

The Employment of Military Police Formations: The Synchronization of Military Police Assets in BCTs

By Lieutenant Colonel Chad B. McRee

General Douglas MacArthur once said, “In no other profession are the penalties for employing untrained personnel so appalling or so irrevocable as in the military.” This could not be truer today, as the U.S. Army undergoes a significant transformation in doctrine and methodology and a paradigm shift in every capacity throughout the force.

Military police are certainly in high demand, but they continue to be highly misunderstood, incorrectly employed, and misrepresented—specifically within the combat arms formations that employ them. Few will argue that military police can be a maneuver commander’s “Force of Choice,” as they possess skills that focus on missions from defusing incidents to providing lethal response at the right time, on the right target. What makes military police formations so unique are the skills acquired through law enforcement (LE) training and employment at home stations in support of an Army garrison. Unquestionably, the greatest risk to the Military Police Corps is the loss of the LE skill set. Without LE training and experience, we will cease to exist as a Corps and our “scientific” experience will diminish and fall to the wayside. What will be truly lost is the maneuver commander’s flexibility—an asset on the battlefield enabled by experienced military police Soldiers trained in particular skill sets and refined by experience “on the road.”

Simply put, military police Soldiers are being assigned to brigade combat teams (BCTs) with little senior military police oversight to assist with the growth, professional development, and learning of functional-area skill sets. It is absolutely essential that military police maintain their mandated LE skills by balancing professional requirements with the field craft support requirements of maneuver unit commanders. The end state: professional military police support that can execute all five battlefield functions—maneuver and mobility support operations, area security operations, law and order operations, internment and resettlement operations, and police intelligence operations—with the finesse identified by combat commanders.

It is the responsibility of the senior military police commander at every installation to help the maneuver commander get the most from his military police support. This must be accomplished through a deliberate training template that allows military police commanders to provide recommendations and oversight on military police-specific training, provide recommendations for employment, and monitor units for the mishandling of military police assets. Additionally, an LE certification program (red cycle) construct must be implemented that standardizes military police training, includes cyclic LE certification, and uses an LE tour-at-home station to reinforce LE skills and refine processes. LE requirements and the execution of these skills in the technical, scientific field of the red cycle remain perishable skills. A deliberate training template will provide guidance to keep training current—providing maneuver commanders with the best trained, doctrinally current, and professionally refined military police Soldiers available!

The sustainment cycle (green cycle) depicted in the graphic on page 14 places BCT military police Soldiers or platoons in a six-week training event. The green cycle is designed around the five military police functions, but more importantly, to support the maneuver commander in a manner that best uses military police skill sets, training, knowledge, and experience. Upon completion of specified field training, the military police platoon would enter a recovery cycle that includes individual training and maintenance followed by a ten-day to two-week LE event (red cycle). During the red cycle, BCT military police Soldiers receive LE-specific instruction and/or certification and a requisite road duty assignment lasting an average of 7–14 days. At the end of the 14-day LE cycle, the military police platoon or individuals are reintegrated into the BCT to prepare for the next set of field training (mandates) within the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) conceptual framework.

The training of military police formations by combat arms units generally does not leverage the full capabilities of military police or the

