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# For A Military Police Corps

**By Colonel Demetrio Camua, GSC (Inf)**



LONG with the development of the major components and services of the Armed Forces, the Military Police ought by now, in a manner of speaking, to assume a personality of its own, in order that it may attain maximum efficiency and effectiveness, in keeping with the increasing complicated organization and mission of the AFP.

As new doctrines and concepts have developed along with the tasks with which the Military (Air, Navy) Police have been charged, their role is fast becoming well defined, their

value and usefulness appreciated in all the services. But there is still something lacking, or rather many things, about which one cannot rest with a peace of mind that can be achieved only when the numerous problems have been studied and every avenue to perfection exploited. Most of these are possible to be accomplished only if the Military (Air, Navy) Police were organized as a branch of service with an organization, personality and cohesiveness of its own.

## **Historical Background**

The need for military police was

recognized from the very beginning of military history. The Office of the Provost Marshal has been traced back to the time of the Norman conquest of England in the eleventh century. The Provost (pronounced "Provo" the "st" silent) was appointed personally by the king to maintain peace, safeguard the royal interests, and handle disciplinary matters. In time, his office assumed more duties of a disciplinary nature within the army, until by the sixteenth century he had become a permanent member of the military establishment. He was also provided with assistant Provost Marshals and government-paid troops, which by the time of Henry VIII were referred to as Provost companies.

#### Growth of American Military Police

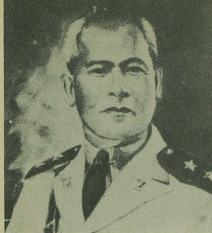
In the American colonies, as early as 1611, a provost marshal was serving in the colony of Virginia, under a martial code drawn up by the Deputy Governor.

The US colonial Army during the American revolution adopted with little change the forms, titles and administrative procedures of the British army. A Provost Martial accordingly was appointed to the army of the United Colonies by his Excellency George Washington in January 1776. A Provost Corps was established by Congressional resolution two years later. In September of 1862, the first Provost Marshal General of the US Army was appointed. His main function was related to the draft laws then in force, but his subordinates stationed all over the country were charged

with apprehending deserters, arresting disloyal persons, inquiring into and reporting treasonable practices, seizing stolen government property and detecting spies. To enable them to discharge their duties efficiently they were "authorized to call on any available military force within their respective district, or else to employ the assistance of citizens, constables, sheriffs or police officers..."

By 1866, however, the office of the Provost Marshal General was abolished and military police work was given to unit commanders. This situation, a far-from-satisfactory one, existed until the entry of the United States into World War I.

The arrival of American Expeditionary Forces in France in 1917, brought to sharp realization the necessity for military police supervision and control of the troops. A provost marshal was appointed to General Pershing's staff in July 1917, as advisor on provost marshal and military police matters. In 20 September 1918, Brig. General Harry Hill Bandholtz became Provost Marshal General, AEF. The establishment of a military police corps for the duration of the emergency was approved by the War Department on 15 October 1918, only a month before the signing of the Armistice. Up to this time, military police duties had been performed by all types of units, hastily activated as the necessity arose without special supervision or technical training. Serious defects in organization, unsuitability of personnel, lack of training, and absence of approved doctrine were apparent, but the early



Maj. Gen. JOSE DE LOS REYES  
First Provost Marshal General

end of hostilities prevented many needed reforms.

General Bandholtz, whose long experience as commander of the Philippine Constabulary made him eminently fitted for evaluating the merits and faults of the organization, summed up a report he submitted in 1919 as follows:

"Maintenance of a specially organized Military Police Corps, in our peacetime military establishment with units that may be actively engaged in Military Police duties, particularly during maneuvers and field training, whose personnel shall be carefully selected and highly trained, having such *Esprit de Corps* and intelligent appreciation of their functions, as will enable the individual Military Police to perform his often delicate duties with assurance and certainty, yet without offense or embarrassment. Then in case of war we will have the nucleus to supply instructors for needed expansion, and trained units to be the first troops to report at any training area."

