EMERGING MILITARY POLICE PLATOON ASSETS AND CAPABILITIES

By Staff Sergeant Joshua J. Franklin

Since the American Revolutionary War, military police have undeniably been a critical element in maintaining discipline, justice, and law and order within the U.S. Army. Looking ahead to 2040, it is imperative to acknowledge that technological advancements and shifts in global security will significantly impact the capabilities and duties of military police platoons. Incorporating cutting-edge tools such as drones, robots, artificial intelligence, and simulations will be vital in ensuring that these platoons can effectively minimize risks to personnel.

One of the most significant changes that the Military Police Corps will see is in the area of equipment—specifically, the increased integration of unmanned systems. Drones with weapons capabilities will be used by military police platoons tasked with providing security for assets, and the availability of drones will shape how military police platoons conduct security duties for the movement of convoys in and around the area of operations and ensure the safety and security of forward operating bases, resulting in decreased risk to human lives. Drones with attached weapons capabilities will allow military police platoons to secure restricted areas without cross-contamination and risk to human life. Furthermore, drones offer employment opportunities in areas with limited access, such as an operational environment contaminated with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents.

As with other emerging technologies, there are risks associated with the use of drones—particularly with the mechanics and employment. It is currently not possible to quickly and efficiently maintain drones while in the heat of battle, which could prove detrimental in situations in which there is no other way to stop an advancing force. It is essential that we overcome this obstacle and develop the capability to quickly replace and produce equipment in mass because Russia has been able to destroy 90 percent of Ukraine's drones utilizing electronic warfare.[1] We must purchase, maintain, and replace drones at the end of their lifecycle in rapid fashion; if this process is too lengthy, this type of technology becomes very risky. If we cannot fully use our capabilities, we will fail. Mitigating these issues should be a top priority of not only military police platoons but also the Army in general. Drones have been widely used and commercially available for years, meaning that the Army has a sufficient sample size from which to choose.

Military police assets are undergoing another significant shift as robotic dogs take over the roles of military working dogs in some detachments. The new and improved robotic dogs have superior capabilities and can detect individuals, drugs, and explosives much faster than their live counterparts. The use of robotic dogs will boost efficiency and ensure the safety of military working dogs currently on the battlefield.

A quadrupedal unmanned ground vehicle, or "robotic dog"

However, challenges such as safeguarding robotic dogs from the elements to prevent rusting or overheating must be addressed. Additionally, military working dog handlers must undergo recertification to master the intricacies of caring for mechanized equipment rather than live animals. The way in which these robotic dogs function must also be taken into account. Are they taking commands from someone via an interface, or are they independently

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V Corps could operate as the theater operations and plans unit, the 66th MIB (T) could effectively operate as the theater security unit, and the 21st TSC could operate as the theater logistics and supply unit. To employ the units in this way, USAREUR-AF would need to provide more guidance and conduct more coordination amongst the units, but this would result in the most effective use of the Soldiers within each unit.

In terms of the AAE escort mission, USAREUR-AF could use V Corps to provide combat arms and maneuver personnel to protect lethal aid as it traverses the theater, with the 66th MIB (T) providing the intelligence and threat support and the 21st TSC providing the logistical expertise to most effectively move the lethal aid across multiple countries. The 18th Military Police Brigade could continue focusing on securing the JSA through its law enforcement mission and on working relationships with garrison force protection assets. Not only would this more evenly distribute the mission workload across the theater, but it would also allow the 18th Military Police Brigade to better secure the JSA, which would allow the AAE to more safely traverse the theater.

Providing lethal aid to our Ukrainian allies has proven to be a challenge. However, taking a step back to analyze all aspects of a challenge usually results in the development of multiple solutions. Historical examples of success and failure in similar situations, coupled with current doctrine, can help shape solutions to complex problems. In contrast, other solutions must be created based on current Army threats and mission variables. One thing is certain: The Army is a learning and evolving organization whose perspective is changed with each experience.

Endnotes:

[1]*Collins Online Dictionary*, Harper Collins Publishers, 15 May 2023, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/lethal-aid>, accessed on 13 July 2023.

[2]"Lend-Lease Act (1941)," *Milestone Documents*, National Archives, 28 June 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/lend-lease-act#:~:text=Passed%20on%20March%2011%2C%201941,defense%20of%20the%20United%20States.%22>, accessed on 13 July 2023.

[3]Field Manual (FM) 3-39, *Military Police Operations*, 9 April 2019.

[4]FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1 October 2022, pp. 3-21–3-22.

[5]Joint Publication (JP) 3-10, *Joint Security Operations in Theater*, 6 August 2021, p. vii.

[6]Michael Reinsch, *In a War for Talent—Recruiting, Retention and Opportunity: Army Leaders Work To Grow the Army of 2030*, U.S. Army, 14 October 2022, <https://www.army.mil/article/261158/in_a_war_for_talent_recruiting_retention_and_opportunity_army_leaders_work_to_grow_the_army_of_2030>, accessed on 3 July 2023.

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listening to the commands of military police on the ground like current military working dogs do? While robotic dogs with which military police could independently interact would be advantageous, our adversaries would be more likely to be able to hack the equipment to turn them against us. A robotic dog that is controlled via an interface would help mitigate the risk of hacking by a foreign government and could have a built-in fail-safe feature to effectively "decommission" the equipment.

Another significant change for military police platoons in 2040 will be the development and integration of artificial and machine-learning intelligence. By 2040, military police forces will use artificial intelligence and machine-learning intelligence to analyze vast amounts of data, identify enemy patterns, and detect potential threats with greater accuracy and speed. With equipment that can detect and gather criminal intelligence with greater accuracy and little to no "human error," we may find ourselves placing less risk not only on our Soldiers but also on the civilian population of the country in which our forces are operating.

The use of advanced training technologies is necessary in order for military police to be prepared for various scenarios. Virtual-reality training simulations represent a technology that has become increasingly essential for training regimens. These simulations offer a safe and controlled environment in which personnel can train against realistic scenarios. Furthermore, the use advanced data analytic tools can help identify areas that require improvement. While military police already have access to helpful tools such as "Shoot. Don't Shoot," scenarios with the Engagement Skills Trainer (virtual-reality simulations that replicate the sights, sounds, and even smells of the operational environment) provide unparalleled training. Soldiers often say, "Train as you fight"; these technological advances provide an excellent way to do just that.

In conclusion, the use of technology will significantly enhance the safety of military police platoon forces in 2040. The incorporation of drones, robots, and artificial intelligence technology will make it easier to detect criminal activities. Additionally, virtual-reality simulations can better prepare personnel for real-life situations. While potential risks may be involved, proper planning can ensure that these technologies become indispensable assets for military police platoons in the field.

Endnote:

[1]David Axe, "Russia's Electronic-Warfare Troops Knocked out 90 Percent of Ukraine's Drones," *Forbes*, 24 December 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/12/24/russia-electronic-warfare-knocked-out-90-percent-ukraines-drones/?sh=50a94737575c>, accessed on 22 May 2023.

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