

ARGENTINA

In 2003, EAAF continued its work in Argentina to identify people who disappeared during the last military regime, moving investigations forward in the city of Buenos Aires and the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Jujuy. The team also continued to work on the re-examination of unscientific exhumations related to disappeared people conducted in 1984. In addition, EAAF team members provided training for a variety of audiences and taught courses at the University of Buenos Aires to strengthen the forensic anthropology field in Argentina.

RECOVERY AND ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Argentina's last military government lasted from 1976 to 1984, during which close to 10,000 people were disappeared by the state and paramilitary groups.

Since 1984, EAAF has been investigating political disappearances in Argentina. In the last few years, information on the role of the security forces and the bureaucratic processes related to the repression has become increasingly accessible. In 1997, EAAF negotiated access to crucial documents stored by the federal government and the government of the province of Buenos Aires. Since that time, EAAF has made steady advances in the retrieval of these documents — most



importantly the recovery of an extensive collection of fingerprints — that have allowed us to resolve difficult cases of disappearance.

Background

During the last military government, most of the bodies of disappeared persons were disposed of in one of two



March 24, 2004. Thousands of protesters gathered in front of the former ESMA compound, which had served as a clandestine detention center during Argentina's "Dirty War." Photo courtesy of Gonzalo Martínez.

ways: they were thrown from military aircrafts into rivers and the Argentine Sea; or they were buried as "N.N." (*Ningún Nombre*/No Name, or John Doe) in public cemeteries across the country. Bodies that met the latter fate often first "appeared" again on the streets or barren lands before their eventual burial. EAAF is dedicated to investigating these cases and has access to

documentation on the bodies produced by state agencies before they were buried.

Contrary to what was long believed, state officials often documented cases of state-sponsored disappearance just as they did in almost every other case of "John Doe/N.N." that they processed. After a person was kidnapped, taken

to a clandestine detention center, tortured, and in most cases killed, bodies were often deposited in public spaces. At this point, a series of bureaucratic-administrative procedures were followed, and an account of some of these steps appeared in official records. When a cadaver or group of cadavers was discovered, the police, with or without a judicial official, performed nearly all of the procedures conducted in “normal” cases. These included writing a description of the discovery, taking photographs, fingerprinting the corpse, conducting an autopsy or external examination of the body, producing a death certificate, making an entry at the local civil register, and issuing a burial certificate, among other steps. In other words, the same state that was committing the crime was bureaucratically obliged, simply oblivious, or indifferent to the paper trail that it was creating.

Dr. Clyde Snow, a US forensic anthropologist who trained and helped found EAAF, first studied such indirect sources of information on the disappeared. Snow published an investigation of cemetery records in the Province of Buenos Aires¹; EAAF has expanded on Dr. Snow’s work in this field. Though in the past, EAAF has collected death certificates and cemetery records of particular locations during investigations of specific cases, we now conduct a systematic regional survey of bureaucratically generated information. The very existence of the files suggested a strategy for approaching offices of the Judiciary and the Ministry of Interior to ask for information about the discovery of cadavers in public places between 1976 and 1980, when most of the disappearances occurred.² In the past, EAAF also concentrated most of its investigative effort in the city of Buenos Aires and the Province of Buenos Aires. According to the *Comisión Nacional sobre las Desapariciones de Personas* (CONADEP) records, which to date are the most complete archives, approximately 70% of the kidnappings of disappeared people occurred in these areas.

The following EAAF members worked primarily on investigations in Argentina during 2003: Carlos Somigliana, Sofía Egaña, Silvana Turner, Dario Olmo, Patricia Bernardi, Anahí Ginarte, Miguel Nieva, Rafael Mazzela, and Daniel Bustamante.

1. THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

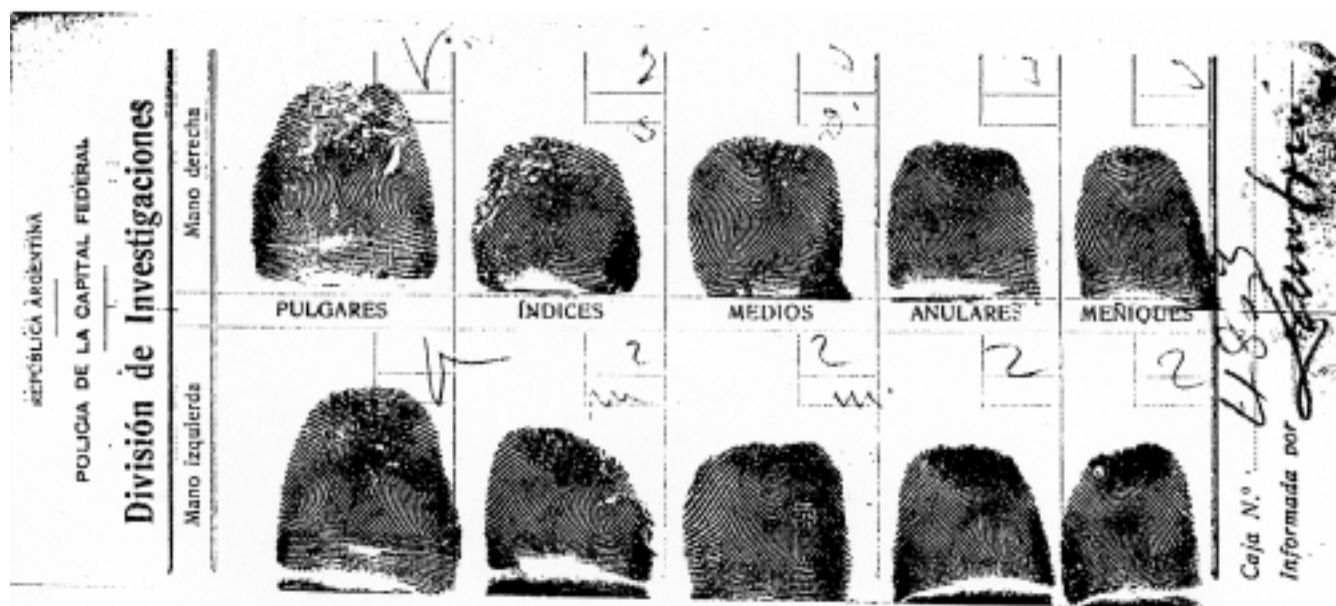
From the beginning of the investigations in Argentina, our reports have emphasized the difference between the state and its role as clandestine repressor and the bureaucratic state. This distinction was what has permitted us to learn so much about the disappearances — the same government that was practicing clandestine repression was documenting the consequences of it.

EAAF has had relatively easy access to some of these documents, such as death certificates and cemetery records. Intelligence documents are obviously harder to obtain. With the exception of the already-mentioned “difficult areas,” EAAF has completed most of the work to collect mass documentary sources in the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires, including La Plata, where 2/3 of the cases of disappearances were reported. Cases in other urban areas (mostly in Córdoba and Rosario) show a different registration process and decreased focus on bureaucratic documentation. Currently, EAAF is focused on completing some of the large archives and specific cases rather than mass research. All of these different documentary sources share in common the fact that they are official documents, and as such, they share certain characteristics, such as impersonal language, full of euphemisms, in an attempt to give objectivity to the information and hide the partiality of the state in relation to the facts. Despite their crucial value to the investigation, this makes the documents homogeneous, limited, rigid and monochromatic.

1.1 MAIN ARCHIVES

The Provincial Register of Persons: Death and Burial Certificates

In 1997, EAAF negotiated permission to enter the Buenos Aires Provincial Register of Persons, located in the city of La Plata, where death certificates for those who died in Buenos Aires Province are kept. We targeted this registry because Buenos Aires was one of the provinces most affected by the repression, particularly between 1976 and 1978.



Fingerprints of a disappeared person from the registry of Buenos Aires Provincial Police archive.

Two EAAF members began work at the registry in April 1997, gathering data from death certificates referring to the discovery of bodies in the 38 jurisdictions comprising “Greater Buenos Aires,” where there was a high rate of kidnapping. EAAF members prioritized as “highly possibly corresponding to disappeared persons” all certificates marked “N.N.” which indicated violent or suspicious cause of death and/or death at a young age. These criteria are based on the typical features of the disappeared population. The recovered data was incorporated into the EAAF database to further the project of matching disappearances and information about killings with discoveries of bodies.

In these archives, burial certificates are frequently found with death certificates, indicating the cemetery where a body was buried. Over the years, EAAF has also collected a large number of cemetery records regarding “N.N.” bodies recorded on cemetery books at most major cemeteries in the Federal Capital as well as in the Buenos Aires Province.

We have continued this work in 2003.

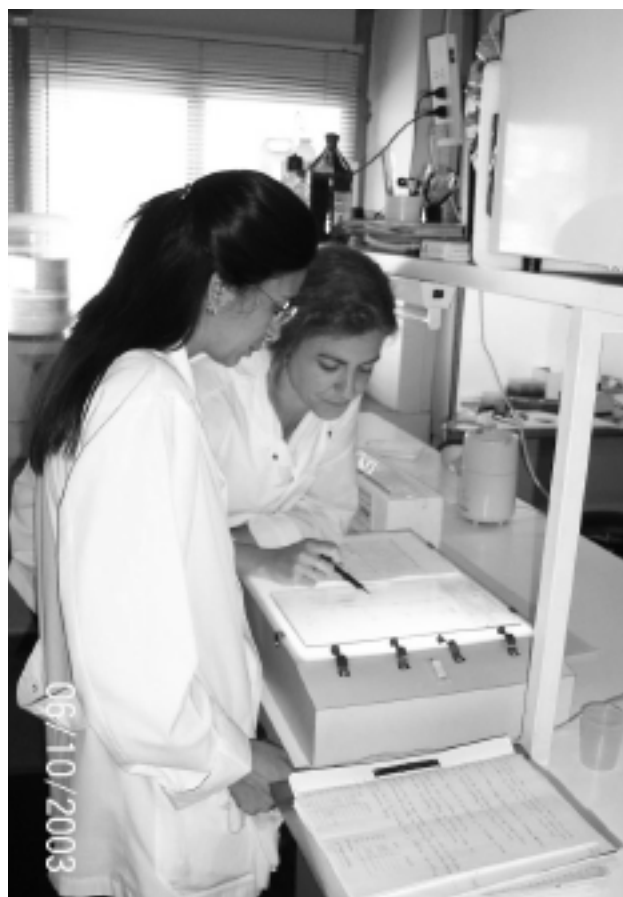
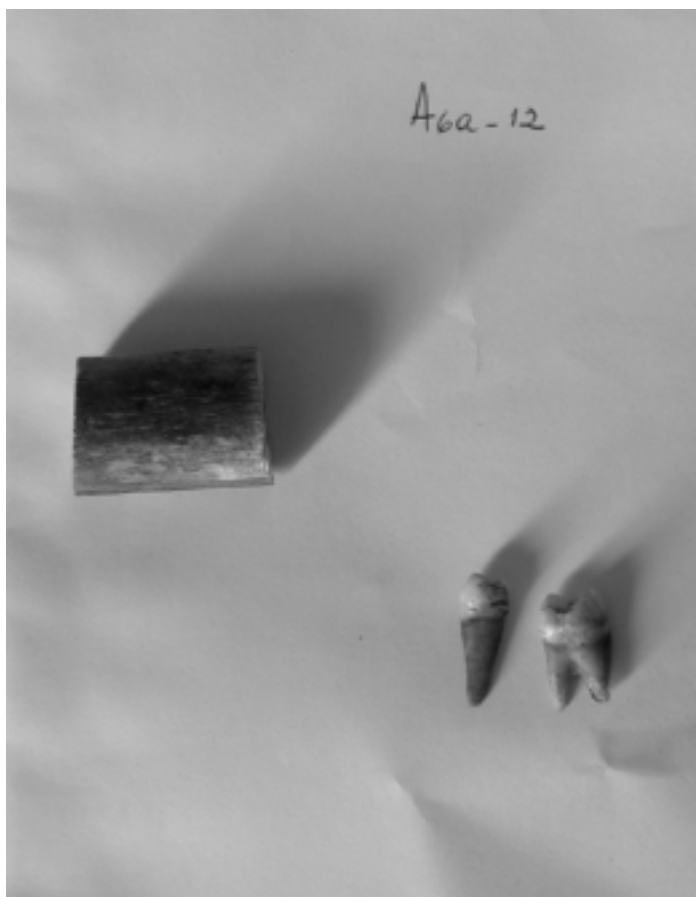
Buenos Aires Provincial Police and Federal Police

At the same time, we initiated a similar task with the Buenos Aires Provincial Police, which in 1998 was under the

Provincial Ministry of Security and Justice. We approached the office in two ways: 1) judicially, and b) institutionally, through an arrangement officials in the Buenos Aires Police Force.³ EAAF also established an agreement with the Ministry of Security and Justice of the Province of Buenos Aires, which at the time led by Dr. León Arslanian, one of the Federal Court judges who sentenced the former commanders of the last military government in 1985.

