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Evaluating the Military Police Corps' Active Shooter Preparedness Plan

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Abstract

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MA, American Military University, 2011

BS, American Military University, 2009

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan is inadequate because several updated tactics, techniques, and procedures that have been developed over the past 20 years and implemented by civilian law enforcement agencies have not been incorporated, leaving the Corps less prepared during active shooter events. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine how Military Police Corps leaders trained their law enforcement and support personnel to respond to an active shooter event. The institutional analysis and development framework was used to analyze the day-to-day operational decisions within the Military Police Corps. Data for the qualitative case study were collected through semi structured interviews with 15 Military Police Corps leaders and soldiers across 5 military police battalions in the United States and Europe and military police training records. These data were subjected to axial and open coding, followed by a thematic analysis procedure. Participants perceived that the Corps' active shooter preparedness training hours and methodology are insufficient to maintain proficiency in active shooter preparedness, that dispatchers are not properly trained on receiving active shooter calls, and that live exercise training for first responders is inadequate. Recommendations for Military Police Corps leadership include updating the training methodology for first responders and dispatchers, providing better tactical equipment for first responders, and revising policies in order to improve the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness program. Implementation of these recommendations may promote public safety.

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Dedication

I dedicate this academic achievement to my two amazing sons, Aaron and Averie. Both of you are extremely intelligent and gifted and can achieve anything once you put your mind and heart into it! Never give up on your dreams and goals. To Michelle, my lovely wife, I could not have done this without your support, encouragement, and belief in me. Thank you, “babe”; I love you with all my heart, and I thank our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for you on a daily basis! To my parents, Robert and Annie Harris, thanks for instilling the value of hard work in me at a very early age; the things I learned from both of you have served me well! To my aunt “Bae” (Ida Harris) and aunt “Pooh” (Willie Mae Garner), thanks for the tough love (Aunt Pooh) and unwavering support (Aunt Bae) throughout my formative years. Finally, I dedicate this research to law enforcement personnel (civilian and military) who place their lives on the line on a daily basis by protecting and serving their communities!

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I wish to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for making this possible. I offer my profound thanks to Dr. Ian Cole for agreeing to be my committee chair and for the insightful comments to my drafts and Dr. Greg Koehle for also agreeing to serve on my committee. Their contribution enhanced this research immensely! I am particularly grateful to the participant pool for taking the time to freely share their experiences with active shooter preparedness planning. To my wife, I greatly appreciated your prayers, understanding, and patience during this journey; you were my inspiration!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

When the Columbine High School shooting occurred in 1999, many in the United States were stunned that 12 students had been killed and 24 were injured in an upper middle-class area; normally, this type of tragedy is not associated with affluent areas (Jenkins, 2017). Although the Columbine shooting was not the first active shooter event in the United States, it seized the attention of society because the tactics used by responding law enforcement officials gave the shooters 30 additional minutes to carry out their assault (Jaymi, Schildkraut, & Stafford, 2016). The violence shocked communities throughout the nation because of the location of the attack, the perpetrators, and the carnage resulting from the deadly onslaught (Jaymi, Schildkraut, & Stafford, 2016).

Because the Columbine incident presented a new tactic for active shooters, it compelled civilian law enforcement agencies throughout the country to review and change their standard operating procedures on responding to an active shooter (Police Executive Research Forum [PERF], 2014). Prior to Columbine, law enforcement first responders would normally respond to the scene, set up a perimeter, and wait for the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team to arrive on the scene; past incidents revealed that armed shooters who took hostages did not do so with an intent to kill as many people as possible (PERF, 2014). After the shooting at Columbine, many civilian police agencies changed their approach to active shooter preparedness. For example, leaders updated their training methodology for first responders, which required first

responders to engage the active shooter upon arriving at the scene, they provided better tactical equipment to first responders, revised policies in order to improve their organizations active shooter preparedness program, and they provided active shooter preparedness training to their 911 dispatchers to assist them with soliciting vital information from callers.

Although Columbine triggered a paradigm shift within the civilian law enforcement community, it generated no policy changes within the Military Police Corps. The Columbine event occurred in April 1999, and domestic active shooter preparedness training did not become a part of the military police training curriculum until 2010 (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010), which was 1 year after the Fort Hood 2009 active shooter event and 11 years after Columbine. The 2009 Fort Hood active shooting event caused Congress and senior leaders in the U.S. Department of Defense to address active shooter events, which in turn placed pressure on the U.S. Department of the Army to address the issue (Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 2010).

The 2009 Fort Hood active shooting event encouraged Military Police Corps leaders to take positive steps towards improving active shooter response in light of the increased active shooter incidents throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Defense, 2013). For example, Military Police Corps leaders have implemented several programs aimed at mitigating the effects of an active shooter. First, they have required all law enforcement personnel and security guards to receive active shooter response training annually. Although the Military Police Corps' Active Shooter Preparedness

Training Support Package (TSP) does not mandate a certain amount of training hours annually, unit training schedules illustrated that they trained about 14 hours per year (Unit Training Schedules [2014 thru 2016]). Second, leaders positioned Site on Wheels on major Army installations to patch together different communications systems and serve as a backup or replacement repeater that allows military police to communicate with local law enforcement officers (U.S. Department of the Army, 2010). Third, leaders instituted the Automated Installation Entry program, which is used to screen individuals' criminal background history when they enter military installations (U.S. Department of the Army, 2013). However, there are many areas within the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan that need updating to meet civilian police industry standards, according to Harvey (2019). For instance, the Military Corps published a template in 2010 for responding to an active shooter event that has been criticized for its lack of customizability (U.S. Department of the Army, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of the Army (2010), the active shooter preparedness template was designed to be general so that it could be tailored to separate installations. However, the template lacks guidance on how Army installations can use the template to create a customized active shooter preparedness plan (U.S. Department of the Army, 2010). Researchers (Blair, Nichols, Burns, & Curnutt, 2013; Borelli, 2013; Lankford, 2016) have illustrated the importance of an individualized active shooter preparedness plan for each organization or installation. Custom-made plans improve the response time and overall management of an active shooter event because they allow the first responders to perform live exercises

within their area of responsibility, which increases knowledge of the terrain the responder may have to operate in during an event (Borelli, 2013). Custom plans also provide the opportunity to establish collaboration agreements with adjacent jurisdictions (Kapucu, Arslan, & Demiroz, 2010).

Although many civilian law enforcement agencies have developed procedures to respond to and manage active shooter events, the majority of the 17,985 law enforcement agencies in the United States have fewer than 10 officers and few resources at their disposal (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015). To have an effective active shooter preparedness plan, all law enforcement agencies need proper resources, human capital, and the support of the community. I conducted this phenomenological study to identify best practices and lessons learned when responding to an active shooter event. Findings may be applicable to civilian and military law enforcement agencies. Implications for military agencies include providing knowledge that leaders of the Military Police Corps may be able to use to provide better training and equipment for their personnel, which may eventually save lives.

This chapter includes the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research question, and the theoretical framework for this phenomenological study. I present the nature of the study, define key terms, and discuss existing research regarding the challenges law enforcement personnel face during an active shooter event. Additionally, I identify the gap in the literature that engendered the study as well as

discuss the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. I summarize key points in the chapter's conclusion.

Background

Improving the Military Police Corps' law enforcement experiences has important and long-lasting consequences for base security. Finding ways to improve the Military Police Corps' emergency management and law enforcement skill sets may help mitigate the loss of life, injuries, and significantly reduce damage to government and personal property (Blair, Nichols, Burns, & Curnutt, 2013; Borelli, 2013; Lankford, 2016). Previous researchers (Capellan, 2015; Feemster, 2010; Sanow, 2013) have shown that the Military Police Corps' active shooter response plan is out-of-date and lacks key elements that could be used to save the lives of civilians and first responders. The types of emergencies law enforcement personnel confront on a daily basis are growing in complexity, and law enforcement training curriculum must change to adapt to the type of real-world issues responders encounter while performing their duties (Feemster, 2010).

Active shooter training by civilian law enforcement agencies is on the rise because of the increased numbers of active shooter events that have occurred during the past several years (Sanow, 2013). Many states have experienced active shooter events that resulted in deaths and injuries (Gun Violence Archive, 2017). Civilian law enforcement agencies are using different tactical formations to improve their active shooter preparedness plans (Sanow, 2013). For example, numerous law enforcement agencies have added emergency medical technicians to their patrol formations to help

provide medical treatment to victims more quickly (Sanow, 2013). Implementation of new tactical formations into the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan may also improve the Corps' overall active shooter response.

Active shootings still present a serious problem for the law enforcement community because criminals and terrorists have shown their willingness to use firearms to kill, maim, and terrorize innocent people (Feemster, 2010). Furthermore, criminals and terrorist are adaptive, which means law enforcement agencies must continue to improve their training curricula (Price, 2012). To have an effective active shooter preparedness plan, the Military Police Corps should be well versed in the tactics employed by domestic terrorist cells and criminals so that those tactics can be incorporated into live exercises (Price, 2012). Active shooter events can occur in any location (country, town, neighborhood, etc.), and they have the potential of producing a large number of casualties (Price, 2012). There were more than 200 active shooter events in the United States between 2000 and 2015, producing over 1,200 casualties (Ruff, 2016).

The lack of research on the effectiveness and relevancy of the U.S. Army's active shooter preparedness training compelled this examination of the Military Police Corps' overall management of active shooter events. Determining the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training is the existing gap in the literature. In conducting this phenomenological study, I sought to provide insight about the efficacy of current Army training. Filling the gap in the literature is the first step to ensure that the

Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness training is effective, relevant, and in line with other federal and state law enforcement agencies. After the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, Congress provided the U.S. Department of Defense with various recommendations designed to improve the overall protection on military installations against active shooters (U. S. Department of the Army, 2010). In 2010, Gates accepted 26 of those recommendations (Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 2010); however, many of those recommendations have not been implemented, even though it has been years since the shooting. Findings from this study may provide Army decision makers with additional knowledge they can use to improve the Corps' active shooter preparedness training.

Problem Statement

Prior research on active shooter incidents can be grouped into three extensive classifications. The first is research that focuses on tactics used by active shooters (e.g., Jaymi, Schildkraut, & Stafford, 2016). The second encompasses the type of active shooter preparedness training and tactics civilian law enforcement use to combat active shooters (e.g., Jaymi, Schildkraut, & Stafford, 2016). The final classification covers emergency management collaboration agreements between local government administrators and business owners (e.g., Jaymi, Schildkraut, & Stafford, 2016).

Multiple active shooter incidents have occurred on military bases, and the military police response has not always been adequate (U.S. Department of the Army, 2010). The Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness training, equipment, and policy have

not been properly updated and may exacerbate an already difficult problem presented by active shooters. During the past 7 years, active shooter incidents have increased by 16% in the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). However, between 2008 and 2016, 17 active shooting incidents occurred on military installations, which represents a 250% increase from 2001 through 2007 (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). A review of the literature (e.g., Borelli, 2013; Feemster, 2010; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014) validates that active shooting incidents are a clear and present danger to the public and all law enforcement personnel. Several civilian law enforcement organizations have established effective standard operating procedures to mitigate the effects of an active shooter (PERF, 2014).

A review of the literature revealed no found studies were conducted to examine the effectiveness of the Military Police Corps' active shooter management plan (in comparison to civilian law enforcement agencies) at the headquarters level, the major command level, or at individual installations. Although there is sufficient evidence that demonstrates how civilian law enforcement agencies have improved their overall management of active shooter events (Capellan, 2015; Feemster, 2010; Sanow, 2013), I found no studies in which the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan had been compared to those of civilian law enforcement agencies to determine effectiveness and relevancy. For example, after the Virginia Tech shooting, civilian law enforcement agencies updated their active shooter preparedness plans with (a) education on breaching techniques for regular patrol officers--training that had normally been

reserved for SWAT members--and (b) issuing of breaching tools to patrol officers for forced entry (DiMaria, 2012). Active shooters have existed for decades, and there is a large body of knowledge that could be used to improve the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan (e.g., Lankford, 2016). Historically, active shooters have mimicked successful active shooters' tactics, which makes it imperative for law enforcement agencies across the United States to incorporate the industry's best practices into their active shooter preparedness plan on a consistent basis. This study may provide insight that Military Police Corps leaders can use to update their plans to reflect these best practices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training by examining the policies and procedures and comparing them to civilian law enforcement policies and procedures for active shooter preparedness. I reviewed how the Military Police Corps responded to an active shooter event by conducting interviews with junior, midgrade, and senior military police officers to determine their perceptions about the active shooter training they receive from their units and to determine if organizational procedures have hindered the evolution of the Military Police Corps' law enforcement paradigm.

Since the beginning of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the Military Police Corps' law enforcement skillset has suffered from frequent deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq (U.S. Department of the Army, 2015). Furthermore, during the past several years, the

Military Police Corps' training schedules have illustrated a sizable discrepancy between law enforcement training and security and mobility support skills training (U.S. Department of the Army, 2016). In particular, training records illustrated that units conducted security and mobility support skills training more frequently than law enforcement training (Unit Training Schedules, 2014 thru 2016); this prioritization means that more resources and training are allotted towards combat skills. The findings from my research, which includes reviewing the Department of Defense's new Law Enforcement (LE) Standards and Training Issuance (DODI 55.25.15, 2019) confirmed that more training and resources are needed to improve the Military Police Corps' law enforcement capabilities. The Military Police Corps has the following battlefield functions: maneuver and mobility support operations (reconnaissance and surveillance), area security operations (site security and response), law and order operations (law enforcement and developing host-nation police forces), internment/resettlement operations (military prisoners and enemy combatants), and police intelligence operations (FM 3-19.1, 2004). The data also show senior military police commanders how supporting the new policing methodology may help to bridge the security gap in the Military Police Corps active shooter preparedness plan.

