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## MILITARY POLICE FUNCTIONS

J. V. Dillon<sup>1</sup>

On September 26, 1941, The Provost Marshal General was charged with the duty of organizing the Corps of Military Police. This was the first time in the history of our Army that a Corps of Military Police was organized. It is true that in World War One, a few months before the Armistice, there was established a centrally controlled body of Military Police in the A.E.F. But this organization was established in the A.E.F. only, and was not a branch of the Army of the United States. It did not survive World War One. However, that war demonstrated the need for a separate Corps of Military Police whose members would be trained to an intelligent standard of performance of duties.

Prior to September, 26, 1941, there were a few Military Police units in existence, but they were more or less the step children of the infantry. Since the organization of the Corps of Military Police, schools have been established to provide the training for the specialized operations the Military Police are called upon to perform. The organization of the Corps has been a great impetus to the building of an esprit de corps, a pride in membership, a pride in the knowledge that the M.P. is of and for the fighting forces. When I think of all the unsavory things said and written about the M.P.'s during and after World War I, I think of the words of Mark Anthony: "The evil that men do lives after them, The good is oft interred with their bones." Perhaps there was a little too much emphasis on brawn and too little on brains in the selection of the M.P.'s in World War I, but even so, some of their work was the subject of many commendations. Unfortunately, too little or none of the fine work came to public attention.

The approach to the study of the organization of the Corps of Military Police was on a functional basis. The functions were found to be multifarious. For each function there must be an appropriate type of organization to perform it. And since the functions are distinct, the training must be suited to the mission of each type.

With the field forces, especially in these days of modern mechanized high-speed armies, traffic control is of utmost importance. From the front lines of divisions to the rear lines of armies, areas with limited road-net facilities buzz with fighting and supply vehicles. Traffic planning and control must be intelligent, vigorous, alert and perpetual. The M.P. is an advisor on planning and

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the operator on control.

I shall cite one instance taken from the records of World War I to demonstrate what happens when insufficient attention is given to the control of traffic. The time for allied counterattack had arrived during the Aisne-Marne offensive. The first and second divisions were started for this area so hurriedly that there was not time for a complete reconnaissance of roads, proper routings and halting places. The same condition seems to have existed with the French and resulted in their meeting the American troops on roads, the condition of which precluded the carrying of such heavy traffic. It was found necessary to rush forward a supply of small arms ammunition and this traffic added to the already burdened highways. In each instance, orders to hurry ahead were transmitted to the units independently and with no information that the same orders were being issued to others. Each outfit considered its particular mission all-important and this feeling caused each one to double and redouble its efforts until finally all the roads for miles were one mass of blocked traffic, all headed towards the front, but at a complete stand-still. Heavy and continuous rains made the situation worse and, before long, mired and skidding trucks added to the congestion. While affairs were in this state, the French attempted to march some cavalry up and soon the whole mass was interspersed with mounted men who were also blocked.

To remedy the situation, detachments were sent to the diverging roads, with instructions to clear these so that an outlet might be had. In accomplishing this, it was found necessary to tip over and off the road, large guns, tractors, and trucks when they were stuck too badly to pull out, or when the progress was so slow as to delay other traffic unreasonably. All vehicles which were lost or which had been sent out without information concerning their destination were put off the road, returning empties were sidetracked, when possible, the mounted men were crowded through the jam and sent forward, and bad places were repaired or guarded to keep the over-anxious from becoming stuck. After several hours of very strenuous effort, most of the roads were clear.

This illustration, which could be multiplied many times, indicates the need for a body of men well organized and thoroughly trained in traffic control. Military Police constitute the principal agency available to a commander for the enforcement of regulations and orders pertaining to traffic. The Military Police carry out this mission by means of traffic control posts and patrols.

As armies have become more and more mechanized, traffic control has really become a science. It is treated as such in the Provost Marshal General's School, where a complete traffic train-

ing course has been worked out and is now being given the officers in the Corps of Military Police.

In battle, men who lose their way are known as stragglers. The M.P. operate straggler lines where stragglers are picked up, brought to collecting points and returned to their units. For traffic control and the operation of straggler lines, each division has an M.P. Platoon, each Corps an M.P. Company and each Army an M.P. Battalion.