Crucial archives within the Buenos Aires Police Province are housed in the Microfilm Section “Cadavers File” and the Cadaver Registration Book in the *Antecedentes* section (police records on previously arrested individuals) of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police Archive. The Police opened files on the deaths of people who were found unattended or who died in violent or suspicious ways. As a result, the bodies of disappeared people were usually fingerprinted, and their prints are often to be found still in the “Cadaver” files of the police archives.

Similarly, the Federal Police also kept fingerprints of the people who died in violent or suspicious manners and/or were found dead in the streets during the years in which disappearances by the state were most concentrated, predominantly 1975 to 1980. The Federal Court of the Federal Capital gave EAAF access to these files. After microfilming the fingerprint records, the Federal and



(Left) Bone and teeth samples for DNA analysis. (Right) Genetic experts from LIDMO Genetic Laboratory in Córdoba processing samples.

the Buenos Aires Province Police agencies destroyed the papers with the original fingerprints.

Analyzing Fingerprints

Although many steps are involved in making a positive identification, in Argentina fingerprint comparison continues to be among the most important resources for identifying disappeared people. Argentina is in a unique position regarding fingerprints for two reasons: first, a large number of disappeared people were fingerprinted before being buried as “N.N.”, and these records were microfilmed and kept by the Police; second, all Argentines provide their fingerprints to state agencies at least twice to obtain two mandatory national identity cards. This fact facilitates the comparison of fingerprints of cadavers taken more than twenty years ago with those taken and kept at state agencies when people who later disappeared processed their national cards.

In 2003, EAAF continued to analyze and compare fingerprints. Fingerprints from the “N.N.” section of the Microfilm “Cadavers File” and the Cadaver registration book in the *Antecedentes* (police records on individuals arrested previously) served as a primary sources. By comparing information such as dates of kidnapping, general physical information, dates of “transfers” — often a euphemism for extrajudicial execution — of disappeared people from clandestine detention centers, information coming from interviews with former militants, and from judicial, police, and military files titled “appearance of bodies” and “shootout between security forces and subversive elements,” among other sources of information, we formulate a hypothetical link between an “N.N.” individual fingerprinted at the Police archive and a disappeared person.

Once the hypothesis is made, EAAF tests the link by comparing fingerprints from the Police Archive to fingerprints stored at the National Registry Office, which

holds records of the fingerprints taken for all Argentine citizens for one of the two national identity cards. When the National Registry's copies of fingerprints are in bad condition, EAAF goes to the Federal Police archive, which contains fingerprints of all citizens and residents for an additional mandatory identity card and passport. To obtain access to these files, EAAF works through the Federal Appellate Chamber of Criminal and Correctional Cases of the Federal Capital (from now on, "Federal Chamber of the Federal Capital," which acts as an intermediary for EAAF and the different state agencies from whom we are requesting fingerprints. By the end of 2001, EAAF received 6,053 fingerprint files of the approximately 9,092 disappeared people during the last military regime (65% of the total).

During 2002, due to the severe economic crisis, state agencies had serious problems acquiring paper and toner. Thus, the National Registry of Persons agreed to allow one EAAF member to take digital photographs of the dossiers and fingerprints corresponding to disappeared people. This system of obtaining the prints was much quicker, and by the end of 2002, EAAF increased the number of fingerprints in our records corresponding to disappeared people to 6,792 (nearly 75% of the total).

During 2003, the number of reported disappearance cases during the last military regime grew to 9,225, primarily because of the one year extension of Law 24.411, which enabled family members of disappeared and killed persons during the State Terrorism to claim reparations. In 2003 EAAF photographed 250 fingerprint files, increasing the registry to 7,043 of 9,225.

Once we have a pair of fingerprints that may match, EAAF conducts an initial comparison. If this preliminary step is positive, then the sets are sent to fingerprint experts from the Ministry of Justice and Security of Buenos Aires Province and/or from the Argentine Naval Prefecture, which are collaborating with EAAF on this project.

The process of identification proceeds from the original fingerprint match. After the first stage of identification is reached, EAAF sends the information to the Federal

Chamber of the Federal Capital so that they can officially authorize the identification, communicate with the relatives of the victims and begin the process of finding the cemetery where the remains may still be buried. Regrettably, some of the remains had already been exhumed from their individual tombs by cemetery personnel and sent to the general ossuary of the cemetery. This is done legally after five or ten years if grave duties are unpaid, as is typical in cases of indigents and "N.N." cadavers. As a result, we can no longer recover them as the remains are mixed with other thousand of bones.

Improvement of Fingerprint Quality

Police fingerprints from the "Cadaver" file are often defective, making their comparison with the sets of fingerprints from identity cards at the National Registry office difficult. To address this problem, in the late 1990s EAAF signed a Cooperative Agreement with the School of Physical Sciences of the National University of Mar del Plata. In this project, mathematician Emilce Moller works to improve recovered images of fingerprints found in police archives. Moller's work facilitates comparison between barely legible fingerprints and the fingerprints of the identity cards of disappeared people.⁴ Moller continued to improve fingerprint images for EAAF during 2003.

Fingerprints Comparison and the relationship with families of victims

When we work with fingerprints, we are able to complete a large part of the process of identification without having contact with the family of a disappeared person. We can obtain the fingerprints without disturbing the family of the disappeared person and conduct the comparison work without raising the family's hopes for results that may be negative or inconclusive after months or years of waiting.

There are many different responses to the tragedy of having a loved one disappeared. While we cannot cover this enormous issue in depth here, there are some common

reactions. Not knowing if their relative is dead or alive produces an enormous amount of pain and anguish for relatives, even if many years have passed. Any new piece of information can often lead to a strong expectation of finally discovering the truth about what happened to their loved one. Over the years, we have learned to be available when relatives of a disappeared person need information but also to only contact families when we have very precise information to tell or ask them. (Sometimes, even a phone call from EAAF can heighten expectations in a way that we don't necessarily intend or cannot fulfill.) Even in cases where we have made a positive identification, EAAF members try to investigate which member of the family may be the best contact person to communicate the news to the rest of the family.

As explained above, the investigative process involves many different steps even before narrowing the sets of fingerprints to be compared. The process can take months or even years and may not be successful. On the other hand, once a fingerprint match is positive, EAAF immediately communicates the results to family members. Once this is done, the remaining steps include the legal identification of the disappeared person and an investigation to see if his or her remains are still buried where the records indicate. In some cases, as explained above, a person can be identified by fingerprints but his or her remains may no longer be retrievable.

In 2003, the team was able to make an unequivocal match between an unidentified body and a disappeared person in 10 cases through fingerprint comparison. These ten cases corresponded to persons reported disappeared, some of whom were seen in clandestine detention centers and were assassinated after their disappearance in contrived or real confrontations, and others for whom there is no information after the kidnapping.

Other Documents

EAAF also continues to work in other archives of the Federal Police and the Buenos Aires Provincial Police, where we have discovered documents with the names of

persons reported disappeared. In some cases, these documents confirm information about the circumstances of death that EAAF and the victim's family already possessed. We try to correlate all this information with "N.N." burials in cemeteries in the Federal Capital and in Buenos Aires Province.

Judicial and military files are scarce in comparison to the number of disappearances, yet they sometimes provide us with crucial information leading to identifications of bodies presumed to correspond to disappeared people. Over the course of 2002, EAAF examined the Federal Court Archive No. 2 in the judicial department of San Martín, province of Buenos Aires. We had access to court documents from 1975-1979, when the majority of forced disappearances took place. Because it is a federal court, it addressed many cases related with the political conflict in 1976, before the military coup. Following an examination of the daily records of the court, we selected a number of cases to pursue and recorded the most significant data from 277 of them. This work continued in 2003.

1.2 TESTIMONIAL SOURCES

This introduction attempts to explain the importance of another source of information that has been acquired: personal interviews. Unlike bureaucratic information, interviews can be chaotic and unpredictable. The competence of the interviewer and clarity of the information he/she is searching for are essential for the success of the interview.

Interviews with families: Families can often provide valuable information about the abduction of their loved ones, information on physical characteristics and genetic data. The normal EAAF procedure is to interview a family member for this information and any other data that may pertain to the case. In particular, it is crucial to know if the person was a member or connected to a political, union or guerrilla organization. This additional information frequently provides clues about why this individual may have been targeted for disappearance,



Students train with members of EAAF at La Chacarita cemetery as part of the course, "Introduction to Forensic Anthropology."
Photo by Miguel Nieva.

what security forces may have been responsible, and where he/she could have been taken.

Over the years, in addition to interviewing family members, we have begun to interview all of the people who might have information about the missing individual or the incidents under investigation.

Informational Meeting about Political-Military Organizations

As part of the historical reconstruction of events, EAAF conducted meetings with members of political-military organizations from the time. This type of investigation is crucial since the most visible objective of the clandestine campaign of repression was the destruction of the political-military organizations fighting the State.

Repressive structures worked hard to identify people to kidnap. Once they had the person in custody, the objective was to extract two important pieces of information: to establish the person's affiliations, which would be used to determine his/her fate; and to obtain information that would lead to more kidnappings.

The aim of the reconstruction is to establish reasons why each act of clandestine repression happened in the way it did; this is to understand the circumstances of the kidnapping (Who? What? Where? How?) and the reasons for it (Why this person? Why that day? Why in that place? And in that way?). If the campaign of clandestine repression in Argentina had been indiscriminate this project would be impossible or pointless.

Most of this information will not be found in bureaucratic state documents (or, if it is there, it is so altered that it is

of little use). The only way to recover it is to interview those who knew the person.

The differences between oral information and documental information are what makes their comparison useful. What we learn often has been altered and interpreted, but at times information from the two types of sources is complementary.

During 2003, EAAF emphasized contacts with militants from the Revolutionary Party of the Workers/Revolutionary Army of the People, because this group is less understood than of the *Montoneros*, the largest armed organization which was mostly decimated by the clandestine repression.

The relatives of the disappeared person can also be an important source of information about what happened to their loved one. During 2003 EAAF conducted approximately 7 interviews each week, and stored the information in our database.

Research on the clandestine detention centers (CDC): From interviews that help us to establish the political interests and involvements of a disappeared person, we then try to establish what clandestine detention center they may have been brought to and what might have happened to them while they were there. The difficulty of this work is evident: what happened at the secret detention centers is difficult to obtain. However, despite bureaucratic measures intended to maintain secrecy and fear, including prohibiting communication among detainees, information is possible to come by, primarily from testimonies of those who were released.

