

93d Military Police Battalion Rededicates Their Focus

By Captain Derrick W. Dew



Today's Military Police Corps is in the midst of a paradigm shift. While we have consistently provided first-class military police support in Iraq and Afghanistan, most of our resources and training philosophies have (rightfully) been focused on combat support. As a result, one of our key skill sets—law enforcement operations—has been significantly degraded. As multiple deployment cycles are ending and Soldiers are returning to garrison in ever-increasing numbers, law enforcement functions are quickly moving to the forefront based on the importance of creating a safe and secure environment for our Soldiers, civilians, veterans, and their families.

At Fort Bliss, Texas, there has been an increase from about 9,000 Air Defense Soldiers assigned to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command to more than 35,000 Soldiers assigned to the U.S. Army Forces Command. This number is expected to top out at more than 50,000 Soldiers (along with their families) by fiscal year 2015. This incredible growth would, alone, be significant; but the fact that a large percentage of this population resides off the main installation makes the need for proactive, adaptive, and creative community law enforcement paramount. The 93d Military Police Battalion “War Eagles,” located at Fort Bliss, have rededicated their focus to law and order operations to ensure that, in spite of recent events, our Soldiers and their families continue to enjoy living in one of the safest cities in our country.

Law Enforcement Training Seminar

The 93d Military Police Battalion, together with the Directorate of Emergency Services (DES), has instituted a Law Enforcement Training Seminar as a means of rededicating the focus of military police Soldiers to the fundamentals of law enforcement by cultivating and maintaining the law enforcement skill set. The Law Enforcement Training Seminar, which is now mandatory for all 93d Military Police Battalion Soldiers in the grades of E-1 through E-7 and O-1 through O-3, is divided into three phases:

- **Phase I.** The focus of this phase, which is conducted at the unit level, is on basic military police skills that are needed for the completion of Phase II.
- **Phase II.** This phase consists of training such as the Military Police Firearms Qualification Course, observer/controller training, Taser training, and active-shooter training.
- **Phase III.** In this phase, military police Soldiers conduct on-the-job training that spans three different shifts.

In addition to the Soldiers of the 93d Military Police Battalion, the Law Enforcement Training Seminar is also

used to train and certify military police Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division. To date, two brigade combat team military police platoons have been certified and two others should soon receive certification. This certification process allows military police who are assigned to brigade combat teams at Fort Bliss to work in the community law enforcement arena and, thus, retain a perishable skill set. The reaction of commanders, Soldiers, and civilians to 1st Armored Division military police performing policing duties within the community has been very positive.

Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve military police units are also trained and certified via the Law Enforcement Training Seminar. In conjunction with the 93d Military Police Battalion (which provides supplemental instructors), Task Force Outlaw conducts Phase I and II training for National Guard and Reserve units. Phase III students perform on-the-job training with the 93d Military Police Battalion red cycle company. The partnership between the 93d Military Police Battalion and Task Force Outlaw enables National Guard and Reserve Soldiers to be trained and certified on the critical law enforcement skill set before operations or deployment.

El Paso Police Department Liaison Program

A unique and diverse skill set is necessary for effective, contemporary law enforcement. And since most of the new growth in the Fort Bliss area is occurring off the installation, the support of local, state, and federal law enforcement officials is critical. Fortunately, the 93d Military Police Battalion and DES have a wonderful, mutually supportive law enforcement relationship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other key agencies—particularly, the El Paso Police Department. The El Paso Police Department Liaison Program provides for carefully selected noncommissioned officers from the 93d Military Police Battalion to serve as liaisons and advisors within select El Paso regional police departments on any law enforcement matter pertaining to military personnel assigned to Fort Bliss. These Soldiers

do not respond to the scene of an incident; however, they provide the El Paso Police Department with a much-needed military connection to U.S. Soldier subjects and offenders.

Together, the post Courtesy Patrol Program and the El Paso Police Department Liaison Program allow local police to quickly turn U.S. Soldiers over to military police for subsequent processing within military channels.

Active-Shooter Program

Following the November 2009 shooting spree that took place at Fort Hood, Texas, the 93d Military Police Battalion and the Fort Bliss DES conducted an assessment of active-shooter response capabilities within the Fort Bliss workforce. In December 2009, each law enforcement officer received two hours of active-shooter reinforcement training, with a focus on active-shooter response requirements and protocols. In March 2010, three law enforcement officers attended a 40-hour, Advanced Active-Shooter Train-the-Trainer Course conducted at Fort Hood. These law enforcement officer trainers then returned to Fort Bliss and, in April 2010, assisted DES in providing all law enforcement officers with 16 hours of active-shooter response training. Since then, the training has been incorporated in the Military Police Law Enforcement Training Seminar and the Department of the Army (DA) Civilian Police Annual Sustainment Training Program.

In addition to preparing the military workforce to respond to an active-shooter event, DES also developed a training program for the community. This program, which was implemented in January 2010, addresses how to plan for, and react to, an active-shooter situation. A total of fifty-one presentations were conducted from January to April 2010, with more than 4,000 community members in attendance.

On 22 September 2010, with the active-shooter and Incident Command System protocols deeply ingrained in our law enforcement culture, the unthinkable occurred. As reported in the press, a lone gunman walked into a Fort Bliss shoppette and opened fire—killing one employee and critically wounding another. The gunman then walked out of the building and was subsequently killed by a DES member responding at the scene. This incident, coupled with the Fort Hood tragedy, has brought active-shooter programs to the forefront of military police law enforcement training. The 93d Military Police Battalion's approach to active-shooter scenarios has since been reshaped to include the synchronization of military police

and DA civilian police training plans; the retrofitting of military police patrol vehicles with M4 rifle response capabilities; and the acquisition of new rifles, better ammunition, and protective vests—all while the battalion continues to implement realistic, scenario-based, response training.

The 93d Military Police Battalion active-shooter training follows the “crawl, walk, run” training methodology:

- The crawl phase consists of classroom instruction on topics such as the history of active shooting, the management of stress during armed conflict, and lessons learned from past active-shooter incidents.
- The walk phase covers armed-response drills such as shoot/don't shoot exercises and reflexive fire drills.
- The active-shooter training culminates with the run phase, which consists of full-speed, scenario-based response exercises in which air-soft pistols and rifles are used to add realism.

The goal of the battalion's active-shooter training initiative is to incorporate local police officers into our active-shooter training and to get our military police incorporated into theirs. This should increase the synergy between the Army and civilian law enforcement agencies, which in turn, should improve the effectiveness of possible future joint operations.

Conclusion

After more than nine years of persistent conflict, the Army is returning to a more balanced footing and our Soldiers and their families are finally getting an opportunity to take a much-needed break. However, the senior leaders of the Military Police Corps Regiment clearly understand that providing world-class law enforcement support throughout the Army is a must; and our military police will be tasked with creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment. To regain and maintain our unique skill set, we must redirect our focus on law and order operations. After all, law enforcement is what makes us special. It is our police skills that differentiate us from the other branches of the Army.

Assist, Protect, and Defend!

Captain Dew is the commander of the 202d Military Police Company, 93d Military Police Battalion. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science, with a focus on international relations, from Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.