

# Military Police Operational Harmonisation: The “Golden Hour” of Stability Deployments

Gary L. Jones<sup>‡</sup>

## ABSTRACT

When the threat level of foreign stability operations increases, military police units can make an effective contribution, especially when conducted with the Australian Federal Police. It is argued that, if Australian military police can apply police harmonisation techniques and improve their ability to conduct civilian-like policing duties, then their role in future rule-of-law operations are likely to be more effective.

**Keywords:** military police, stability operations, peacekeeping, humanitarian missions, rule-of-law operations

## INTRODUCTION

There is a generally accepted view that as military forces move from combat operations to stability operations there is a transition period known as the *Golden Hour* of security (Jones, Wilson, Rathmell and Riley, 2005). This period is seen as being critical for laying the foundation for the development of foreign nation's ability to govern. The Golden Hour, also known as the *Deployment/Enforcement Gap* (Oakley, Dziedzic, and Goldberg, 1998), can be defined as the immediate aftermath of combat operations. Nonetheless, this period can vary depending on the political situation in-country; from several weeks to several months.

This paper argues that in high-threat, non-permissive, and time-sensitive environments where Australian military forces may be deployed, Australian military police units should be called on to provide situational awareness reports to the civilian policing authorities during the lead-up to stability operations. This is because military police operate with combat units from the time of first deployment. But, for such a strategy to succeed, a culture of interoperability, operationalised through a joint cell structure is likely to be needed. This relationship would provide the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and its partner, the International Deployment Group (IDG), with intelligence during this transition period. Finally, it is argued that to ensure the success of this strategy,

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<sup>‡</sup> Corresponding author: gljones1981@yahoo.com.au

Australian military police will need to develop policing skills that are capable of civilian support, but also provide policing tactics to secure the host nation's population, including working with civilian police forces (CIVPOL) during this transition.

## BACKGROUND

Australian Military Police have been deployed with the Australian Army in wars and peacekeeping operations since the end of the Second World War. These deployments include all Australian Defence Force (ADF) Service Police--from the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces, Korea, Vietnam and numerous peacekeeping operations, such as Cambodia, Somalia and East Timor, where law enforcement of civilian and military persons was a primary task (Buckingham, 2014), through to conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and border protection operations, where Military Police have provided close personal protection, detention and internment operations, and policing of civilian and military personnel on military establishments. Overall, the role of the Australian Military Police is to provide:

- 1 manoeuvre and mobility support (mobility support; manoeuvre support; route reconnaissance and monitoring; military road network regulation and enforcement);
- 2 internment and detention (classify captured personnel; handle captured personnel; manage internment and detention facilities and repatriation and release of captured personnel);
- 3 law enforcement (support morale and discipline; enforce military and civil law; law and order restoration; liaison with other policing and civilian agencies); and
- 4 security (area security; logistic support security; point of entry/departure security; physical security). (Military Police Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, 2008)

While the role military police play in a traditional context is to ensure manoeuvre and mobility support, and internment and detention operations, it is through the application of policing and security duties that the end-state is achieved. Australian Military Police conduct operations according to a system of priority levels; from offensive operations, to defensive operations, to stability operations, and finally, to enabling operations. The priority of operational support depends

on the type of operation. For instance, in the case of offensive operations, resources would normally be focused on manoeuvre and mobility support, and internment and detention operations. However, in stability operations, law enforcement may be the primary task. Military police use a centralised command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) structure that permits a rapid change in operational focus based on priority (Military Police Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, 2008). But this structure lacks the interoperability needed for effective transition to civilian handover.

## RATIONALE

Australian Military Police are in the unique position to be able to work across a range of military operations in both high-threat, conventional operations, and low-threat peacekeeping and humanitarian operations (Force 2020, 2002). *Rule-of-law*, in some form, will always be a core tenet of these operations, and the Australian Defence Force has a policy of using a Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) approach to military operations to ensure this outcome (Force 2020, 2002); that includes working with the Australian Federal Police (Joint Operations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2007). Part of this policy is for policing agencies to work toward a common goal that will result in security and stability.

Australian Federal Police officers have worked alongside the Australian Defence Force personnel on several occasions. Take, for example, East Timor and the Solomon Islands deployments where these organisations operated under the United Nations' chapter VII powers (being the ability of the UN Security Council to act in respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression from, and to nation states) (Greener and FisSh, 2015), and under the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) agreement (Greener, 2009). During these types of operations, the Australian Federal Police's International Deployment Group expanded its functional areas. This included institutional capacity building, training and mentoring programs, as well as the development of a more robust crisis response capability and post-conflict rule-of-law development programs (Dhalstrom, 2007).

Military police units assume some of the law enforcement related roles and responsibilities because they are deemed *combat survivable*, and this ability allows military police greater freedom of movement within high-threat environments that exist during initial stages of engagement. Nonetheless, what is lacking is some of the higher-level policing skills, such as problem-oriented

policing and community policing experience that the Australian Federal Policing have. But, apart from this shortcoming, the ability to operate in a combat zone emerges as an asset during the Golden Hour. International expectations are that policing and rule-of-law enforcement will be a high-priority for stability operations, yet in an asymmetric, high-threat environment, there are times where the civilian police cannot move around the area of operation because the security situation is unstable, or at other times not in position to implement their mission mandate without a large police presence. This is because these Australian Federal Police are not trained to operate as a combat unit, nor is it their role.