In addition to interviews with individuals who have passed through this experience, we have been conducting sessions with groups of survivors that were held in the same CDC, to establish which disappeared persons might have been held at each clandestine detention center, and to understand how the security forces operated. In a few cases, we have offered our records on a particular detention center to survivors to prompt recollection of details outside the setting of an interview. This method permits the augmentation of records on a particular detention center in a fluid way via e-mail, and helps

survivors work outside the tension of a formal interview and link their memories to existing data.

2. IDENTIFICATIONS AND EXHUMATIONS

CASE: Carlos Horacio Gushiken

CARLOS HORACIO GUSHIKEN was on the list of disappeared people compiled by the Japanese community in Argentina. He disappeared at the age of 22, on April 8, 1978, in the town of Florencio Varela, Buenos Aires Province. He worked as a machinist in a company called Rigolleau. The family did not know any details about the kidnapping. They reported his disappearance to the National Commission on Disappearance of Persons in 1984 (CONADEP file #1612).

According to EAAF's investigation, Gushiken's body corresponds to PC 50526 (Cadaver Log of the Office of Police Records of the Province of Buenos Aires) described as 'killed by armed forces' in the city of Mar de Plata. Ana María Torti and María Cristina Garofoli died with him. Torti was identified through fingerprints at the time, but her family was not informed.

According to the date in the National Registry of Persons, Gushiken died July 13, 1978 in Paraje Barranco de los Lobos, Mar de Plata, and was registered in Record 104, Volume 1. He was buried in *El Parque* Cemetery on July 14, 1978 in grave 3992-B as "N.N." EAAF found information in the cemetery office confirming that the grave had not been altered.

Since 1985, a number of legal problems related to the jurisdiction of the case have been resolved (see EAAF 2002 Annual Report). These obstacles blocked the possibility to exhume Gushiken's remains. Finally, on July 2, 2003, EAAF exhumed the remains in grave 3992, Section B of *El Parque* Cemetery at the request of the National Chamber of Criminal and Correctional Matters of the Federal Capital.⁵

The anthropological study showed that the remains corresponded to a male, aged 18-22. (The cause of death

based on the skeletal remains could have been multiple gunshot wounds to the skull and thorax.) Moreover, EAAF observed mongoloid features in the recovered remains (in particular their odontological characteristics). There is general conformity between the biological profile of the exhumed remains and the ante-mortem data for Gushiken. However, the available ante-mortem information was insufficient to positively identify him through anthropological means. Because of this, the team sent blood samples from Gushiken's father to be compared with the DNA extracted from the remains exhumed at Mar de Plata at the genetic laboratory LIDMO in the province of Córdoba. Genetic analysis confirmed his identity.

THE CASE AGAINST THE BUENOS AIRES JUDICIAL MORGUE: Norberto Gómez, Julio Enzo Panebianco and Elena Kalaidjian

In November 1976, the parents of **NORBERTO GÓMEZ**, a 27-year old doctor, learned that their son had been kidnapped by army personnel. A militant from the *Montoneros*, one of the main guerrilla groups, at the time of his disappearance Norberto was working in the Arguerich Hospital. A few days after the disappearance, his parents received a letter written by Norberto saying that he would be in detention for two years. The letter did not reveal the location or motive of the disappearance. After three years without any news, in May of 1979, Norberto's parents presented a *habeas corpus*. Surprisingly, the Federal Police responded that Norberto Gómez died in a conflict on March 18, 1977 in the jurisdiction of the 32nd Precinct.

The statement made by Norberto's father, Salvador María Gómez, launched what is known as the "Morgue Case." It was brought before the Buenos Aires Judge of "Instruction" No. 3 in order to investigate irregularities at the Judicial Morgue. In Argentina, the main forensic system works within the judiciary. The police also have forensic pathologists that intervene in some cases. Because of the Gómez case, the judge reviewed the entrance of bodies related to cases brought before the Special War Council 1/1 (*Consejo de Guerra Especial Estable 1/1*) (CGEE 1/1). The CGEE 1/1 was formed in March 1976, at the

start of the coup, to try crimes of "subversive" nature committed by civilians in the area controlled by the First Army Corps (Security Zone 1). The majority of these cases resulted from armed confrontations (real or fictitious) which occurred within its jurisdiction and were brought before the War Council. The bodies of those who died in these cases (generally labeled "offense and resistance to authority") in Buenos Aires were taken to the Judicial Morgue of Buenos Aires and buried in the Chacarita Cemetery. When morgue records were checked, it was discovered that Norberto Gómez was identified through fingerprints by the Federal Police dactiloscopia department. At the time, the court and lawyers for the families then began to search for similar cases.

Thus, the case permitted family members of several disappeared persons to find out what had happened to their loved ones. The reactions were diverse: some — such as the parents of Gómez — accepted the information and wanted the exhumation and reburial of the remains of their relative, this time with a name. Others, as in the case of Elena Kalaidjian, did not believe the information, as it was coming from an official source and was based on records made by the military government.

The War Council CGEE1/1 operated like a civil court: it intervened after the police proceedings, whenever it considered that the incidents fell under military jurisdiction. For example, in this case, on the morning of March 18, 1977, four people were taken from the clandestine detention center "The Athletic Club" of the Federal Capital Sub Zone Command, put into a Citroen car owned by another disappeared person, taken to Labardén Street, and executed. Presumably, the executioners must have requested that there be no police intervention. After the execution, police from the 32nd Precinct arrived and took over, recording the findings and taking photos and digital fingerprints of the bodies. This showed clear collaboration among government entities and the documentation of an extra-judicial execution. The information was sent to the CGEE 1/1 because the incident was labeled a "subversive confrontation". The police also were in charge of sending the fingerprints to its *Antecedentes* Division and the bodies were sent to the



Elena Kalaidjian, Julio Enzo Panebianco, Ana Teresa del Valle. EAAF Archives, photos provided by families.

Judicial Morgue “at the disposition of CGEE 1/1”. Of the four sets of prints, two were immediately identified as Norberto Gómez and Elena Kalaidjian; the other two sets were not identified and were erroneously labeled with the wrong sex. While the two identifications were communicated to the CGEE 1/1, they did not inform family members or Civil Registry authorities, resulting in the burial of these four victims as “N.N.” in the Chacarita Cemetery. The case was quickly shelved.

In “Case 13,” the trial of the three Military Junta leaders, Ex-Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla and others were charged with the four homicides.

Relatives of Luis Fuentes, who was kidnapped on February 22, 1977, visited EAAF’s office recently. In the course of the interview, they mentioned that he had owned a Citroen that was stolen when he was kidnapped. They also reported that approximately a month after his disappearance, they received a phone call from the police telling them that the car had been found in an armed confrontation. This prompted EAAF to re-examine the incident mentioned above, in which four individuals were forced into a Citroen. Following this lead, we discovered that the as-of-yet unidentified couple’s fingerprints were interchanged. We requested a new comparison after correcting the mistake, which resulted in the identification of the woman as **ANA TERESA DEL VALLE AGUILAR** and the man as **JULIO ENZO PANEBIANCO**. When we checked whether the bodies remained in the original burial site we discovered that both appeared unaltered in the

registries. We also learned that **ELENA KALAJDZIAN** also appeared as a “N.N.” in the cemetery records and was still buried there.

Twenty-two year old **ELENA KALAJDZIAN** was with a friend at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters when she was kidnapped on January 21, 1977.

Evidence suggests that her kidnapping was related to her affiliation with a peronist militant group in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. As explained above, she was identified through fingerprints by the Federal Police on the day of her death, but her relatives were not informed until 2003. As mentioned before, when the Morgue Case was opened, they did not want to pursue her case because they did not trust the information coming from official documents produced during the military government. EAAF notified them about the identification of her remains in 2003.

Twenty-two year-old **JULIO ENZO PANEBIANCO** was an administrative employee at the National Taxation Direction *General Dirección Impositiva* (DGI). He and his wife had two children. Julio and his wife were kidnapped on March 2, 1977, and she was freed a few days later. Another disappeared person who was later released, Carlos Figueredo Ríos, claimed to have seen Julio in The Athletic Club CDC. He was one of four victims of the incident on March 18, 1977 mentioned earlier.

Twenty-year old **ANA TERESA DEL VALLE AGUILAR** was

a third year medical student who worked in the clinic of the *Unión Obrera Metalúrgica* and at the Italian Hospital in Buenos Aires. She was kidnapped in Buenos Aires in October 1976. Her family did not know the location and exact date of the kidnapping. We discovered through interviews with relatives that she was part of the *Montoneros* group, and that Norberto Gómez was her boyfriend.

Survivors of the Garage Azopardo CDC testified that Gómez had a close relationship with a female medical student who assisted him.

The exhumation of Ana Teresa's remains could not take place at the same time as the exhumation of Panebianco and Kalaidjian. Because her family lives far away, in the northern province of Santiago del Estero, they requested a delay until they could be present at the exhumation.

On August 14, EAAF went to Chacarita Cemetery to exhume two cadavers, presumably Elena Kalaidjian and Julio Enzo Panebianco, registered on May 3, 1977 (records 1135 and 1146). The team used archaeological methods to exhume two graves, one located in section 8, block 2, area 16, between graves 1 and 2 (CH 2238); and the second in section 8, block 5, area 22, grave 7 (CH 2237).

The first exhumation corresponded to grave 8-2-20-52, labeled "CH 2238," in the former burial records of Chacarita Cemetery in Buenos Aires. Once the work area had been marked, we dug until we observed the presence of remains, including disarticulated bones corresponding to the skull, pelvis, upper limbs and thorax that were not found in anatomical position, at a depth of 70 centimeters. The lower limbs appeared in anatomic position. We did not recover any items associated with the skeletal remains.

The second grave corresponded to grave S-8-M-5-T-22-S-7, labeled "CH 2237." After marking the area, we dug until we discovered a metal coffin containing remains corresponding to a female that had not been skeletonized. Because of previous experiences of multiple use of

individual burial sites, and because we had not reached the usual depth of burial, we determined that this was not the individual we were looking for and continued to dig. Approximately 15 centimeters deeper, EAAF discovered a skeleton lying face up. The skeleton's hands were tied together by a fragment of cloth, and some of the remains were not in anatomical position.

The spatial distribution of the remains within both graves showed that they had been disturbed after their burial. This explains the fact that in both cases, large parts of the skeletons were not found in anatomical position and that they were not completely recovered. These disturbances were probably caused by the multiple use of the graves.

We transferred the remains to our laboratory to conduct anthropological studies and take samples for genetic analysis. Because we could recover only part of the remains due to the disturbances to the original graves, and because there was not sufficient pre-mortem data, EAAF decided that genetic analysis was necessary for positive identification. This analysis has not been completed as of this writing.

CASE: Osvaldo Horacio Portas

OSVALDO HORACIO PORTAS, born on January 9, 1950, was married and had two children. He was reported as disappeared on August 15, 1977. In an interview with EAAF, his wife suggested that he may have been killed that same day in an armed confrontation. An article in *La Opinión* newspaper, published on August 17, 1977, supports this theory:

"...San Martín, Bs. As. – Shortly before midday the day before yesterday, the combined forces of the Federal Police and the Province of Buenos Aires approached a photocopying business on 297 Lincoln Street, where they engaged in a 40-minute confrontation until the police threw grenades into the building. Inside they found the bodies of three people who have not been identified."

The newspaper, “*La Opinión*” also published on August 19, 1977:

“...SAN MARTIN, Bs. As.— The Area 1 Command confirmed the raid of a photocopying business yesterday that served as printer for the gang “OCPO-FAL 22.” A business on 3590 Lincoln Street at the “Industrial Duplication” company served as cover for extremist activities. One terrorist died in the confrontation. A series of explosive traps that were set in the building detonated when the police entered the building, causing material destruction and wounding two of the officers.”

