



Military Police



Military Corner

The need for military police has been evident to American military commanders since the struggle for national independence. Whenever the United States engaged in warfare, some form of police

element emerged to assist its leaders in maintaining various aspects of discipline. Surfacing when necessity dictated, the Military Police Corps evolved through several phases, each meeting the needs of a particular

period in American history. Assuming increased responsibilities, military police established their place as combat soldiers who have the professional knowledge and flexibility needed to perform a variety of missions in war and peace.

Although soldiers have been delegated to perform police type duties in the military since the beginning of armies, the seed that germinated into the birth of the modern Military Police Corps in 1941 can be traced back to the American Revolutionary War. At the beginning of the American Revolution, the Continental Army adopted with little change the forms, titles, and administrative procedures of the British Army including those pertaining to military police.

On 1 June 1778, at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, after the harshest winter the Continental Army ever endured, General George Washington formed a special unit—a troop of light dragoons—soldiers on horseback. The troop would be called the Marechaussee Corps, from the French provost marshal units dating back to the twelfth century. The Marechaussee Corps had the duty and responsibility of maintaining order and enforcing the Articles of War in the often unruly and sometimes undependable American Army. The Marechaussee Corps was the first MP-like organization in the United States and performed many duties much like the Army Military Police Corps of today. Although the Marechaussee Corps was disbanded in November 1783, the men of that unit established the high standard for behavior and dedication to duty that became the modern-day Military Police motto.

A Provost Marshal General's Office and Corps of Military Police were established in 1941. Prior to that time, except during the Civil War and World War I, there was no regularly appointed Provost Marshal General or regularly constituted Military Police Corps, although a "Provost Marshal" can be found as early as January 1776, and a "Provost Corps" as early as 1778.

The most recent landmark development in the evolution of the Military Police Corps occurred on 26 September 1986. On that date, the 45th Anniversary of the founding of the Corps, the Department of the Army activated the Military Police Corps Regiment and designated Fort McClellan, Alabama, as its home.

There are 21 specific Military Police covers currently listed.

[<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/mp.htm>]