Research Question

The research question (RQ) was, How can civilian law enforcement policing strategies help improve the Military Police Corps' response to an active shooter?

Theoretical Framework

The link between inadequate performance during active shooter events, lack of active shooter preparedness training, outdated training curriculum, obsolete or inadequate equipment, and a lack of governing policies is well established in the literature (Blair et al., 2013; Borelli, 2013; Brennan, 2012; Feemster, 2010). Operational and environmental impediments can be described by using the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework. The IAD framework is designed to examine shared action with a focus on institutions (Anderies & Janson, 2013). Broadly defined, institutions are the prescriptions that humans use to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions, such as households, schools, hospitals, companies, and courts of law (Anderies & Janson, 2013). These measures, also known as rules or norms, can be used broadly from creating household rules to international treaties (Ostrom, 2010). Because rules and norms are essentially human constructs, agreed upon or recognized by a group of people, they are not immutable (Anderies & Janson, 2013). Individuals can decide whether to follow the rules or norms. In addition, their choices and actions have consequences for themselves and for others (Anderies & Janson, 2013).

The IAD framework is ideal for this phenomenological study because it addresses core issues related to defending against active shooters. The IAD framework materialized from the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University, established by Ostrom and Ostrom (Anderies & Janson, 2013). The IAD framework includes multiple levels of institutional analysis (Ostrom, 2010); however, for

this phenomenological study, the emphasis was on the operational level because its main goal is to focus where individuals collectively make decisions about day-to-day activities. Rules and norms are significant in any organization because they are the parameters by which organizations make daily operational decisions (Ostrom, 2010). For instance, rules and norms within the Military Police Corps dictates how law enforcement personnel view their law enforcement mission. Regardless of the settings, rules and norms apply; however, the specifics of these rules will differ depending on the location. For example, the rules and norms at work are different than those at an individual's home (Anderies & Janson, 2013). Findings from this phenomenological study may show that senior law enforcement commanders have the ability to affect change within the organizational structure by adopting some of the rules and norms of civilian law enforcement agencies, which may advance the Military Police Corps' law enforcement development.

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative research method to interview 15 military law enforcement personnel, consisting of senior Military Police Corps leaders (Pay Grade 05 through 06), midlevel leaders (Pay Grade E-7 through 04), and junior soldiers and leaders (Pay Grade E-1 through E-6). The five battalions were selected because of their geographical locations and their size. The design consisted of a 30 to 45-minute, unstructured audio-recorded interview with each participant to glean individual perspectives and experiences on active shooter preparedness. I interviewed each participant by telephone. The methodology included a descriptive data analysis technique to describe the main

characteristic of the data and an exploratory analysis to look for unknown relationship and provide future recommendation.

Qualitative research is consistent with the need for a complex and detailed understanding of how the Military Police Corps uses its resources to prevent or mitigate active shooter incidents, which is the focus of this investigation. The Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness training may be predicated on financial restraints, personal biases, or simply a lack of knowledge. I used the IAD framework to highlight the rules and norms of the Military Police Corps, which will help illuminate the decision-making process of Military Police Corps leaders. By interviewing 15 military law enforcement personnel, and reviewing public law enforcement archival data, I gained insight and solutions for the growing problem of active shooters and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training.

Active shooter events represent a real phenomenon that shakes the practicalities of one's appreciation of well-being, trepidation, and inquietude (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). From 2000 to 2016, approximately 80 casualties and 28 deaths occurred per year, but in comparison to traffic casualties, the odds of any single individual being a victim of an active shooter are low (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016; National Safety Council, 2017). In 2016, the U.S. experienced more than 40,000 traffic fatalities for the first time in 10 years (National Safety Council, 2017). Although traffic accidents cause many more casualties on a yearly basis than active shooters, active shooter events have a more significant psychological effect on a community. The associated dread that

inculcates from an active shooter event mandates that government agencies, law enforcement organizations, business communities, and individuals act prudently to mitigate the effects of an active shooter event through preparedness training (Zeemering & Delabbio, 2013). Although it is impossible for elected official and law enforcement personnel to prevent all active shooter events, having a robust active shooter preparedness plan will help mitigate casualties and property damages.

Definitions

Active shooter. An individual actively involved in killing or trying to kill people in a confined and occupied area. In most cases, firearms are used, and there is no pattern or method to the shooter's selection of victims (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2016).

Army Force generation process. The method for effectively and efficiently generating trained and ready forces for combatant commanders on a sustainable, rotational basis (U.S. Department of the Army, 2009).

Concealment. The protection from observation of oneself from aggressors (U.S. Department of the Army, 1984).

Contextualization. The process of examining or interpreting something that is separate from the context in which it is embedded (Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary, 2003).

Cover. Protection from the fire of hostile weapons (U.S. Department of the Army, 1984).

Deidentification. The process to prevent a person's identity from being connected with information (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). Common uses of deidentification include human subject research for the sake of privacy of research participants (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015).

Military Police Corps leaders. Law enforcement supervisors between the rank of corporal and colonel (military and civilians) who are responsible for the day-to-day supervision of other law enforcement and support personnel.

Pay Grade E-1 through E-6. Junior soldiers and leaders (to include civilian law enforcement personnel).

Pay Grade E-7 through O4. Midlevel leaders (to include civilian law enforcement personnel).

Pay Grade O5 and O6. Senior leaders (to include civilian law enforcement personnel).

Outlier. Something that lies outside the main body or group.

Soft target. A person or thing that is relatively unprotected or vulnerable, especially to military or terrorist attack.

Standard operating procedures. Established or prescribed methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or in designated situations.

Terrorism. The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

Validity. A concept that refers to how well a scientific test or piece of research actually measures what it sets out to, or how well it reflects the reality it claims to represent (Creswell, 2007).

Assumptions

Five assumptions are associated with this phenomenological study. Junior leaders and law enforcement personnel will be part of the participant pool because it is assumed that they will provide unguarded responses and will not be concerned with protecting their unit's reputation. The promise of anonymity and confidentiality will likely encourage junior leaders to be truthful even if the information about their organization is negative. In addition, it is assumed that the U.S. Department of the Army Civilian Police (DACP) participants will be more forthcoming than Military Police Corps soldiers because they are more concerned with the law enforcement mission than the combat mission. Generally speaking, DACPs have more law enforcement training than military police soldiers, which makes them more invested in the law enforcement mission. It is assumed that a qualitative phenomenological study of the participants' operational environment is the best course of actions. Determining the strengths and weaknesses of the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan is best determined with a qualitative research approach. The use of triangulation provided research from several sources to determine if senior military and civilian leaders truly grasp the many problems an active shooter presents for first responders and community members. Finally, it is assumed that senior military leaders may provide guarded responses because they are

concerned with protecting their unit's reputation. Senior leaders are responsible for the units' successes and failures and it is only natural to assume that it is highly likely they will give guarded responses in order to protect their reputations.

Scope and Delimitations

The delimitations for this phenomenological study are based on my comprehension of the dynamics that influence the Military Police Corps' senior leadership decision-making process in connection to law enforcement operations. In addition, my goal was to determine the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training and identify new tactics, techniques, and procedures to enhance the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness policies. To accomplish this (with the study sample limited to 15 individuals at five Army installations), I reviewed elements that support the Military Police Corps adopting new tactics to combat active shooter events. The installations designated for this phenomenological study were selected because of their size, diverse population, and geographical locations. The carefully chosen installations have some of the largest law enforcement contingency and the largest population. Snowball sampling was used to identify 15 participants, who were interviewed via telephone to collect the data. Telephonic interviews helped mitigate the expense associated with conducting in-person interviews at multiple locations. Snowball sampling was chosen because it simplified the process of obtaining formal permission from the U.S. Department of the Army to interview the target population. After identifying the participants, each participant received a consent form and a copy of the

interview questions via email. Electronic mail was used to deliver the consent form to the participants for expediency.

Limitations

Four limitations are related with this phenomenological study and each limitation relates to methodological weaknesses. The first is working with a small participant pool, including senior Military Police Corps leaders [Pay Grade 05 through 06], mid-level leaders [Pay Grade E-7 through 04], junior leaders [E-5 through E-6] and junior soldiers and leaders [Pay Grade E-1 through E-4]), which may hinder data saturation. Data saturation is an important element of qualitative research and failing to reach it will influence the research and restrict content validity, which is required to demonstrate that the research is valid and that it answers the research question. The nature of the small participant pool limitation is artificially created to provide an expedient and judicious execution of the research; however, taking participants from large, medium, and small installations provided reasonable measures to address this limitation. Second, sampling specifically drawn from the U.S. Army law enforcement population may result in groupthink responses. Armed forces and law enforcement individuals are extremely cohesive (due to their training and experiences) and are trained to solve problems as a team, which could make it harder for individual voice an independent idea.

Although it is reasonable that the sampling came from the military, pulling from one specific group may result in groupthink, thus making improvement difficult. The inclusion of law enforcement personnel with different ranks and positions enhanced the

probability that groupthink did not occur. Third, participants may provide erroneous information because they may view me as an outsider trying to embarrass the Military Police Corps. Finally, disgruntled participants may provide inaccurate information because they are dissatisfied with their employer. During any type of research or investigation that requires interaction with the population, there will always be a possibility of receiving erroneous or exaggerated information from participants because of ulterior motives. To address this type of limitation, I reviewed and compare the responses received and look for outliers, which may require further investigation for clarity. In addition to receiving erroneous or exaggerated information from participants, investigators must also be aware of their own biases. For example, I work as a Law Enforcement and Emergency Management Specialist (Department of Defense Contractor) assigned to the Pentagon (HQ Department of the Army G34 Protection Directorate); and because of my position I have access to classified information, law enforcement sensitive information, internal memorandums and emails that are not available to the public or to law enforcement personnel in subordinate organizations. For bias mitigation purposes, I chose only to use documents that have been released to the public or those that can be obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

Significance

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2016), between the years 2000 and 2016, almost 200 active shooter events have occurred throughout the U.S., which have caused more than 1,000 causalities (deaths and injuries). This phenomenological study is

significant because there have been 17 active shooter situations on military installations since the 2009 Fort Hood shootings (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). This phenomenological study may assist the Military Police Corps' leadership with their decision-making process, updating their training methodology for first responders and 911 dispatchers, provide better tactical equipment for first responders, and enlighten the Military Police Corps' leadership on the importance of having an effective emergency management collaboration agreement with local law enforcement agencies. In addition, the phenomenological study is significant for civilian law enforcement organizations because it identified best practices and lesson learned when responding to an active shooter event. Although it is true that many civilian law enforcement agencies have developed procedures to respond to and manage active shooter events, numerous agencies (with 10 or less officers) could benefit from the phenomenological study because many organizations do not have adequate polices or procedures on responding to an active shooter event.

Summary

Despite being one of the most powerful armies in the world, active shooter events within the military community have illustrated security gaps on military installations. During the past 7 years, active shooter incidents have increased by 16% in the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). However, between 2008 and 2016 there have been 17 active shooting incidents occurring on military installations, which represent a 250% increase since the previous 9 years (1999 to 2007; U.S. Department of Justice,

2016). This phenomenological study will fill the gap in the literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training.

According to research data, active shooter events are trending upwards and with every successful attack the "enemy/ criminal elements" take notice (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). The type of service calls law enforcement personnel are required to respond to are growing in complexity and to provide adequate protection to the community the training curriculum must be reflective of the real world issues they may encounter while performing their duty as first responders.

In Chapter 2, I examined current studies on updated active shooter preparedness plans and the leadership decision-making process to determine the best course of action for improving the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2014), from 2000 to 2013, an average of 11 active shooting events occurred annually in the United States. The distribution of events is highly concentrated in the last 7 years of this time frame; however, with 16 events occurring between 2007 to 2013 (versus six between 2000 and 2006), representing an increase of more than 150% (p. 13). However, between 2008 and 2016, 17 active shooting incidents occurred on military installations, which represents a 250% increase from the previous 9 years (1999 to 2007; U.S. Department of Justice, 2016, p. 29). (See Figure 1 for a comparison of active shooter events on military vs. nonmilitary installations between 2008-2016.) In a published update to the U.S. Department of Justice's 2014 report, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI; 2016) found the amount of active shooter events increased slightly between 2014 to 2016 to 51 events, while the previous 3 years (2011 to 2013) had only 48 events. Of note, the cutoff date for 2016 was June, thus leaving 6 months unaccounted for.