The Civil Registry of the Police Necropapiloscopia Section of the Province of Buenos Aires officially identified Portas and recorded his identification. However, he was buried as an “N.N.” In July 2003, his family contacted EAAF to ask if it was possible to try to recover his remains, which were supposedly buried in the San Martín cemetery, grave 185, lateral block, section 1. Since EAAF had worked in this cemetery on various occasions we had records of all of the “N.N.” graves from that time. In this case, a note in the records said “uncertain” about whether the body remained in the identified location. In order to verify this, we requested authorization from the Federal Chamber to conduct an exhumation.

On November 26, 2003 we went to the cemetery, delimited the work area around the grave, and recovered the first remains at a depth of 103 centimeters. While the remains corresponded to a male, the lack of peri-mortem wounds and approximate age of the remains rapidly enabled us to rule out the possibility that they belonged to Osvaldo. We found another skeleton lying face up under a cement canopy beneath the first coffin. We exposed the skeleton, but did not find the skull. The anthropological study conducted later at the laboratory



The newspaper, *La Opinión*, published a story, “Death of Extremist Confirmed,” on August 19, 1977, eventually linked to the investigation of the disappearance of Julio Enzo Panebianco.

indicated that it was a male, aged 32-42 years at the time of death, approximately 1.67 centimeters tall, with ante-mortem lesions on the left ribs, hip and fibula. This biological profile did not correspond to the information given by the family. The difference between the recovered skeletons and the ante-mortem information corresponding to Osvaldo Horacio Portas led us to conclude that his remains were not in this location.

RE-EXAMINING “LOST” REMAINS

BACKGROUND

Since the beginning of 1984, when democracy was reinstated in Argentina, Federal Tribunals have ordered numerous exhumations of “N.N.” graves where there was a presumption that they might correspond with people who disappeared during the last military dictatorship of 1976-1983.

However, these procedures were problematic in many ways. First, the forensic doctors had little or no professional experience in the recovery and analysis of

skeletal remains because their daily work was to conduct autopsies of cadavers. In addition, Argentina did not have significant experience with archaeological methods for the recovery of buried remains. The exhumations were done by people without expertise, such as firefighters or cemetery keepers, and in a completely a-scientific manner. In some cases they used bulldozers on entire sections of the cemeteries. As a result, many bones were lost, mixed up, left in the grave, or broken. Hence, the evidence necessary to identify the remains and to support legal cases against those responsible for the crimes was being destroyed. In addition, some forensic doctors had themselves been complicit — either by omission or commission — in the crimes of the previous regime. In Argentina, as in most Latin American countries, forensic experts are part of the police and/or the judicial systems. Therefore, during non-democratic periods their independence is severely limited. (See introduction of Annual Report.)

Because most of these exhumations took place in the Province of Buenos Aires, many of the remains were under the jurisdiction of the Medical Legal Institute of La Plata, *Asesoría Pericial de La Plata*, from the Buenos Aires Province Judiciary. In 1984, a group of North American forensic scientists visited Argentina at the request of the *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP) and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who had asked for their help with the problem of the identification of disappeared people and search for disappeared

children. The scientists visited the Medical Legal Institute of La Plata, saw the bags of remains that had come from the poorly-executed exhumations, and made an immediate call to stop the exhumations so that archaeology and forensic anthropology could be used to recover and analyze the skeletal remains.

Among these scientists was US forensic anthropologist Dr. Clyde Snow, who, at the request of judges, organized the first exhumations using archaeological techniques and trained the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team.

During the following years, EAAF worked on the exhumation and analysis of other disappearance cases in which the remains and associated evidence were not as disturbed. In one occasion, in 1986, Dr. Snow and EAAF were given access to the remains exhumed from the Grand Bourg Cemetery in relation to the so-called “Triple Homicide of Del Viso” case. The team found

that labels on many of the bags and boxes of skeletons were lost, making it even more difficult to access and analyze the remains. Despite these challenges, the examination of part of the remains culminated in the positive identification of Leticia Akselman, who had been kidnapped on June 12, 1976.⁶

The bags of remains from these exhumations were kept in precarious storage conditions at the Medical Legal Institute. With time, institutional interest in these cases deteriorated and most judges stopped working on them, leaving the remains abandoned



Remains collected during the 1984 unscientific exhumations of mass graves in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area. Photo from judicial files.



Exhumations conducted in 1984 were done with bulldozers and other heavy equipment without following forensic procedures, resulting in the loss, mixing, and damage of remains. Photo from judicial files.

in the storage facility. Requests for information were inadequately answered and eventually led to the conclusion that access to the remains was not possible.

At the same time, the results of the historical investigation conducted by EAAF through interviews with survivors of the CCDs, relatives of disappeared people, cemetery and judicial records, fingerprints, and other sources, led us to believe that the remains of some disappeared persons could be found and identified at the Medical Legal Institute.

The Medical Legal Institute agreed to work with EAAF to provide an inventory with as much detail as possible about the skeletons in the depository and their

origin, which was then given to the Federal Chamber of Buenos Aires. The Federal Chamber, in turn, requested that the remains be given to EAAF for laboratory study.

In December 2002, under the authority of the Federal Chamber of Buenos Aires, 90 significantly deteriorated bags and boxes containing bone material, clothes, ballistic evidence and partially legible notes were transferred from the Institute of Legal Medicine of La Plata to EAAF custody for analysis.

From February to July 2003, the team conducted the analysis at the National University of Buenos Aires Faculty of Medicine, through an agreement between

EAAF and the Department of Legal Medicine and Thanatology. At the end of July 2003, EAAF transferred the remains to the Department of Anthropology in the National Judicial Morgue, where the work continued. EAAF involved the Judicial Morgue because our laboratory is already at capacity and cannot store more remains at this time. We made an agreement with the morgue to ensure the security of the remains and adequate work space for the analysis.

Five University of Buenos Aires anthropology students are conducting this work: Mariela Fumagalli, Analía González Simonetto, Victoria Hernández, Mariana Selva and Selva Varela. In addition, Dr. Luis Bossio, member of the Forensic Unit of Buenos Aires and the Institute of Legal Medicine collaborates and advises the team on this project.

Laboratory Analysis

The a-scientific recovery and inadequate storage of the remains inevitably resulted in the mixing of bone fragments. The boxes that were supposed to contain the remains of just one person actually contained incomplete remains of individuals or the remains of multiple individuals. Because of this, EAAF re-organized the remains so that they could be studied as individual skeletons, anatomical sections or bone concentrations.

The methodology initially included taking photographs and making an inventory of the remains from each container received from the La Plata Institute of Legal Medicine. At the same time, we tried to relate the remains with existing information about them, such as autopsy reports, judicial files, and cemetery records.

In cases in which the remains corresponded to one individual, we conducted routine anthropological analysis, including estimating sex, age, stature, laterality, ante-mortem description of pathologies and old lesions, peri-mortem trauma, odontological information, post-

mortem alterations, clothing, and evidence associated with the remains.

In cases in which the remains were mixed, we analyzed them as assemblage or concentration commingled skeletal remains from a single box, and/or with the remains from all the boxes from one cemetery. The analysis aimed to re-associate the greatest number of individual skeletons from the mixed remains in order to conduct individualized studies. In cases where we were not able to separate individual skeletons, we established a minimum number of individuals (MNI) present in each box or bag and/or in each cemetery where they were found. The MNI is determined by the most represented bones of the entire set of remains, such as the right femur. If in one box we have three right femurs, we can assume that the remains of a minimum number of three individuals are in the container. Another element taken into account when estimating the MNI is to separate the total of remains into large age groups: infants, children, adolescents, and adults. We may have three left femurs from adults but if we have any other bone from a child or infant, it is accurate to estimate the MNI as four individuals.

We also took photographs and x-rays of the remains that showed traumatic peri-mortem lesions and pathologies or ante-mortem anomalies. The results of the analysis were recorded in EAAF's database.

Historical Investigation: Documental Sources

At the same time that we were studying the remains, the team continued the historical investigation related to these cases to try to identify them. EAAF continued to collect and analyze information about people seen at Clandestine Detention Centers (CDC) and studied the operation of CDCs located near the cemeteries where we were working, ante-mortem information of disappeared persons given by their relatives and administrative documentation such as the fingerprint registry, cemetery records, and death certificates. We also studied newspaper articles published at the time about real or contrived



EAAF volunteers working at the laboratory of the National Judicial Morgue, where the remains collected from the La Plata Institute of Legal Medicine were transferred and space was created for EAAF's investigation of the unscientific exhumations conducted in 1984.

armed confrontations, or the “discovery” of cadavers in areas near the cemeteries.

EAAF made a spreadsheet showing which box or bag corresponds or may be of interest for each judicial case to find out more information about issues such as where the bodies came from, to determine the date of burial, and the circumstances of the exhumation of the remains. There is significant information in the judicial files related to the “discovery” and exhumation of cadavers (see beginning of this section). Some of the files include the autopsy reports and photographs of the remains at the time of their initial exhumation in 1984. The analysis of these files will help EAAF to identify the remains.

Summary of Partial Results

The bags and boxes collected from the La Plata *Asesoría Pericial* came from at least 8 cemeteries in the Buenos Aires Province, according to the labels present in the majority of the containers. These labels refer to the cemetery where the remains were recovered (Municipal cemeteries of Moreno, Boulonge, Rafael Calzada, General Maradiaga, Lomas de Zamora, Campana, Vicente López and Isidrio Casanova) or the judicial case related to the 1984 exhumations of these remains.

During 2003, EAAF examined cases from six cemeteries (Moreno, Boulonge, Rafael Calzada, General Maradiaga, Lomas de Zamora, and Isidro Casanova), finding an MNI

of 63 individuals represented by partially complete skeletons and bone concentrations or assemblages.

Among them, 63.4% corresponded to male individuals, 29.6% to females, and 9.5% to individuals whose sex could not be determined because they were in a bad state of preservation and/or found incomplete (Table I).

In relation to the ages of the 63 individuals, 61.9% were young adults (21 to 35 years old) at the time of death (Table II).

At least 35 individuals, or 55.5% of the total, had traumatic peri-mortem wounds, the majority of which were gunshot wounds (Table III).

These three characteristics show a strong coincidence in the biological profile (sex and age) and pathology (peri-mortem trauma) with the disappeared population (Snow and Bihurriet, 1987).

IDENTIFICATIONS

EAAF is currently in the process of comparing the results from the laboratory with the physical information given by the relatives of the disappeared persons whose remains may be among those exhumed at the beginning of democracy in the mentioned cemeteries, and existing historical information.

Two cases of female skeletons from the Moreno cemetery and one case of a female skeleton from the Boulonge cemetery showed significant similarities between the biological profile and ante-mortem data of people reported

disappeared and other information. In July 2003, dental pieces corresponding to these individuals and blood samples from possible family members were sent to the LIDMO genetic laboratory for comparison. At the time of this writing, we are still waiting for results in all of the cases.

