

# Hills' recruit begins police officer training

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are going to be very critical."

He goes home often wondering if he remembered to do what he's supposed to do. Truthfully, by the time he gets home armed with Farmington Hills ordinance books to study, he's tired.

"I fall into bed. Right now, it just seems so overwhelming. You make a mental checklist of everything, but you wonder if you forgot anything."

He knows he's on the line.

In the third phase of a five-phase field training officer program in Farmington Hills, his performance and progress is constantly evaluated. If he doesn't make the grade, he's out, looking for a new career.

If he makes the grade, he's expected to be one of the better-trained young police officers in the state. The Farmington Hills Police Depart-

ment is one of perhaps five in the state requiring and providing a structured training program for recruits.

**BRADLEY'S LIFE** is dominated by work and training. Engaged, he and his fiancée, the daughter of a Detroit Police Department sergeant, are waiting until his training is complete before setting a date.

His social and personal life is not what it used to be. His hours change every day and every week. He's pooped when he gets home, and there's a night of studying and thinking ahead of him. He wants to succeed.

"Over time, as I become more comfortable and confident, I'm sure I'll get back to those social things," he said.

He wouldn't want it any other

way. Now that he's encountered real-life incidents, he can't imagine walking out of the police academy and into a patrol car alone as officers in other departments do.

"In the academy, they can't give you the experience of doing those things," said Bradley, a Centerline resident. "It's great to have someone there to ask the questions. I can tap the resources and ask those questions."

It's been a long haul since he decided to become a police officer when he was graduating from high school. "A police officer was always someone I looked up to; someone I emulated as a role model."

He attended Macomb County Community College in law enforcement. He joined the Hills department as a cadet and less than a year later and a long testing process, was accepted as an officer.

**THEN CAME** the long and grueling 16-week police academy.

"Academically, it was a little tougher than I thought it would be," Bradley said. Physically, it wasn't as tough as he would have liked it to be.

In top shape, Bradley thinks "it's very important in the job that you maintain a good physical condition." He works out, training specific muscles, four-to-five times a week in the department's new fitness room.

The academy began every day at 7:45 a.m. Inspection led the day.

"We had a coordinator coming up and down the ranks checking from our shoes to our hair. If there was mud on your shoes, you got a demerit. You really had to live the discipline. They wanted to train you to handle the pressure, take orders."

If it sounds like the military, it

was similar. A 5-foot tower of books and paperwork greeted Bradley when he arrived at the academy.

Each day was different. Sometimes, he encountered eight hours of lectures and seminars. Other days were eight hours of practical training: pursuit driving, firearms training, how to handcuff and how to pat down a prisoner.

And every night there was about 2½ hours of homework. He could expect two tests a week. By the end of the 16 weeks, Bradley had three large notebooks full of notes, which he was expected to have typed.

"THEY DEFINITELY try to throw the scare into you," Bradley said. "We had to come in after school for night procedures. They simulate situations you might encounter. Then you are rated on your performance."

His work as a cadet served as a

"stepping stone" to acceptance as an officer. Practice makes perfect. Everything he learned in the academy and as a cadet he's learning and doing again. As a recruit, he's totally responsible for processing the suspects he arrests.

Under the watchful eye of his training officer, Bradley deliberately and patiently fingerprints the suspects, rolling their fingers in ink and processing their belongings before they are taken to the glassed cells.

Bradley's determination and concentration is immediately evident. Every move is deliberate as his expression shows his mind neatly checking off the list he's made for each and every procedure he's learning under the wings of his training officers.

"If you don't have anyone there to catch the mistakes, you'll never stop doing those mistakes," Bradley said.

## Veteran officers guide recruits in learning tools of the trade

By Joanna Maliszewski  
staff writer

Every day, Farmington Hills police recruit Gary Bradley is tested.

Every action and reaction counts. He's evaluated on the most and least satisfactory performance of the day. "You have to keep after recruits as far as laws and reinforcing ideas," said Jim Worthington, Bradley's training officer. "You definitely become a teacher."

The 19-year police veteran has become the teacher he wishes he had when his career began with the Farmington Township Police Department.

Worthington can describe what it's like to go from the academy right to the streets. "I was just put out in a scout car and told, 'You go out at this time, and come back at this time.'"

"Nobody wants to see someone else mess up. You definitely don't want someone to sit there and go through the same mess you did back then," Worthington said.

Bradley is in the third of five phases of intense training and evaluation required and provided by the Farmington Hills Police Department. Relatively new, the Hills program is one of perhaps six throughout the state.

**THE PROGRAM** was established to provide recruits with better training. Lack of police officer training walks hand-in-hand with increased civil and criminal lawsuits against law enforcement agencies, Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said.

"The problem with most departments is that they don't have a structured field training officer (FTO) program. Recruits generally are put right on the road, generally to fend for themselves. Or they're put in the hands of veteran officers who are 'not going to bother teaching them anything,'" Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said.

From the day recruits, such as Bradley, begin the 16-week police academy, they are on probation for 18 months. For the first 90 days following graduation, recruits pass through four phases of training.

The first four are designed to familiarize the recruit with the community and coach the new employee in the practical application of police skills. Skills covered in the first four phases are criminal statutes, city ordinances, conflict mediation, criminal investigation and traffic enforcement.

Armed with his own 40-hour training and certification course, Worthington is responsible for ensuring that Bradley learns the ropes and for catching mistakes.

**TO DO THAT**, Worthington accompanies Bradley in whatever he does in the third phase of training, which is scheduled to be completed by Feb. 15. In the training program's first and second phases, Bradley was more of an observer, getting a feel for the city, its laws and police procedures, and translating theory learned in the academy to police work.

In the third phase, Bradley is expected to take a little more responsibility. "It's more self-initiated activity. You have to notice things and go after them. There's a big emphasis on things we can find for ourselves," Bradley said.

Throughout the five phases, recruits, like Bradley, are watched to be sure they are doing everything perfectly, whether it's putting on handcuffs, taking a dispatch call, filling out a report, processing a prisoner or talking with residents.

The training program is there to give Bradley a chance to ask veteran officers questions and to watch just how something is done. The fourth phase eliminates in the shadow phase in which the training officer stands by in plainclothes only watching as the recruit goes it alone.



Patrol Sgt. Peter Larion (center) is flanked by new officer Gary Bradley (left) and police cadet Thomas Shivak.

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