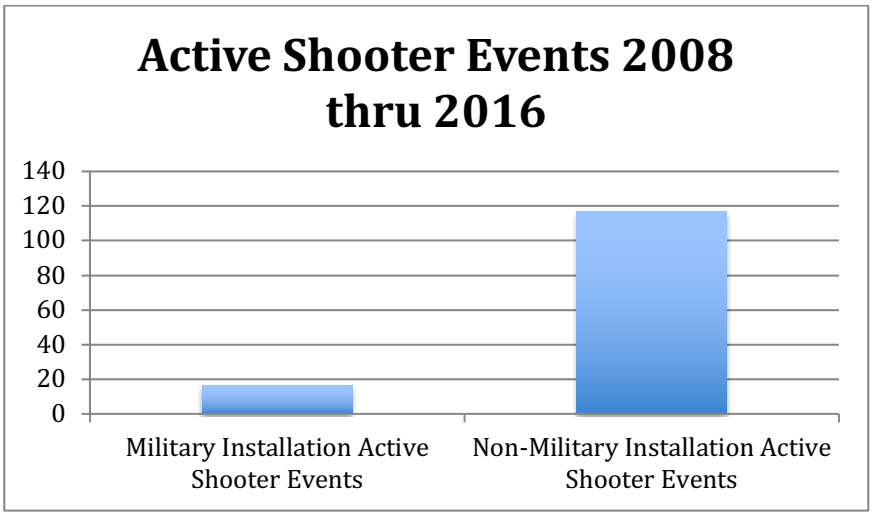

Figure 1. Active shooter events. Adapted from "2008 to 2016 Active Shooter Events," by U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2016 (https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/activeshooter_incidents_2001-2016.pdf/view). In the public domain.

Some research indicates that the lack of an active shooter preparedness plan may increase rates for injuries and fatalities in communities. Wands (2016), for instance, discovered that there are still law enforcement agencies and communities (17 years later after the Columbine shooting) in the United States without a robust active shooter preparedness plan, which may result in more injuries and deaths. As Wands noted, there were 231 casualties attributed to active shooter events between 2014 and 2015; "six of these incidents ended with quick citizen action" (p. 388). A review of the literature (e.g., Borelli, 2013; Feemster, 2010; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014) validates that active shooting incidents are a clear and present danger to the public and to law enforcement personnel.

The Military Police Corps has three main missions: police operations, detention operations, and security and mobility support. The Corps' primary mission is police

operations (U.S. Department of the Army, 2014). The skills and capabilities needed to perform detention operations and security and mobility support are derived from conducting police operations (U.S. Department of the Army, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of the Army (2014), frequent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan over a 15-year time frame have deteriorated the Military Police Corps' law enforcement skills and other capabilities (p. 151). The frequent deployments have resulted in more resources and training being allotted for security and mobility support skills, leaving a gap in readiness for active shooter events. In this phenomenological study, I used data from military units residing in the United States and Europe to show the difference in training time between security and mobility support skills and active shooter preparedness. Military commanders are tasked with ensuring their soldiers are well trained for their assigned mission. They have the authority to tailor the unit training schedule to address training gaps that may affect unit readiness (U.S. Department of the Army, 2015).

The objective of this literature review is to examine, analyze, and fuse the literature on active shooter response. The chapter offers an inclusive review of the theoretical and conceptual bases of active shooter response. I examine the tools used by law enforcement organizations to combat active shooters and determine their effectiveness. The chapter includes sections on my literature search strategy and theoretical framework, followed by a review of the literature. The literature review includes a definition of an active shooter and discussion of the following topics: active

shooters trends, analysis of tactics used to combat active shooters, tools available to law enforcement to combat active shooters, and policy choices for active shooter events. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion section.

Literature Search Strategy

I used the Walden University Library to search for literature relevant to mitigating active shooter events. The selected literature aided me in developing the theoretical framework for this phenomenological study. The following is a list of key terms used to review germane literature: a*ctive shooter*, *active shooter response*, *active shooter management*, *law enforcement training*, *active shooters on military installations*, *Military Police Corps law enforcement training*, *active shooter and terrorism*, *military culture*, and *emergency dispatcher training*.

The literature review highlighted that a well-conceived active shooter response plan requires standardizing policies and providing updated instruction to the populace regarding the best course of action when involved in an active shooter event. Such a plan should be supported by empirical findings from previous active shooter events. In addition, I reviewed several studies and articles pertaining to active shooter preparedness, multijurisdiction collaboration, training, and recovery; however, the majority of the literature were related to civilian law enforcement agencies improving their active shooter preparedness. I found few studies concerning active shooter preparedness within the military law enforcement community. Because little research on active shooter preparedness exists within the military law enforcement community, the literature review

demonstrated the necessity for military law enforcement community to adopt the best practices of civilian law enforcement agencies for active shooter preparedness.

Although numerous agencies, including those in the federal government, have adopted the Run, Hide, and Fight (RHF) paradigm as a best practice (Careless, 2015), Blair et al. (2013) delineated that the Fight option of RHF should be the first course of action instead of the Run option. Blair et al. highlighted how a majority of the casualties occurred while victims were running away from the shooters and while attempting to hide in unfortified rooms. The researchers revealed that nearly 40% of the shooters were subdued (without weapons) or shot by citizens before law enforcement arrived on the scene (Blair et al., 2013). The data presented by Blair et al. justify the review of the U.S. government's endorsement of RHF.

Walden University Library and Google was the principal means of accessing academic databases and websites. The primary databases used to search for the key terms were Google Scholar, ProQuest, Sage Journals Online, EBSCOhost, Parameters (U.S. Army War College Press, Carlisle Barracks, and Pennsylvania), Center for Army Lessons Learned (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) and the Army Publishing Directorate.

Theoretical Framework

I selected the IAD framework for this phenomenological study because it addressed core issues (appropriate day-to-day decision making, training, and equipment) related to defending against active shooters. The IAD framework materialized from the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University, established by

Elinor and Ostrom in 2009. The IAD is applicable to this phenomenological study because senior law enforcement commanders have the ability to affect change within the organizational structure and could therefore hinder or advance the Military Police Corps' law enforcement evolution. The IAD identifies multiple levels of institutional analysis; however, the emphasis of this phenomenological study was on the operational level because its main goal is to focus where individuals collectively make decisions about day-to-day activities.

In the past, researchers have mainly used the IAD to study the controlling of communal resources, such as public infrastructure and common-pool resources (Ostrom, 2010). The IAD framework summarizes the communal efforts to understand the ways in which organizations operate and change over time. The framework ascribes all pertinent descriptive issues and variables to groups in an effort to determine rational relationships (Ostrom, 2010, p. 2). Through this phenomenological study, I illustrated its effectiveness to evaluate the efficiency of decision-making and policy reform. In 21st-century society, citizens interaction with institutions (federal, state, local, and private) that govern daily activities are inescapable. With so much oversight, using IAD to evaluate institutions is not only logical, but is also a necessity to ensure that institutions are providing proper regulatory supervision and agency leaders are adaptable to an ever-changing world.

Living in an intricate, interrelated, and a frequently changing society underpins the inherent need for adaptability for government officials and the citizens they serve (Löf, 2014). Löf (2014) discussed how important it is for leaders of organizations and

communities to have the ability to make appropriate day-to-day decisions for the good of their organizations or communities, especially during turbulent times.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Active Shooter Trends

Although active shooters are geospatially dispersed, motivated by various reasons, and have no affiliation with each other, their tactics and characteristics are appallingly similar. The U.S. Department of Justice 2014 report was a study of active shooter incidents in the U.S. between 2000 and 2013. In addition, the FBI 2016 updated report includes active shooter incidents in the U.S. in 2014 and 2015. I used these reports as base documents for establishing a trend analysis of active shooter events. In more than 15% of the events, the active shooter was mobile during the event (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 6), which exasperated the situation. From a tactical perspective, engaging a mobile assailant is difficult and requires intense and regular training session (FM 7-8, 2013). Responding to an active shooter is already a difficult task for law enforcement because of its asymmetrical nature, but when the shooters are moving from one site to another, it makes the situation more difficult for law enforcement personnel.

Updating tactics to combat active shooters presents a difficult problem for law enforcement, administrators, and society because such events are highly difficult to predict (U.S. Department of the Army, 2015). However, one of the best courses of action is to review past incidents and conduct a trend analysis to help improve future management and response strategies. However, caution must be used because criminals

tend to conduct their own analysis of law enforcement tactics and procedures in order to counter them (U.S. Department of the Army, 2015).

With almost 70% of the active shooter events occurring at businesses (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 12), it is likely that businesses are the primary objective for active shooters because they are considered soft targets. The U.S. Department of Justice (2014) report, along with other researchers (Brennan, 2012; Capellan, 2015; Ergenbright & Hubbard, 2012), illustrated that active shooters overwhelmingly target businesses more than any other location. It is probable that active shooters will continue to target businesses disproportionately. Throughout the United States, active shooter events have steadily increased since 2008; seventeen of those events occurred on military installations (in business-like environments, i.e. medical facilities, shopping centers, and office buildings) or military-leased properties (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 15). The Fort Hood report (2010) reviewed the Military Police Corps' response and management of the 2010 active shooter event. The researchers of the report noted how the quick response of the first responders prevented the Fort Hood shooter from killing and hurting many more individuals. However, the researchers also highlighted several areas in which the Military Police Corps can improve upon (more training, better technology, better equipment, etc.).

Terrorism

Lankford (2016), Lies (2016), Capellan (2015), and Feemster (2010) delineated that terrorist organizations' use of active shooters is a tactic shared by terrorist

organizations and criminals throughout the world. Although terrorist attacks occur more frequently in many countries than in the United States (Economics and Peace, 2015), that does not mean the United States will not experience an increase in terrorist attacks. The effects of terrorism are experienced around the world, but countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa experience the majority of deaths (78%) produced by terrorist attacks (Economics and Peace, 2015, p. 3). Acts of terrorism during the past several years have exemplified that the U.S. military community, in particular, has experienced an increased amount of active shooter events (Capellan, 2015; Feemster, 2010; Lankford, 2016; Lies, 2016). Although the FBI 2016 updated report on active shooter events confirmed that active shooter incidents have been on the rise, it is not a new phenomenon. Figure 2 shows the number of active shooter events that occurred in the United States from 2013 thru 2016.

U.S. Department of the Army (2010) and the FBI (2016) demonstrated how difficult it is for law enforcement or other officials to predict when an active shooter event will occur, identify an active shooter prior to the event, or defend against active shooters.

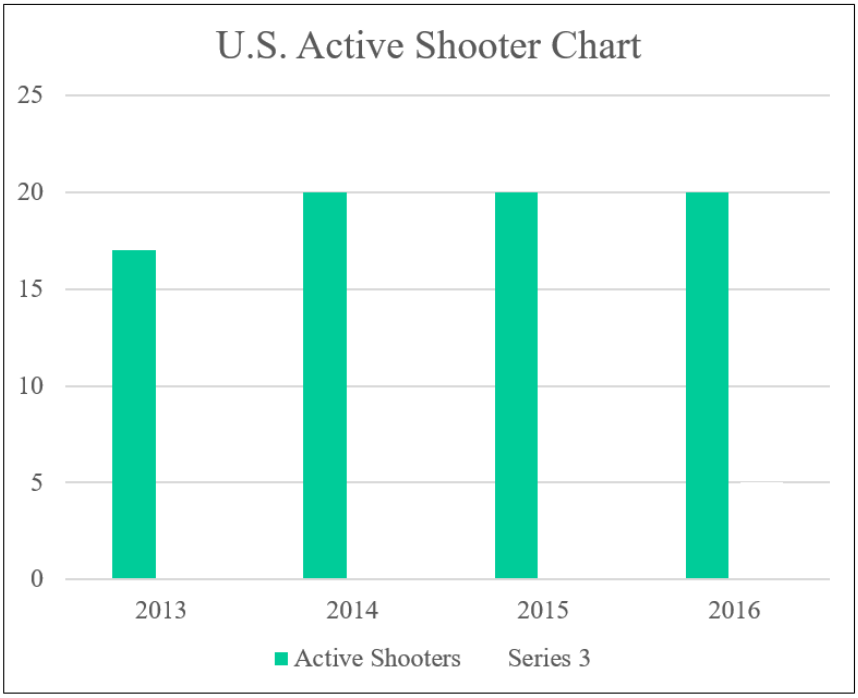

Figure 2. U.S. active shooter chart. Adapted from "2000 to 2016 Active Shooter Incidents," by U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2016 (https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/activeshooter_incidents_2001-2016.pdf/view). In the public domain.

The United States is not the only country that is having a difficult time with preventing and responding to active shooter events. In 2008 10 attackers entered the city of Mumbia, India, from multiple locations and caused mass hysteria when they began shooting people indiscriminately (Capellan, 2015). The Mumbia attack was significant because it highlighted how a small group of determined killers were able to kill scores of individuals, cause millions of dollars' worth of damages, and evade one of the largest police forces in the world for almost three days. Despite having a superior force, better equipment, and weapons, the attack exposed multiple security gaps within Mumbai's

government (Capellan, 2015). The official after-action review of the attack explained how Mumbai's laws prevented a whole of government response approach, which significantly hindered their reaction time and overall management of the incident (Capellan, 2015). Prior to the attack, Mumbai had laws that prevented the Army from responding to terrorist attacks that occurred within the police department's jurisdiction (Capellan, 2015).

