

NIBIN NEWSLETTER

Editor: Karen Molina

Call for Articles

We would like to have our users provide an article for the next Newsletter. This is a good way for you to bring attention to your lab or department and highlight your successes or a topic that might be of interest to others. Please contact Karen Molina at the NIBIN Branch or Nanette Rudolph at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement if you would like to provide an article. Email your suggestions or articles to: Karen.Molina@atf.gov or nanetterudolph@fdle.state.fl.us.

** Please remember to take the Security Awareness Training on www.learnATF.gov. Students that fail to complete the training within a 60-day time from the creation of their learnATF accounts will have their NIBIN accounts disabled. Learn ATF accounts were activated on **September 5, 2006**. Students have until **November 6, 2006** to take the training. If you have any problems please contact the ATF Help desk at 1-888-875-3723.

History– Institute of Forensic Science– Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico has been on the forefront of firearms examination since May 15, 1936, when the Insular Police Bureau of Criminal Identifications and Investigations was established. That original Firearms Laboratory, located in Old San Juan, was started with four firearms examiners.

By 1978, the Bureau of Special Investigations was created under the Department of Justice of Puerto Rico. This second organization was established to conduct internal investigations and, at the same time, it established its own firearms examination section. On July 24, 1985, the two entities merged, creating the current "Instituto de Ciencias Forenses de Puerto Rico."

Since the inception of its first firearms laboratory, Puerto Rico has had an impressive history of aggressively pursuing and analyzing crime gun evidence. During Fiscal Year

2004 alone, 30,233 pieces of evidence were analyzed. This included firearms, casings, projectiles, and bullets. Connected to that evidence, a total of 62,424 different types of analyses were performed, which resulted in the elucidation of numerous criminal cases at the State and Federal level. The types of analyses currently performed include firearm function examinations, gravimetric studies, microscopic comparison analysis, serial number restoration, and pressure tests to evaluate trigger function. Because of the high level of expertise exhibited by the firearms examiners, they are regularly called upon to testify in State and Federal court.

In 1995, Puerto Rico established the first Integrated Ballistics Information System (IBIS) in Latin-American and the Caribbean. Subsequently, three portable Rapid Brass

Identification (RBI) systems were acquired for the Regional Laboratories located throughout the island. In the future, these RBIs will be replaced by the new BrassTRAX Cartridge Case Imaging Systems.

At present, a total of 100 confirmed "hits" have been identified using the IBIS equipment. As of the March 2006 NIBIN Activity Report, the Instituto de Ciencias Forenses de Puerto Rico had 19,840 casings entered into the NIBIN database. With a total of 228 laboratories located throughout the United States, the Virgin Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico, this puts the Puerto Rico Lab in the top 10 laboratories with the most casings entered into the NIBIN Database.

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Detroit Police Department– Hit # 110

The Detroit, Michigan Police Department, using NIBIN, linked ballistic evidence recovered at a shooting to a suicide that occurred approximately three years later. In August 2002, the Detroit Police Department conducted a field investigation regarding several males playing dice. When the officers arrived, one of them apprehended a perpetrator attempting to flee the scene. While he was securing the perpetrator, an unknown assailant fatally shot the other

officer in the head. Casings were recovered and submitted for entry into NIBIN.

Approximately three years later in July 2005, the Detroit Police Department responded to a suicide at a residence. When the police arrived they spoke to a private citizen who stated she found her husband on the back porch of their home with a gun shot wound to his head, dead of an apparent suicide. The police recovered the fired evidence and the firearm from the scene.

The firearm, a 9mm Fratelli Tanfoglio model TA90 semiautomatic pistol, was submitted for test firing and imaged into the IBIS system at the Detroit Laboratory. This weapon was a match to the ballistic evidence recovered at the shooting that occurred approximately three years earlier.

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