### Military Police Development in the AFP

In the AFP, a provost marshal general was first designated sometime in 1936 in the person of Maj. Gen. Jose de los Reyes when the Constabulary became a division of the Philippine Army, although the former continued to discharge its normal police duties. This designation was changed when the Constabulary was separated from the PA by virtue of Commonwealth Act No. 343 of 23 June 1938.

The first officer to have ever been given the title of Provost Marshal General was Brig. Gen. Oboza as head of the Military Police Command under the USAFFE, AFWESPAC and later the AFPAC. But the Military Police Command was essentially a post-liberation version of the Philippine Constabulary, whose time-honored name was still sullied by its unfortunate association with the Japanese Bureau of Constabulary. Trained under military police training programs, the main mission of the MPC was the same as that of the pre-war Constabulary with stress on its jurisdiction over the civilian populace, although its missions included the enforcement of military orders and regulations. As it was, the MPC did not really support military units, because by late 1945 and 1946, after the surrender of Japan, these MPC units existed in most places in the islands as the only existing units of the AFP, most others having been deactivated.

In Luzon four MP Battalions were activated from the PA about that

time and trained as MP units distinct from the MPC. After training these were attached to US Army installations and bases. Then Major Cabal, now Chief, PC, commanded the 2nd MP Bn, Major Santiano, the 1st MP Bn, while Major Merritt, now DPMG commanded the 3rd MP Bn.

The inactivation of the MPC simultaneous with the activation of the PC on 31 December 1947 brought to an end the designation of its Chief as Provost Marshal General.

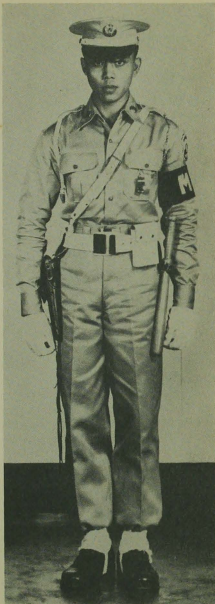
Col. Florentino V. Cardenas, Inf. (GSC) was the first Provost Marshal General of the AFP. He was designated as such on 19 Feb. 1953 with the activation of the Provost Marshal General Section, GHQ as a unit of AFP under T/O 19-7 dtd 22 Jan. 53. The unit was organized as a special staff section.

This section was then allotted three officers and five EM with the mission to:

(a) Coordinate activities of military police units (to include PAF and PN) of the AFP.

(b) Exercise operational control over Military Police Units (to include PAF and PN), AFP not assigned or attached to subordinate units.

Prior to the activation of the PMGS, however, three companies of Air Police at each of the three PAF Air bases, the 202d MP Co. of the Philippine Army Training Command and the Area MP Companies of 1st and 2nd Military Areas had been organized and there was existing as early as 1949 the 303d MP Co., and in 1950 the MP Section, both of HSG, GHQ AFP, Camp Murphy, a



*Military Policeman, Army*



Military Policeman, Air Force

total of eight MP units, all without upper level guidance, uncoordinated in their activities, and hampered by lack of doctrine and by serious personnel problems.

Subsequently, three new units were organized, the MP Cos. of the 3rd Military Area (7 July '53) and the 4th Military Area (1 March '54) and the SP Det., PN (19 Oct. '54). Still in the process of organization, is an MP unit of the PC to serve HPC.

On 16 October 1954 the 303d MP Co. was relieved from HSG, GHQ and assigned to the Office of the Provost Marshal General. The transfer included personnel, equipment and records. From solely a member of the Special Staff, GHQ AFP the PMG became also a commander of troops. The 303d MP Co. was given the jurisdiction of the Manila Area, the MP units of the major services were thereafter limited in their activities to the posts of the units they served.