The review also revealed that Mumbai's police force was not properly trained for active shooter events. Capellan (2015) also explored how the terrorists used social media and live news updates to keep track of the law enforcements efforts and progress, which made it easier for the 10-man team to evade capture (Capellan, 2015), which suggest a holistic active shooter preparedness plan must address media presence and operations security. The Military Police Corps' current active shooter preparedness plan does not discuss operations security and how the media may compromise tactics by inadvertently passing on crucial operational information to active shooters during an event. Operations security (OPSEC) is a method that identifies unclassified but crucial information to determine if friendly actions can be detected and used by adversaries/ criminal elements to help accomplish their goals. For any operations to be successful, OPSEC must be a fundamental part of the plan.

Active shooter events can occur in any location and they have the potential of harming a high number of victims. Between 2000 and 2015, the U.S. experienced 200 active shooter events and more than 1,200 casualties (Ruff, 2016). Although no location

is immune, ample data illustrates how commercial facilities (office buildings, factories, warehouses, retail stores, restaurants, etc.) are preferred venues for active shooters (Ruff, 2016).

Although businesses are the leading location where active shoot events occur (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), U.S. schools and universities are the second most common locations where active shooter events occur. Since the Columbine High School massacre, there have been 50 school shootings (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2016). After the Columbine High School active shooter event of 1999, law enforcement agencies across the country started changing their polices and tactics for responding to an active shooter event. Multiple researchers (Barnes, 2012; McCarthy, 2014; Wands, 2016) have illustrated how law enforcement leaders across the nation have changed the way their organizations respond to an active shooter event.

One of the major changes was a discontinued practice of patrol officers containing the scene and waiting on the SWAT team or additional back up (first officer on scene will proceed to engage the shooter). In addition, many organizations made the following changes, (a) patrol officers will have long-riffles in their vehicles, (b) officers will not stop to render aid to victims (will proceed towards threat), (c) dispatchers are trained on active shooter threat information protocol, and (d) officers are issued ballistic shields (Barnes, 2012; McCarthy, 2014; Wands, 2016). Even though more than 16 years have passed since the Columbine active shooter event, tactics and polices are still developing because stopping active shooters is a daunting task. The U.S. Department of Justice

2014, “Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the U.S. between 2000 and 2013,” indicated that active shooters not only looked to past events for inspiration, but they also copied operational details.

Although active shooter events appear to happen without warning, many experts (Blair et al., 2013; Capellan, 2015; Supervisory Special Agent Andre Simons, -; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014) believe that is not the case. Investigations of past events and the perpetrators revealed that the shooters developed well thought-out plans, spending several months or years of planning before the shooting. In most cases, the shooters said or did things that were abnormal or disturbing to their family and friends, who knew them well (PERF, 2014).

Although active shooter events occur more frequently in civilian communities than in military communities (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), the U.S. Department of the Army still recognized the need to direct the Military Police Corps to develop a training packet to assist the security forces (law enforcement and security guards) with responding to and containing an active shooter. The tragedy illustrated that law enforcement response speed and courage are essential when responding to an active shooter event (Blair et al., 2013). Frazzano and Snyder (2014) illustrated how a speedy response to an active shooter is a vital part of any active shooter preparedness plan because the sooner the shooter is neutralized, the more lives will be saved. Developing an all-inclusive emergency action plan along with a realistic active shooter preparedness training curriculum will equip law enforcement personnel with the required skills and confidence to properly manage and

respond to an active shooter event (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010). In 2010, less than a year after the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, the U.S. Army Military Police School released the Active Shooter Response Training Support Package (TSP; U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010). The packet outlines several courses of action regarding how to respond to and manage an active shooter event. Although the TSP was a significant effort to address a highly complex problem, the packet has several gaps that need filling. For example, the TSP contradicts or makes unrealistic claims or expectations pertaining to some of the most recent and updated active shooter response training developed by federal and local law enforcement (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010). The authors of the TSP stated the following regarding what to do when approaching the scene of an active shooter:

> Make no mistake about it, the patrolmen/CSGs making contact with the suspect during this stage is in danger, but as long as they keep an open mind on every single individual present, they can stay safe. There is a fine line between having your name on an award and your name on a wall. The difference is often being prepared, being aware and being highly skilled. (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010, p. 27)

By alluding that officers' safety is dependent on keeping an "open mind on every single individual" (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010, p. 27), the findings contradict current data that suggest better equipment, training, policies, and information sharing from the public will improve law enforcement personnel survival rates.

The second issue with the TSP is that it identifies obstacles or problems officers may encounter when responding to an active shooter event but offers few solutions. For example, when actively engaging the shooter, the TSP (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010) instructs officers to do the following, "Once the shooter opens fire, immediate action needs to be taken. First responding patrolman/CSG need to rapidly proceed in a tactically sound manner to the suspect and stop the threat" (p. 27).

According to Army Field Manual 21-75 (U.S. Department of the Army, 1984), the best method for moving while under direct fire is to minimize exposure by seeking cover and concealment and moving from one covered position to another. When moving, individuals should only stay exposed 3 to 5 seconds before seeking cover. Although this tactic was designed for armed individuals engaging other armed individuals, unarmed civilians who are attempting to evacuate the area of an active shooter event can also use it to help minimize casualties.

Multiple studies (After Action Report Washington Navy Yard, 2013; Capellan, 2015; Feemster, 2010; Frazzano & Snyder, 2014) illustrate how agencies have incorporated updated training into their active shooter operational plan, as well as included specified training for 911 dispatchers or communication officers, which is missing from the TSP (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010). The communication officer training curriculum was added after learning from past events, which demonstrated the importance of having properly trained operators when taking information about an active shooter.

On several occasions, callers reported that operators were following a script that was not relevant to an active shooter event, which resulted in delayed reporting time to law enforcement officers and information gaps (Careless, 2015). When communication officers fail to gather critical information about the shooter or the event, it exacerbates the victims' problems and it will also place the first responders in significant danger. According to the Police Executive Research Forum (2014), information operators are trained to solicit the following from a caller,

> These lists include questions about the description and location of the shooter or shooters, the types of weapons involved, the caller's exact location, the number of people at the location, how many people are injured, whether the shooter was carrying anything or seemed to be wearing body armor, whether the shooter said anything, whether the shooter took any hostages, and so on. (p. 12)

According to IAED (2017), an emergency dispatch active shooter threat information protocol should provide the following, (a) quick notification of call classification to responding officers; (b) accurate and critical scene safety information (number of shooters and location updates, secondary issues such as bombs, snipers, hostage taking, etc.); (c) escaping suspects (directions, mode of escape, assistance rendered, etc.); (d) a large group of people moving in and out of the area and anticipated effects; (e) safety for responders at triage area, traffic patterns, giving lifesaving instructions to callers for evacuation, when possible, or lockdown instructions when necessary. Along with the previous mentioned updates, the TSP also failed to discuss

ways to provide better and faster medical services to the victims, despite that the civilian sector has adopted and modified the U.S. Department of Defense combat medic model to provide better care for victims of active shooter events.

Creating and employing a practical joint service (law enforcement, fire, and EMS) response and management plan to an active shooter event requires changes to current paradigms. However, society has been conditioned to believe that active shooter events are primarily a law enforcement issue, instead of recognizing it as an all-hazards problem that requires a holistic response from multiple first responder disciplines (Christensen & Lægreid, 2014). The paradigm shift, although necessary, will be difficult to achieve because of the organizational culture of each discipline. However, it is possible to develop a coordinated response effort. For such an effort to occur, leaders at all levels, including elected officials, must buy-in to the new model (Christensen & Lægreid, 2014).

In multiple updated guidelines, federal, state, and local agencies have incorporated the Tactical Emergency Casualty Care concept into their active shooter response guideline. The program is based on the military's Tactical Combat Casualty Care program, developed to help prevent the leading causes of preventable deaths. Jones, Kue, Mitchell, Eblan, and Dyer (2014) emphasized that law enforcement and medical personnel are collaborating during active shooter events by emulating how the military use medical personnel (medics) during combat missions. Combat medics are accustomed to treating victims in a hostile environment or in a hot zone. The report (Mitchell, Eblan, & Dyer, 2014) described how the Military Police Corps and the Medical Corps could

incorporate their wartime collaboration into the TSP. For example, during combat deployments, medical personnel are embedded with combat and combat support units, or members of the unit are cross trained as combat medical personnel. A similar partnership may help save lives during an active shooter event (Mitchell, Eblan, & Dyer, 2014).

Although this phenomenological study primarily pertained to how law enforcement respond to and manage an active shooter event, the study would be incomplete if I did not examine how law enforcement and other government agencies, at all levels, instruct potential victims to react during an active shooter event. Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States embrace the current paradigm of Run, Hide, and Fight (Implementing an active shooter training program, 2015). Although that paradigm appears to be appropriate, data from multiple active shooter events (Your Emergency Action Plan & Active Shooter Scenarios, 2014; Wands, 2016; Weber, 2016) suggest the RHF paradigm is not the best course of action during an active shooter event. In its application, RHF is not realistic because the data from active shooter events illustrated how multiple victims were shot while attempting to flee the area, while hiding when the suspect located them and gained access to the room, or they were simply shot through a door (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014; Wands, 2016; Weber, 2016). Active shooters are constantly changing their tactics, making it a necessity for first responders, communities, and other government agencies to change their active shooter prevention and response tactics (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

The Run portion of RHF is flawed because it recommends that victims should run away while a shooter is firing indiscriminately with the intent to kill or injury as many people as possible. Running is not the best course of action because no human is faster than a speeding bullet and being exposed to a shooter for more than 5 seconds increases the chance of getting shot. According to Army doctrine, FM 21-75 (U.S. Department of the Army, 1984), moving under direct fire should be done in 3 to 5 second rushes to limit your exposure, which will make the individual a more difficult target. The Hide premise is based on the fact that the shooter cannot find his victims, which means fewer targets. However, when the victims are located by the shooter, they are usually found in an unhardened room (not protected against small arms fire) with only one entrance and exit, which results in multiple deaths.

In 2013, Blair et al. reviewed 84 active shooter events that occurred between 2000 and 2010 and revealed that in approximately half of the shootings, the active shooter had been stopped prior to the arrival of law enforcement by suicide, shot, or subdued by victims. Although the Run and Hide options may be a more politically correct answer to a complex problem, the analyzed data from past active shooter events does not suggest they are the best courses of action. According to the FBI (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), most active shooter events last two minutes or less, which suggest that it is highly unlikely that law enforcement first responders will arrive at the scene, on a consistent basis, and early enough to halt the shooter's aggression and significantly reduce the casualties. For example, during the 2009 Fort Hood active

shooter event, it took law enforcement personnel a total of 4 minutes and 10 second to neutralize the shooter. However, prior to him being shot by law enforcement, the shooter had killed 13 people and wounded 43 others (U.S. Department of the Army, 2010).

Military Police Active Shooter Response

Frazzano and Snyder (2014) found security gaps within law enforcement organizations that may have a disastrous affect during an active shooter event. Some of the law enforcement security concerns raised by the researchers were evident in the Military Police Corps' response to the 2009 Fort Hood active shooter event. For example, prolonged combat deployments for more than a decade prevented in-service type of training, which is used to maintain proficiency in police operations. Army organizations (commanders) are required to develop and submit training schedules to their higher headquarters on a quarterly basis with the intent of illustrating the type of training they are doing to stay proficient in their assigned missions. After the Columbine active shooter event, the New York Police Department and other law enforcement agencies changed the way they responded to active shooter events (Frazzano & Snyder, 2014).

Since the 2009 Fort Hood active shooter event, the U.S. Department of the Army and the Military Police Corps have dedicated a significant amount of resources and energy toward refining force protection. The force protection refinements were intended to provide a safer environment for the military community and the countless number of

visitors to Army installations (Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 2010). After the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, the U.S. Department of Defense and Congress conducted an investigation to determine how to better protect the military community, which became known as the Fort Hood Recommendations (AIT, 2010).

Active shooter events are easily planned, have little overhead, and are highly difficult to prevent, which are several reasons why active shooters are a common tactic used by terrorists (domestic and international) and other criminals (Barnes, 2012). Although they may be easily planned and executed, the intricacies involved in stopping and responding to an active shooter are highly complex. Protecting the public from an active shooter is a multifaceted operation and stopping the threat is the first of three primary objectives first responders should have when responding to an active shooter event (Frazzano & Snyder, 2014).

The subsequent components are synchronization, which is important for ensuring a unified command; and the aftermath, which includes conducting the investigation, after action reviews, implementing procedural changes, and healing the community (Capellan, 2015). Active shooters, regardless of their motivation, usually prepare and carry-out their attacks in a similar manner. Because of their complexity and deadly potential, these events represent a severe hazard to the population and an operational quagmire for government official at the local, state, and federal levels (Capellan, 2015).

Since 2009, the Military Police Corps has made significant advances at improving their law enforcement capabilities, which include responding to and managing active

shooter events. The Military Police Corps has implemented several major programs aimed at mitigating the effects of an active shooter, such as (a) requiring all law enforcement personnel and security guards to receive active shooter response training annually; (b) positioning Site on Wheels on major Army installations to patch together different communications systems and serve as a backup or replacement repeater that allows military police to communicate with local law enforcement officers; and (c) instituting the Automated Installation Entry program, which is used to screen individuals' criminal background history when they enter military installations (Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 2010).

