

Certain Uncertainty: Preparing for an Unwanted Mission

By Captain Christopher Evans and Captain Lauryn Riley

When man-made or natural disasters overwhelm local, state, and federal response efforts, the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Consequence Management Response Force (CCMRF)—a Title 10¹ task force comprised of active duty Soldiers, Marines, and Airmen—can be called upon to provide lifesaving assistance to civilian authorities within 96 hours of notification. The 93d Military Police Battalion, Fort Bliss, Texas, has been poised to conduct consequence management operations as part of the CCMRF (pronounced “see-smurf”) since 1 October 2010. During a recent 93d Military Police Battalion officer professional development session, Brigadier General David Phillips (chief of the Military Police Corps Regiment and commandant of the U.S. Army Military Police School) reminded officers that “It’s not if, but when” the CCMRF will be activated. As with any contingency response organization, the CCMRF faces its own unique set of challenges, which include logistics, mission command, and integration into civilian response efforts. This article contains a discussion of the challenges that are unique to CCMRF; successful tactics, techniques, and procedures used by the 93d; and the future of the mission.

At its core, CCMRF is about “Americans helping Americans” when civil support and National Guard forces have been overwhelmed. Military police leaders and Soldiers within the CCMRF serve as general-purpose forces in the affected area, supporting civilian response mitigation efforts and assisting fellow Americans. Because the CCMRF is assigned unique mission sets and can only be activated in response to catastrophic disasters, leadership, critical thinking, and flexibility are required at the ground level. The CCMRF mission is one that is tailor-made for military police due to the Corps emphasis on leadership, responsibility (which begins at the junior level), and experience in responding to high-stress situations.

The 93d Military Police Battalion serves as the headquarters for Task Force 93—a force comprised of three military police companies and a chemical company with an additional Biological Integrated Detection System platoon. In the “ready” phase of CCMRF operations, Task Force 93 headquarters exercises mission command over

subordinate elements with training readiness authority only. More problematic is that the official training readiness authority relationship is not established until mission assumption at the start of the fiscal year, while planning and coordination for training is required months before that. Additionally, the training readiness authority relationship inherently constrains the ability of an ad-hoc task force headquarters to conduct mission command, putting the task force in the precarious position of waiting in line behind the organic chain of command. For individual companies tasked with CCMRF operations, this can exacerbate the problem of simultaneously meeting the intent of battalion, brigade, and installation commanders who have the authority to “task” rather than “ask.”

Task Force 93 recently completed Operation Vibrant Response—the Joint Task Force–Civil Support fiscal year 2011 validation exercise. The execution of this large-scale, joint exercise—which included participants from three brigade-size task forces under Joint Task Force–Civil Support—afforded Task Force 93 the opportunity to train as a task force and execute realistic missions. The operation also introduced the element of logistics into the CCMRF mission—an element that had not previously been fully integrated. The daunting task of deploying multiple geographically separate units with the ultimate goal of a phased flow of troops and equipment to the base support installation is an immense challenge that is only complicated by the fact that units under the CCMRF are unable to accurately anticipate mission requirements, since mission assignments are made at the discretion of the incident commander.

Because there is no established mission-essential equipment list for the CCMRF, one of the major issues encountered by the logisticians was the acquisition of non-modified table of organization and equipment items. Task Force 93 considered potential mission sets and acquired the following items as the basis of an equipment package to support the CCMRF mission: triple containers; Base-X® tent systems; environmental control units; commercial chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) apparel, and civilian-compatible automations. All acquired equipment was essential to

the battalion's ability to deploy within 96 hours and self-sustain for up to 30 days.

The 93d Military Police Battalion began conducting mission analysis and holding meetings with key personnel in the Fort Bliss transportation office (G-4) and mission support element (G-3) months before mission assumption. The three organizations worked together on an array of logistic and operational tasks—one of which was outlining requirements for a CCMRF-specific deployment sequence and identifying possible friction points within that sequence. To test those friction points, the 93d conducted a September 2010 emergency deployment readiness drill involving the integration of the plan developers and executors. Synchronization between the planners and the unit movement officer was critical. The emergency deployment readiness drill experience was used to help refine the installation deployment plan; it also brought tangibility to a mission that sometimes seems unlikely to materialize.

Unless authorized by the Secretary of Defense, Title 10 forces do not carry weapons. And military personnel are further constrained by the Posse Comitatus Act,² which prohibits federal troops from actively enforcing the law on American soil. So the question is: How is a young Soldier to deal with a mob of confused, desperate, and possibly violent civilians without the ability to exercise the full spectrum of force? Furthermore, how is a military police Soldier to deal with such a crowd without the authority to enforce law and order? The key is to form partnerships with local and federal civilian law enforcement personnel and to provide assistance while they enforce the law. Leaders at all levels of the military should emphasize that the purpose of the CCMRF is to “care for the people”—not to promote the rule of law.

