D12   VICTIMS: A National Database Solution for Unidentified Human Remains in the United States

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After attending this presentation, attendees will become aware of the existence and usefulness of the FBI VICTIMS software system. In addition this presentation should promote the use of the VICTIMS system as a forensic tool for identifying unidentified human remains.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and the public by demonstrating how VICTIMS will create an environment capable of assisting a variety of forensic professionals in melding their data for the analytical comparison between missing persons and unidentified human remains records, as well as an environment where friends and families of missing persons can easily search all of the unidentified records in the United States for their loved one in the pursuit of making an identification.

After attending this presentation, attendees will learn more about how they and their agencies can contribute to the VICTIMS (Victim Information, Catalog, Tracking, and IMage System) database, how to enter and maintain their unidentified records within the VICTIM System, and the benefits of utilizing VICTIMS. Currently in its final phase of development, the VICTIMS software is designed to remedy a number of problems with existing approaches to solving cases of unidentified human remains. The goal of VICTIMS is to provide a national database of unidentified human remains that will organize and coordinate the efforts of the forensic identification community and the public.

Records of unidentified human remains cases have been available on the FBI website since its inception. However, these records were neither comprehensive nor searchable. As a result, in 1998, the FBI Laboratory embarked on a focused effort to solve the increasing number of cases involving unidentified human remains. While the FBI has made improvements in a number of forensic fields (DNA, facial reconstruction, etc), these improvements have largely been conducted in isolation within the specific fields in which they apply. In order to bridge the gap between the various forensic disciplines that assist with the identification of unidentified human remains, a centralized, comprehensive, and role-based software system is currently in development at the FBI. The role-based atmosphere will allow the ability to isolate and protect all data elements for all users based on who they are and what they can contribute to the system and the identification process. VICTIMS is designed to be a comprehensive and internet- accessible environment for the collection, storage, indexing, searching, and retrieval of all forms of data that might assist in the identification of unidentified human remains. The collected data types include (but are not limited to) photographs, facial reconstructions, anthropological reports, medical examiners reports, radiographs, text, case data, and NCIC data that are pertinent to assisting in identification. Many of these data forms have never been available in a searchable electronic format or viewable by the public.

VICTIMS, Unidentified Human Remains, National Data