Table I. Distribution by Sex of the Minimum Number of Individuals Analyzed

Sex	Total (MNI)	Percentage
Male	40	63.4 %
Female	17	26.9 %
Indeterminate	6	9.5 %
Total MNI	63	99.8 %

Table II. Distribution by Age Group of the Minimum Number of Individuals Analyzed

Age Group	Total (MNI)	Percentage
Infants /Children (0 - 13 years)	1	1.5 %
Adolescents (14 - 20 years)	1	1.5 %
Young Adults (21 - 35 years)	39	61.9 %
Mature Adults (36 - 50 years)	6	9.5 %
Adults ⁷ (21 - 50 years)	14	22.2 %
Elderly (+ 50 years)	2	3.1 %
Total MNI	63	100 %

Table III. Distribution by Sex and Cases with Peri-mortem Trauma

Sex	Perimortem Trauma	Percentage
Male	26	74.2 % of the total male cases with perimortem
Female	9	25.7 % of the total female cases with perimortem
Total	35	55.5 % of total MNI

REPORT ON TRIP TO JUJUY PROVINCE

Introduction

At the request of human rights organizations in Jujuy, Federal Judge No. 1 of the Jujuy Province, Dr. Mariano Wenceslao Cardozo began to a “Truth Trial” (see Right to Truth section) to clarify the incidents that took place in the province during the military dictatorship. Jujuy is located in the north of Argentina, bordering Bolivia.

From November 17 to 20, 2003, EAAF member Anahí Ginarte worked with investigators in Jujuy. The request came from family members of disappeared persons from Jujuy because a witness in the Truth Trial planned to show the judge possible clandestine burial sites of disappeared persons.

EAAF’s preliminary investigation included three areas:

- 1) participating in the visit to potential clandestine burial sites with the judge, the witness, the lawyers and the family members of disappeared people from the area;
- 2) Visit with the relatives of disappeared people to the Yala cemetery to verify the existence of “N.N.” burials during 1976 and 1977.
- 3) Meeting with human rights organizations and their lawyers to explain the process and relevance of forensic anthropology in this kind of investigation.

1. Visit to the Possible Burial Sites with the Witness

The site, “Puesto Mendoza,” is southwest of the city of San Salvador of Jujuy, in a field at the foot of the Andes Mountains. It once functioned as a military guard post and training center, but the post had been abandoned, leaving cement, stone walls, wells, and piles of earth.

Residents of the area said that the military base had been used as a CDC during the military government and that there were possible burial sites. The witness in the Truth Trial is from the area but did not see any murders or burials. He was only able to identify the area and show possible burial sites based on the appearance of overturned earth.

The staff from the court and the EAAF member took note of each of the locations with a Global Positioning System (GPS) and recorded their main features. From this information, we concluded: 1) The place was a military base, but there is no direct witness who can confirm that the location was used as a CDC. 2) The depressions observed in the earth are of anthropic origin, meaning they were man-made, but this does not necessarily mean they are graves. We do not have any witness that could confirm that they were graves.

EAAF recommended expanding the investigation and trying to find a direct witness or other new information in order to conduct exploratory trenches of mapped depressions.

2. Visit to the Yala Cemetery

Yala is a small community located 20 kilometers west of the city of San Salvador of Jujuy.

The cemetery is small, covering an area of approximately 2 hectares, and is located on the right bank of the Grande River. At the edge of the cemetery next to the river is a hill approximately 30 meters high. The river has caused loss of earth through the continual erosion of the hill and the cemetery, resulting in the exposure of bones from old graves after the river rises.

The “N.N.” graves are on the east side of the river. Most of the graves are unmarked, and are only noticeable because of depressions in the earth. Some have crosses with dated inscriptions. Many were from 1976-1983 during the military dictatorship. EAAF also noted that

this number of “N.N.” graves seemed too high for a small-town cemetery. We recommended to the judge the seizure of the cemetery records, and the recovery of death certificates and any other available information.

3. Meeting with Local Human Rights Organizations

EAAF held two meetings, one at the beginning of the mission to explain the work of EAAF, and another to discuss the results of the two visits to potential clandestine burial sites. The group of relatives, lawyers and collaborators involved in the case decided that they would continue the investigations in Puesto Mendoza, but that they would dedicate more time to the cemetery investigations in Yala, where there is a greater chance of finding “N.N.” graves belonging to people disappeared during the military dictatorship. EAAF committed to collaborate on future visits to Jujuy and eventually to serve as expert witnesses in the case.

EAAF Exchange with Canadian Forensic Scientists

In the forensic missions with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in Bosnia and Kosovo, EAAF members had the opportunity to meet forensic scientists from around the world, including Canadian police officers who were in Kosovo working as

crime scene investigators. In 2002, EAAF made contact with a group of forensic archaeologists from the Regional Police of York, Ontario. In March 2003, the head of this forensic archaeology group, Sergeant Greg Olson, came to Argentina and participated in the excavation of a common grave at the San Vicente Cemetery in Córdoba.

In August 2003, a member of EAAF, anthropologist Anahí Ginarte, was invited to give a workshop in the York Police summer course on forensic anthropology which is held each year in the city of Newmarket. Investigators and detectives from all over Canada participated in the five-day course. The course included practical and theoretical classes given by forensic scientists such as Dr. Katy Gruspier and Dr. Steve Symes. EAAF gave several presentations on forensic science in human rights cases, illustrating the lectures with examples from EAAF work in Argentina, El Salvador, Bosnia, Ethiopia, and other countries.

In addition, on Wednesday afternoon, EAAF gave a public screening of “Following Antigone: Forensic Anthropology and Human Rights Investigations” (see Special Section). Ginarte also made a presentation about the graves in the San Vicente cemetery in the city of Córdoba in the Newmarket municipal theater.

Collaboration among the group of forensic archaeology specialists from the York Regional Police and EAAF continued when Sergeant Olson participated a second time in the excavation work at the cemetery in Córdoba in 2004.



EAAF members working at a mass grave at San Vicente Cemetery in Córdoba.

Córdoba

Introduction

At the end of 2002 and during all of 2003, EAAF conducted investigations in Córdoba City, the second largest city in Argentina located in the center of the country. The Third Army Corps was involved in serious and massive human rights violations in this area between 1975 and 1983. Córdoba City is the capital of the Córdoba Province.

EAAF worked in collaboration with the non-governmental organization ARHISTA (Association for the Historical Recuperation in Argentina) and the Anthropology Museum of the National University of Córdoba Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, as part of the “Inquiry into Clandestine Burials” judicial case, under the jurisdiction of Dr. Cristina Garzón de Lascano, Federal Judge No 3. Dr. Graciela López de Filoñuk is in charge of the case.

At the end of 2002, EAAF conducted exhumations in individual graves at the San Vicente Cemetery. EAAF then organized large-scale exhumations that were conducted during the first half of 2003. This resulted in the excavation of the largest common grave related to the State Terrorism in Argentina, found in Sector C of the San Vicente Cemetery. Following the excavation, we completed laboratory work in the Córdoba Institute of Legal Medicine.

In addition, the Laboratory of Immunogenetics and Molecular Diagnostics, LIDMO, a private genetic company in Córdoba, made a critical contribution by analyzing genetic material of some of the exhumed remains and comparing them with blood samples from relatives of disappeared people taken by EAAF. To date, four identifications of disappeared persons have resulted from this comparison, and their families have been able to recover their remains. The investigation work continues.

The success of these investigations was possible due to the support of several individuals and institutions. First, the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Argentina provided major funding for the excavations. The Provincial Ministry of Production and the Legislature of the Province of Córdoba also provided political and financial support. The Argentine National Government was involved in the work and provided resources and support. The Ford Foundation’s Santiago, Chile office provided funds for the genetic analysis. Finally, donors contributing to EAAF’s institutional funding partly supported the salaries of those involved in the Córdoba work: ICCO (The Netherlands), OSI (USA), and The John Merck Fund (USA). Human

Rights organizations in Córdoba also vigorously supported the legal cases. The local press gave broad and responsible coverage of the work, particularly through the webpage created by the newspaper *La Voz del Interior*. The Anthropology Museum of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities provided economic and human resources to all phases of the investigation. The Provincial Court provided the facilities of the Legal-Medical Institute and an Agreement of Cooperation for future work. Two other genetic laboratories, the Córdoba Science Agency from Córdoba province and The Center for Applied Genomics of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada also participated in the work. Finally, the Federal Court also contributed to the funding for the project.

Collection of DNA Reference Samples and Ante-Mortem Data

Two hundred seventy-four relatives, nearly 50% of the disappeared people in the Córdoba region, already provided genetic samples and other physical data corresponding to their disappeared relative to EAAF, in hope of identifying their loved one. In addition, the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, Dr. Mónica Gordillo, coordinates a group of students searching for medical histories and odontological records of disappeared people in the region. The Secretary of Outreach in the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities organized conferences in ten high schools and four departments in the university, as well as an outreach program. EAAF also held conferences at the Catholic University and the National Journals of History Schools. EAAF’s photography exhibition was shown throughout the city in 2003.

Most important are the identifications that EAAF established and the opportunity to return remains to the relatives. By the end of 2003, EAAF identified the remains of Mario Andrés Osatinsky, Liliana Sofía Barrios, Horacio Pietragalla y Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo (see Identifications section). EAAF hopes to continue the work on this project during 2004.⁸

Historical Background

Most of EAAF's investigations in Argentina have focused on the Buenos Aires metropolitan area, which includes the Federal Capital and the suburban part of Buenos Aires Province. The main reason for this was that two thirds of all disappearances in Argentina reportedly occurred in the metropolitan area. For most of the military period — from March 1976 through June 1982 — the Armed Forces divided the country into five army command zones, each containing a major population center. Zone One covered the Federal Capital and the majority of Buenos Aires Province. Zone Two included the northeastern provinces, with headquarters in Rosario, Santa Fé Province. Zone Three contained the central, west, and northwest regions. The Fifth Army Corps controlled southern Argentina. The headquarters of Zone Four, located at the Campo de Mayo Army base in Buenos Aires Province, was the most important military installation in the country, and had jurisdiction over the northern zone of Buenos Aires Province. Consequently, most of our investigations have centered on patterns of repression in Zones One and Four. Zone Three, which was controlled by the Third Army Corps, was headquartered in Córdoba, approximately 780 kilometers northwest of Buenos Aires.

The Third Corps had jurisdiction over the provinces of Córdoba, San Luis, Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy — an area of approximately 800,000 square kilometers. Forty Clandestine Detention Centers (CDCs) were in operation in this region from 1975 to 1980. Subzone 31, under the second command of the Third Corps, based in Córdoba City, had jurisdiction over Córdoba, Le Río and Catamarca Provinces.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

Based on the information collected so far, most of the people “disappeared” by the state in Córdoba and its outskirts were taken to two CDCs controlled by the Army

— *La Perla* and *Campo La Ribera*. *La Perla*, located in a military post on the highway between Córdoba City and the city of Carlos Paz, started functioning as a CDC after the military coup of March 1976. *La Ribera*, a military prison, began operating as a CDC in December 1975, a few months before the coup. The National Commission on Disappeared Persons (CONADEP) estimated that between 1976 and the end of 1979, approximately 2,200 disappeared people passed through *La Perla*, making it one of the largest CDCs in the country.

Although the repression was organized on a national level, with a certain degree of coordination among command zones, Zone Three enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. In contrast to most of the CDCs managed by the army, where prolonged contact between repressors and prisoners was avoided, at *La Perla* there were several cases of prolonged imprisonment. There also were a greater number of survivors, who tended to have detailed memories about the way that the unit functioned, who was on the staff, and who was detained at the CDC.⁹ The centralization of repression, seen in the concentration of prisoners in two CDCs, seems also to have applied to the disposal of the bodies of the victims. It is clear now that the bodies of most of the people who disappeared in Córdoba City passed through the Córdoba City morgue and were later buried in the San Vicente Cemetery (also in Córdoba City) for burial.

In 1984, the existence of at least one mass grave in the San Vicente Cemetery became public, when morgue and cemetery employees submitted official testimonies to the CONADEP. At that time, they declared that beginning in 1976, members of the security forces delivered a large number of unidentified bodies to the Judicial Morgue of Córdoba City, located in the San Roque Hospital morgue, and later to the Córdoba Hospital. Reportedly, in almost every case, they exhibited gunshot wounds, clear signs of torture, and ink stains on the fingers, implying that they had been fingerprinted. Most of the time, the bodies reportedly arrived without papers, so there was no indication of which state agency had sent them, although they were delivered by security forces. Also, in most cases, they entered as “N.N.”

