

# Military Police Make Use of Land Warrior

*By Captain Joshua K. Frye*

*While dismounted, imagine—*

- *Knowing the locations of your squad members at all times without visually scanning or talking.*
- *Shooting around corners.*
- *Seeing mission photographs, digital overlays, and live unmanned aerial vehicle feeds almost simultaneously.*

The technology that allows for these capabilities is actually available and was recently used in combat by the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment (2 SCR) (or 2d Dragoon) Military Police Platoon, Vilseck, Germany. The Land Warrior system offers tomorrow's requested capabilities today.

The Land Warrior was designed for traditional combat arms use; it was not originally envisioned as a tool for combat support Soldiers and leaders. When recent versions of the system began hitting the battlefields of Iraq in 2006, the Infantry Branch (4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment) became most involved. Because the Enhanced Position Location Reporting System (EPLRS) radio comprised the centerpiece of the Land Warrior, the Army naturally chose to field it with Stryker brigades, which already had the digital infrastructure necessary.

In 2009, the 5th Brigade, 2d Infantry Division (5/2) Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) deployed to Afghanistan with the latest version of the Land Warrior (dubbed the "Strike"). Because the system was not a program of record, it was fielded only to the 5/2 SBCT and, subsequently, to the 2 SCR.

Although 2 SCR infantry, cavalry scouts, engineers, and some field artillery units received the Strike before they deployed to Afghanistan, members of the Military Police Platoon did not attend new-equipment training in Germany. Because the platoon, which had been reorganized into four squads, had originally planned to conduct detention operations, their focus was on preparing to support the four 2 SCR maneuver squadrons. After arriving in Afghanistan, the platoon dispersed to various locations in several provinces; however, it quickly became clear that the military police squads could best serve the SCR by performing host nation police training as part of a security forces advisory team.

During the consolidation of two military police squads at one of the provincial police headquarters, it was apparent that—to leverage all possible advantages—Military Police

Platoon capabilities would need to be reevaluated with regard to conducting daily dismounted patrols in an urban setting. With the engineer troop engaged in route clearance operations, some Land Warrior ensembles were available for issue to military police—and the two 2 SCR squads were rapidly outfitted. New-equipment training (including a short practical exercise that was technically supported by Department of Defense contractors on a nearby forward operating base) was accomplished in just two days. Although the training was actually intended for team leaders and above, all squad members were trained and had the opportunity to use the system in a combat setting. During that time, two Soldiers became the first females to train, field, and operationally use the Land Warrior. In addition, the 2 SCR Military Police Platoon became the first military police unit to use the Land Warrior in combat.

Following the training, the military police put the Land Warrior to the test. The 9- to 11-pound ensemble—which is affixed to the back of the Soldier Plate Carrier System or inside the back of the improved outer tactical vest—features a digital compass, a Global Positioning System receiver, a helmet-mounted display, an enhanced Soldier control unit, two battery life options, and numerous sub-components in the standard configuration. It is capable of processing up to secret level classified information. The digital compass and Global Positioning System receiver allow for the constant determination of the location and orientation of the Soldier. The helmet-mounted display, which is commonly affixed to the helmet and viewed with the nondominant eye, displays full-color digital data and a moving map. The enhanced Soldier control unit serves as the primary user interface to system functions. The true strength of the Land Warrior as a force multiplier was revealed with the use of the EPLRS radio network to transmit position, voice, and other data between ensembles and vehicles. Each Soldier was outfitted with full, over-the-ear, active hearing protection or in-ear microphones, allowing for seamless communication over the secure EPLRS network and auxiliary radios.

An urban setting is arguably one of the most complex operational environments faced by a unit. To “even the playing field,” the Military Police Platoon made daily use of the Land Warrior. Digital maps and the latest imagery were available for frequent download from the Regimental Geospatial Cell. The imagery was extremely valuable while traveling through the densely populated city at all hours of the day and night.

Because they did not operate Stryker vehicles, the Military Police Platoon needed an existing EPLRS to transmit and receive data to and from the network. A robust city network was established by placing full-size EPLRS radios at two nearby forward operating bases and one at the provincial police headquarters where the military police were based. Newly fielded, mine-resistant, ambush-protected, all-terrain vehicles were also equipped with EPLRS radios. Dismounted Soldiers who were equipped with the Land Warrior were tracked via Blue Force Tracker and Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below. The network served to enhance the situational awareness of the squads, enabling their unprecedented access to information on the go. In addition, automated position reporting allowed senior leaders and personnel from adjacent units to remain fully aware of the real-time locations of military police.

The Military Police Platoon also fielded and tested a number of advanced capabilities that can be integrated with the Land Warrior. For example, the platoon used the Soldier intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance receiver prototype to view real-time, unmanned aerial vehicle feeds through the Land Warrior. They then provided feedback, which led to the eventual fielding and operational use of a second version. The platoon also used the daylight video sight. When mounted to a weapon, the daylight video sight allows Soldiers to look and fire around corners, take still photographs, and transmit the photographs to network members. Other camera solutions, including the “pole cam” and Dragon Egg™, were also used. With the pole cam (a wireless camera mounted to a telescoping graphite pole), deep wells and the tops of compound roofs can be visually inspected for weapons or explosives without endangering Soldiers. The Dragon Egg (a throwable wireless camera) has a low-light capability and is primarily used for static site security or viewing small, hard-to-access areas. Finally, the platoon also used the multifunction, agile, remote-control robot in dealing with numerous real-world improvised explosive devices and other dangerous situations.

The Land Warrior incorporates numerous exceptional planning and mission command tools. Planning software is used to create detailed overlays using the same



**A Soldier adjusts his Land Warrior ensemble before heading out on a mission.**

maps and imagery that are available on Land Warrior ensembles. These digital capabilities entirely replaced the three-dimensional sand tables and paper maps traditionally used for briefings by the 2 SCR Military Police Platoon. With the mission planner hooked to a large, liquid crystal display television, the entire platoon observed the manner in which the operation was to unfold; they then received identical mission overlays on their individual Land Warriors. During operations, the Land Warrior laptop allowed tactical operations centers to interact with equipped Soldiers on the battlefield and to provide mission command at unprecedented levels.

Over the course of the 2 SCR Military Police Platoon deployment, the Land Warrior was used in an urban setting, on convoys, during dismounted movements in rural areas, and in myriad other mission profiles. The advantages of the system were clear. The capabilities amplified the situational awareness and abilities of the Military Police Platoon. Furthermore, the Program Executive Office was very responsive and helpful in troubleshooting hardware and software issues and the Land Warrior team eagerly accepted all military police feedback and operational reports. This resulted in several high-level visits to observe the 2 SCR Military Police Platoon using the system.

Future versions of the Land Warrior (by different names) are currently under development and may be massively fielded. The 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division SBCT Military Police Platoon is slated to receive Land Warrior equipment and may bring these new capabilities to bear in the near future. By leveraging these and similar technologies, military police of today and tomorrow will continue to assist, protect, and defend from “the cutting edge.”

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*Captain Frye is the executive officer of the Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2 SCR. He was the 2 SCR Military Police Platoon leader from 2009 to 2011. Captain Frye holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in military science from East Tennessee State University.*