



71st Military Police Detachment Activated



By Major Kevin M. Pelley

On 16 October 2009, Lieutenant Colonel David F. Koonce, commander of the Benning U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC) (commonly referred to as “CID”) Battalion, and Chief Warrant Officer Three Shirley Hawkins, also with the Benning CID Battalion, uncased the 71st Military Police Detachment (CID) guidon, marking the unit’s reactivation at Fort Benning, Georgia. Orders to activate the 71st were approved in November 2008; the activation ceremony was the culmination of nearly a year of planning and preparation.

The Benning CID Battalion was authorized an increase based on its geographically dispersed structure, the number of unit and individual deployments, and an increase in support requirements due to the growth of Fort Benning and other installations within the battalion footprint. The high demand for CID agents in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other theaters resulted in detachments within the Benning CID Battalion performing felony criminal investigative missions with less than half of the required strength. As Lieutenant Colonel Koonce stated at the activation ceremony, “With the addition of this detachment and the personnel positions that the activation authorizes, the battalion will be able to better support the Fort Benning community and the expected increase in population that the Armor School and the Maneuver Center of Excellence will bring.”

The activation of the 71st also allowed the battalion to officially stand up two new offices in Florida—one at Eglin Air Force Base (to cover the panhandle region of Florida) and another in Lakeland (to provide support to the central and southern portions of Florida, including Tampa, Orlando, Miami, and MacDill Air Force Base). In addition, the activation authorized the personnel whom the battalion had been providing as support for the Puerto Rico office.

The 71st Military Police Detachment was originally constituted on 8 November 1950 as the 71st Military Police Criminal Investigation Detachment. The guidon has since been furled and unfurled many times. In 1976, the unit earned campaign credit for service in Vietnam. From 2000 to 2006, the 71st provided law enforcement support at Fort Benning; during that time, individual augmentees were deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the detachment was awarded the Brigadier General David H. Stem Award as the best U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command military police detachment. The unit was last inactivated on 17 April 2006.

The Military Police Corps has nearly doubled in size during the last seven years—a direct result of combatant commanders’ demands for military police and CID units in their theaters. Lieutenant Colonel Koonce remarked, “The activation of the 71st Military Police Detachment (CID) is an honor for the Benning CID Battalion for two reasons—one, the only new growth within CID this fiscal year is this detachment; and two, with the activation of this detachment, the Army continues to recognize the importance of law enforcement and investigative units within its ranks.”

With the high demand for criminal investigators, the 71st Military Police Detachment was scheduled for deployment even before it was activated. The deployment, which is scheduled for Spring 2010, will be in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The newly activated unit will conduct felony investigations, support intelligence fusion operations, and mentor Iraqi investigators.

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