



Military Intelligence Civilian Excepted Career Program as a Career Field

by Mr. Ricardo Romero

Introduction

The Military Intelligence Civilian Excepted Career Program (MICECP) is an Army Civilian intelligence program that provides expert support to intelligence organizations worldwide. The U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command executes MICECP through the Commander, U.S. Army Field Support Center. AR 690-950-4, *Military Intelligence Civilian Excepted Career Program*, governs the execution and implementation of the program. The regulation further prescribes the policy and procedures for the hiring, training, career development and management, appraisal, recruitment, and employment of MICECP employees engaged in foreign counterintelligence (CI), tactical, operational, and strategic human intelligence (HUMINT), and other specialized technical intelligence collection and operational support functions. AR 690-950-4 supplements other applicable regulations on Army Civilian personnel management.

Background

In 1956, the U.S. Civil Service authorized the excepted service program for Army intelligence. A year later, the U.S. Army Intelligence Center issued General Order 8, establishing the Army Survey Detachment as the management unit of the excepted service program. The detachment's Intelligence Civilian Career Program, the predecessor of MICECP, counted 172 CI and HUMINT specialists in the United States, Caribbean, and Pacific and European theaters. In 1986, the Army Survey Detachment was re-designated the Army Field Support Center.

The Excepted Service Program

MICECP personnel are Army Civilians serving in an excepted service program. MICECP employees differ from traditional Army Civilians, each of whom brings subject matter expertise to their position. The Army recruits and develops MICECP personnel for a career in intelligence rather than a specific position. For example, a MICECP member at the journeyman level, GG-13 paygrade, in the CI career track/investigations career path can serve effectively at multiple types of investigative positions, including—

- ◆ Investigator at a field office in the continental United States and in the European, Pacific, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Korean, and/or Southwest Asian theaters.
- ◆ Army representative on a joint terrorism task force at a Federal Bureau of Investigation platform.
- ◆ Army force protection attaché in a force protection detachment on a State Department platform.
- ◆ CI management duties at each echelon from the field office level to the Department of the Army level.

Recruitment and Career Planning

MICECP recruits, employs, and develops motivated, highly qualified, and exceptionally skilled civilian intelligence professionals to fill sensitive and critical CI and HUMINT positions that directly support worldwide missions executed by U.S. Army commanders, U.S. intelligence community staff offices, and joint commands. MICECP provides a specialized and centrally managed career program for civilian intelligence professionals who can operate and excel in all environments. By developing personnel of the highest standards, MICECP meets the operational and strategic requirements at all echelons in both traditional and emerging intelligence disciplines.

The MICECP of today has evolved from its nascent years. Initially focused on only CI and HUMINT career tracks, the program now has three distinct career tracks: CI, HUMINT, and technical support to a specific intelligence discipline. Within CI, there are five career paths: CI Investigations, Strategic CI Operations, CI Support to Cyber Operations, Technical Surveillance Countermeasures, and Polygraph.

Ever versatile and flexible, MICECP continues to evolve as the operating environment changes and new threats emerge. This flexibility is evidenced with the ongoing fielding of the fourth MICECP career track involving specialized assistance to intelligence operations, which is expected to be fully fielded in 2021. With this new career track, MICECP can effectively address and provide solutions for evolving Army operational challenges worldwide.

Each of the career tracks offers professional growth with supervisory positions, staff and management positions, and promotion opportunities at the GG-14 and GG-15 paygrades.

Mobility and Global Opportunities

MICECP assignments are worldwide, at every Army echelon, and some are located at various agency platforms outside the Army. MICECP personnel support 29 organizations, and the overseas assignments are in 37 countries with locations in 21 time zones. MICECP members also perform operational coverage throughout the United States, with permanent duty stations in half of the 50 states. Furthermore, MICECP employees tend to be a professional, interconnected group, allowing MICECP personnel to interact with each other in problem-solving efforts to find solutions to intelligence challenges presented to commands and organizations supported by MICECP members. The MICECP workforce readily accepts organizational challenges and works together to identify multiple courses of action to achieve organizational goals.


Each MICECP member agrees to and signs a mobility agreement, which facilitates rotational tours in the 3-to-5-year timeframe. The mobility agreement allows the Army to surge MICECP personnel worldwide in support of emergency and specialized operations. The mobility agreement, coupled with provisions from AR 690-950-4, also facilitates professional growth among the MICECP population. MICECP personnel rotations occur every 3 to 5 years for three main reasons. In the first year, MICECP members learn the new skills associated with the position; by the second year, these members should be competent in the position; and in years 3 to 5, these members should be able to master the skills associated with their respective position and begin training for follow-on assignments. Additionally, regular rotations limit the possibility of stagnation in one type of assignment. To help with planning, MICECP Career Management uses an “Individual Career Assessment Plan,” or career map, for two follow-on assignments for each MICECP member, with suggested training to increase competitiveness for these assignments.

Specific Skillsets and Continuous Training

The Army hires MICECP members for their specific “tool-box” of skills. At each assignment, MICECP members learn and master new skills while applying those skillsets already possessed. Each MICECP member’s capability continues to grow and enrich with every new assignment. The MICECP Career Management Branch rarely assigns a MICECP member to a position the member performed previously because the employee will have little opportunity to develop and improve their skillset. Supported organizations highly covet these skillsets because MICECP personnel tend to offer multiple courses of action to address the operational and leadership challenges encountered by those organizations.

MICECP personnel receive centrally managed training in a continuous effort to enhance each member’s leadership and technical skills. While MICECP members possess subject matter expertise in each position they fill, employees are continuously preparing for their next assignment. The program highly encourages leadership training for each MICECP member, as the Army expects employees to be coaches, mentors, and trainers to all personnel they work with and encounter. Some MICECP personnel also prepare for future supervisory positions at higher grades (GG-14 and GG-15) where leadership capabilities are paramount. Furthermore, some MICECP positions are language-coded to enhance satisfying command requirements. Thus, MICECP provides a broad range of language training opportunities to its linguist workforce. Many MICECP employees have proficiency in several languages, which often enhances successful mission outcomes in multiple theaters of operations.

Conclusion

Over the past few years, MICECP has made great strides with its workforce in improving transparency regarding assignment planning and personnel actions. The program has found that transparency, along with fairness and consistency, is an excellent tool for recruiting and retaining talent within MICECP. As requirements and challenges evolve in the Army, MICECP will evolve correspondingly, ever ready to prepare for and adeptly address future challenges. 

Mr. Ricardo Romero enlisted in the Army in 1984 and transitioned to the Military Intelligence Civilian Excepted Career Program (MICECP) as an Army Civilian in 1998. He currently serves as the MICECP Career Program Manager. He is a dual-tracked career MICECP member in counterintelligence and human intelligence and is an Arabic and Italian linguist. He served in the 66th and 513th Military Intelligence Brigades-Theater and the 902nd Military Intelligence Group. He also served with the Army Field Support Center in various positions, including joint terrorism task forces with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, force protection detachments, and field offices in Atlanta, Detroit, Italy, and Germany in investigative, collections, research and technology protection, and management roles. Mr. Romero attended Michigan State University, with continued studies in various languages at the Defense Language Institute, University of Detroit-Mercy, and University of Maryland-University Center. He also earned advanced management and leadership certificates from Harvard Law School and the U.S. Graduate School.