Policing Strategy

Systematic reviews of policing policies and training curriculum are a vital component of any law enforcement organization and should not be neglected (Telep & Weisburd, 2014). According to Telep and Weisburd (2014), a holistic review also consists of policing strategies and funding to help the advancement of scientific knowledge. The Military Police Corps is in the process of transitioning from a reactive policing strategy to a predictive strategy. Predictive policing is the practice of anticipating criminal activity, recognizing and assessing criminal trends with the intention of eliminating, or mitigating by fusing criminal intelligence and law enforcement operations (Harmon, 2009). When used, predictive policing prevents crime and allows law enforcement personnel to respond more effectively while optimizing finite resources (Harmon, 2009). The objective of predictive policing is to change the

paradigm of law enforcement by understanding the decision-making process of criminals (e.g., drug dealers, gang members, and terrorists) to gain a unique opportunity for prevention, mitigation, and intelligence-based deployment. The end result is preventing crime, preserving the public's health and safety, and protecting first responders from injury while they carry out their mission (Saunders, Hunt, & Hollywood, 2016). Collaborating with civilian law enforcement agencies and implementing some of their best practiced policies may enhance the Military Police Corps' law enforcement capabilities.

Collaborations and Coordination: The Whole of Government Approach

The active shooter events that occurred at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech University are some of the deadliest active shooter incidents that have occurred in the United States since 1984 (Los Angeles Times, 2016). Although they are not the worst events that have occurred, they are arguably the two events that have had the most significant influence on shaping law enforcement active shooter preparedness policies.

The Virginia Tech shooting demonstrated to the law enforcement community and administrators that updated training and polices were needed to help prevent and mitigate the actions of an active shooter (DiMaria, 2012). The Virginia Tech shooting also motivated law makers to pass additional laws to help combat active shooters. In 2010, Virginia's governor signed into law SB 60S and HB 1238, which require senior administrators of public universities to verify their understanding and comprehension of the institution's crisis and emergency plan and to conduct a yearly emergency exercise

(DiMaria, 2012). The Columbine shooting made law enforcement realize that faster law enforcement and medical response is needed for active shooter events (Mission Manager, 2015). In addition, law enforcement realized the need to change the current paradigm of responding to an active shooter event and securing the perimeter to wait for the SWAT team to arrive and take control of the situation (Mission Manager, 2015).

Action reports from both events (Governor's Columbine Review Commission Report, 2001; Virginia Tech, 2007) suggested that active shooter events require multiagency collaboration and coordination because an active shooter event can be highly complex and overwhelming for a single organization. In addition an active shooter event requires decision makers to take in consideration their organization's operational capabilities, which include size, budget, and proficiency to accomplish certain task when developing an active shooter preparedness policy.

Although years of data from numerous authors (Brunk, 2016; Kapucu et al., 2010; Shan, Wang, Li, & Chen, 2012) illustrate the advantage of having a multiagency collaboration agreement to assist with an emergency management event, the TSP has only one paragraph in the whole document (195 pages) dedicated to collaborating with external agencies to mitigate active shooter events. The TSP was created to help the Military Police Corps manage active shooter events, and should therefore provide more details about multiagency collaboration (U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010). In addition, multiagency collaboration will result in substantial cost savings in services, a higher capacity, and enhancements to service proficiency and quality.

Zeemering and Delabbio (2013) argued that a certain level of trust between government entities is required before a collaborative framework of shared responsibility can be initiated and executed at a high-level of expertise. The researchers suggested that emergency planning exercises between agencies are essential if they are to function as a cohesive unit during real-world emergencies. The Whole of Government (WoG) approach represents various government agencies (federal, state, and local) and private organizations working together by crossing their predetermined boundaries to respond to a specific problem that is affecting, or has the potential to affect, the general public. Formal collaboration agreements between organizations are preferred but not required. However, many government entities and private organizations have formal agreements to assist each other during emergencies; past disasters have shown that formal agreements are advantageous for each organization prior to an emergency (Kapucu et al., 2010). Formal agreements can mitigate cost, help save lives, and diminish the duplication of effort, which is a possibility when multiple jurisdictions respond to the same disaster (Frazzano & Snyder, 2014).

With the prevalence of active shooter events in 21st century society, along with the amount of destruction they cause (economic, psychological, and physical), the WoG strategy presents the best course of action to prevent and lessen the destruction caused by an active shooter. The WoG strategy is an all-inclusive strategy involving insights from other social sciences to help address problems that may overlap between organizational boundaries (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). Although the WoG concept was first

introduced in 1997 (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007), several organizations throughout the country, including hospitals, private businesses, small police forces, and small government administrations, would significantly benefit from creating an active shooter preparedness plan (Wands, 2016). Because of the steady rise in active shooter events, the events appear to be a preferred mode of attack by criminals and terrorist (Lankford, 2016).

Although the WoG approach appears to be one of the best courses of action for active shooter response, it does not guarantee that law enforcement personnel will respond in time to neutralize the threat. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2012), the vast majority of all active shooter events were concluded prior to the arrival of law enforcement personnel, which is not necessarily because of incompetence. Ergenbright and Hubbard (2012) argued the response to an active shooter event, by law enforcement personnel, is limited because of the nature of active shooter events. Ergenbright and Hubbard (2012) stated, "law enforcement capability to reduce the rate of kill in active shooter scenarios is limited by the separation of time and space between the threat and first responders at the outset of the incident" (p. 30).

The successful implantation of the WoG concept is predicated on the belief that law enforcement agencies and the communities (businesses, schools, religious organizations, and citizens) they serve will have an open dialogue with each other. According to Frazzano and Snyder (2014), recent active shooter events strengthen the need for a paradigm shift in active shooter preparedness training if current models do not

incorporate the whole community concept, which argues that law enforcement, other government agencies, and communities must have an interdependent relationship to keep their communities safe. For example, communities must be willing to relay information about possible attacks to authorities before they occur because prevention will always save more lives than reacting after an attack has commenced. Conversely, government and law enforcement officials must update the different stakeholders on a continual basis regarding the latest tactics, techniques, and procedures pertaining to active shooter preparedness.

Several researchers (McCarthy, 2014; Nardi, 2015; Rizvi & Kelly, 2015; Wands, 2016) addressed the active shooter problem through a multitude of qualitative methodologies and each investigation added value to the problem by addressing multiple security and operational gaps. The investigators identified different gaps within the literature, including inadequate training time and realistic scenarios, improper equipment for first responders, lack of coordination and cooperation between other government agencies and the community, and insufficient training for law enforcement support staff. The researchers addressed these gaps in their research, thus reducing the gap in knowledge (McCarthy, 2014; Nardi, 2015; Rizvi & Kelly, 2015; Wands, 2016). A review of the Military Police Corps' TSP revealed that all of the security and operational gaps identified by McCarthy (2014), Nardi (2015), Rizvi and Kelly (2015), and Wands (2016) exist within the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan.

When discussing the WoG concept for active shooter preparedness, the legislative bodies (state and federal) have an important part within the WoG concept; however, little discussion has occurred regarding the requirement a legislative body has in active shooter preparedness. According to Brennan (2012), during the past 30 years, few laws have been passed to help mitigate the effects of an active shooter. In 2013, President Obama attempted to lobby Congress to reinstate the ban on assault weapons (Feith, 2013). President Clinton originally signed the ban into law in 1994, which outlawed 19 types of military-style assault weapons, such as AK-47, Uzis, and TEC-9s, and ammunition magazines that held more than 10 rounds (Feith, 2013). In 2004, the ban expired thus making the military-style assault weapons legal to purchase (Feith, 2013). Assault weapons are not the only weapons used by active shooters, but reinstating the ban may help prevent future active shooters from legally purchasing military-style assault weapons.

Although a limited number of laws have been enacted to help mitigate the active shooter phenomenon, some laws aid active shooters, mitigating efforts. For example, President Obama sign into law legislation S.2840, which authorized local law enforcement agencies and emergency responders to use federal funds for active shooter preparedness training. In addition, the law allows state and local law enforcement agencies to hire additional officers (Lankford, 2016). After the Virginia Tech shooting of 2007, which was the third most severe mass shooting in U.S. history, President George W. Bush signed into law the National Instant Criminal Background Check Improvement

Act, which enhanced the National Instant Criminal Background Check System by expanding the type of individuals who are federally prohibited to own firearms (Price & Norris, 2008). Such individuals include those adjudicated mentally defective individuals, unlawful users of or those who are addicted to a controlled substance, and individuals who have been committed to a mental institution. The act allotted funding to states to expand their own firearms reporting programs (Price & Norris, 2008).

Mandatory Training

As of August 2016, the Army had approximately 190 military occupation specialties, each one requires soldiers to conduct a certain amount of mandatory training to stay proficient or certified in their particular vocation. Professional training standards and certifications are key components for any professional organization, regardless of the industry; however, when training requirements become more of a hindrance to an organization than value added, it may be time for senior leaders to re-think their current worldview on mandatory training (Wong & Gerras, 2015). Wong and Gerras (2015) argued the Army is inundated with non-mission essential training requirements, which places a significant burden on commanders and their soldiers. The training requirements prohibit the commanders from accomplishing their day-to day mission essential tasks to industry standards, thus creating gaps in performance.

According to Wong and Gerras (2015),

> External pressure on commanders (throughout the chain of command) to report that 100% of their members have met the annual training requirements makes

> deceitful reporting from junior and mid-level commanders a common occurrence in the Army. The practice is well known by leaders at all levels, even though they are reluctant to admit it. (p. 45)

Changing the mindset of civilians and military leaders may be a difficult task because this has been the culture for several decades; however, the first step is for leaders to acknowledge that a problem exists with the current training methodology, which is a significant obstacle to overcome. A change in methodology would require senior leaders (civilians and military) to show restraint when contemplating future training requirements and it would also require them to accept a higher degree of risk by reducing current training requirements (Wong & Gerras, 2015).

Between 2001 and 2012, there have been three significant studies (Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, 2001; U.S. Department of the Army Inspector General Report, 2012; Wong, 2002) conducted on the amount of mandatory training requirements imposed throughout the Army ranks. Each of the reports showed the force was inundated with training requirements, which had a negative effect of force readiness. However, Wong (2002) illustrated the seriousness of the problem by highlighting that commanders had only 256 available training days (because of weekends, federal holidays, and Army holidays) to fit 297 days of mandatory requirements.

The more recent report conducted by the U.S. Department of the Army Inspector General Office (2012) scrutinized the bombardment of mandatory training requirements involved in the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process. The researchers noted:

"At none (0 of 16) of the locations inspected were companies in the ARFORGEN process able to complete all mandatory training and administrative tasks during ARFORGEN which impacts their ability to lead effectively and take care of Soldiers (Lying Too Ourselves, 2015 p 4)." The three reports exemplify the injurious effect training can have on force readiness when not properly managed.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature pertaining to managing an active shooter incident from a first responder perspective. I also reviewed literature regarding courses of action for how to react during an active shooter event for individuals who are victims of an active shooter event. The IAD framework was used as a guiding theoretical framework for this research. This framework focused on the operational level because its main goal is to determine how individuals collectively make decisions about day-to-day activities.

The IAD is relevant because senior law enforcement commanders have the ability to affect change within the organizational structure, which may hinder or advance the Military Police Corps' law enforcement evolution. In addition, the phenomenological methodology gave the participant pool (military police officers) a chance to voice their views on their organizations' active shooter management plan. Responding to an active shooter event can present multiple problems for first responders because of the unpredictability and complexity of an active shooter. The literature illustrated that first responders who are well trained, properly equipped, and collaborate with adjacent

jurisdictions on active shooting training are better prepared to manage an active shooter event. In addition, the literature also highlighted that the current course of action for victims reacting to an active shooter may be flawed.

Although the literature on active shooter response and management is comprehensive, few studies pertain to military law enforcement agencies and their management of active shooter events. The lack of research presents a serious gap within the literature. In Chapter 3, I discussed the methodology used to determine the best course of action for managing and reacting to an active shooter event.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

A phenomenology research method is designed to highlight issues related to a phenomenon and ascertain how the participants in the situation perceived it. Generally, a researcher's goal is to uncover the essence of the participant's lived experiences and align his or her investigation with a comprehensible phenomenological structure (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). I used the phenomenology approach to evaluate how the Military Police Corps manage an active shooter event. In using the design, I focused on participants' everyday life experiences. I attempted to understand law enforcement officers' observations, viewpoints, and understanding of how their unit manages, or plans to manage, an active shooter event.

Law enforcement agencies prepare for active shooter incidents in accordance with their resources, jurisdiction, authority, and societal perceptions. The Military Police Corps is similar to other law enforcement agencies, but because of cultural norms, the authoritative variable is amplified significantly, which may be a detriment or advantage to active shooter preparedness training. To determine the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training, I examined the Military Police Corps' policies and procedures for active shooter preparedness and compared them to civilian law enforcement policies and procedures.

Chapter 3 includes an overview of the research method I used in conducting my investigation. In the research design and rationale section, I discuss the

phenomenological approach and explain why it was a good design for this study. The research question is also restated and the role of the researcher discussed. Finally, the chapter includes the methodology that I followed in collecting and analyzing study data.

Research Design and Rationale

Researchers who use a phenomenological design are striving to understand a concept from the individual's subjective vantage point (Hays et al., 2016), which requires the researcher to lay aside her or his present understandings of a phenomenon to genuinely investigate the participants' experiences. Approaches for collecting and analyzing data within phenomenological research include, but are not limited to, in-depth semistructured interviews, focus groups, and artifact collection (Flynn & Korcuska, 2017). My data sources consisted of interviews I conducted with the 15 participants and military police training records.

