

TEAMWORK AND AWARENESS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS AGAINST TERRORIST ATTACKS

By Colonel Richard Vanderlinden (Retired) and Lieutenant Colonel Craig Benedict (Retired)

“Terrorists are constantly scheming to attack your Army, your country, and even your family.”

—Specialist Brandy N. Gayanont,
289th Military Police Company,
3d U.S. Infantry Regiment

According to legendary basketball coach John Wooden, “When balance is lost, an organization grows weaker and is made vulnerable.”¹ Just as Coach Wooden’s observation can be applied to basketball teams, it can also be applied to those fighting to protect against terrorist attacks.

For many years, the Military Police Corps has acted as the bulwark against attacks on Army installations. Military police units and Department of the Army (DA) police have adjusted to the terrorist threats of today and continue to serve at the leading edge of current security efforts. But the building and sustaining of security is only a small part of the value of military police to the Army community “team” for which terrorism protection is designed. As the proponent for antiterrorism (AT), the Office of the Provost Marshal General (OPMG) oversees the Army AT program. OPMG acts as the manager of the team, constantly adjusting and improving security as circumstances dictate.

As the police force for Army communities, military and DA police are responsible for the safety and security of our installations and facilities against criminal and terrorist threats. The traditionally close relationship that military police have with the communities they protect makes them the perfect choice for the “team builder.” By leveraging this relationship, military police can build strength, improve community awareness, and help prevent terrorist attacks. Efforts begin at the DA level with AT policy and program resourcing and are reflected in AT doctrine and the global Military Police Corps AT mission. The common denominator within the strategic, operational, and tactical levels is the Military Police Corps and its responsibility to provide AT security. The community supports the military police mission by understanding the threat, providing information, and responding in a helpful way.

Extremist ideologies and separatist movements continue to have anti-Western and -U.S. orientations that

threaten our Nation and the Army. The attempted vehicle bombing in Times Square, New York, on 1 May 2010 reinforced the homeland defense perspective that terrorism is a persistent, enduring, worldwide threat to our Nation that requires a team effort involving security personnel and the community. And the potential threat of domestic and international terrorism extends from New York City to our Army communities. Therefore, the Army must maintain a strong defensive posture to prevent terrorist acts and protect critical Army assets, including people, information, and infrastructure. Our AT plans must be “team” plans that contain the defensive element of the Army’s combating terrorism program.

The “Army Antiterrorism Strategic Plan”² (ATSP), which was developed by OPMG in direct support of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, focuses and supports Army AT policy. The introduction to the ATSP (signed by then Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, G-3/5/7, Lieutenant General [now General] James D. Thurman) states, “Through constant awareness and vigilance . . . we will succeed in our goal of preventing terrorist attacks” by including “. . . every person in the Army community” as active participants. Lieutenant General Thurman recognized that the primary building block for implementation of the AT strategy is a community with a basic understanding of potential terrorist act indicators, such as suspicious behavior or activity. The Military Police Corps is capable of leading the AT effort by consistently conveying the message to members of the Army community so that they, through their vigilance, can immeasurably contribute to our overall protection.

Enhancement of AT Awareness

It is difficult to sustain AT awareness throughout our communities—particularly, since most community members feel that they live and work in the safest locations throughout the country. Army efforts to “ramp up” AT awareness began in earnest in 2008 and are now

under full-scale implementation. In October 2008, the AT Branch, OPMG, began taking deliberate steps to instill a heightened sense of awareness and vigilance across the Army. When asked about this new initiative, the AT Branch chief, Mr. Alex Mascelli, explained, “We cannot afford to drop our guard or become complacent. In fact, continuing to prevent future attacks becomes even harder and we must redouble our efforts to ensure terrorist threat awareness and vigilance is maintained. We must ensure that everyone plays in the endeavor.”

The first steps that the Army took to increase focus and resources on AT awareness involved adding “enhance AT awareness throughout the Army community” as an ATSP goal and developing a supporting AT strategic communication plan. Key portions of the Army AT strategic communication plan include the—

- Listing of the commander’s AT strategic talking points.
- Establishment of focused AT communication themes and messages.
- Branding of an AT image (logo and slogan) for awareness and program recognition.
- Approval of senior Army leaders to conduct an Army-wide AT awareness month.
- Implementation of iWATCH ARMY (a new terrorist watch program).

Community Policing

Due to their status and experience with communities, military and DA police have the lead role in expanding and enhancing criminal and terrorist threat awareness among local communities. By working together, the police and citizens of the community form the first line of defense against terrorist activities. Through their daily interaction with community members, police organizations educate and inform the community about potential threats. A knowledgeable and empowered community, in turn, extends the reach of police and security forces by serving as additional “eyes and ears.” Soldiers, DA civilians, Army contractors, and family members can add tremendous value to Army AT prevention and detection capabilities by serving as “sensors” in the fight against extremists and terrorists. The relationship between police and the community was one area of focus for the recent Army AT Awareness Month.