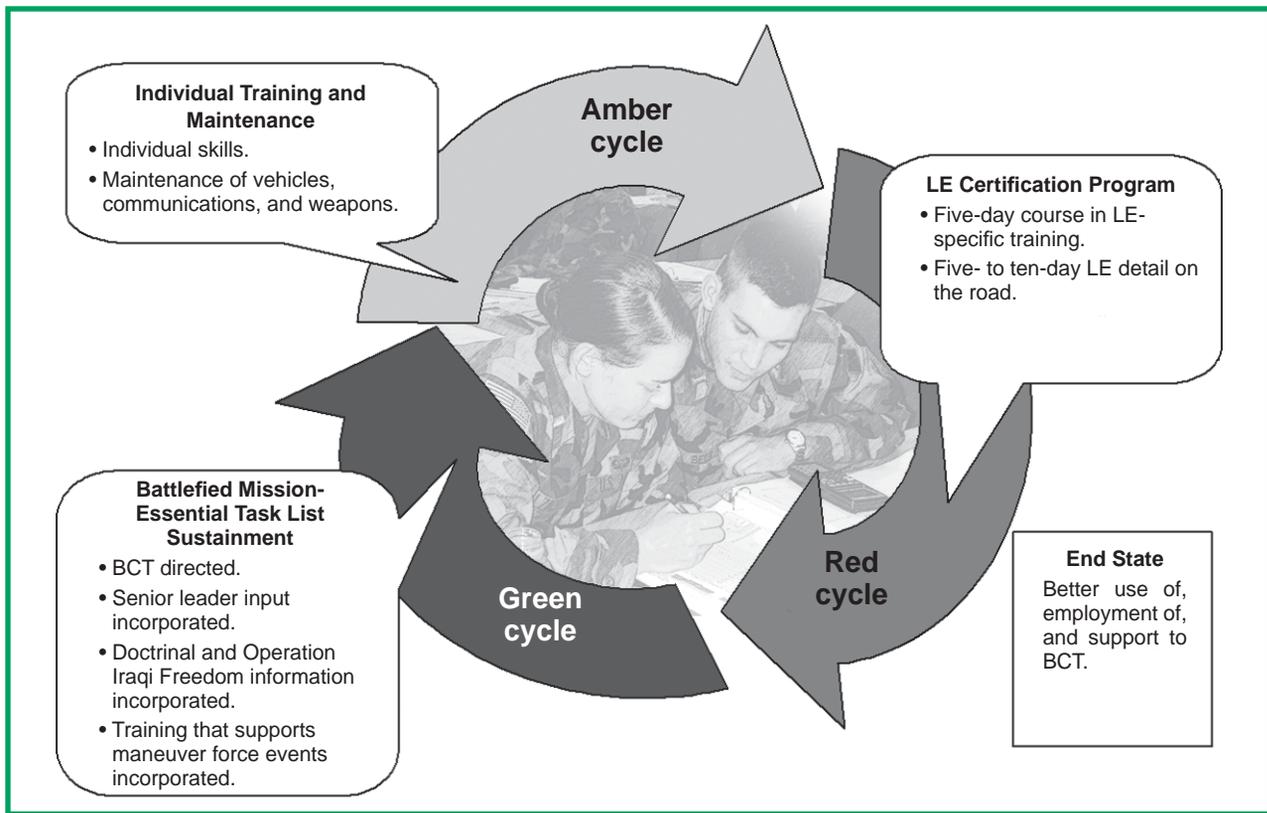


Figure 1. Military police platoon sustainment cycle

employment of capabilities where they can be of the most value to units (a situation not unlike a military police unit training an armor unit on screening operations). Each unit has a particular skill set that is best honed by the expertise within that respective field.

Many units, due to a lack of knowledge, assign low-density military occupational specialty personnel to areas or duties that seem “reasonable”—or at least remotely related to their respective functions. This is true of military police assigned to nonmilitary police units. Oftentimes, it seems a simple decision to assign military police Soldiers to guard tactical operations centers or access points. If senior military police personnel are allowed to provide recommendations, they can ensure that the proper support to a maneuver commander’s overall intent is met. During the green cycle, the maneuver commander may conduct scenario-driven training that focuses on area security or maneuver and mobility support operations. For military police personnel, this training should include—

- Area security.
 - Response force operations.
 - Tactical combat force (TCF).
 - Counterreconnaissance.
 - Command post security.

- Maneuver and mobility support operations.
 - Route reconnaissance and surveillance.
 - Main supply route regulation and enforcement.
 - Straggler and dislocated-civilian control.
 - Area damage control.

During the amber cycle, military police should execute a comprehensive maintenance plan for the military police platoon that includes—

- Weapons.
- Vehicles.
- Communications equipment.

The amber cycle should also include qualification and certification on individual skills, which may include—

- Ranges.
- Driver testing.
- Common training tasks.
- Retests on shortcomings identified in previous training certifications.

As part of a BCT, military police units would also be subject to unit-specific taskings and/or requirements. During the red cycle, military police would be assigned to a senior military police commander to validate LE certification and participate in a utilization tour. The certification and tour would

be limited in order to integrate the concepts into overall BCT long-range training plans to ensure that military police platoons are able to support a maneuver commander's training objectives and still obtain the necessary LE training, certification, and experience on a recurring basis (as outlined within the ARFORGEN training strategy). An example of LE certification and training is displayed to the right.

Critical to the overall success of the BCT military police support template is the synchronization of efforts, training, maintenance, individual skills, LE experience, and commander support. The experience gained from the military police force generation construct (MPFORGEN-C) will ultimately result in a standardized package that has depth, experience, and no limitations on stationing and locations and that provides support to all BCTs, Corps military police brigades, and installation Army garrisons throughout the Army.

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<p><u>Day 1</u> Patrol policies and procedures. Use of force and assault command post procedures. Military police reports and forms. Community-Oriented Policing System.</p>	<p><u>Day 3</u> Traffic accidents, traffic stops, and vehicle searches. DA form completion. Field sobriety tests. Drunk driver processing. Military police M9 qualification. Driver's training.</p>
<p><u>Day 2</u> Domestic-disturbance response. Juvenile offenders. Crime scene processing/ evidence collection and marking. DA form completion. Interviews. Search and seizure, child neglect, and rape.</p>	<p><u>Day 4</u> Radar certification. Federal and state wildlife laws. Unarmed self-defense, pressure point, and hand-and-arm signals.</p> <p><u>Day 5</u> Handcuffing. Restraint removal. Apprehension. Subject searches. OC (pepper spray) certification.</p>
<p><u>On-the-Job Training</u></p> <p>Following completion of LE certification, Soldiers will be integrated into LE operations at home station for 10–21 days to maintain military police proficiency and sustain critical skills.</p>	

Figure 2. LE certification and training objectives