#### Defects of Present Set-Up

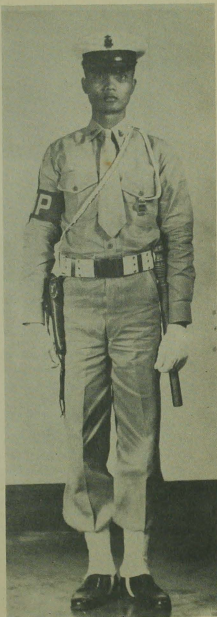
This is the present set-up of the Military Police. The PMG exercises staff supervision over units assigned with the various commands, in this case, all units mentioned above except the 303d MP Co. But this is as far as it goes. Funds for travel are limited, so that not much could be done in the way of supervision and inspections. Personnel turnover is so fast, that as has often happened, a PM has not learned much of his job when he is again relieved. In one area the situation was such that no PM was on duty, because the area commander did not have the officer to spare. In an-

other area, a company commander complained that many of his replacements were EM awaiting retirement! **Advantages as a Branch of Service**

What advantages can be gained from making the military police a branch of service?

Foremost among them is in the field of personnel selection. Military police work is a highly specialized job — almost equal to the specialization required in the Judge Advocate and the Signal Services. One cannot just pick up any soldier and expect him to do the work efficiently and correctly, if at all. Personnel must be selected for certain desirable basic qualities and then trained well. The officers must be handpicked, and likewise trained. Not everyone can become a policeman, one is tempted to say that with proper training, anyone can be a Signal man, a Quartermaster, a Dental technician or even a passable lawyer. But a law enforcement man in a military organization definitely must possess certain qualities of personal and moral courage, a detective's instinct, a predisposition to dealing with all sorts of people under all sorts of tight situations and a few other necessary qualities.

Incidentally, there is an MP ROTC (Lyceum) but no means by which officer material are assured of commissions in the military police. And for several years since 1945 officers have been sent to the Provost Marshal School in the US, but their training have been wasted in assignments which did not call for the knowledge they thus acquired. A classic example is that of an officer who took a special course on the poly-



*Military Policeman, Marines*

graph but who on arrival was assigned in the Adjutant General's Office of a major command. An MP service will provide the means for selection of enlisted personnel, group under its wing those officers whose training and aptitudes fit them for police work and thus provide the needed nucleus of highly trained men that will be a strong base for expansion in case of emergency.

There is one personnel aspect little appreciated but very essential in honest and effective police work, and that is security in office as long as the job is done right. This is no supposition. It has actually happened that an apprehension has brought down on the head of a military policeman all the wrath and the pressure for his relief to "Huklandia or Jolo." Now, there's nothing wrong with an assignment in those places, but there's something fundamentally wrong if a police officer is relieved on pressure because he stuck to the rules and did his job. But of course we have yet to see a policeman who is loved by all. The idea at any rate, is to protect a military policeman in his job from an influential or pseudo-influential violator. A service with high morale and *esprit de corps* will afford this protection and assurance. In this connection it may be mentioned that, surprisingly, no enforcement problem of this kind has been encountered among ranking officers. It is among company grade officers that embarrassing incidents have taken place.

Then there is the matter of improved training, and the development of doctrines. Without a service, mi-

litary police training will be, as now, haphazard, irregular and never uniform. Doctrines, which develop best in the searching explorations of the service school conducted by experienced officers under the right atmosphere and surroundings to think them out, will be up-dated, and continuously restudied. Doctrines are developed in schools and staff rooms. Seldom if ever, are they hatched and grown in the field. Under the present loose relations between MP units, a service school cannot be justified nor would it be practicable.

All the possible advantages that one can think of eventually lead to the main aim of higher efficiency and maximum effectiveness. This of course is the final yardstick. And if we attain for our military police organization, perhaps we will have fewer of those offenses which, committed in small, imperceptible doses, are poisoning the public mind against the AFP. Perhaps, even, the singular AFP phenomenon of an officer in desertion being promoted while absent, will disappear from our list of administrative blunders, when our apprehension program has developed to perfection. We need a highly efficient military police to start with.



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