According to Matua and Van Der Wal (2015), researchers typically use the descriptive approach to explain poorly understood features of experiences. By comparison, the interpretive approach is used to scrutinize related features of an experience relative to other stimuli such as culture, gender, employment or well-being of people or groups experiencing the phenomenon. I used an interpretative phenomenological model to assess the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness program, which will include a comprehensive review of training, equipment, policies, coordination, and collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, and the decision-making process.

Research Question

This phenomenological study was based on the following research question. How can civilian law enforcement policing strategies help improve the Military Police Corps' response to an active shooter? I developed the research question to determine if senior leaders are using the latest industry standards to help improve the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan. The interview questions were designed to understand how police agencies integrate their active shooter strategic and tactical objectives with their training, collaborations, and technology. The answers to the research question were obtained through telephone interviews and agency written documentation on the subject of training and policies.

Role of the Researcher

I spent an extensive amount of time interviewing the participants and my findings are based on the data from these interviews. I was responsible for the entire phenomenological study, which included organizing the interviews and selecting the participants. I designed the interview questions, created and provided the consent form to the participants, and was available to answer any questions or concerns the participants had. In addition, I transcribed all of the data. As a retired military police officer (who served for 22 years) and a current senior protection policy analyst (employed at the Pentagon as a law enforcement, antiterrorism, and emergency management subject matter expert), I have many preconceived ideas about my topic. To avoid bias, I used a standardized set of questions that supports the overall research question. For

transparency, I recorded all interviews, transcribed them, and provided the participants an electronic copy of their responses (within 48 hours of the interview). The participants received a copy of their responses to validate the accuracy of my transcription.

Methodology

I conducted interviews with the framework of interpretative phenomenological methodology, which guided the process. According to Starks and Trinidad (2007), interviews are one of the main tools used for data collection in a qualitative research design. I used interviews to collect evidence on the experiences of the participants and their comprehension of the experiences. The interviews were semistructured and include open-ended questions, as suggested by Reid et al. (2005).

Prior to conducting any interviews, I obtained approval from Walden's University Institutional Review Board (IRB). After obtaining IRB approval, I interviewed multiple military law enforcement personnel (at various levels) by telephone. This qualitative research, I concluded, was consistent with eliciting a complex, detailed understanding of how the Military Police Corps is using it resources to prevent or mitigate active shooting incidents, which was the focus of this investigation. The interviewees consisted of three senior Military Police Corps leaders (Pay Grade 05 through 06), midlevel leaders (Pay Grade E-7 through 04), junior leaders (Pay Grade E-5 through E-6), junior soldiers (Pay Grade E-1 through E-4) and three Department of the Army Civilian Police Officers (junior grade). The participants came from five military police battalions. I selected the five battalions because of their geographic locations and size. I employed a snowball

sampling methodology by enlisting current military police officers whom I served with while on active duty status to join the participant pool. Afterwards, participants were asked to recommend coworkers whom they believed would be a good fit (i.e., who had significant experience in law enforcement operations and met the following criteria: senior Military Police Corps leaders [Pay Grade 05 through 06], midlevel leaders [Pay Grade E-7 through 04], junior leaders [Pay Grade E-5 through E-6], junior soldiers [Pay Grade E-1 through E-4], or Department of the Army Civilian Police Officers [junior grade]). As a contingency plan, I would have used the social media platforms LinkedIn and Facebook to solicit additional participants.

Prior to conducting interviews, participants received consent forms for their review and signature. The informed consent form detailed the phenomenological study's purpose, my contact information, and issues of confidentiality between the participants and the investigator. The form also addressed potential risks to the participants.

For this research, no real names were used and each participant was assigned numbers and aliases to protect their privacy and for de-identification purposes. The data was collected via telephonic interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Because of the participant pool was geospatially disbursed, I used telephonic interviews for this phenomenological study. The interview questions (see Appendix A) were devised so participants could explain how they would improve active shooter response in their organization, how they would improve collaboration between law enforcement and the military community for active shooter preparedness training, and

how the military police culture hinders or enhances the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan. I developed this instrument based on literature sources (e.g., Barnes, 2012; Blair, Nichols, Burns, & Curnutt, 2013; Schweit, 2014; Borelli, 2013; IAED 2017) and my personal experience and training as a retired military police officer. To record the interviews, I used a digital recorder.

The first step in establishing content validity is recognizing bias tendencies and ensuring they do not affect the development of the research and interview questions. Second, ethical recruiting assisted with content validity because data collected from representatives of the targeted population, with the required knowledge and experience, led to valid results. Finally, I used respondent validation by summarizing the data and having the participants review my findings, which allowed the participants to critically analyze the findings to confirm that the data is authentic and recognizable. To support data sufficiency, information was gathered from multiple perspectives (locations and groups within the same industry), which is known as triangulation.

Data management in qualitative research consists of coding, data storage, interpretation, and presentation (Smith & Firth, 2011). Data management is an indispensable part of the research process, which should be in place prior to the start of any research project (Smith & Firth, 2011). To assist with coding, data storage, and interpretation, I used NVivo 10 by QSR International. I transcribed the interviews into NVivo to organize, label, and stamp the data with the date and time. I used axial and open coding. Throughout the open coding phase, I examined words or phrases and sorted

them into groups; during axial coding, I linked groups to subgroups by concentrating on the affiliation between the different categories.

According to Starks and Trinidad (2007), qualitative research is intrinsically idiosyncratic because the investigator is the primary research tool and the decision maker in regards to coding, thematizing, and contextualization. In any type of research, integrity is an important characteristic for an investigator to have, but in a phenomenological study, the integrity of the researcher is "center stage" because of the subjective nature (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). To assist with validity, all interviews were recorded (via digital recorder) with the consent of the interviewees, and each transcribed response was stored under lock and key. The discussions followed a designed worksheet to help maintain uniformity between members of the sampling pool.

After completion of the interviews, I transferred the documents and acoustic files to NVivo 10 for analysis and information management. I stored the data on a flash drive and secured it in my home safe. Triangulation of sources established credibility and allow me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic studied. The different data sources consisted of interviewing people at different locations, in multiple positions, and with different experiences.

I used snowball sampling to identify the participant pool from the five preselected Army installations. With the support from literature sources, I developed questions to address the gap in literature. I conducted snowball sampling by contacting a former coworker who is still an active duty military police officer. I asked him to recommend

other participants for this phenomenological study. I explained the purpose of this phenomenological study, interview procedures, and the confidentiality issue of storing all data collected in a secure place. The participants were assured that their personal identification information would not be shared in the written report or verbally.

The final point I explained before the interviews started was the consent form. I explained the form in its entirety and asked each participant verbally if they understood the form. After verbal conformation, I asked the participant to sign the form (the forms were emailed to the participants). After the forms were signed, I reminded each participant that he or she could withdraw from this phenomenological study at any time and for any reason. I used a semistructured format and allowed the participants a significant amount of time to explain their personal experiences with this phenomenon.

During and after the interview phase, I requested clarification from multiple participants, regarding words, phrases, or experiences they shared. This technique is known as member checking. Member checking is used in qualitative research to allow research participants to double-check the information they shared with the researcher (Carlson, 2010). I took notes during the interviews to record the following actions of the participants: emotions, and lack of emotions. In addition, I recorded my personal thoughts or observations related to the participants' reactions during the interview. After completion of the interviews, I reviewed the audiotapes and my personal notes to ensure accuracy. All data was stored in NVivo—software designed to support qualitative research—and then saved to a password protected thumb drive and secured in my home

safe. All participants had an opportunity to review their initial interview to verify accuracy (member check) of language, meaning, and views. Each participant received a copy (via email) of the transcript pertaining to his or her interview.

Summary

Through this qualitative phenomenological study, I investigated the philosophies that guide the Military Police Corps' views on active shooter preparedness training and the influence of those policies on the military and civilian community. A phenomenology theoretical framework guided this study because it allowed the investigator to use a phenomenological approach, which is a requirement when seeking answers for problems of this nature (Weed, 2005). I pinpointed the rank and file members' perceptions of their active shooter preparedness training. Although these accounts were subjective, they were valuable because they came with an insiders' viewpoints. This chapter presented the framework of this phenomenological study, data collection, data management and analysis, validity and reliability, and the role of the investigator.

I asked 15 law enforcement personnel, including senior leaders, mid-level leaders, junior leaders, junior officers, and DA civilian police officers, to participate in the study. Before the commencement of this phenomenological study, all participants had time to ask questions, read, and sign the informed consent form. I transferred all documents and acoustic files to NVivo 10 for analysis and information management; the data was stored on a secure and password-protected thumb drive. I analyzed and grouped the data

according to themes identified during the analysis phase. In Chapter 4, I discussed the findings of the research, themes, and analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings of this study. The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the Army's active shooter preparedness training by examining its policies and procedures and comparing them to civilian law enforcement policies and procedures for active shooter preparedness. I sought to answer the following research question: How can civilian law enforcement policing strategies help improve the response of the Military Police Corps to an active shooter? Phone interviews gave me the opportunity to examine the lived experiences of the participants.

Setting

The geographic setting for this study consisted of locations throughout the United States and Europe. I used telephone interviews in the study because of the geospatial location of the participants. During the phone interviews, participants shared their knowledge and experience about active shooter preparedness. All participants were encouraged to speak openly about their experiences. I conducted interviews at various times and dates at the participants' convenience. The participants were made up of Military Police soldiers and Department of the Army Civilian Police personnel. A comprehensive description including positions of key participants cannot be divulged because it may lead to their identification. The participants consisted of senior Military Police Corps leaders, midlevel leaders, junior leaders, and junior soldiers.

Demographics

The 15 participants interviewed for this study came from various military police units throughout the United States and Europe. (Eight participants were from the same organization.) Each participant reported that she or he had been involved in a live active shooter preparedness exercise at some point in her or his career. I asked demographic questions about gender, age, rank, job title, and educational level (see Appendix B). The 15 participants were of various ages, races, genders, ranks, and educational levels (see Table 1). Eight volunteers were excluded from this study because they did not meet the explicit criteria.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Rank	Race	Gender	Education level
MP1	46	0-6	White	Male	MA
MP2	45	0-5	White	Male	MA
MP3	29	E-4	Black	Male	AD
MP4	48	0-6	White	Male	MA
MP5	44	GS7	Hispanic	Male	AD
MP6	38	GS7	Hispanic	Male	HS
MP7	33	GS9	White	Female	MA
MP8	27	E-4	White	Female	AD
MP9	25	E-4	Black	Female	HS
MP10	33	O-4	Black	Male	MA
MP11	30	E-4	Hispanic	Male	BA
MP12	31	GS9	White	Female	MA
MP13	40	0-5	White	Male	MA
MP14	39	GS9	Black	Male	HS
MP15	42	GS12	White	Female	HS

Note. HS = high school; AD = associate's degree; BA = bachelor's degree; MA = master's degree.

Data Collection

I conducted the interviews over a 12-day period and asked each participant 10 questions, which took approximately 30 minutes to answer. Prior to the start of the interviews, the consent form was discussed, and I informed the participants that they had the option to discontinue the interview at any time without any negative consequences. I used a digital recorder to record each interview, with permission from each participant. The participants were informed that the interviews would be anonymous and, to ensure their anonymity, their names were replaced (randomly) with alphanumeric characters.

Data Analysis

After completing the interviews, I transcribed the digital recordings verbatim and uploaded them into the NVivo 10 software. I selected this software so that the data from the interviews could be analyzed to categorize themes and patterns that emerged from the responses to the interview questions. Using the software, I was able to compile phrases into related groups. By evaluating the participants' replies to the interview questions, I was able to demonstrate the relationship between related patterns and themes. Each interview question was open-ended and designed to invoke replies specific to the research design and focus.

The phenomenological method was most appropriate for this type of research because there is very little research on active shooter preparedness for the military law enforcement community (see Chapters 1 and 2). Use of this methodology permitted me to classify a participant's experience and categorize a similarly experienced phenomenon

shared by the participants, such as the lack of quality training time, inadequate equipment, subpar leadership, and lack of community outreach (on active shooter preparedness).

During data interpretation, the following themes emerged from the participant responses: (a) local community not adequately trained in active shooter preparedness, (b) inadequate joint active shooter preparedness training with local law enforcement, (c) inferior or inadequate equipment (ballistic shields and breaching tools), and (d) insufficient training for law enforcement (first responders) and emergency dispatchers. Although the themes did not start developing until the conclusion of the data collection and interpretation, the answers they provided were expected. In 2016, the Department of Defense (DoD) published Instructions 5525.15 (Law Enforcement Standards and Training in the Department of Defense), and it illustrated how DoD's new law enforcement standards will be similar to civil law enforcement training standards.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

According to Shenton (2016), research trustworthiness centers on establishing dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Each characteristic plays a significant and equal part in providing trustworthiness in a qualitative study.

Credibility

For the assertion of trustworthiness in this study, I used various strategies as authentication for the quality of the collected data. Triangulation (the corroboration of specific themes from participants) and rapport building (discussing my relevant

experience) strategies were used to validate the collected data (see Shenton, 2016). After transcribing the oral interviews, I e-mailed the interview transcripts to the participants for accuracy verification. As a retired military police officer, I was able to discuss force protection issues and training restraints within the Military Police Corps. I believe that this made it easier for many of the participants to establish a rapport with me, which gave them the confidence to speak freely. Sharing their comparable experiences and views about their organizations' active shooter preparedness plans provided credibility.