At the morgue, the bodies were recorded as “found in the street” or “killed in confrontations with security or military forces.”¹⁰ In some cases, the bodies were identified while at the morgue, and the Military Judges (*Jueces de Instrucción Militar*) sometimes delivered the victims’ bodies to their families. Police physicians were responsible for signing death certificates.

Some morgue employees also stated that they had taken part in the transfer of the bodies to the San Vicente Cemetery. At least four mass transfers of bodies were documented in 1976, involving approximately 200 bodies. The bodies were placed in a mass grave that was used multiple times; they were naked and had no identification except in some cases where a metal tag corresponding to a morgue number was hanging from carpal bones (wrist) was left with the bodies. Beginning in 1977, the transfers were comprised of smaller groups of bodies, which tended to be buried individually. The total number of bodies delivered to San Vicente during 1977 seems to have been similar to the figures indicated for 1976.

According to morgue and cemetery workers, the bodies were buried clandestinely during the night, in common or individual graves, without coffins or any identifying markers, and without making the requisite entries in the cemetery registers. Thus, hundreds of citizens whose names were known to the authorities were systematically transformed into “N.N.” cadavers. All of this information resulted in the opening of an investigation in 1984 by the Federal Court No. 3 of Córdoba City.

In 1984, judicial and CONADEP investigations led to the identification of some bodies buried in this manner. It was determined that the large mass grave contained the bodies of seven youths who had been sent to the Córdoba city morgue in October 1976 from Los Surgentes, Córdoba Province. Their records state that they died in an “armed confrontation.”

The investigation revealed that the corpses had been bound at the wrists, which allowed the judge to qualify it as a homicide. This was confirmed by a

partial exhumation of the mass grave by cemetery staff on orders from the Federal Court. Ante-mortem odontological records compared with one of the exhumed individuals led to the identification of one young woman, and her remains were delivered to her family. Subsequently, the CONADEP and the Federal Judiciary declared that they were unable to make further identifications without access to DNA technology.¹¹

CURRENT INVESTIGATION OF THE SAN VICENTE CEMETERY

In this part of the investigation EAAF compiled and analyzed information related to clandestine burials in the San Vicente cemetery. Our aim was to compare different sources of information, such as number of victims, dates of disappearance, burial dates, and death certificates, to establish a hypothesis about the identity of the victims in the graves. EAAF conducted the preliminary investigation before and during the excavation and the laboratory analysis, and we currently continue to collect this information.

EAAF members Dario Olmo and Anahí Ginarte coordinated this phase of the work with collaboration from members of ARHISTA, students from the Philosophy and Humanities Department at the National University of Córdoba, and members of the human rights organization HIJOS, founded by sons and daughters of disappeared people. (See acknowledgements section).

The sources of information consulted in the preliminary investigation included:

A: DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Several local family members of disappeared persons and human rights organizations initiated investigations and opened judicial cases during the last two decades. They collaborated with the local branch of the CONADEP.

1. *Judicial Sources*

- 1.1 Reading of the judicial case, “Abad, on denunciations”; currently, the name of the file is “Inquiry into Clandestine Burials in case PEREZ ESQUIVEL Adolfo, MARTINEZ María Elba on/Presentation” File number 9693.
- 1.2 Judicial cases from ordinary federal or military courts
- 1.3 Reading, compiling and analyzing morgue records

2: *State Sources*

- 2.1 Provincial Registry of Persons (compilation of death certificates issued by the office of the Registry that could be related to disappeared people)

B: *TESTIMONIAL SOURCES: The Survivors*

1. EAAF compiled a list of all of the people reported disappeared in the Province of Córdoba and its surroundings. The final figure to date is 631 individuals.
2. We analyzed the testimonies of people released from the *La Perla* and *La Ribera* CDCs given to different human rights organizations and the CONADEP. In addition, EAAF conducted interviews with some of them.
3. EAAF compiled written testimonies of relatives of victims. Also, from March to December 2003, EAAF and ARHISTA interviewed family members in the evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Anthropology Museum office. We asked family members about the circumstances of the disappearance or kidnapping and physical data of their loved one, and took blood and saliva samples for a possible genetic comparison with the exhumed remains from the San Vicente cemetery.
4. We conducted interviews with former members of militant groups belonging to groups such as political parties, guerrilla groups, and unions, which were targeted during the repression.

Through the compilation of this information we established several hypotheses about the location of the graves and the identity of the people buried in them.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

While the work conducted at the end of 2002 did not produce conclusive identifications, the results supported the general hypothesis that victims of the illegal repression were indeed buried in the San Vicente cemetery.

EAAF decided to conduct a large-scale archaeological exhumation in February 2003 based on these partial results, and began excavations in Sector C of the San Vicente Cemetery in early 2003.

Mr. Caro, a worker from the Córdoba Morgue who participated in the 1976 burials, identified places where common graves were dug at the time. While there had been a number of changes in the terrain, he recommended examining part of Sector C in front of the Railroad Worker and Municipal Pantheons, adjacent to the Crematorium. Based on this information, we dug a series of trenches in this area, carefully removing as much earth as possible without damaging individual graves.

We dug ten trenches, 3-10 meters long, one meter wide, and 2.5 meters deep, removing approximately 50 cubic meters of earth. The trenches were archaeologically sterile, but we were able to form an idea of the stratigraphy of Sector C. During the time of the incidents under investigation, this part of the San Vicente Cemetery was part of the back of the necropolis, and old aerial photos enabled us to conclude that it was used for burials after 1974 (see photos). In addition, an examination of the superficial layers of the removed earth led to the presumption that the first 30 centimeters of the earth, adjacent to the street that separated Sector C from the vaults and the crematorium, corresponds to sediment of anthropic origin (not natural), probably re-deposited while the road was being paved sometime between 1977 and 1978.

EAAF also investigated the status of the bags of remains exhumed in 1984 that, according to records, were returned to the cemetery in early 1985. This part of the investigation was conducted by ARHISTA. They concluded that the 33 bags of remains corresponding to an unknown number of unidentified people were cremated in the San Vicente cemetery in 1985, under the orders of democratically elected municipal authorities.

On February 17, the team marked an area a few meters east and began to explore along the line in Section C that separates the 1984 excavation of the crematorium. We have labeled this site Sector C North Head.

While we continued working near the paved road we also conducted interviews with people who were present in the 1984 excavations and relatives of disappeared persons whose bodies were found in the city of Los Sargentos, Department of Marcos Juárez, Córdoba at the end of 1976. They claimed that the ramp erected in 1984 to remove the bodies was parallel to the grave excavated in 1976, which the witness, Mr. Caro had called the “Big Grave,” and that corresponds to the transfer of bodies from the morgue conducted in December 1976. For this reason, the only part of the grave affected by these excavations corresponds to the area between points of reference in the wall that then marked the edge of the cemetery. Today there are remnants no higher than 40 centimeters from the floor, delimiting a surface of less than 40 square meters. While the 1984 excavation unfortunately resulted in the loss of at least 33 bags of remains, we realized it did not affect other sectors of the “Big Grave” that were filled with remains at different depths and places within the same grave at different times during the military regime.

Beginning on February 18, 2003 we surrounded the area with a perimeter of 2.20 meter high posts tied with black plastic material marking an area of 2000 square meters. This isolated Sector C from the rest of the cemetery, preserving its integrity and protecting it from onlookers.

In the second half of February 2003, the work initiated in the North Head began to produce the results we

expected. Layers of 20 centimeters depth were artificially established and excavated.

In the second layer, we found disarticulated bone remains in a matrix (or “floor” of that layer) of remainders of coffins (metal boxes), nylon bags, drills, medicine bottles and other residue of probable hospital origin. The matrix sediment was discontinuous — in some sectors black, with signs of combustion, and in others fluvial sediment, with few signs of alteration.

In the fourth level, slightly more than 70 centimeters deep, we began to clearly observe articulated human skeletons, in various positions — evidence of the multiple burials that we had expected to find in this part of the cemetery. We cleared a total of 35 square meters and established nine two-meter-square quadrants, labeled according to a grid system, with letters progressing from west to east and numbers increasing from north to south.

The “floor” where the remains were lying was called “Floor one of North Head.” Toward the east wall of this floor there was evidence of a later burial, on top of it, in which numerous disarticulated human bone remains were found as well as remains of metal coffins, all compatible with remains from the crematorium. This interruption ran parallel to the east wall, and as a result the skeletons on Floor One of that section appeared incomplete. In some of the remains, one could see possible signs of perimortem trauma, and some had small metal tags with an engraved number associated with the remains. These pieces were found in the region of the carpal bones (bones of the wrist and hand), as if they had been attached to the wrists of the cadavers when they had soft tissue. The presence of these tags would be consistent with the entry of bodies into the morgues. The random disposition of the bodies and the position in which they were found inside the grave suggested that they were thrown from the edge of the grave without care, consideration or other criteria as might occur in a rushed burial.

By March, EAAF had fully exposed Floor One. We began to exhume individuals that were numbered 1-20 with the code SV CN (San Vicente *Cabecera Norte*/North Head) on



Aerial view of San Vicente cemetery in 1970.

March 13. We took photos of each skeleton as well as several tri-dimensional measurements to register its location in a general map of the grave. Following Dr. Garzón de Lascano's order, we placed the remains of each individual in a labeled box that was given to the Medical Examiner's office of the City of Córdoba, where EAAF will clean and examine them, and where they will be stored.

Approximately 30 centimeters deeper, another floor of skeletons began to appear, labeled "Floor Two of the North Head." This second cluster of remains was much more dense, occupying the same surface as Floor One and representing another episode of multiple, simultaneous and clandestine burials. We found remains corresponding to a total of 72 people (individual skeletons) in addition to numerous clusters of incomplete remains on this floor.

This is the largest common grave of victims of the State Terrorism in Argentina found to date.

Because we found it below Floor One, it is logical to assume that Floor Two is an older burial, which we confirmed later with historical documents. EAAF also found metal tags with numbers associated with the remains of some individuals on Floor Two.

Morgue records show that some of the bodies registered in 1976 had tag numbers. The tag number can then be related to a date of entry and /or exit of that particular body. These numbers coincide with some of the numbers on the tags found attached to skeletons on both floors. Thus, we were able to establish a hypothesis about the burial dates for each floor. The older Floor Two



Aerial view of San Vicente cemetery in 1995.

corresponds to a multiple burial that occurred at the end of April 1976. Nearer to the surface, and as such more recent, Floor One was conducted in July 1976.

EAAF fully exposed Floor Two by the end of March. In April, we exhumed each individual (numbered from 21-94) and clusters of disarticulated bones. Once EAAF had completed these tasks, we continued to excavate deeper under the surface of the North Head, but did not find anything else.

At the end of April we extended the excavation toward the south, searching for new floors with indications of multiple burials. These activities did not produce results until the middle of May, 2003 when 12 meters from the southern limit of the North Head area, at the same depth

as Floor One, we found a third floor of human bone remains with at least 32 individuals. We labeled this cluster “Floor One of the Central Strip.” The excavation of this floor lasted until June 18, 2003. After we continued excavating deeper but did not find other results in this part of Section C. We also excavated the entire area that had been destroyed in 1984 and did not find anything, which confirmed the complete destruction of the December 1976 “Big Grave,” in the unscientific excavations conducted in March 1984.

From June to December 2003 EAAF excavated 20 individual graves from 1977. During 2002, the excavated remains were incomplete, disarticulated and destroyed by later burials that occurred in the same graves throughout the 1980s. It is unclear yet if these correspond to

incidents of political violence from the last dictatorship, taking into account the experience excavating individual graves from 1977 during 2002.