### PROPOSED DOCTRINAL POSITION

It is criminological truism that law is the prerequisite for social order; so, if peace is the common goal, then the introduction of law and order should not be delayed (Hills, 2009). Therefore, it is posited that during an operation's Golden Hour military police should be used to bridge the gap.

If it is accepted that the Australian Military Police, with its combination of general policing skills and its experience in operating in combat zones, is what sets it apart from the civilian police forces, then the transition to civil order could be achieved quickly via the use of an AFP–Military Police Interagency Cooperation Cell. Operating a joint cell structure to the military police C<sup>2</sup> and the AFP's reporting lines would also ensure that when the security situation is stable, civilian policing responsibilities are handed-over to the Australian Federal Police. (Szayna, Eaton and Richardson, 2007).

### NEED FOR INTEROPERABILITY

#### **Tactical Level Criminal Intelligence During the Golden Hour**

Criminal intelligence is an important element of being able to make the transition during the Golden Hour. Military intelligence is the product of information about the theater's terrain, weather, activities, infrastructure, as well as the opposition force's order-of-battle and intentions (Intelligence Doctrine, 2008), whereas criminal intelligence informs commanders about the nature, extent, and effect of criminal threats. Criminal intelligence provides insights into the criminal activities and criminal personalities involved in a theatre of operations. While the Australian Military Police has a dedicated Service Police Intelligence Office, this Office is a non-deployable unit, and as such, nearly all of the field intelligence services within the Australian Defence Force have been provided by

a single service intelligence organisation. This is because the Australian Military Police has not made criminal intelligence collection an operational priority, and what criminal intelligence that is collected, is directed to military intelligence.

This shortcoming will need to be addressed; it will require military police units to improve their data collection and analysis in order to align itself with their civilian counterparts. This is because criminal intelligence is a key aspect in shortening the length of time Golden Hour operations persist. It does this by providing commanders with greater understanding of their area of operations.

Although related, criminal intelligence differs from military intelligence in several ways; principally, the rules and regulations for conducting military intelligence activities can only be conducted outside of Australia. Criminal intelligence activities are conducted within Australia by duly authorised agencies. However, the collections of criminal information by a military unit and shared with civilian police forces during a foreign stability operation could step over the demarcation line separating military and Australian civilian intelligence activities.

It would be fair to say that there has always been a level of mistrust of the military undertaking policing activities and some of the issues have a logical argument, especially the historic misuse of the military through internal security in some Latin American and African countries. Indeed, Western militaries have been reluctant to take on policing activities, which stems, in part, from the Weinberger-Powell doctrine the United States implemented (Record, 2007: 82), where the basic use of the military was to fight and win a war “quickly and decisively, with a clear exit strategy.” But a strict interpretation of this doctrine is incompatible with stability operations.

As civil conflicts unfold, and geo-political influences bear more and more on nation states, issues such as the emergency of transnational crime groups during stability operations, requires a re-think. Nevertheless, an intelligence sharing arrangement for overseas stability operations could be drafted, as will be discussed.

### **Civilian Police and Military Police Co-Operation**

While civilian and military police interaction have been a somewhat taboo subject about an integrated structure, the security situation in some theatres

requires a re-think of this position. The current mindset is reflected by Greener and Fish (2013), who state that:

Although members of the military often suggested they were capable of performing a number of policing tasks, our research made it clear that there was among military as well as police personnel a level of discomfort about this possibility. ... Despite this unease, however, all military personnel said they were comfortable working with ... and an increased willingness to work in support of police objectives.

While the blurring of policing between civil and military lines is not enviable, it is no doubt necessary at times when dealing with high-threat security situations and finite resources. Greener and Fish (2013) do identify that while some military units are the “least-worst” options for effecting policing at the tactical level, it is arguable that this option could become an “enforced-necessity.” *Enforced*, because the Australian Federal Police is not able to deal with high-legality, asymmetric threats, and hence is reliant on the Australian Military Police to perform this role. *Necessary*, because the Golden Hour is time-critical; an effective transition could be hindered by the security situation, or ultimately, result in failure if crime and internal instability are not brought under control quickly.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### **Precedent**

There are examples where military police have been the lead-agency or assist CIVPOL elements during the Golden Hour. Such cases usually involve situations where forces are still engaged in combat, but a policing presence is required;<sup>1</sup> an active insurgency is on-going; or where criminal activities involving armed offenders are prevalent. At the beginning of the 1999 intervention in Kosovo, the Feldjager (German Military Police), commenced community policing, taking witness statements and conducting field investigations into allegations of war crimes (Brocades Zaalberg, 2006). Again, that year, with the outbreak of violence in East Timor, Australian and Coalition military police took a lead policing role as the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) moved from combat patrolling to constabulary tasks. Policing and law-and-order patrols commenced for Australian and Coalition military police in-theatre as well as providing support to CIVPOL in war crimes investigations (Greener and Fish, 2015). Later in 2009, in Afghanistan the German Feldjager

assisted their CIVPOL counterparts by collaborating in general police training. The Feldjager also trained Afghanistan National Police personnel in combat skills; such as weapons handling and shooting techniques, unarmed combat, first-aid training, conducting vehicle searches, and or high-risk security duties (Friesendorf and Krempel, 2011).