Transferability

Transferability refers to relevance of study findings to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Shenton, 2016). I recruited participants from five Army installations, and all participants were certified law enforcement personnel with various levels of experience, education, and responsibility (from senior-level decision makers to junior patrol personnel). Additional research conducted on this topic should use similar demographics and questions to establish transferability.

Dependability

According to Shenton (2016), allowing the participants to repeat themselves is a crucial part of establishing dependability. Dependability in qualitative research is defined as the stability of data over time and over conditions. For this study, comparisons with previous research pertained to inferior or inadequate equipment, insufficient training for law enforcement (first responders), and emergency dispatchers, and other topics. A researcher conducting a qualitative study tries to advance themes and responses based on

the replies and analysis of the participants (Shenton, 2016). Within their answers, participants expressed multiple shared experiences that transcended geography and position.

Confirmability

This is used to substantiate that the research findings are derived from the experience of participants and supporting documents (Shenton, 2016). Conducting this qualitative study required a particular group of individuals with the right phenomenological experience. I established confirmability by detailing the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. I also provided supporting documentation for this research, such as training schedules from the military police units of the participants, the Military Police Corps training support package for active shooter preparedness, recordings and transcribed interviews, and peer-reviewed literature from past studies.

Results

Interview Question Findings

Interview Question 1. What are the steps involved in your local law enforcement's active shooter preparedness plan? The question illustrated the familiarization level of participants with the active shooter preparedness plan of their local law enforcement. The responses were divided into the following categories: (a) familiar and (b) not familiar. All participants responded to the question, and only 2 out of the 15 participants were familiar with their respective plan.

Subtheme 1.1: Familiar. Considering that *familiar* and *not familiar* can be subjective terms, familiar was interpreted as being able to articulate how the local police department trains officers to respond to an active shooter event. Two participants (MP3 and MP7) from different military police units were familiar with their local police department's active shooter preparedness plan. They were able to explain how the local police department trained the personnel, the type of equipment available for active shooter events, and the training frequency. In addition, MP3 and MP7 are active duty military police law enforcement officers who are volunteer police officers with their respective local civilian police department. These respondents stated that their knowledge of their local police department active shooter preparedness plan was gleaned from their service as auxiliary/volunteer police officers with their respective local police departments. Furthermore, they stated that their units had not conducted any joint active shooter training with their local police departments.

Subtheme 1.2: Not familiar. *Not familiar* was interpreted as not knowing how the local police department trains officers to respond to an active shooter event. Thirteen participants were not familiar with their local police department's active shooter preparedness plan. All participants stated that their units had not conducted joint active shooter training with their local police department within the last 3 to 5 years. (Each participant had been with her or his organization from 3 to 5 years).

Interview Question 2. What type of training do military police officers conduct in conjunction with local law enforcement? Military police officers have a long-standing tradition of training alongside local law enforcement officers. All 15 participants stated that their units allow all assigned military police personnel to attend law enforcement training sponsored by civilian law enforcement agencies. Participants reported having received the following training from civilian law enforcement agencies: (a) interview and interrogation techniques, (b) a driving while intoxicated identification course, (c) traffic accident investigation, (d) crime scene investigation, (e) community policing, (f) baton, (g) chemical aerosol projector, (h) 911 dispatch, and (i) stun gun training. When asked a follow-up question about active shooter training courses offered by their local police organizations, 80% of the participants stated that their local agencies offered training on active shooter response.

Interview Question 3. What are the similarities and differences between your unit's active shooter preparedness and local counterpart's training? Of the 15 participants, only 2 (MP3 and MP7) had the required knowledge to compare their active

shooter preparedness training with their local police department. The other 13 participants could not compare training criteria because their units did not conduct joint active shooter training with their local counterparts. Participants MP3 and MP7 reported that their agencies stated that the only similarities they saw were the following: each agencies had a written active shooter preparedness plan that required responding officers to advance toward the suspect as soon as they arrived on the scene and necessitated that a supervisor had to respond to the scene and assume the position of scene commander.

MP3 stated that the local police departments' active shooter preparedness plan differed from his units' active shooter preparedness plan. The plan from the local police department contained the following topics that were missing from their units' active shooter plan: specialized active shooter training for 911 operators, moving under-fire training for first responders and breaching training for first responders.

MP7 also relayed that his unit's active shooter preparedness plan was missing, specialized active shooter training for 911 operators, moving under-fire training for first responders, and breaching training for first responders. In addition, MP3 and MP7 stated that their local police departments would conduct training at different businesses throughout their jurisdictions (they would request permission from different companies), such as shopping malls, hospitals, grocery stores, and their own police stations. Since all major Army installation have shopping malls (e.g. Post Exchanges), hospitals, grocery stores (e.g. Commissaries), and police stations, the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan should also require active shooter preparedness training at those

locations.

Interview Question 4. How do the military police provide training to the military community (soldiers, family members, businesses, retirees, etc.) on how to react if they are involved in an active shooter event? Each participant stated that none of their units provided active shooter training to the military community (soldiers, family members, businesses, retirees, etc.). The United States Army Military Police School (USAMPS) has a course titled Patrol Response to Active Shooter Train-the-Trainer and it is designed to "instruct personnel responsible for training service members in active shooter response tactics, techniques, and procedures" (U.S. Army Fort Leonard Wood, 2019, p. 1).

Interview Question 5. What type of activities does the Military Police Corps active shooter preparedness training entail and how regularly do they occur? All 15 participants stated that each of their units conducts some form of active shooter training. Seven of the participants indicated that their units perform annual active shooter training, consisting of going over different tactics (e.g. shoot, do not shoot, unit policy on responding to an active shooter, providing first aid to the victims, room clearing procedures, etc.) in a classroom environment. Six of the participants stated that they also conduct training in a classroom environment, but it is not yearly (once every 2 years, 3 years, 18 months, or too infrequently to determine a set time pattern). The remaining two participants stated that their units conducted active shooter training annually that included practical exercises. The practical exercises consisted of active shooter training occurring

at their urban environment-training sites.

Interview Question 6. What types of live active shooter exercises do the military police conduct with on-post businesses and how many other organizations are involved (fire, medical, etc.)? Each participant stated that none of their units conducted live active shooter exercises with on-post businesses. Since the 1999 Columbine High School active shooter event, civilian police departments have updated their active shooter preparedness plan on a continual basis. For example, civilian law enforcement agencies, throughout the United States, are training local business owners and other community members on how to react during an active shooter event (Harvey, 2019).

Interview Question 7. How does the Military Police Corps culture affect active shooter preparedness training? Employees in every organization play a part in determining the overall culture in their particular company; however, leaders have the greatest influence on organizational culture (Heathfield, 2019). Of the 15 participants, 4 individuals (MP1, MP2, MP4, and MP10) believed that the Military Police Corps culture is conducive for active shooter preparedness training because organizational leadership is dedicated to providing ample training time for all law enforcement training to include active shooter preparedness. The remaining 11 participants stated the opposite. These respondents reported that their units did allow time for law enforcement training, but it was inadequate. Law enforcement training was usually conducted once a year, while training for tactical skills was scheduled for multiple times during the year.

Interview Question 8. What type of active shooter preparedness training do emergency dispatchers receive? Twelve participants stated that their organization did not have specialized active shooter preparedness training for their dispatchers. The remaining three participants indicated they were not aware of any specialized active shooter training for dispatchers.

Interview Question 9. Under what circumstances is your organization's active shooter preparedness plan updated? How often does this occur? Most of the participants, 80%, stated that they were unfamiliar with procedures to update the plan. In addition to their knowledge, their plans had not been updated within the last three years. The final three stated that their active shooter preparedness plans are updated yearly.

Interview Question 10. How could your organization's active shooter preparedness plan be improved? Eleven participants responded and each provided similar recommendations as to how their units could improve their active shooter preparedness plans. Respondents to this interview question stated that their organization should increase the number of active shooting training hours conducted on an annual basis; acquire the latest equipment, such as ballistic shields and breaching tools (only the patrol supervisor have breaching equipment); and conduct more live exercise training with their local civilian law enforcement agencies and business owners. In addition, four participants stated that their organization needed to invest in a new 911 communication system because the current systems are outdated.

Research Question Findings

Large metropolitan police departments, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York City, and Washington DC, have spent enormous amounts of time and resources on improving their active shooter preparedness training (Maximino, 2015). Over the years, active shooter response has evolved from the usual strategy of creating a perimeter and standing by while specialized units respond to the scene and engage the active shooter. Since the 1999 Columbine High School shooting, upgraded techniques (e.g. law enforcement immediately engaging active shooters, increased training time for active shooter preparedness, better equipment for first responders, etc.) were developed because it became clear that the tactics had become obsolete (Maximino, 2015). The enhanced techniques have improved active shooter preparedness training for many civilian law enforcement agencies. Analysis of the interviews illustrated that the upgraded tactics used by civilian law enforcement agencies for active shooter response could enhance the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps if they are integrated appropriately.

Collaboration. Although years of data from numerous authors (Brunk, 2016; Kapucu et al., 2010; Shan et al., 2012) illustrate the advantage of having a multiagency collaboration agreement to assist with an emergency management event, the analysis of the participants' responses demonstrated that the value of multiagency collaboration is not a priority for their leadership. Only 13% of the respondents stated that their units had an effective multiagency agreement in place. Eighty-six percent of the respondents stated

that their units did not conduct joint active shooter training with their local counterparts. Having an effective collaboration agreement requires agencies to conduct live exercise training on a regular basis because it could lead to a successful response, mitigation, and recovery effort (Brunk, 2016).

Training. All of the participants reported that personnel in their units had conducted a multitude of joint criminal justice training with their local law enforcement, but none of it was active shooter preparedness training. According to Zeemering and Delabbio (2013), emergency planning exercises between agencies are essential if they are to function as a cohesive unit during real-world emergencies. Training as one cohesive group will foster a certain level of trust and confidence between organizations, which will be required before a collaborative framework of shared responsibility can be initiated and executed at a high level of expertise (Zeemering & Delabbio, 2013).

While joint training is essential, an effective organizational training methodology is paramount to maintain adequate and professional law enforcement personnel. All of the participants stated that their organizations conduct some form of active shooter preparedness training. Moreover, 46% indicated that their units attended annual training in a classroom environment, while 40% reported that their units held training in a classroom environment, but it was not on a yearly basis (between 18 months and three years). Additionally, 13% stated that their units conducted annual active shooter training that consisted of a classroom portion and a practical exercise in an urban environment.

According to Rorie (2015), a holistic and effective active shooter preparedness plan should provide training on a regular basis. It should also conduct collaboration training with the local community and other first responders (fire, medical, etc.) and provide training for support staff and law enforcement personnel. Finally, it should also regularly update previous active shooter preparedness plans.

Seventy-three percent of the participants stated that their organizations could improve their active shooter preparedness plan by increasing the number of active shooter training hours conducted on an annual basis. Moreover, they suggested that the organizations should issue better equipment to the first responders, such as ballistic shields and breaching tools (only the patrol supervisors have breaching material in their vehicles). Finally, the participants suggested conducting more live exercise training (with their local civilian law enforcement agencies, business owners, and other community members). In addition, 26% stated that their organization needed to invest in a new 911 communication system because their current systems are outdated.

Summary

Although the literature on active shooter response and management is comprehensive, few studies pertain to military law enforcement agencies and their management of active shooter events, according to my review of the literature. Although the study is focused on the Army's Military Police Corps, it will also be beneficial for the other law enforcement agencies in DoD. In Chapter 5, I further discuss the findings. In

addition, I consider the limitations and implications of the study, and I offer recommendations for future research topics.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Active shooter events continue to occur throughout the United States. Past active shooter events including those at Fort Hood, Texas (49th Transportation Battalion, 2014); Chattanooga, Tennessee (Chattanooga Recruitment Center, 2015); Las Vegas, Nevada (Mandalay Bay Hotel, 2017); Parkland, Florida (Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, 2018); and Virginia Beach, Virginia (Virginia Beach Municipal Center, 2019) illustrate that all law enforcement agencies need an active shooter preparedness plan that is holistic in nature. Active shooter preparedness training is a significant issue that requires continuous research to assist leaders and administrators with a holistic approach to combating active shooter events. I conducted this research to examine the Military Police Corps' training on active shooter preparedness to determine whether it is comparable to civilian law enforcement industry standards. I found that the Corps' training is not comparable to civilian law enforcement industry standards.

In 2010, less than a year after the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, the U.S. Army Military Police School released the Active Shooter Response Training Support Package (TSP; U.S. Army Military Police School, 2010). The packet outlines several courses of action regarding how to respond to and manage an active shooter event. Although the TSP was a significant effort to address a highly complex problem, the packet has several gaps that need filling. For example, the TSP contradicts updated active shooter response training developed by federal and local law enforcement agencies by making unrealistic

claims or expectations pertaining to officer safety and neutralizing active shooters. The results of this study illustrate that the Corps' current active shooter preparedness training methodology has gaps that can be filled by incorporating civilian law enforcement industry standards for active shooter preparedness. I plan to use the results of this research to advocate for recommended changes that are more in line with civilian law enforcement industry standards for active shooter preparedness.

