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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



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Special agents get their start at FLW

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – The U.S. Army’s version of crime scene investigators get their start at Fort Leonard Wood attending the U.S. Army Military Police School.

It takes 15 weeks to earn the title of criminal investigations special agent (historically called CID agents) for select Soldiers who are specialized in crime-scene investigation, evidence gathering and laws of the science.

The CID Special Agent Course syllabus covers law, code to include the Uniform Code of Military Justice, unarmed self-defense, subject apprehension, firearms training and qualification, crime-scene processing and drugs and weapons undercover operations.

Students participate in a rite of passage ceremony where they graduate, according to Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Hickman, CIDSAC course manager, who said, on average, about 200 Soldiers annually graduate from the course accredited by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation program.

Already holding a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, Spc. Catherine Link applied for the CID program and made the transition from civilian to Soldier by completing the military police 19-week, One Station Unit Training here.

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“The more I learned about forensic science, the more I fell in love with it,” she said. “Forensic science and helping people at the same time is a real-life puzzle. So, if you’re good at puzzles already, this is a dream come true.”

“You have to have the right mindset,” the Illinois native, said. “You have to think ‘this is science.’ As long as you can separate your life from what is going on, you are safe. You can’t let the two blend.”

Following completion of the course, Link plans to complete a yearlong apprenticeship at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Another of the current CIDSAC students, Sgt. Andrew Langley, came to the course from Fort Hood, Texas, where he served as a signals analyst. He said he’s been in military intelligence for six years, and completed a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan as an asset to investigations from the end of 2013 to mid-2014.

Langley said it took about six months for his CID application to be accepted, which was short in comparison to some, since he held the required security clearance from his previous position.

“Investigation is about problem solving,” Langley, an Alabama native said. “I like the idea of solving problems, getting to the truth, and finding the facts of each case. That’s what got me to want to put in a CID packet.”

Spc. Christian Wilson, served for six years with the 229th MP Company, Virginia National Guard, where he worked security operations and riot control, and now serves on active duty.

“It took one year and eight months and a lot of perseverance to get here,” Wilson, said.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Duane Mitchell, USAMPS, Military Police Investigative Division chief, said, “The purpose of the course is to provide the most current doctrine, training and technology, and investigative techniques available, to train our newest to conduct investigations on serious crimes, ranging from \$5,000 larcenies to murder. That is the meat and potatoes of what CID is all about – safeguarding Army personnel, assets and interests.”

Mitchell said, as part of the course curriculum, students are tested on their ability to juggle cases, because that’s exactly what they will have to do in the field. “We basically see who is struggling, and help teach them prioritization,” he said. “We’re producing a self-sufficient agent who can figure things out on their own, which is the way it should be.”

Mitchell, with a 30-year background in criminal investigations, emphasized, “Agents are taught to do the right thing, the right way, the first time. Once you burn a bridge, it’s over with.”

Currently, members of the U.S. Marine Corps are eligible to attend the course, and Mitchell said it is important to include other services in the training.

“That way, we’re all speaking the same language and using the same protocols,” he said.

Mitchell said CIDSAC is just the beginning to a career as a 31D.

“This is basic level training. There are so many other courses to further their investigative capabilities. We touch upon these topics in the basic course so they are aware.”

Hickman said the prerequisites and process to become a CID Special Agent can be found online at www.cid.army.mil.

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

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Photo outline: *Spc. Rebekah Baldwin obtains a handprint of Spc. Jamie Landis during week two of the criminal investigations special agent course at the Maj. Gen. Paul Timmerberg Forensic Science Training Facility July 31, 2015.*

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains about 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command’s U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army’s largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting a colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.
