have complete oversight of the detainee operations and must know the roles that other MOS place in the operations also. The military intelligence, Army medical and chaplains also have an important role but will have the oversight of the military police to conduct their operations. With up to date doctrine and training measurements in place military

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police will continue to have operational success within the area of combat operations in whatever it is they do.

Throughout our history, Military Police have performed distinct missions. From the Revolutionary War through Operations Desert Storm/Shield their missions have been clearly supportive to the combat commander. Iraq and Afghanistan however, have posed unique challenges for the Military Police. Their clear and defined roles blur in the chaos of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) war. In spite of the chaos, the Military Police Corps has performed well. However, the argument is that although they may perform an important role in combat operations, military police receive more training in non-combat related tasks and therefore should not conduct combat operations. In addition, the Army already has trained combat arms Soldiers to perform these functions.

The Military Police (MP) can trace its beginnings back to the Revolutionary War. Even in our earliest times, Commanders found the need to have law and order within their ranks. The earliest appointment of some form of law enforcement agent was the Provost Marshall. General Washington recognized the need for this and appointed Bartholomew Von Heer as the Continental Army's first Provost Marshall (Wright, 1992). The role of the Provost Marshall was three-fold. First, he was to hold fugitives and arrest criminals. Second, they would safeguard against deserters and control stragglers. Finally, they had the responsibility to guard the rear from attack (Wright, 1992). During the civil war, their role maintained constant with the addition of performing certain control functions against the civilian populace (Wright, 1992). These changes, although subtle were shaping the military police roles and adapting them to the operations on the ground. During World War I, the Military Police would see their role increase once again. This time the Army would add traffic control, area security, temporary prisoner-of-

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war (POW) camps, and their transportation to such camps (Wright, 1992). It was not until 25 September 1941 that the Army established the Military Police Corps as a permanent branch (Wright, 1992). Their duties were things such as traffic control, investigating crimes, maintain order, POW operations, rear area security, and fighting hostile airborne Soldiers when combat troops were not available (Wright, 1992). Then, historically speaking you have the comparison of our modern day wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to Vietnam. In Vietnam, there were no clearly defined rear areas. The Vietnamese made convoys a target. Wright (1992) argues the military police saw direct combat and direct combat support roles for the first time. Today however, things are much different for the military policeman. Bell (2004) argues that the role of the military police Soldier has moved from security of the rear areas to direct combat operations. This change is a result of the operational environment and not reflected in today's doctrine. The Military Police have five basic functions. They are maneuver and mobility support (MMS), area security (AS), internment and resettlement (I/R), law and order (L&O), and police intelligence operations (PIO) (FM 3-19.1, 2001). These functions enhance the commanders' ability to perform full spectrum military operations (FM 3-19.1, 2001).

The question is not with the Military Police Soldier effectively performing its doctrinal role. What is in question is the fact that the Army has combat arms Soldiers that are performing these tasks. The Army's inventory contains the following combat arms branches: Air Defense Artillery (ADA), Armored Cavalry (AR, CAV), Aviation (AV), Engineers (EN), Field Artillery (FA), Infantry (IN), and Special Forces (SF). The primary tool in which the army fights in close combat is the infantry Soldier. The Army is currently in a state of flux known as Transformation. The Brigade Combat Team (BCT) is the organization that the Army developed. It is the BCT's fundamental role is to locate and destroy any enemy of the United States (FM 3-90.6, August

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2006). The concept of the BCT also encompasses Urban Operations like the ones currently conducted in Iraq. According to FM 3-90.6 (2006) “The BCT operates as a combined arms organization with infantry forces in combination with mounted forces providing fires and shock effect to defeat the enemy and his will to resist” (p. 9-1). This concept is important. Our fundamental doctrine provides specific functions or roles within the BCT. As you can plainly see, combat arms Soldiers have a direct combat role not the Military Police.

In this fast paced and ever changing environment, we call the War on Terrorism; the challenge is training our Soldiers. The military policeman at skill level 1 currently is required to know 14 tasks. Of these 14 only 3 or 21% are direct combat related (STP 19-95B1-SM, January 2003). The other eight tasks focus on their five functional roles as discussed earlier. This trend does not improve with rank. Soldiers in the rank of Sergeant-Sergeant First Class experience similar pitfalls (STP 19-31B24-SM-TG, February 2007). The question then becomes; does this have any effect on the ground? Does a MP feel any negative effects due to the inadequate combat training? Our military police units are training the Iraqi Police. Doctrinally MPs have the skills to do that. (FM 3-19.1, 2001). The problem is although the MPs are training the Iraqi Police it is in law enforcement not military tactics. This exposes the MPs because the enemy targets the Iraqi Police. Additionally, their role is in law enforcement and the Iraqi Army performs the military mission. The Iraqi Police Force restores law and order it does not perform combat operations. Terrorists target and engage our military police in direct combat by virtue of the attacks on the Iraqi Police Force. Direct Combat is not the role of the Military Police Corps nor do they receive the proper training as previously stated.

Therefore, you can see that although they play an important role in combat, military police should not conduct combat operations for two main reasons. First, the Army already has combat

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arms Soldiers performing these functions. However, most importantly military police receive more training in non-combat related tasks. The Military Police have been performing important roles for our nation since the Revolutionary War. These roles have traditionally been in a combat supportive role of the Commander. However, the chaotic battleground of Iraq has caused concern over their current use. Consequently, it is paramount that the Army relook the mission of the Military Police Corps and update doctrine and training to ensure their continued success.

In conclusion, the Military Police Corps will always have a combat role. The unique niche that the MP fills will always be necessary. Ensuring that the MP units is properly trained and equipped for garrison and combat roles is important for the overall mission success of combatant commanders.

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