

Organizing and Training the Military Police for the Global War on Terrorism

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***Organizing and Training the Military Police
for the Global War on Terrorism***

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Since the catastrophic events of September 2001, the Marine Corps has been thrust into a new kind of warfare—the global war on terrorism (GWOT). The Marine Corps’ involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) are examples of this new kind of warfare. Such operations will be increasingly characterized by a transition from major combat operations to stability and support operations (SASO). In the SASO environment, unique threats emerge that demand a focus on rear area operations across the non-contiguous battlespace. In SASO operations, the old concept of an easily identified rear area no longer exists necessitating a major change to military police organization. The current garrison-centric approach to organizing and training military police units will have to undergo a major overhaul if the military police are truly to become a “MAGTF force multiplier.”¹

Marine Corps and joint doctrine identifies rear area operations functions as the following: security, communications, intelligence, sustainment, area management, movements, infrastructure development, and host-nation support.² The first function is security, the all-important force protection element that enables the other functions to occur. Military police, which provide and support the gamut of security operations, are

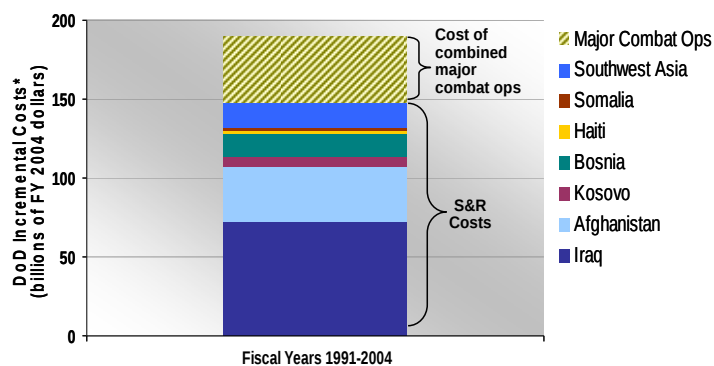
¹ *Military Police in Support of the MAGTF* (MCWP 3-34.1). HQMC, Washington D.C., 2000: 1-1.

² *Rear Area Operations* (MCWP 3-41.1). HQMC, Washington, D.C., 2000: 1-2.

a key ingredient in rear area operations. All five of the following military police missions are critical in the SASO environment: support for anti-terrorism/force protection (AT/FP) operations; maneuver and mobility support operations (MMSO); area security operations; law and order operations; and internment operations.³

As a direct result of lessons learned in current operations, the Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study focused on “the transition to and from hostilities”⁴—those operations that occur before and after major combat operations. One significant conclusion was that “[t]omorrow’s force (active and reserve components) needs a much stronger set of capabilities directed toward stabilization and reconstruction...”⁵ In the

Table 1
Costs of DOD Operations



Source: Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities, August 2004

same study, an analysis was conducted comparing the costs of major combat operations and the costs of stability and reconstruction from 1991 to 2004 (Table 1).⁶

³ *Military Police in Support of the MAGTF (MCWP 3-34.1)*. HQMC, Washington D.C., 2000: 1-1.

⁴ Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities, August 2004.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities, August 2004.

ORGANIZING THE MILITARY POLICE

Since SASO operations consume more resources than major combat operations, it follows that the focus of effort for organizing and training military police personnel should be weighted similarly.

Each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) has a battalion's worth of MPs; however, the MP units are organized differently in each of the three Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs). In I MEF, there is an MP company with the 1st Marine Division, an MP company with the 1st Force Service Support Group (FSSG), and an MP platoon belonging to each of the four Marine wing support squadrons (MWSS) within the wing. All of the MWSS MPs are on loan to the base for garrison law enforcement through the Fleet Assistance Program (FAP).⁷ When the MWSS deploys to conduct aviation ground support operations, it must do so without the benefit of its organic security element—the military police.

In II MEF, the long awaited Proof of Concept Test (POCT)⁸ is in mid stride to evaluate the benefit of consolidating all the MPs into a single battalion. Even with the consolidation, the battalion contains only two manned line companies (Alpha and

⁷ Jan Durham and Bill Weber. *Operating Forces Military Police Organizational Validation*: Operational Advisory Group (OAG) Presentation, November 2003.

⁸ The POCT to evaluate the utility of consolidating II MEF MPs into a single battalion has been extended through OIF III

Bravo).⁹ Charlie company exists on paper only. The shortfall in personnel required to perform the battalion's mission in support of OIF II is being compensated with provisional MPs from other MOSs within the reserve establishment.¹⁰

Finally, III MEF has an MP company in the 3rd Marine Division, an MP company in the 2d Force Service Support Group (FSSG), and an MP platoon in each of the two Marine wing support squadrons (MWSS). All III MEF MP personnel are FAP'd to their respective installations for garrison law enforcement.¹¹ Since all the organic MPs are on loan to the installation commanders, deploying units must either leave their MPs behind, or pull them back leaving the installations without a security force.

