

## Detectives fire info to ballistics

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By CHRISTOPHER BOBBY Tribune Chronicle

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WARREN - Trumbull Sheriff's Office detectives fired test shots from confiscated weapons Saturday in an effort to collect ballistics information for storage in state and national crime databanks.

"We're sending the shell casings to BCI (Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation) for analysis. They'll not only keep the information on file, they have the capability of comparing the information nationally to see if a certain weapon matches one used in a crime elsewhere," said Detective Mike Yannucci.

Forensic firearms experts are able to compare markings on the base of casings and microscopically compare one casing with another.

Yannucci, Major Tom Stewart and Detective Jolene Marcello used a heavy iron chamber loaded with hard rubber balls that stop the bullet. The chamber is connected to a transparent box in the front where the weapon is held and fired and where the casing is collected.

The device - named a Savage Range System and nicknamed a "forensic buddy" - is on loan from BCI.

Stewart said the equipment - about four-feet long and set up in the department's roll call room - also is being offered to any police department in the county to log more ballistics information.

Marcello rummaged through an evidence vault, retrieving a 7.62 and a .380 mm semi-automatic weapon grabbed for safekeeping from a 2003 domestic disturbance in Bristol Township. There was a .40 caliber Smith and Wesson stored from a 2005 concealed weapon case and a Sig Sauer .9 mm from a 2005 suicide investigated by deputies, among other handguns.

"You really only get one shot at a crime scene," Yannucci said. "With the information on file, they can hopefully match a weapon we might have on file with one used in a homicide in Indianapolis, for example.

"A casing can be just like a fingerprint. We're even firing weapons and getting serial numbers from those we might be ordered to give back through a court order," Yannucci said.

BCI is connected with the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN), which was developed through a partnership between the FBI and the ATF. The two national agencies agreed to standardize into one national imaging system.