

# Lessons Learned From OUR

By Major William B. McKannay

**Editor’s Note:** *In response to the devastating 12 January 2010 earthquake, Major McKannay was deployed to Haiti, where he served as the provost marshal for Joint Task Force (JTF)–Haiti. He was tasked with unifying the efforts of security forces from all services and several interagency partners to provide physical security for task force assets and to enable traumatized Haitian and United Nations (UN) security forces to regain stable footing.*

The earthquake relief mission, or Operation Unified Response (OUR), tested our collective ability to quickly respond to a devastating natural disaster in a joint, combined, and interagency manner. Although the uniqueness of responses to similar operations sometimes generates lessons learned that can be applied to contingency plans for future disaster relief efforts, it is the commonalities between OUR and other, ongoing operations that produce the greatest lessons learned. And while OUR was short-lived in comparison to other deployments, there were some lessons learned that may be of great benefit to the entire community of military police and Soldiers in general—specifically, in the areas of universality of new doctrine; cross-cutting effects of joint, combined, and interagency operations; and benefits of law enforcement training and operations on mission effectiveness. It is important to understand—

- How changes in doctrine throughout the past three to four years have improved effectiveness in a variety of combat and humanitarian operating environments.
- How experience gained from many years of joint, combined, and interagency operations has improved the capabilities, efficiencies, and overall delivery speed of the Department of Defense (DOD).
- How law enforcement training and operations benefit humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HA/DR) missions.

Hopefully, by sharing the lessons learned along three themes, others within our community can effectively apply them.

## Universality of New Doctrine

The publication of Field Manual (FM) 3-24 was a watershed event for U.S. forces. Although the need for new counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine was realized through challenges faced in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the usefulness of FM 3-24 permeated all types of operations. Its “whole government” approach to operations represented the best means available for quelling disorder and setting operations on the path to success; and soon after its publication, COIN became the mantra of all branches of the armed forces—especially the Army and Marine Corps.<sup>1</sup>

However, the focus of the new COIN doctrine was limited to stemming insurgencies and reducing their support bases. Commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan quickly realized that these operations fell short of the long-term strategic goal of rebuilding failed or failing states. This led to the development of FM 3-07, which is the most comprehensive work on the subject of stability operations ever published by the U.S. Army. It bridges the divides between offense, defense, and stability operations and demonstrates that stability operations are inherently linked to joint forces, other military components, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private actors. Possibly the most important lesson of FM 3-07, as Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV and Lieutenant Colonel Steven M. Leonard point out, is that “In the current conflicts, our inability to achieve interagency unity of effort, to forge a whole-of-government approach founded on shared understanding of a common goal, is the single most significant obstacle to our attaining sustainable, enduring success.”<sup>2</sup>

But those who developed FM 3-24 and FM 3-07 may not have realized how significantly the manuals would impact HA/DR operations. It so happens that the principles employed for COIN and stability operations can also be applied to HA/DR operations. While the “enemy forces” encountered in an HA/DR operation are time and the elements, the primary deciding factor is arguably the same as that for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom—the support of the populace.

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who were involved in OUR wasted no time applying lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to problems they faced in Haiti. As U.S. forces spread across the earthquake-ravaged regions of the country, they identified the greatest needs as public order, food, medical care, and shelter. DOD leaders assembled JTF elements; other government agencies; nongovernmental organizations; local leaders; and private, volunteer organizations to jointly determine priorities and match them with the appropriate corresponding resources. This allowed for the application of economy of force and reinforced the credibility of local agencies and aid groups that will remain engaged long after DOD forces leave. The ability and confidence that Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines applied to the effort



**Military police provide crowd control assistance at a humanitarian aid distribution point in Port Au Prince, Haiti, 27 January 2010.**

was derived from years of experience gained on the streets and in the mountains of Iraq and Afghanistan. According to a Marine officer, “[The earthquake relief effort] is very similar to Iraq and Afghanistan, except that here, there is no bad guy. We’re helping the populace, winning their trust. This is right up our alley. All of us are products of the COIN manual.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Cross-Cutting Effects of Joint, Combined, and Interagency Operations**

The nation-building efforts in the U.S. Central Command area of operations have primarily been a mission of non-DOD U.S. government agencies; but without the unity of effort between DOD and these other U.S. government agencies, progress stalls or—worse yet—is derailed completely. For example, the financial and diplomatic programs implemented and managed by the U.S. State Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other agencies significantly impact the effectiveness of provincial reconstruction teams.<sup>4</sup> And the U.S. Department of Justice is intimately involved in the training and development of host nation police forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Without the daily contact (involving the coordination, synchronization, and resourcing of missions) between these civilian agencies and the U.S. forces conducting provincial reconstruction team and police-training missions, success would have been impossible to achieve.

The knowledge and experience gained by our forces through the long years of joint, combined, and interagency

operations serve as a force multiplier, increasing leader and Soldier confidence. U.S. Service members are now aware that military forces are not the only tool available for mission accomplishment. More importantly, they know which tools can best be leveraged for a particular situation—whether that tool is a sister Service, an allied force with a better cultural understanding, an interagency office, or a nongovernmental organization with better technical expertise.