Understanding the constraints placed on defense support to civil authorities operations is the first step toward effectively executing missions. And based not only on their training in law enforcement and the escalation of force, but also on their experience with working in small elements (where interpersonal communication skills and independent decisionmaking abilities are imperative), military police Soldiers are well equipped to deal with such situations. These skills carry over into the CCMRF mission set, where operations are independent of platoon—or even squad—leadership. This flexibility allows commanders at all levels to provide support to civil authorities without the fear of depleted effectiveness.

Task Force 93 military police units provide the bulk of the manpower used to support local law enforcement and civil agencies during CCMRF operations; accordingly, they are viewed as the main effort of task force operations and Joint Task Force–Civil Support. The primary defense support to civil authorities mission of military police units is to conduct community wellness checks, which involve working with local law enforcement agencies to sweep the



Soldiers conduct mass casualty decontamination.



Soldiers carry an injured civilian to an ambulance during wellness check operations.



A Soldier searches for survivors in the rubble before the unit begins route clearance operations.

affected area for survivors and to provide basic medical support, supplies, and accurate information from the incident command post.

At the end of this fiscal year, the CCMRF will transition to the Defense CBRNE Response Force. The Defense CBRNE Response Force will maintain the same mission and intent as its predecessor, but will be distinctly

different. Rather than being made up of three distinct organizations with responsibility for different sub-missions within task force operations, the Defense CBRNE Response Force will be comprised of three independent, multifunctional CBRNE response task forces, with each of the O-5 level commands having the same capabilities as their sister task forces. For military police, this means that companies will not necessarily serve under a military police higher headquarters or among other military police companies. Instead, one military police company will be assigned to each O-5 command and will perform missions as the only general-purpose force within that task force command. The Defense CBRNE Response Force will provide support to civil authorities within the initial hours or days following a catastrophic incident. Whether this new structure will create a more effective response force remains to be seen. However, military police will

certainly be involved in assisting, protecting, and defending the people of the United States when the time comes.

Endnotes:

¹“Title 10” refers to U.S. Code (USC), Title 10, *Armed Forces*.

²The Posse Comitatus Act (USC, Title 18, *Crimes and Criminal Procedure*, §1385), which was passed in 1878, was developed in response to the U.S. Army occupation of former Confederate States during the Reconstruction Era.

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There's a New Sheriff in Town: The “Fighting Deuce” Takes Over for the “Punishers”

By Private Alyxandra McChesney

On 2 February 2011, the “Punishers” of the 512th Military Police Company, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, introduced their U.S. forces replacements—the “Fighting Deuce” Soldiers of the 272d Military Police Company, Fort Polk, Louisiana—to the police chiefs of Kirkuk, Iraq. Then the Punishers said their goodbyes.

During their 12-month deployment to Kirkuk, the 512th built a new law enforcement program called the Kirkuk Provincial Organized Crime Unit (KPOC-U). “KPOC-U is a program we came up with to advise and assist the investigating officers of Kirkuk to enhance their capabilities to collect evidence to help the Iraqi police in convicting criminals,” said Sergeant First Class Robert Cannon, platoon sergeant, 512th Military Police Company.

Before creating the new unit, U.S. Army military police, civilian police advisers, a criminal investigator from each of the eight Kirkuk districts, and two criminal investigators from the Kirkuk Anticrime Unit attended a 30-day, Iraqi-led class intended to help U.S. forces understand Iraqi police procedures conducted during criminal investigations. Class topics included Iraqi law, crime scene security and integrity, forensic evidence identification, and DNA collection.

KPOC-U was created by combining a wide range of preexisting Kirkuk police force resources. Personnel and assets were consolidated under one command to fight an increasingly organized criminal enterprise within the province.

On 15 June 2010—just two days after class graduation—the new KPOC-U began operation and undertook their first mission. Much of the unit's experience was derived from on-the-job-training.

Upon receipt of a crime report, Soldiers of the 512th Military Police Company accompanied Iraqi police units to the scene of the crime, where they advised, assisted, and mentored their Iraqi counterparts in building the prosecution's case by collecting evidence and taking fingerprints. Establishing the KPOC-U enabled Kirkuk police teams to find and collect evidence, capture suspects, and convict criminals under the Iraqi rule of law.

According to Sergeant First Class Cannon, the crime rate in the city of Kirkuk has been successfully reduced through the KPOC-U program. “When we first started the program, we were going out on two missions or crime scenes a day to collect criminal evidence. Now we go on very few crime scene missions—only a few per week,” he said. “I believe our mission here is complete on our end,” he added. “It feels great to hand over the task to another unit to finish what we started.”

A platoon sergeant with the 272d Military Police Company observed a marked improvement in security since his first tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. “We are excited to be here, and we want to continue with the KPOC-U program,” he said, “But most of all, we want to keep the relationship [that the] 512th has built.”

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