

## **History of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory**

In 1943 the world was at war, and millions of Americans had been called to serve their country. The chain-of-command realized that in order to defeat the enemy aggressors, they had to control the internal criminal element. To assist in accomplishing this mission, the Army's first forensic laboratory was activated on October 1, 1943, as the Scientific Investigations Branch of the Provost Marshal's Office, 12th U.S. Army Group, Algiers, French North Africa.

The Laboratory consisted of 2nd Lt. George R. "Pappy" Bird and a photographer. They moved with advancing forces from Algiers to Naples, Italy where Sgt. James Boarders joined the new crime laboratory. The team then moved on to southern France. During this time all their work was done in borrowed offices of abandoned homes. As the offensive picked up speed, Bird, who had been promoted to captain, saw the need for a mobile laboratory. While in Marseilles, France, he obtained a weapons repair truck and its driver from the 27th MP Detachment (CI) and converted it into a laboratory. Bird later added a jeep and a chemist to his team and rejoined the allied advance; crossing the Rhine River and moving into the heart of Germany. The laboratory ended its wartime duty in Fulda, later moved to Wiesbaden, and then to Frankfurt.

In 1953, the European laboratory (USACIL-EUROPE) underwent major modernization of facilities and equipment. During this period the lab was also responsible for supervising the "Lie Detector Program" in Europe and was designated as the point of contact between the U.S. Army and INTERPOL.

The Army's second forensic laboratory, (USACIL-PACIFIC) was founded in Manila, Philippine Islands shortly after the islands were recaptured from the Japanese. In 1946, the facility was moved to Tokyo, Japan; however, due to inadequate facilities and equipment, the laboratory was able to provide only limited services. In 1948, Col. Calvin Goddard, a noted criminologist, was assigned as the commander of the Tokyo laboratory. He was responsible for modernizing the facility, acquiring state of the art scientific equipment and adding Japanese civilian and American technicians to the staff.

The third forensic laboratory (USACIL-CONUS) was established May 1, 1945 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. It was moved to Fort Gordon, Georgia in September 1948. The "draft" was relied upon to provide trained individuals to staff the facility. In an attempt to alleviate persistent shortages of qualified military police criminal investigation laboratory technicians and to provide trained replacements to meet future personnel needs, an in-house laboratory training program was established by the Provost Marshal General on February 1, 1956. In September 1983, the laboratory was moved to its current location at Fort Gillem, Georgia.

In addition to the three Regular Army Crime Laboratories, there were at least three Army Reserve Laboratories; the 379th MP Laboratory (CI), in Washington, D.C.; the 498th Laboratory (CI), in Wichita, Kansas; and, the 380th MP Detachment (Crime Lab), Oakland Army Base, Oakland, California. These laboratories trained and maintained professional relationships with the laboratory at Fort Gordon, Georgia.

During the Vietnam War, a fourth forensic laboratory was established as the U.S. Army Republic of Vietnam, Crime Laboratory, Long Binh, Vietnam. As America's involvement in Vietnam was reduced, this laboratory was closed and its mission was turned over to the Japan Laboratory.

On September 17, 1971 the United States Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC) was established as a major Army Command and the three laboratories: U.S. Army Criminal Investigation

Laboratory, Fort Gordon, Ga.; Detachment B, 9th MP Gp (CI), Frankfurt, Germany; and the 515th MP Detachment B, Japan, were integrated into USACIDC and redesignated as USACIL-CONUS, USACIL-EUROPE, and USACIL-PACIFIC.

In 1985, Maj. Gen. Eugene R. Cromartie, USACIDC's commander, directed the reorganization of the USACIDC laboratory structure. That decision was implemented in 1987 with the unification of USACIDC's three crime laboratories under one command - the USACIL: a centrally directed forensic laboratory system to provide cost effective, state of the art, full service forensic laboratory support to Department of Defense law enforcement and legal agencies worldwide.

The 1990s brought the end of the Cold War and with it, a reduction of U.S. military commitments in Asia and Europe. As a result of DoD downsizing in response to reduced commitments; USACIL-PACIFIC was deactivated on September 15, 1993; USACIL Europe was deactivated on June 1, 1996; and laboratory operations were consolidated at USACIL-CONUS, which assumed worldwide mission responsibility.

On November 25, 2002 a groundbreaking ceremony was held to initiate construction of an 88.6K square foot state-of-the-art criminal investigation laboratory. USACIL officially occupied the now 133,000 square foot facility on January 11, 2006 and is currently undergoing its third expansion.

During the execution of OIF/OEF, the need for forward based forensic laboratories was recognized and in 2007, the Provost Marshal General directed USACIL to develop an enduring expeditionary forensics capability. On September 9, 2008, Army DAMO-FM approved an initial TDA of 152 personnel including three deployable laboratories, and USACIL stood up the Expeditionary Forensic Division. In 2009, the Training and Technology Division was created to train the examiners needed to staff the Expeditionary Forensic Laboratories.

From 1985 until mid-February 2011, USACIL was accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors - Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB) since 1985. It was the 31st forensic laboratory in the United States to be accredited. In December 2010, USACIL was assessed by the Forensic Quality Services – Forensic Accreditation Program and found to be in compliance with the International Organization of Standardization and Forensic Requirements for Accreditation. USACIL received international accreditation on February 16, 2011.

Today, USACIL is the only full service forensic laboratory in DoD and provides services to all DoD investigative agencies worldwide.

Throughout 68 years of distinguished service, the men and women, both military and civilian, of the Army's crime laboratories, have lived up to their motto: "Justitia Per Scientia" - Justice Through Science.