The U.S. forces that were flown into Haiti on short notice quickly realized that the scope of the problem far exceeded their own capacity. However, their years of experience afforded them the confidence needed to reach out, establish relationships, and find the best solutions for delivering aid and saving Haitian lives. With the benefit of these past interagency experiences, OUR proved to be a model for unity of effort. The U.S. Agency for International Development was designated as the lead federal agency for OUR, while DOD was assigned in support. The commander of JTF-Haiti provided support for the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti; and the U.S. Agency for International Development, JTF-Haiti, and U.S. Embassy staffs were intermixed to provide the holistic planning and delivery of HA/DR. According to Mr. Lynne Platte, director of Narcotics Affairs and senior representative of the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, “. . . what we did here as a team for the Haitian security situation in those early weeks after the earthquake exemplifies the best of military-civilian partnership.”<sup>5</sup>

## Benefits of Law Enforcement Training and Operations on Mission Effectiveness

For years, the Military Police Corps has been known as the “Force of Choice” due to its versatility and scalability. However, the relatively recent focus on combat operations has allowed traditional law enforcement skills to atrophy. Although missions that military police have been admirably performing in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom prepared them fairly well for the HA/DR support to Haiti, the years of reduced focus on police operations in garrison has left a gap between the requirements of operational and garrison mission commanders and the ability of military police to provide comprehensive law enforcement. This capability gap is being addressed across the Military Police Corps Regiment by training military police to higher policing standards and by placing them in positions of greater responsibility within the overall emergency services mission. This emphasis has resulted in the enhancement of security at U.S. Army installations and an improvement in the effectiveness of military police in any operating environment—including that of HA/DR.

The JTF-Haiti provost marshal staff was in the unique and very rewarding position of watching and, at times, influencing the assigned missions of military police involved in OUR. As identified during the OUR planning process, areas that initially required attention included critical-asset security, humanitarian-aid security, and assistance to local and international security forces who were attempting to ensure the timely and effective distribution of aid to the most critical areas. Military police naturally fit into the roles that were created to achieve these planning goals.

In addition, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the UN Police Advisory Mission, and the Haitian National Police were greatly affected by the earthquake and, likewise, required support. The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the UN Police suffered heavy casualties; 83 personnel died (including the head and deputy head of the UN Mission and the deputy UN police commissioner), and hundreds were wounded.<sup>6</sup> The Haitian National Police suffered greatly, as well; 75 personnel were killed, and more than 400 officers were missing or wounded.<sup>7</sup> These crippling losses resulted in a great need for security augmentation, planning, and resourcing support.

At first, commanders gravitated toward using military police forces for critical-site security, convoy security, and personal security escorts—just as they had in recent operations in other theaters. However, as the JTF became more established, requirements for circulation control, antiterrorism/force protection, physical security, law and order operations, and criminal investigations increased. With limited military police assets present in Haiti, the JTF provost marshal cell and the two combat support military police company commanders were forced to use all available assets for these missions. Most of the challenges associated with a lack of depth and experience in traditional military

police functions (antiterrorism/force protection, physical security, law and order operations, criminal investigations) were overcome by working long, hard hours and reaching back to the U.S. Army Military Police School, 16th Military Police Brigade, and 3d Military Police Group (U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command [USACID] [commonly referred to as “CID”]).

Although military police associated with OUR performed their duties extremely well, the U.S. Army Military Police School and home stations are engaged in ongoing efforts to improve training to enhance military police skills and abilities and to provide higher-level services to JTF commanders in similar operations in any environment.

## Conclusion

The losses suffered by Haiti and our UN partners were horrific; however, the global emergency relief response and initial restoration are inspiring. On a personal level, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate as a member of JTF-Haiti—a truly interagency solution to a very complex problem. The lessons that I learned with regard to the importance of permeating up-to-date doctrine throughout the ranks; the benefits of joint, combined, and interagency operations; and the enhancement of military police core competencies will stay with me. I hope that sharing these lessons will have a positive effect on the future of the U.S. Army and Military Police Corps Regiment.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV and Lieutenant Colonel Steven M. Leonard, “Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations: Upshifting the Engine of Change,” *Military Review*, July–August, 2008.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Gerson, “A Deployment of Kindness,” *The Miami Herald*, 17 February 2010.

<sup>4</sup>Nima Abbaszadeh, et. al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations*, Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, January 2008, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Lynne G. Platt, “U.S. Embassy Haiti,” e-mail message, 16 June 2010.

<sup>6</sup>“MINUSTAH Facts and Figures,” *MINUSTAH: United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, United Nations, <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/facts.shtml>>, accessed on 27 January 2010.

<sup>7</sup>Numbers obtained from notes taken by the author while serving as the JTF-Haiti provost marshal, 2010.

## References:

FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, 6 October 2008.

FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 15 December 2006.

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