#### *Military Police and War Prisoners*

Again in battle, there are prisoners of war. These must be collected, escorted to the rear areas and there processed and, thereafter, confined in prisoner of war enclosures. For this purpose, Military Police Escort Guard Companies and Prisoner of War Processing Units are used. These two units are functionally distinct from the units heretofore described and from each other and, accordingly, their make-up and training is different. The units handling prisoners of war must be pretty well versed in the rules of land warfare governing the treatment of prisoners. The processing units must be made up of linguists. Under the Geneva Convention of 1929, prisoners are required to give certain information about themselves. Their names, age, and next of kin, the address of their next of kin and other information is recorded. The prisoner is generally interrogated in his own tongue and, so far as is possible, in order to reduce overhead, the interrogator is the recorder and he records in English. The prisoner is photographed, fingerprinted and otherwise physically described. Processing units are, accordingly, composed of linguistic clerks trained as well in photography and fingerprinting. Youth and physical prowess are relatively unimportant in these units. Emphasis is on brains. The escort guard companies are used, as their name implies, in escorting and guarding prisoners of war. These units are generally composed of men who, because of age or physical limitations, are not suitable for combat duty.

#### *Occupational Police*

Another type of military police organization which must accompany the ground forces on offense, is occupational police. As our ground forces penetrate enemy territory, towns, villages and cities are passed. The combat troops cannot be dissipated on the duty of keeping the civilian population in subjection. None the less, the civilian population cannot be permitted to go at will. Curfews must be established and enforced. Firearms and other instruments suitable for guerilla warfare must be collected. Rules governing the movement and conduct of the civilians must be promulgated and enforced. These are but a few of the immediate duties of occupational police.

*Police of Military Personnel*

Another important function of Military Police is the police of military personnel at posts, camps and stations, as well as in towns and cities. Probably you are better acquainted with the military policeman in this role than in any other. In this duty he exercises more authority per grade than any other man in the army. He is taught to guard his authority jealously, but to use it discreetly and in a friendly manner.

For some reason or other, policemen are traditionally either disliked or feared or both. For this reason, Military Policemen are taught to go out of their way to do a service for their fellow soldiers, to keep the soldier out of trouble. One officer, an outstanding Military Police officer, told me that he interviewed every man as he joined his organization. He would always ask the man "Who is your bunk-mate?" The man would answer—let us say—"Joe Murphy", and then the officer would say "Suppose you saw your bunk-mate, Joe Murphy, in town with a little too much liquor under his belt, what would you do?" The prospective M.P. would straighten up and say "I'd arrest him sir!" And the officer would say, in a kindly way: "Now honestly wouldn't you do your best to get him back to barracks without getting him into trouble?" Well, the prospective M.P. would invariably answer "Yes sir, I think I would." Then the officer would say "Remember this always: Every man you meet in town, with a little too much aboard, or otherwise getting himself in trouble, is your bunk-mate and I want you to do for him just what you told me you would do for your bunkie Joe Murphy."

That's the kind of advice I think an M.P. will remember. If so, the soldier in trouble will turn to the M.P.—not avoid him.

*Relation to Prostitution*

The M.P. of posts, camps and stations must be trained in a manner comparable to the police in modern cities. Within the post, the M.P. controls traffic, usually regulates the ingress and egress of soldiers and civilians; usually operates the information service; and makes all criminal and traffic accident investigations. The legal limitations of his authority on the military reservation are not disturbing. But the legal limitations on that same Military Policeman patrolling in towns contiguous to posts is quite disturbing. He is told to confine his police activity to military personnel. That is a nice formula in theory, but difficult to apply.

Now let me give a concrete illustration of a troublesome problem facing the commanding officer of any post within the United States, in the solution of which the Military Police play an important part. To enable the Army to combat more effectively the vice problem around military posts, Congress, in July, 1941,

passed the May Act. This Act, when invoked, makes prostitution unlawful within a "reasonable distance" of any military or naval camp or base.

Mindful of the tradition that matters of local government are the responsibility of state and local officials, the Army has been extremely reluctant to invoke the May Act. Every effort is first made to obtain the cooperation of local officials and to have them do the necessary housecleaning.

Where local officials are unwilling to take the lead in eliminating vice conditions, the commanding officer, acting through his Provost Marshal and the Military Police, must take the initiative. Since the Military Police have no power of arrest over persons outside their jurisdiction, they are unable, of themselves, to clean out the troublesome areas. However, they assist the Provost Marshal of the post and interested social groups in the procurement of evidence. The evidence is turned over to the local authorities, who are requested to take action. Often times this is sufficient. In other instances the local authorities are long on promises but definitely short on accomplishments. Under these circumstances the commanding officer takes steps to invoke the May Act.

I shall digress for a moment in order to explain the special regulations set up for the administration of this Act. The regulations place upon the commanding officer of each post, camp, or station, the responsibility for "determining if and when prostitution in the areas adjacent to the military reservation adversely affects the efficiency, health and welfare of the post, camp or station."