This study progressed from the analysis of the training plan for active shooter preparedness of the Military Police Corps to the assessment of technology, equipment, written policies, and collaborations with internal and external organizations to combat active shooter events. Although this study has limitations, it provides additional information to the current active shooter preparedness literature. Although there have been numerous studies on active shooter preparedness (Jenkins, 2017), I found no litature that compared the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness training with the civilian law enforcements active shooter preparedness standards.

In addressing this gap in the literature, I examined the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps, conducted interviews, and reviewed training documentation of five geographically dispersed organizations. Specifically, I examined how the Military Police Corps trained and responded to an active shooter event in comparison to civilian law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, I analyzed the participants' interview response to identify and address security gaps (by comparing the

responses to civilian law enforcement industry standards for active shooter preparedness) in the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness plan.

Interpretation of the Findings

This phenomenological study addressed multiple aspects of the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps, such as training hours, personnel training, equipment, collaboration, and communication. Having an appropriately trained workforce is a vital component for any organization. Without an effective training methodology, employees could become underqualified due to advancements in technology, equipment, and training methodology. The results of this phenomenological study (derived from participant responses and military police training records) affirmed that the Military Police Corps averages 14 training hours per year on active shooter preparedness, which is far less than the 40 hours recommended by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (2018). Results also indicate that officers in the Corps are not adequately equipped or appropriately trained and that they lack a comprehensive policy that requires each Military Police Corps unit to have a standardized active shooter preparedness plan.

Although a review of the literature confirmed that civilian police agencies have changed the way they respond to active shooter events since the Columbine High School shooting (Harvey, 2019), the training on active shooter preparedness of the Military Police Corps does not reflect the major changes civilian law enforcement agencies have adopted as standard practices for responding to active shooter events. For example,

civilian law enforcement agencies have incorporated active shooter training that consists of live exercises in operational environments and joint training with other fire and medical first responders, and they developed collaboration agreements with neighboring jurisdictions (Harvey, 2019). The updated tactics have helped law enforcement agencies improve their active shooter preparedness program.

These changes illustrated how active shooter response tactics continue to advance, which increases the complexity of active shooter preparedness training. In the civilian sector, a paradigm shift in the use of medical personnel has them entering the hostile zone before the shooter is neutralized. Such a change will require additional training for civilian medical personnel; however, if the Military Police Corps would adopt this new tactic, very little training would be needed since the Military Police Corps does this in a combat environment by incorporating combat medics into military police squads. During combat deployments, medical personnel are exposed to dangerous situations (ambushes, active shooters, etc.) on a regular basis.

Analysis of study data demonstrates that the training methodology for the active shooter incident preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps is limited. The information gleaned from the research confirms that there is a significant gap between the active shooter preparedness plans of the Military Police Corps and civilian law enforcement. In addition, it revealed that the Military Police Corps is not motivated to educate the military community on the best strategies needed to mitigate injuries and death from active shooter incidents.

According to the research results, the likelihood of a significant active shooter event occurring within the military community increases yearly; however, it appears that the current active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps does not address the active shooter response holistically. The research data provided evidence that there are multiple gaps in the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps, which could be addressed by incorporating the operational capabilities of civilian law enforcement agencies.

Limitations of the Study

It was my intent to interview 15 participants (senior Military Police Corps leaders, midlevel leaders, junior leaders, and junior soldiers) from five different military police units. My intent was to have at least two participants from each unit so I could have multiple responses for each unit. However, only eight participants were from the same units (MP1 and MP5, MP2 and MP11, MP3 and MP6, and MP7 and MP15). Although the participants were not all from the same unit, I do not believe the outcome would have been different. This is because the seven other respondents had similar responses to the eight participants who were from the same units.

Four limitations apply to this phenomenological study, and each limitation relates to methodological weaknesses. The first limitation is from the result of working with a small participant pool. Data saturation is a principal element of qualitative research. Failing to reach it will influence the research and restrict content validity, which is required to demonstrate that the research is valid and that it answers the research

question. The nature of the small sample size limitation is artificially created to provide an expedient and judicious execution of the research; however, taking participants from large, medium, and small installations provided reasonable measures to address this limitation.

Second, sampling specifically drawn from the U.S. Army law enforcement population may result in groupthink responses. Armed forces and law enforcement individuals are extremely cohesive due to their training and experiences and are trained to solve problems as a team. These factors could make it more difficult for individuals to voice an independent idea. Because of the research topic, selecting the sampling from the military was a reasonable choice; however, pulling from one specific group may result in groupthink, which could make improvement difficult. The inclusion of law enforcement personnel with different ranks, positions, and the geospatial disbursement of the participant pool enhanced the probability that groupthink did not occur. It is highly unlikely that groupthink occurred during this research because several hundred miles separated the respondents.

Third, participants may have provided erroneous information because they could have viewed me as an outsider trying to embarrass the Military Police Corps. Respondents who viewed me as an outsider trying to embarrass the Military Police Corps or their units could have provided erroneous information about their unit's active shooter preparedness training program (embellishing on the amount of training hours allocated for active shooter preparedness, the type of training, the type of equipment, etc.). Finally,

disgruntled participants may provide inaccurate information because they are dissatisfied with their employer (Disgruntled Employees, 2019). During any type of research or investigation that requires interaction with the population, there will always be a possibility of receiving erroneous or exaggerated information from participants due to ulterior motives.

To address this type of limitation, I reviewed and compared the responses received and looked for outliers that required further investigation for clarity (there wee no outliers identified that needed further investigation). In addition to receiving erroneous or exaggerated information from participants, investigators must also be aware of their own biases. For example, I work as a law enforcement and antiterrorism specialist (DoD contractor) for the Under Secretary of Defense (Intelligence) and because of my position, I have access to classified information, law enforcement sensitive information, and internal memorandums and emails that are not available to the public or to law enforcement personnel in subordinate organizations. Having access to internal memorandums and emails that highlights the security gaps in the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness program has the potential to negatively affect my objectivity. For bias mitigation purposes, I only used documents that had been released to the public or those that can be obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

Recommendations

Developing a Holistic Active Shooter Preparedness Plan

Mitigating the effects of an active shooter event requires preparation, stakeholders engagement (with numerous agencies), and competent leadership Christensen & Lægreid, 2014). The analysis identified four main elements that stand out as fundamental components of a holistic active shooter preparedness plan.

Technology plays a vital role in developing and maintaining an effective active shooter preparedness plan. Active shooter events are usually over within 5 minutes or less. In addition, having the right technology could help mitigate the influence of an active shooter. For example, a gunshot detection system can assist law enforcement in quickly pinpointing an active shooter.

Equipment can also be used to mitigate the loss of life by protecting first responders during an active shooter response. Numerous civilian law enforcement agencies provide their first responders with specific equipment that is used to assist with an active shooter response, such as ballistic shields, breaching tools, and long barrel guns.

Written policies are used to provide guidance to employees and assist with creating a standard level of operations throughout an organization. Civilian law enforcement agencies have developed holistic active shooter policies that require the entire organization to implement them at the unit level.

Collaboration between law enforcement agencies stimulates greater productivity in service delivery and improves the role designation of other agencies. Interagency

partnership in law enforcement can take the shape of resource sharing with another police department to offer expert training, to plan for conceivable emergencies, and to develop better ways to respond to calls involving large-scale emergencies.

The study identified that 12 of the participants (middle leaders, junior leaders, and junior patrolmen) are interested in providing updated equipment to first responders and developing a holistic standardized active shooter preparedness plan for the Military Police Corps. They are also interested in establishing collaboration agreements with other law enforcement agencies, increasing training hours for active shooter preparedness training, and increasing the amount of active shooter training with live-fire exercise.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is limited research regarding the preparedness of the Military Police Corps for an active shooter event, which suggests continual research is needed to investigate this issue to ensure that the best response methodology is incorporated into the overall active shooter response planning for the Military Police Corps. The study findings determined that active shooter preparedness planning must be holistic in nature, which includes addressing collaboration agreements with adjacent law enforcement agencies and medical agencies. A comprehensive methodology will ensure that the active shooter preparedness plan will address the four phases of an active shooter event, which are mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The examination of the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps found that response, training, equipment, tactics, technology, and collaboration are

some of the areas that need additional research. The interviews implied that the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps is restrictive and does not reflect the best practices from civilian law enforcement agencies for active shooter response, such as medical collaboration, which is extremely important to the active shooter response and therefore deserving of more analytical research.

In addition, future investigators should research the feasibility of civilian law enforcement agencies assuming the law enforcement mission for Army installations to determine if they can provide better service. The phenomenological framework assisted this study by illustrating the effectiveness of the training support package for an active shooter for the Military Police Corps at the unit level. Additional research should include scrutiny of civilian training methodology to minimize casualties concerning active shooter preparedness. This study demonstrated that the current active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps lacks a provision that addresses active shooter training for the general military population.

Expanding the examination of this subject by adding additional military police units from other geographic locations could assist in further understanding of the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps. Facts gleaned from different areas could provide wide-ranging results that may help improve the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps.

The researcher seeks to enlighten senior leaders within the Department of the Army and the DoD with information that will help mitigate casualties from an active

shooter event. In addition, the research provides a holistic approach to active shooter preparedness that can be used by civilian law enforcement agencies.

Implications

This study can affect positive social change within the DoD and the civilian law enforcement community by highlighting lesson learned and best course of actions from past active shooter events that occurred. The study can assist the Military Police Corps leadership with their decision-making process, updating their training methodology for first responders and 911 dispatchers, and provide better tactical equipment for first responders. In addition, this research can enlighten the Military Police Corps leadership on the importance of having an effective emergency management collaboration agreement (with local law enforcement agencies) because the literature illustrated how collaboration agreements between government entities and private organizations could be advantageous for each organization (Kapucu et al., 2010). Multiagency collaboration will result in substantial cost savings in services, a higher capacity, and enhancements to service proficiency and quality.

Additionally, this phenomenological study is significant for civilian law enforcement organizations because it identified best practices and lessons learned when responding to an active shooter event. Although it is true that many civilian law enforcement agencies have developed procedures to respond to and manage active shooter events, numerous agencies (with 10 or less officers) could benefit from the

phenomenological study because many organizations do not have adequate policies or procedures on responding to an active shooter event.

Conclusion

The active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps was unmistakably designed to protect the military community against active shooters. The results of the study found that the current active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps is obsolete and does not provide the best protection against active shooters. Multiple law enforcement agencies throughout the nation have failed to have a comprehensive active shooter preparedness plan that focuses on mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to develop comprehensive active shooter plans that address collaborative strategic planning between local law enforcement agencies and adjacent jurisdictions to increase active shooter preparedness effectiveness.

Using a phenomenological methodology assisted with identifying security gaps in the active shooter preparedness plan of the Military Police Corps and recommending solutions for the security gaps. The phenomenological methodology supported an interpretive approach, which allowed the participant pool to use real-life situations to describe how their agencies prepare for active shooter events. The IAD framework illustrated multiple barriers that currently hinder the Military Police Corps from implementing an effective and holistic active shooter preparedness plan that addresses the

following four phases of an active shooter event: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The study found that law enforcement officers and emergency dispatchers were not adequately trained (or properly equipped) in the most current active shooter tactics used by civilian law enforcement organizations (state and federal). The study also revealed that the amount of time allocated to active shooter preparedness training for the first responders in the Military Police Corps is significantly less than the training allocated for their tactical combat mission. A comprehensive approach to active shooter preparedness should also address training issues, resources, technology, and collaboration.

For law enforcement agencies, staying current on active shooter preparedness literature is a necessity to maintain an effective active shooter preparedness training plan. Mitigating the effects of an active shooter should be the objective of all active shooter preparedness plans. To accomplish that objective, collaboration and coordination between law enforcement personnel, administrators, and politicians must occur because defending against active shooters is a problem set that requires a whole government approach. Although this study adds to the overall body of literature for active shooter preparedness training, it is not all encompassing because several areas within active shooter preparedness, including financial resourcing, equipment, technology, and human capital require further research.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What are the steps involved in your local law enforcement's active shooter preparedness plan?
2. What type of training do military police officers conduct in conjunction with local law enforcement?
3. What are the similarities and differences between your unit's active shooter preparedness and local counterpart's training?
4. In what ways does the military police provide training to the military community (soldiers, family members, businesses, retirees, etc) on how to react if they are involved in an active shooter event?
5. What type of activities does the Military Police Corps' active shooter preparedness training entail and how regularly do they occur?
6. What types of live active shooter exercises does the military police conduct with on-post businesses and how many other organizations are involved (fire, medical, etc.)?
7. How does the Military Police Corps' culture affect active shooter preparedness training?
8. What type of active shooter preparedness training do emergency dispatchers receive?
9. Under what circumstances is your organization's active shooter preparedness plan updated? How often does this occur?
10. How could your organization's active shooter preparedness plan be improved?

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questions

1. Age:_____
2. Gender:_____
3. Current Rank:_____
4. Job Title: _____
5. Education Level:
    a. Doctoral Degree _____
    b. Master's Degree _____
    c. Bachelor's Degree_____
    d. Associate Degree_____
    e. Some College_____
    f. High School Diploma_____