Forensic Anthropology Report

INTRODUCTION

Once EAAF moved the remains from San Vicente Cemetery to the Medical Examiner's Office in the City of Córdoba, we began laboratory work on April 28, 2003.

The Medical Examiner's Office converted a room of 4x20 meters to a laboratory for us to work, in an area separated from the rest of the judicial morgue. During the entire time that the remains were being analyzed, the Medical Examiner's Office collaborated with the team of experts, providing infrastructure and when possible materials (among others, radiology service).

The characteristics of the skeletons recovered in grave SVcbCN and SVcbFC from San Vicente Cemetery suggested that there were two population groups mixed together: 1) one cluster of people of advanced age that had been registered at the morgue in the period investigated but did not form part of the group of disappeared persons; they correspond to unclaimed identified and unidentified individuals, and 2) a younger group of individuals, with signs of violent death that indicated a probable connection with the investigation underway.

The team prioritized cases according to a number of criteria to determine who could have been related to the disappearance or violent death before analyzing the remains. The criteria were: age (prioritizing adolescents and young adults over older adults); signs of violent death (peri-mortem fractures, associated ballistics evidence, etc.); or atypical indications of morgue processes such as individual associated with clothing or disarticulation of skeletons. In the case of individuals associated with clothing, there were a few cases involving individuals that were dressed and because of

that, suspected to correspond to disappeared people. During the dictatorship, there was an "order" not to practice autopsies on these cases, only external examinations. Thus, they would sometimes be buried with their clothing. The disarticulated remains refer to individuals found not in anatomical position, as we were looking for a disappeared person that reportedly was killed when a grenade was thrown at him.

Methodology

The general procedures EAAF followed for the analysis of the remains, varied based on the state of preservation or the characteristics of the case, and are as follows:

Preparation of the remains: cleaning recovered bones and the associated artifacts and evidence. Because of the bad state of preservation of the remains we could not submerge them in water, thus in the majority of the cases we cleaned the remains with soft and dry brushes, avoiding harming the bone tissue.

Morphological analysis: We analyzed each skeleton's characteristics, estimating sex, age at time of death, stature and dental analysis, dental analysis, pre-mortem lesions, pathologies, epigenetic or non-metric features, and traumatic lesions in the bone at the time of death (peri-mortem) — related or unrelated to the cause of death.

X-rays were taken in the cases in which pre- and /or peri-mortem fractures, dental restorations or suspected metallic fragments associated with bone that could correspond to ballistic traces, were found and/ or suspected.

We made an individual file, graphics and photographic log of each case, emphasizing the most relevant findings, such as signs of violence in the individual (traumatic lesions), a hypothesis about the identity (pathologies, pre-mortem fractures, etc.) or taphonomic variables (post-mortem changes of the remains, such as erosion suffered by the remains, evidence of exposure to fire, etc.).

In cases in which clothes or personal effects were recovered associated with the skeleton, we made an inventory and took photos of them.

Finally, the team analyzed objects which suggest signs of violence (ballistics, wires, cords, etc.) presumably exercised on the individuals. We also analyzed objects that would be of interest for the identification process and general investigation such as metal tags with a number engraved associated with some skeletons, and took photos of them.

The information resulting from the study of each skeleton was compared to ante- mortem data provided by relatives of disappeared people as well as to historical information such as date of disappearance, registry in the morgue book, etc. In cases in which an agreement existed, we formed a hypothesis about the identity of the individual.

The team then tried to exhaust medical, dental, radiographic and other records of the victims to corroborate the identification. Because we could not find these records in any of the cases where we reached a tentative identification, we turned to genetic analysis with the hope of positively identifying the victim. EAAF relied on the help of private molecular biology laboratory LIDMO (see before).

We submitted an expert witness report to Federal Judge No. 3, for those individuals we could identify, including details of the process from the exhumation to the analysis of the remains, the results and conclusions of the study, as well as a graphic and photographic registry of the most relevant findings.

Finally, the remains of the identified victims were returned to their family members.

According to the judicial mandate and with the consent of families, EAAF kept extra bone and blood samples of the relatives of each identified individual, as well as associated evidence found with their skeleton, such as the morgue's metal tags and pieces of ballistic interest.

RESULTS

From April 28 through October 31 of 2003, EAAF completed the analysis of 91 individual skeletons exhumed in grave SVcb CN, and 75% of the 32 individual skeletons exhumed in grave SVcb FC, from San Vicente Cemetery in Córdoba.

The information in this report corresponds to the results derived from the study of both sections of the grave, however the quantitative analysis is subdivided in two groups (grave SVcb CN and SVcb FC) since they already present clearly differentiated patterns.

San Vicente Grave, North Head (Cabecera Norte/SVcb CN)

EAAF recovered a total of 91 skeletons (Graphic 1), of which 19 individuals correspond to Floor One (whose burial date is presumed to be July 22, 1976) and 72 individuals to Floor Two (with a verified burial date of April 27, 1976).

80% of the skeletons recovered in both floors correspond to male individuals.

EAAF verified the existence of two population groups in the North Head of the grave: one cluster of people whose age was greater than 40 years (53 individuals or 59% of the total) and a smaller group aged 15-40 years (37 individuals or 41% of the total). A remaining individual was represented only by an adult skull, with no clear age range, and it was included in the previous classification.

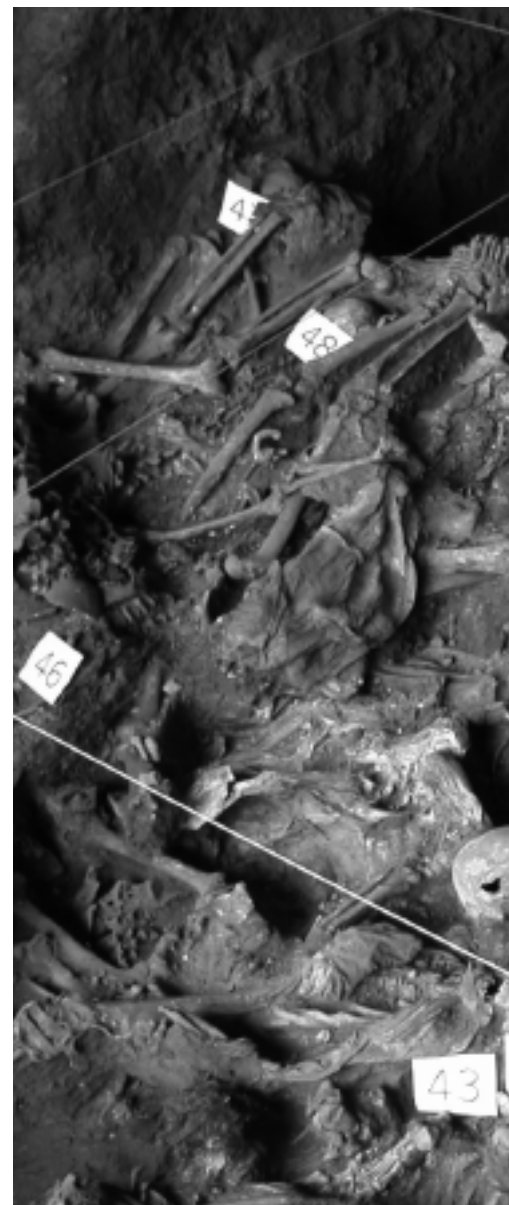
Only 23 of the 91 skeletons analyzed showed evidence of autopsy, which indicates that 75% of the individuals that entered the morgue in that period did not have a medical examiner's autopsy to determine the cause of death. This implies that the majority of the diagnostics of cause of death was based only on the external examination of the cadaver.

Numbered metal tags were found associated with 30 of the 91 skeletons. EAAF presumed that these tags

corresponded to an internal morgue number given the date the bodies entered the morgue, a hypothesis that was verified through the positive identification of three of the victims that had tags. The form and the numbers of the tags found at each floor of SVcbCN and SVcbFC, are different, thus, we presume that bodies contained in each of them may come from different places or times.

The number in the three cases (Floor One and 2 of CN and Floor One of FC) did not indicate a date but it could in

some cases be associated to one. On Floor One CN, the tags correspond to the entry number at the morgue. On Floor Two CN, the numbers are larger and have three digits, arbitrarily put when entering into the morgue not related with the entry number. It was sometimes registered as the morgue entry record. Finally, on Floor One FC, the tags are small, made out of different material, with a metal wristlet, and the numbers on them were for the most part, was no longer readable. In these cases, the number's relationship with the morgue record is not yet clear.

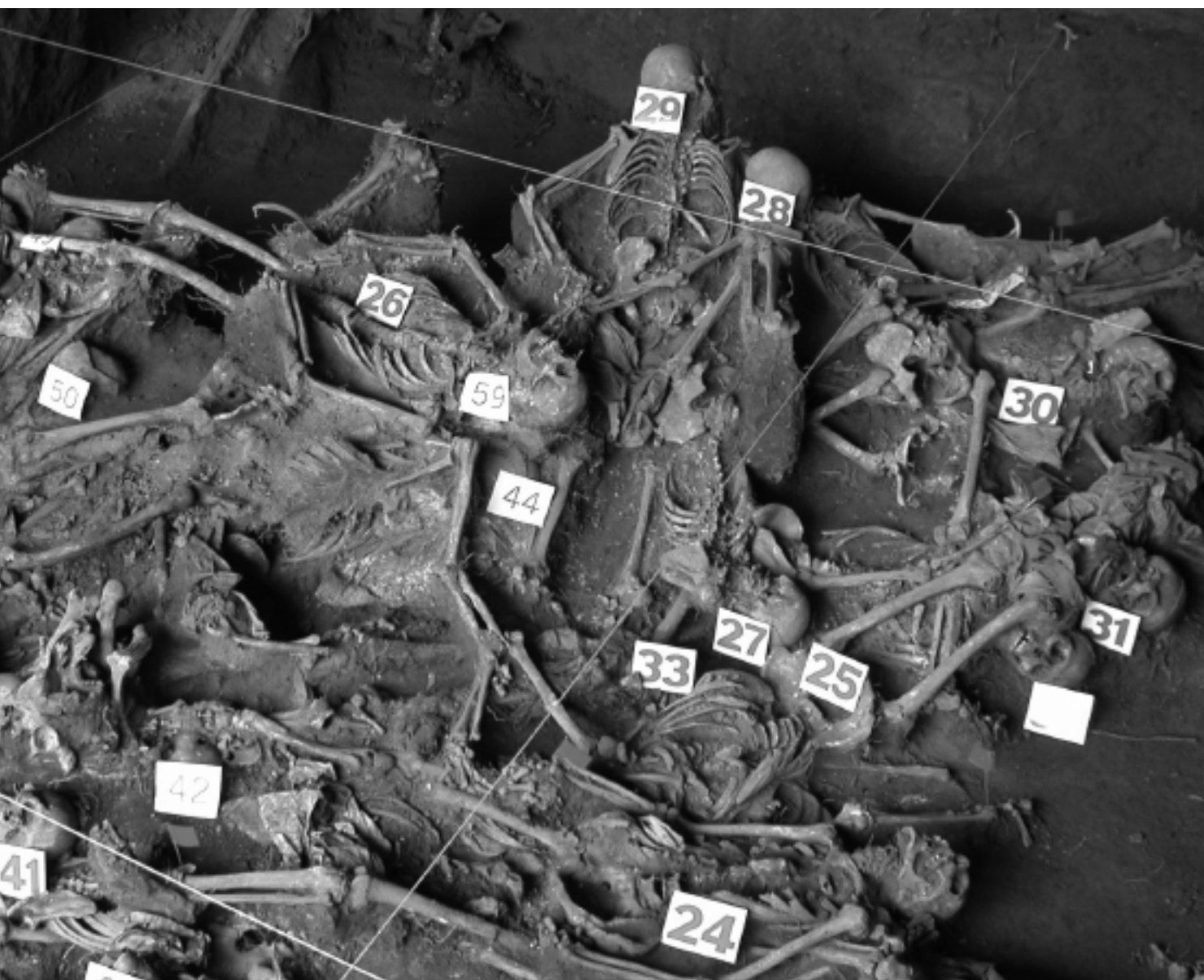


(Left) Metal tag associated with skeletal remains at San Vicente Cemetery in Córdoba. **(Right)** Detail of grave exhumed at San Vicente Cemetery. Photos by EAAF.