When local cooperative measures have proved ineffective, the local commander requests his service commander to make a special report of conditions. This request is referred to the Federal Security Agency for investigation. If the report made as a result of this investigation contains factual information of the existence of prostitution, the commanding officer again consults the local authorities, informs them of the report and advises them that unless corrective measures are taken, the May Act will be invoked. If corrective measures are not taken within a reasonable period of time, the Commanding Officer forwards a letter to the Adjutant General containing:

- a. A statement of the conditions which are inimical to the efficiency, health and welfare of his command.
- b. A narrative of the efforts which have been made to cause the local authorities to correct conditions.
- c. A recommendation concerning the specific areas which the Secretary of War shall publicly announce as the zone in which the practice of prostitution shall be a federal crime.

The Act declares that once the zone has been determined and

proclaimed, either the War or Navy Department, or the Federal Security Agency may take whatever steps are considered necessary to prevent the violation of the law. There is one exception to this last statement and I suspect it will be considered a major exception. According to the Act "nothing . . . shall be construed as conferring on the personnel of the War or Navy Departments or the Federal Security Agency any authority to make criminal investigations, searches, seizures, or arrests of civilians charged with violation of the law." The purpose of this clause was to leave the enforcement of the law in the hands of the civil authorities. The clause is in keeping with the famous *Posse Comitatus* Act of 1878, which prohibits the use of the Army for the enforcement of the law except where expressly authorized by the Constitution or by Act of Congress.

The enforcement of the May Act, then, is not the responsibility of the Army. Nor does the invocation of the May Act prevent the local authorities from taking action. The law specifically authorizes the War and Navy Departments and the Federal Security Agency to accept the cooperation of State and local officials.

Federal enforcement of the Act devolves upon the Department of Justice. They investigate, arrest, and endeavor to secure the conviction of the violator. An area embracing 27 counties was included in the May 20 declaration of the Secretary of War invoking the Act for the protection of the men around Camp Forrest, Tennessee. A survey made prior to the invocation of the Act disclosed that approximately 500 prostitutes were operating in the area. The Act was invoked a few days before pay day at Camp Forrest and a squad of 158 F.B.I. agents went in to work with the local officials and the Military Police. With the announcement that the Act was being invoked, the number of prostitutes decreased rapidly. Of 75 arrests which were made, 52 were prostitutes and 23 were operators of brothels and juke joints. Sixteen of the 75 were convicted, the average sentence being six months. The majority of the sentences were imposed upon men who were operating these places. It is hard to visualize the difficulties incident to the enforcement of this law.

Just how effective the May Act will be is uncertain. General invocation of the Act is not practicable, nor is it desirable. In most of the industrial areas and in many towns visited by soldiers on furlough or in transit, reliance must be placed on local officials and on local laws. The solution of the problem depends ultimately upon community action, rather than upon federal enforcement.

There are, of course, other quicker means of accomplishing the results. A post commander may declare a certain areas off limits for military personnel, and station military police around the

area and prohibit the ingress of military personnel to the area. This procedure, of course, penalizes the legitimate tradesmen in the area, in that it deprives them of the trade of the soldier. Another means open to the Post Commander is to declare a certain house or group of houses off limits and station Military Police to prohibit the entrance of military personnel to such places. This procedure is wasteful of personnel and is resorted to only when the number of places so declared off limits is relatively few.

About a year ago, a large military reservation was opened adjoining a city of about five thousand population. The reservation had a military population of about fifty thousand. Shortly after the influx of the soldiers, about 150 so-called sandwich shops (in reality bawdy houses) were located just outside the boundaries of the reservation. It so happened that the attendants at the sandwich shops were young women. The venereal rate at that post, during the first few months, was very high. The Provost Marshal of the post visited each of the shops and stated that all handlers of food in the Army were required to stand a rigid physical examination; he stated that inasmuch as these shops were so close to the post and were allegedly and ostensibly handling food for soldiers, it seemed that these waitresses would have to undergo the same type of food-handlers examination as was required for food-handlers in the Army. The keepers of these sandwich shops objected strenuously to such interference by the military and, at first, refused. The Provost Marshal stated that it was quite all right, but he would have to station a Military Policeman outside of each place and prohibit the entrance of military personnel. The health of the soldiers was too important to permit unexamined food-handlers to serve them. Business, of course, fell off to nothing and soon the keepers consented to the physical examination. It was found that over sixty per cent of the waitresses were venereally infected. The shops that survived thereafter confined their trade to serving food.