### **Interagency Co-Operation Cell**

To implement the transition from military to civilian control during the Golden Hour requires some form of joint command and control that is not featured in existing structures. A simple, yet functional, model for C<sup>2</sup> that immediately presents itself, is to use an Interagency Co-operation Cell. Without such a command and control arrangement, a disjointed application of policing practices and procedures could inadvertently evolve, resulting in a less stable situation. By way of example, take the case of the 2003 American-led intervention in Iraq—Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, American military police were assumed to be experts in policing. However, this did not prove to be the case during the transition period. This was discovered when US military police received the mission to develop host nation police; since that time, reports suggest that the American military police struggled because of a lack of understanding of the role of civilian police, police management at the [operational] level, and the expertise to design a long-term, coherent plan for development and reform (Dillon, 2013). As a result, several civilian contractors were employed as a way to help resolve the problem.

### **A Lesson Learned**

The American experience in Iraq is an important lesson to be learned; that is, Australian Military Police should understand policing practices beyond the military application so that their effectiveness increases in joint civilian operations. If they lack these skills, then, like the lesson learned by the US in Iraq, they may find themselves replaced by other personnel, either civilian, or perhaps, other coalition military police. This skills gap should be a rallying point for Australian Military Police to commence teaching modern policing practices as part of its training curriculum.

## **Civilian Police Deployment**

Experience has shown that when civilian police elements are deployed, it is a slow process. And, if they are to be deployed into a high-threat environment, they cannot be stationed in conflict locations where the need is great. The reasons are varied, but include practical as well as political issues. By way of example, the security threat they face is the most obvious practical issue, and government's reluctance to commit police because of the financial costs reflects a political dimension (US Department of State and Defence, 2006). These issues are exacerbated by frequent personnel rotations that can exhaust the supply of fresh police (Hansen, 2002). Ironically, this is compounded by the popularity of these interventions from institutions such as the UN.

## **Development of an Interoperable Doctrine**

How might an interoperability doctrine be developed? As with many operational agreements, an officer-level working party could be established to draft a number of documents that could be discussed at higher echelons; eventually, being signed-off at Ministerial or Cabinet level. These documents would logically include a memorandum of understanding between Australian Military Police and the Australian Federal Police; the doctrine itself, which would lay-out the principles, polices, and operational procedures of working as a joint force, as well as incorporating an ethics statement to guide operational personnel at all levels of command; and finally, a set of capability statements, a list equipment requirements, and a training curriculum that ideally includes pre-deployment exercises.

In drafting these documents, it needs to be made clear that joint operations would be restricted to overseas rule-of-law operations. In no way should the doctrine suggest the integration of military police and civilian police services within Australia, or the paramilitary development of any of Australia's state police forces or the Federal Police. The doctrine need only concerned itself with developing units of the Australian Military Police and Australian Federal Police to operate as a unified tactical force in stability operations (Eaton, 2009).

## **CONCLUSION**

Soldiers were once expected to be warriors, now they are expected to also assist in nation building. They must be prepared to help re-establish institutions, which includes assisting re-build local police forces. They must be able to facilitate

local governance through the rule-of-law. To do this it requires coordination and cooperation with many international agencies, intergovernmental organisations, and host-nation authorities (Galvan, 2012).

This paper puts forward the argument that in the transition from combat operations to stability operations, planners would benefit by acknowledging the role of military police could play if its *police* mandate was underscored as much as its *military* moniker. It is through military police's policing role *and* its ability to assist in force projection on the battlefield that could provide an advantage over the current doctrine of separating military actions from civilian policing.

There is no doubt the future of stability operations is one that will be fraught with danger. There is little doubt that policing will always be a key component in ensuring the rule-of-law is re-established. As soldiers and civilian police evolve to take on these new responsibilities, so does the Australian Military Police. To ensure that Australia's military police are ready for that challenge, the doctrinal ground-work needs to begin.

#### ENDNOTE

1. That is to say, *three-block warfare*, a concept by Marine General Krulak that at certain points in time, within a three-block radius in urban environments, the military could potentially be providing humanitarian assistance, holding two warring tribes apart (peacekeeping operations) and be fighting a highly lethal mid-intensity battle (Collins, 2004).

#### DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and are not intended to reflect the views of the Australian Defence Force, the Commonwealth or New South Wales governments, or any of their agencies.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Gary L. Jones** holds a Bachelor of Policing degree and is currently completing his studies for the degree of Master of Leadership and Management (Policing and Security) at Charles Sturt University. He has had operational experience in civilian policing as a former New South Wales Police Officer, and in military policing as an Australian Defence Forces Investigator. His area of research is the use of military police in domestic and international settings.

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