Given the current and projected type and tempo of operations, the focus for all MPs must necessarily shift from garrison law enforcement to support the forward-deployed Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) engaged in the global war on terrorism (GWOT). This can only be accomplished if someone else performs the garrison law enforcement mission. LtGen Hailston's (MarCent) assessment of the 2d MP Battalion during OIF included the following: "There may not be enough MPs to meet the needs of

⁹ Capt Todd Gillingham. Interview by author. January 3, 2005. Capt Gillingham is currently serving as the Operations Officer, 2d MP Bn, 2d FSSG, Camp Lejeune, NC.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Jan Durham and Bill Webber. *Operating Forces Military Police* Organizational Validation: Operational Advisory Group (OAG) Presentation, November 2003.

a deployed MEF, depending on the war. The MP Bn command structure works and is critical for operation level support.”¹²

According to Security and Law Enforcement Branch (HQMC), a personnel realignment project to correct the imbalance is in progress. The project includes an initiative to civilianize certain installation security functions.¹³ According to Major Daniel O’Connor, Provost Marshal for Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Albany, his base will be the first to see this change once implemented. Along with MCLB Albany in Georgia, the proposal includes similar adjustments to the Provost Marshal’s Office at MCLB Barstow in California. This civilianization initiative will only affect non-core competencies such as gate sentries, and certain PMO services functions such as pass and ID issuing stations.¹⁴

The essential task of providing security at CONUS installations is one that can be easily performed by contractors. If the proposed civilianization initiative is fully implemented, it will free up critical MP structure to support the forward deployed MAGTFs and eliminate the need for the Fleet Assistance Program (FAP).

¹² Jan Durham and Bill Webber. Operating Forces Military Police Organizational Validation: Operational Advisory Group (OAG) Presentation, November 2003.

¹³ *The Blotter*, Volume 1, Issue 1 (2004). http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/ps/The_Blotter/The_Blotter_Home.asp

¹⁴ Major Daniel W. O’Connor. Interview by author. December 17, 2004.

TRAINING THE MILITARY POLICE

Part of the current problem lies in the necessity to support a Fleet Assistance Program (FAP) agreement. This program that moves MPs from operational units to the installations also deprives them of critical training opportunities for their combat role.

The author's experience as an MP officer stationed with a west coast Marine wing support squadron (MWSS) serves to underscore an important shortfall in MP training. In this case, since the number of MPs that belonged to the installation was significantly inadequate to support the garrison law enforcement mission, the MP platoon organic to the MWSS was reassigned to the Provost Marshal's Office (PMO).

On the surface, this seems reasonable; however, whenever the MWSS participated in training exercises, the MP piece became notional. Moreover, because PMO could not afford to let the FAP'd MPs participate in any of the field training with their parent squadron, their field MP skills perished.¹⁵ Fortunately, the squadron never deployed as a unit during this period. Had this occurred and the FAP'd Marines returned to their parent command, the MPs would have found themselves required to perform MP functions for which they had never trained.

¹⁵ During the author's tour with the MWSS (1999-2001), not a single opportunity was presented to take the platoon to the field and participate in training to maintain proficiency in critical mission capabilities.

The problem is not a new one. The military police lessons learned from Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in 1990 and 1991 identified the same problem with the FAP agreement. "The FMF [Fleet Marine Force] MP companies deployed [to Southwest Asia] were significantly short of personnel (manned at 60% of T/O). By way of contrast, some garrison MP units in CONUS remained well manned throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm."¹⁶

The military police community is a high demand, low density occupational field. It is impossible for the MPs to perform garrison law enforcement adequately and to support the MAGTF simultaneously given their current structure. Even when it is possible to augment MPs assigned to the operating forces with provision MPs drawn from low demand, high density occupational fields and reserve units, it does not solve the problem of garrison MPs maintaining proficiency in their combat support role.

PROMOTING MILITARY POLICE CAPABILITIES

A decade ago, it was thought that the MP community was partly to blame for its underutilization by commanders.¹⁷ Until Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm imposed a renewed demand for the military police combat role, the general consensus was

¹⁶ R. Barry Cronin, ed., *Military Police Lessons Learned*. Memorandum 3-91, *The Blotter*. Washington, D.C.: HQMC, Law Enforcement Section (POS-40), 1991.

¹⁷ Gordon A. Broussard. "Military Police for the MAGTF Commander." *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 1994: 15.

that MPs were cops, a necessary evil required at every Marine Corps installation.

In a 1994 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, LtCol Gordon Broussard identifies a significant part of the problem.

Over the last 5 years, one can count on one hand the number of articles about military police capabilities in professional magazines. Out of 2,345 after-action reports in the Marine Corps Lessons Learned System, only 4 reports have been submitted dealing with MPs in support. In addition, the military police community has not placed any emphasis on formalized instruction on MP operations at the two Marine Corps schools where future commanders and staff officers are developed: [Expeditionary Warfare School] and Command and Staff College.¹⁸

Perhaps the MP community can do a better job of promoting its capabilities in support of the MAGTF.

CONCLUSION

MPs provide a critical capability that is clearly defined in our doctrine. The time has come to fill the role as a combat multiplier to the MAGTF commander. This can only occur by divorcing the MPs from their historical garrison law enforcement role, consolidating them into battalions as MEF assets, and training them for their most important mission, supporting the MAGTF. Somebody else can guard the gate.

¹⁸ Gordon A. Broussard. "Military Police for the MAGTF Commander." *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 1994: 15.

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