AT Awareness Month

On 16 February 2010, DA senior leaders approved the designation of August 2010 as AT Awareness Month. During this month, Army forces, installations, and facilities focused their attention on heightening awareness and vigilance in communities to prevent and protect against acts of terrorism. Areas of focus for AT Awareness Month included—

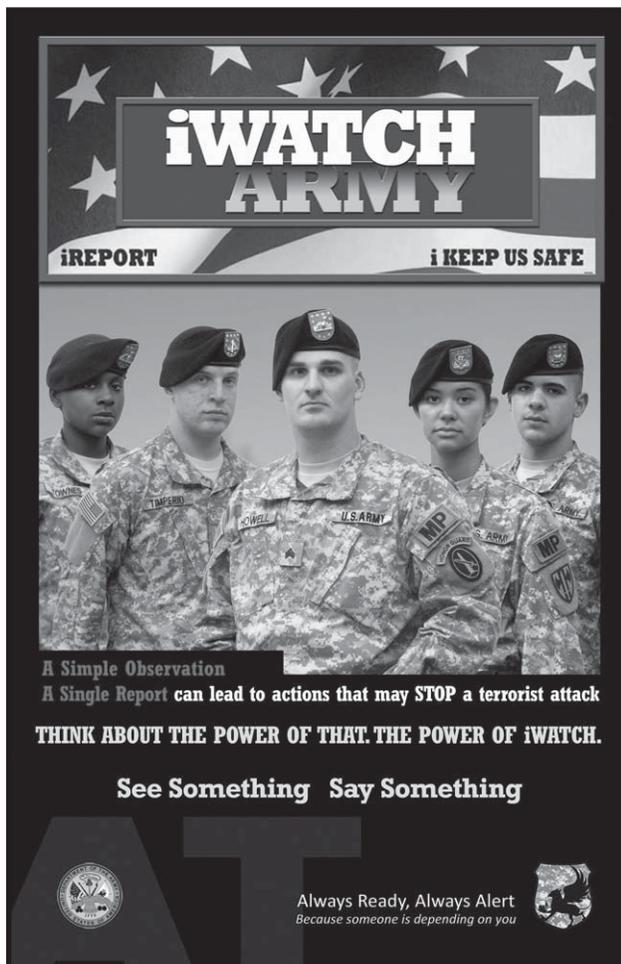
- Conducting AT training, education, and awareness for military personnel and DA civilians.

- Increasing the emphasis on reporting suspicious activities, describing reportable information, and identifying personnel to whom to report.
- Reviewing and emphasizing the AT roles and responsibilities of unit leaders and staffs across operational units, installations, and stand-alone facilities.
- Enhancing AT preparedness through local civilian and host nation partnerships and emergency response planning.

iWATCH ARMY

Military police have always played an important role in AT awareness by providing leadership, guidance, and advice to commanders and managers who are responsible for the security of Army installations and facilities. Military police leadership will continue to be critical as the Army implements iWATCH ARMY.

iWATCH is a modern, nationwide version of the Neighborhood Watch Program. Modeled after the Los Angeles Police Department’s terrorist watch program, iWATCH ARMY enables and encourages citizens to help protect their communities by identifying and reporting



Department of the Army iWATCH ARMY poster

suspicious behavior associated with terrorist activities. There is a passive element to iWATCH ARMY, which involves individual situational awareness of surroundings. There is also an active element, which involves the reporting of suspicious behavior or activities to military police or other law enforcement agencies for further investigation. Military police play an important role in educating the community about iWATCH ARMY and indicators of potential terrorist activity.

Investigations of successful terrorist attacks reveal that perpetrators conduct reconnaissance and surveillance missions to determine vulnerabilities, select targets, and develop and finalize attack plans. Local community members often have the opportunity to observe unusual or suspicious preoperational terrorist actions such as persons inquiring about security-related issues or photographing or videotaping buildings. By reporting these activities to military police or local law enforcement agencies for investigation, community members extend the “informal sensor system,” allowing for the better detection and prevention of terrorist activities.

The former chief of operations for OPMG, Colonel Chad B. McRee, put iWATCH ARMY into perspective, stating, “The nature of the terrorist threat warrants constant awareness in all missions and all operational environments. The ability to maintain an appropriate level of awareness demands training, education, and leadership. But it also requires a deliberate and sustained outreach effort, which leverages our entire Army community. Collectively, every member of our Army—Soldiers, DA civilians, family members, and Army contractors—plays an important role by watching for and reporting suspicious activity. If they see something suspicious, they should report it.”

In addition to their role in educating the community about AT awareness, military police also receive and investigate initial reports of suspicious behavior or activity. This entails gathering citizen reports, investigating potential terrorist activity, and initiating the suspicious-activity reporting process that is linked to broader, U.S. government terrorist intelligence capabilities.



Always Ready, Always Alert
Because someone is depending on you

Dissemination of Awareness Products

The AT Branch, OPMG, has developed and disseminated AT awareness products and tools designed to assist leaders in the development and implementation of community awareness programs at unit, installation, and stand-alone facility levels. Recent activities undertaken to ensure that AT awareness messages and products are received by the communities and that they add value at the community level include the—

- Mass distribution of more than one million AT awareness and iWATCH ARMY brochures, posters, and CD/DVD sets containing the products and tools necessary to support local commanders and staffs.
- Publication of high-impact AT awareness and iWATCH ARMY posters in the August 2010 issue of *Soldiers* magazine.
- Provision of AT awareness and iWATCH ARMY information and products to commanders and units through the Army Knowledge Online, AT Enterprise Portal, at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/605757>.

Summary

Military police guide and assist commanders and other leaders who are responsible for the protection of units, installations, and stand-alone facilities by helping them assess the nature of the terrorist threat and employ the full defensive potential of the local community. A focused effort on AT awareness can empower Army community members by providing them with information about the constantly evolving terrorist threat and required personal protection measures. By leveraging the full capabilities of the Military Police Corps, the AT awareness and iWATCH ARMY initiatives can be effective tools in the defense against terrorism.

And as John Wooden indicated—by improving balance, we reduce our vulnerability.

Endnotes:

¹John Wooden and Steve Jamison, *Wooden on Leadership: How to Create a Winning Organization*, McGraw-Hill Companies, 5 April 2005.

²“Army Antiterrorism Strategic Plan,” 10 March 2009 (revised 1 August 2009).

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