



Physical Anthropology Section – 2003

H47 The University of Tennessee/ FBI Human Remains Recovery School

Murray K. Marks, PhD, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN*

The goals of this presentation are to inform the audience of class objectives and what agents learn about recovery of human remains.

Since 2000, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has sponsored the Human Remains Recovery School designed by the Forensic Anthropology Center at the University of Tennessee. During a week each spring, 40 Evidence Response Team agents attend this course to gain training in clandestine-grave discovery and excavation. The Forensic Anthropology Research Facility provides the unique opportunity for this training with decomposing/skeletal remains in a variety of mortuary settings. This is a modified sister version of a course long offered by W.C. Rodriguez and W.D. Lord at the FBI Training Facility at Quantico, VA.

The course involves lecture for 2.5 days on introductory anthropology (including bone trauma), pathology, odontology, entomology, and botany with detailed presentations on clandestine grave discovery, mapping, excavation, and recovery. This is followed by 2.5 days in the field recognizing surface anomalies and excavating decomposing/skeletal remains.

Annually, the Bureau performs recovery operations without the services of a board-certified forensic anthropologist experienced in forensic mortuary site archaeology. The purpose of the class is not to transform Bureau agents into anthropologists, pathologists, or dentists, but to make them cognizant of clandestine grave evidence. In the class, agents become familiar with the complexities of discovery and recovery. The training makes them aware that the quality of their field abilities affects the quality of the remains and the information that can be discerned from the remains.

Forensic Anthropology, Forensic Mortuary Site Archaeology, Continuing Education