



# Guns Up! 142d Military Police Company Conducts Live-Fire Training in the Republic of Korea

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*Near a small South Korean village that lies just below the Demilitarized Zone, a U.S. base cluster has been experiencing small probing attacks. The base cluster commander believes the enemy has a staging area a few terrain features away to the east. The base cluster commander has requested MP support to respond to this threat, and the 142d Military Police Company, 94th Military Police Battalion, is conducting area security missions in the vicinity. In the early morning mist, a squad of regulators performs a final precombat inspection of its gear, checks its camouflage one more time, and steps out in the direction of the enemy...*

Since 11 September 2001, America has undergone many changes. The tragic events of that day increased the focus on homeland security and force protection requirements throughout the military community. The 8th Military Police Brigade was not exempt from these changes as field training came to a near halt and soldiers stood guard on the gates for months. As the world watched and waited to see what America would do, the soldiers of both the 94th and 728th Military Police Battalions continued to ensure the safety of our assets in Korea.

For five long months, the military police stood the gates and conducted random antiterrorist measures around the clock as the war on terrorism began and force protection requirements were at their highest. As time went on, the brigade reduced its protective posture and a transformation took place across the peninsula. On 7 June 2002 the 8th Military Police Brigade bid farewell to Colonel Timothy Lamb and welcomed Colonel Peter Champagne. Colonel Champagne brought with him a vision and philosophy that emphasized combat readiness

and focused on tough, realistic mission-essential task list (METL)-based training. As force protection levels gradually returned to near-normal conditions, he shifted the focus from force protection and reemphasized the brigade's wartime mission. The legacy of Colonel Lamb's "fight tonight" mentality was now becoming a reality. Companies revamped their METLs, training sections took a hard look at how the unit conducted ranges and lane training, and the brigade transitioned from 4- to 6-week green cycles. The warrior mentality caught on like wildfire as the units dusted off their modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) and got back to the basics.

The capstone events in Colonel Champagne's vision were live-fire exercises. The 94th Military Police Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Scott Jones, realized that vision in April 2003. The 142d Military Police Company conducted the first live-fire exercise in the battalion. After only two green cycles, the commanders were confident that the soldiers could perform the squad dismounted response force live-fire exercise lane. They were right.

The battalion S3 spent many weeks conducting land reconnaissance, planning the scenario, and resourcing the mission. They also conducted observer/controller certification to ensure that the squads would receive instruction and feedback from highly qualified leaders. Meanwhile, the company was focusing on its own leader certification, on tactical exercises without troops, and rock drills to ensure that leaders and soldiers alike clearly understood the components of the tasks. The train-up was conducted over two green cycles, with the squads undergoing a rigorous exercise evaluation in October 2002 on a similar mission. There were five critical tasks they would be trained and evaluated on: issue an operation order (OPORD), occupy an objective rally point, conduct movement to contact, conduct actions on the objective, and consolidate and reorganize.

The live-fire exercise took place over a 5-day period. The battalion S3 and the observer/controllers set up operations at the base of the live-fire exercise range. The 142d Military Police Company headquarters element established a life support area approximately 2 kilometers away. The squads were greeted by their observer/controllers at the life support area at 1500 the evening before execution. They were issued the tactical OPORD and conducted a dry-fire walk-through of the lane. The squad leaders continued to conduct their troop-leading procedures and issued the squad OPORD that night on a sand table.

The next morning at 0430, the first squad moved out of the life support area and began the tactical road march to locate the objective rally point. Locating the objective rally point was no easy task, and reaching it was even more challenging because of the mountainous terrain and the heavy combat load. Once in the objective rally point, the squad leader established security and set out to conduct a leader's reconnaissance and emplace the support-by-fire position. With the reconnaissance complete and the plan confirmed, it was time for the assault element to move into its final attack position. The assault element would have to conquer two major obstacles to do so. The first was movement down some very steep terrain and the second was a large danger area with a group of buildings in the middle. The soldiers negotiated these obstacles and teams moved up to the attack position. Then they called for the support element to open up, while launching M203 rounds

at the objective to initiate the attack. The M249s quickly picked up a rhythm and laid hundreds of rounds on the objective.

The assault element was armed with M4s, M16s, M203s, hand grenades, and smoke. The lane ahead of them was approximately 300 meters long and had multiple sets of enemy targets. As the assault element bounded toward the objective, the squad leader signaled the support element to shift fire. The noise reached a crescendo throughout the valley as the squad pressed forward and the support element maintained a constant rain of bullets on the flank of the objective, where an enemy infantry fighting vehicle sat. More smoke signaled the support element to lift its fire as the assault element was about halfway to the objective. The support element then provided rear security for the exit route.

The objective was designed to evaluate the squads' ability to react to many situations in a chaotic environment and test the skills of the specialty teams. There were "enemy" mannequins that had to be disarmed and searched for hidden documents, and observer/controllers inflicted a friendly casualty or two, which tested the abilities of the aid and litter team. While the squad leader was ensuring that these teams were conducting the mission to standard, in the right order, and in less than two minutes, the team leaders were collecting analysis and control element reports and ensuring the squad had adequate security. As the squad began to move off the objective, the squad leader called in a 9-line medical evacuation and a request for extraction by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that was waiting in support.

After extraction, the squad returned to the live-fire exercise site and moved into the S3 operation area for the after-action report. The observer/controllers facilitated the after-action reports, which were supplemented by video footage taken from multiple angles throughout each squad's mission. This process allowed the soldiers to observe what the observer/controller saw and provided instantaneous visual feedback to reinforce the observer/controller's learning points. The lane was challenging and intense, the train-up and leader certification was thorough, and the live-fire exercise a success. Even the camouflage, sweat, and occasional trickle of blood could not disguise the sense of accomplishment of each soldier who walked off that lane.