The Military Police, as such, have no right to arrest civilians when martial law is not in effect. Of course, they have the same right enjoyed by any person to arrest in felony cases or in case of misdemeanor amounting to breach of peace committed in their presence. This limitation has its difficulties. Civilian traffic violators on an Army post may not be arrested and tried by military authority. They may be detained and turned over to a United States Commissioner in the vicinity, who has, by Federal Law, the right to try such offenders, much the same as the justice of the peace or the magistrate for similar offenses in towns.

Examples of difficulties and troublesome problems growing out of the use of Military Police on patrol duty in towns and cities

might be cited at length. The important thing, of course, is that the M.P. know the limitations of his authority and confine his activity within those limits. To that end his training is directed.

*Duties Enlarged by the "All-out" Character of War*

The development of means of carrying war into the interior of nations at war by air transportation, and the development of fifth columns has effectively changed the fundamental concept of war. It is no longer merely a conflict between armies; it is a conflict between nations, and all the peoples thereof. Internal security of a nation is vital to success. The Army is the ultimate force available for internal security.

The accepted published War Department policy places the primary responsibility for the protection of plants, facilities, installations, utilities and materials which are deemed vital to the war effort, upon the operators, owners, and local or state governments. In time of war there is no question that the Army and the Navy have the ultimate responsibility for such protection, and military commanders must see that the job is properly done by the agencies heretofore mentioned, or do it themselves. Detailed provisions for such protection are included in Service Command plans for domestic disorder, disaster-relief, or fifth column activities, and current instructions of the War Department on internal security. Taken together, these plans and instructions provide for the internal security of the nation.

To discharge his responsibilities under these plans, the Service Commander has at his disposal Military Police Battalions (Zone of the Interior). These Battalions are organized, trained and equipped for the type of combat they are likely to face. The work is a novel police job.

*Relation to Sabotage in Industry*

The President, recognizing the existence of a serious and immediate potential danger of sabotage to national-defense materials, national-defense premises and national-defense utilities, which might menace our maximum productive effort, had published an Executive Order on December 12, 1941, authorizing the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy to establish and maintain military guard and patrols and to take other appropriate measures to protect such vital materials, premises and utilities.

The Military Police Battalions used on this work are not executing the civil laws. They are used for the protection of Federal property. Even though the title of the Federal Government to such property may be remote, all will agree that the Federal interest is proximate and paramount.

The training of these Battalions is unlike the training given to any other type of Military Police. The units are trained for com-

bat. They are equipped with modern small arms weapons of war and other weapons. These are the minute men of internal security. They are trained to detect and thwart the saboteur; to meet and destroy the fifth columnist who operates by trick, fraud and chicanery. This is a novel police assignment. The esprit de corps of the Military Police has been enhanced by this combat mission, because it truly makes the M.P. a combat soldier.

#### *When Fighting Ceases*

When fighting has ceased, responsibility for the maintenance of law and order must rest temporarily upon the Armies of the conquering nations. Military Government will prevail. How long this will be true depends on many factors and will vary from country to country.

In those countries which have been liberated from the Axis yoke, a large occupying force will be unnecessary. However, during the transition period at the close of the war, the liberated peoples will, in all probability, need outside assistance to insure the maintenance of law and order. Perhaps no more than a mobile Military Police will be necessary—simply a body to give the inhabitants a feeling of confidence and security.

Where military government prevails, the functions of the Military Police will vary greatly, depending upon the locality and the attitude of the inhabitants. Military government is concerned with public safety, sanitation, legal and fiscal affairs, utilities and, in fact, all functions of government. Under favorable conditions, where effective support of the civil police exists or has been obtained, the work of the Military Police is merely supervisory. Without such support, and where there is popular opposition to the invading force, the work of the Military Police becomes much more detailed and complex.

#### *Function of the Provost Marshal General*

The foregoing is a broad sketch of the functions of the Military Police. The Provost Marshal General exercises no command function. Instead, he coordinates, directs and administers matters relating to the Corps of Military Police. At the Provost Marshal General's Replacement Training Center, Fort Riley, Kansas, enlisted men are trained as loss replacements for all functional types of Military Police units. At the Provost Marshal General's Training Center, Fort Custer, Michigan, officers and units are trained in perfection of Military Police technique and tactics.

Every effort is being made to take advantage of the lessons of World War I. Through proper training, and through improved organization and control, we are endeavoring to secure a body of Military Police whose performance will be a credit to the Army, and a matter of pride to the nation which they serve.