Of the 30 skeletons that had a tag associated with them, only 5 (17%) showed signs of autopsy, which probably means that having a tag did not represent having been autopsied. However, in 43% of the skeletons with an associated tag, EAAF observed signs of violent death, while this figure was reduced to 19% for skeletons that did not have a morgue tag. With regard to age, the figures are even more disparate, with 62% of the skeletons less than or equal to 35 years of age having associated morgue tags, while only 20% of the older

individuals were found with tags. This fact could indicate that the allocation of the numbered tags was not random, presuming a tendency among morgue staff to place them with greater frequency on younger corpses or those that presented traumatic lesions, although in the morgue book they were labeled as “N.N.” This may indicate a possible intent to discriminate or emphasize the evidence of cadavers with elements of violent death.

The majority of the bodies were buried without associated



clothes or personal effects. EAAF also found no remains indicating the presence of boxes or coffins.

Approximately half of the 91 skeletons studied (45 individuals or 49%) did not show any obvious type of peri-mortem traumatic lesion or post-mortem lesion. This does not rule out the possibility that the cause of death was traumatic — affecting soft tissue that had disappeared by the time of our analysis. In the remaining 46 individuals (51% of the cases) evidence was found of two types of lesions:

1) Peri-mortem trauma found in 25 of the 46 individuals (54% within this group or 27.4% of the total of 91 individuals). From the 25 individuals showing peri-mortem trauma, 22 of them exhibited gunshot wounds, 2 individuals showed blunt trauma wounds and 1 individual showed sharp wound trauma. Regarding these peri-mortem lesions, EAAF presumes they were the cause of death in 27% of the total of cases.

2) Post-mortem fractures of the bone found in 21 individuals (46% within this group). These lesions probably were caused during the storage of the bodies. These post-mortem fractures corresponded to blunt force trauma and their coloration, fracture lines, and borders, among other features, seem to be in between the pattern of peri-mortem and post-mortem fractures.

The majority of the skeletons with evidence of gunshot wounds showed poly-traumatism, exhibiting more than one impact. The anatomical distribution of the gunshot wounds (GSW) was variable, although more than half of the cases (64% of them) showed GSW in the cranium as well as in other parts of the body. In 32% of the cases, GSW were only found in the thorax and abdomen; and in 4% of the cases, GSW were only found in the limbs.

In the cases where GSW were found in the cranium, EAAF found a predominance of postero-anterior trajectories and an impact number that varied from 1 to 5. We recovered ballistic evidence associated with 11 skeletons (12% of the total of 91 individuals).

Age and Peri-mortem Trauma

We found that 60% of the people under the age of 30 show peri-mortem trauma, while the number inverts in the individuals above 30 years of age (14%). We observed that as age increases, there were fewer peri-mortem traumatic lesions, with a point of inflexion at 30 years of age. This fact corroborates the existence of two population groups: a cluster of young people with signs of violent death and a subgroup of people older than 30 years, with a lower frequency of peri-mortem lesions. The four individuals that have been identified to date correspond to the first cluster of young people.

The majority of the skeletons of the older group, corresponded to people of advanced age, with increased frequency of degenerative illnesses and show poor oral health in general. This group probably correspond to unclaimed bodies, identified or not (indigents, old people, etc.) that were brought to the morgue through causes unrelated to the investigation.

Five of the skeletons corresponding to Floor Two (with a burial date of April 27 1976), were found with indications of leprosy, affecting bone tissue in the lower limbs. Four of them were found together in the southern sector of the grave, and none of them had a morgue registry tag. Through inquiries with medical personnel with expertise in the area, we found out that there was a transitional hospital for persons with leprosy near the San Vicente Cemetery that operated from 1965-1979. It is possible that these corpses were taken directly to this grave, without passing through the San Roque Hospital Morgue, which in addition, it may explain why there is not agreement between the number of skeletons found and the morgue registry.

CASES IDENTIFIED IN THE SAN VICENTE CEMETERY, PROVINCE OF CÓRDOBA

To date we have been able to identify four victims, whose initial tentative identifications were confirmed through genetic analysis. Their remains were returned to the family members.

MARIO OSATINSKY was born on February 28, 1957 in San Miguel de Tucumán and died on March 25, 1976 at age 19 from gunshot wounds during an armed confrontation with security forces in La Serranita, Córdoba Province. He was part of the *Montoneros* guerrilla group. He was buried as “N.N.” on April 27, 1976 in a mass grave in San Vicente Cemetery. The local newspaper *La Voz del Interior* published the following report:

“27/3. Saturday, Córdoba: The Fourth Air Transport Infantry Brigade, the 141st Artillery Group and the police conducted an anti-subversive operation in La Serranita, near Alta Gracia. At 10:15 p.m. forces surrounded a farm near a vacation camp for Buenos Aires municipal employees, and the following people were killed: Osatinsky, Andres (war name: Bibaudo, Gerardo); Martin, Jorge Eduardo (a) ‘Rulo’ war name; Oliva, Eduardo Alberto; Ocampo, Rosa Elena (a) ‘Chochi,’ war name Paradelo, Dora Ines; Asis Norma Isabel (a) ‘Petisa’ o ‘Bety’.”

Tag 160 in the Judicial Morgue log of the admittance and release of cadavers from 1969-1980 corresponds to a male “N.N.” cadaver, entry registered on March 26, 1976 at 11:15. The body, along with three others, came from the Section Second of the Precinct of the Córdoba Police, and the apparent cause of death as stated on his death certificate was “confrontation.” Mario Osatinsky’s body remained unidentified and was labeled with tag 160. On April 26, 1976, his remains were moved to the San Vicente Cemetery and buried in a common grave by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

When EAAF excavated the “North Head” grave of the

San Vicente Cemetery, we recovered a metal tag numbered 160 associated with the remains of a person. The remains were skeletonized, in anatomical position and lying face down. We established that the remains corresponded to a male, aged 17-19, approximate height of 1.70 meters, showing peri-mortem trauma consistent with multiple gunshot wounds. This and other data from EAAF’s database enabled us to tentatively identify the remains as belonging to Mario Osatinsky.

To confirm this tentative identification, on May 22, 2003, EAAF took dental pieces from the skeleton, and saliva and blood samples belonging to Mario’s mother, Sara Solarz de Osatinsky to LIDMO genetic laboratory for a genetic comparison. The results confirmed that the remains belonged to a biological son of Sara Solarz de Osatinsky with 99.9996% certainty. His remains were returned to his family and reburied.

LILIANA SOFÍA BARRIOS: Born June 7, 1955 in Buenos Aires. She had two children and was four months pregnant when she was kidnapped from her home in Córdoba on March 26, 1976. According to testimonies, Barrios was brought to the Third Army Corps “*La Perla*” concentration camp and executed on April 7, 1976 with two other young men. According to morgue records, her body was taken to the morgue and remained there until April 27, 1976. The cause of death stated on the death certificate was thoracic and abdominal polytraumatism caused by multiple gunshot wounds.

Barrios was buried in a common grave in Sector C of the San Vicente Cemetery, as “N.N.” The morgue book showed that Tag 156 corresponded with the body of Liliana Sofía Barrios, admitted to the morgue on April 7

Table IV. Cases Identified in San Vicente Cemetery

Name	Age	Date of Disappearance	Signs of Violent Death
Mario Osatinsky	18 years	03-26-1976	Gunshot wounds in the skull, thorax, abdomen and feet
Liliana Sofía Barrios	21 years	03-24-1976	Gunshot wounds in the skull and thorax
Horacio Miguel Pietragalla	27 years	10-15-1975	Gunshot wounds in the thorax
Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo	19 years	03-26-1976	Gunshot wounds in the skull and thorax



Horacio Miguel Pietragalla. Photo provided by family.

at 9 p.m. According to the records, her body was brought to the morgue by the 4th Police Precinct Military Hospital with two other cadavers corresponding to Tomas Eduardo Gomez Prat and Alfredo Eusebio Alejandro Esma. The cause of death was listed as “confrontation with the army” and “gunshot wounds”. The two young men were identified and recovered by relatives, but Liliana Barrios’ body remained at the morgue.

On June 12, 2003 LIDMO genetic laboratory examined 2 dental pieces of the skeleton along with blood samples extracted from Sara Castro — the daughter of Liliana Barrios — for DNA analysis. Dr. Vullo at LIDMO determined within 99.9995% certainty that the remains belonged to Sara Castro’s biological mother. Liliana’s children recovered the remains of their mother and reburied them.

HORACIO MIGUEL PIETRAGALLA: Born August 3, 1948 in Buenos Aires. He had a son. He was kidnapped on October 15, 1975, at the age of 27, in Córdoba City, a few months before the military coup.

Pietragalla was kidnapped with two friends by the “Liberating Commandos of America”, a paramilitary group. The local press reported on the triple-kidnapping on October 19 of three men in Córdoba:

Newspaper, *La Voz del Interior* – Córdoba
 “...Family members reported the detention of

Eduardo Juan Jensen by police officials when he was in a café in Barrio Alta, Córdoba, with Joracio Pietragalla and Juan Isidro Saucedo, who were also kidnapped by unknown people. After being presented with an habeas corpus judicial request, the provincial and federal police said that they do not have them in custody”.

Meanwhile, two male N.N. bodies were admitted to the San Roque Hospital morgue on November 8, 1975 from the Malagueño Precinct. Both were labeled “N.N.” on their death certificates, and were buried in the common grave in San Vicente Cemetery on April 27, 1976 with a third “N.N.” male.

Just over a month after the kidnapping, the national newspaper *La Opinión* reported: “November 30, 1975. Córdoba. Police officials established the identity of one of two partially burned bodies and with multiple gunshot wounds found two weeks ago in the town of Malagueño. The person identified is Eduardo Juan Jensen, 27 years old, who lived in the City of Corrientes, province of Corrientes. His parents reported his disappearance in Córdoba Province some time ago and had made advertisement requests to the authorities for reports about his whereabouts.”

Pietragalla’s tentative identification was established by EAAF during the laboratory work based on his ante-mortem data. In particular, Pietragalla was unusually tall compared to the local population—he was almost 2 meters tall—which helped the team to tentatively identify his remains.

Finally, with the assistance of Dr. Vullo from the LIDMO Laboratory in the City of Córdoba, the team was able to positively identify the remains through a comparison with genetic material from Pietragalla’s relatives in August 2003. The Third Federal Judge of Córdoba gave Pietragalla’s remains to his son.

As of this writing, LIDMO laboratory has not completed the genetic comparison for Jensen. There is no information to date over the whereabouts of Saucedo, the

third person kidnapped with Pietragalla and Jensen, who remains disappeared.

GUSTAVO GABRIEL OLMEDO: Born June 8, 1956. Gustavo was a third-year student in the Faculty of Civil Engineering at the University of Córdoba. He was a member of the political military organization, *Ocpo* (*Organización Communist Poder Obrero*). He disappeared on March 26, 1976 at the age of 19, in a confrontation with Joint Forces of the Third Army Corps (*Tercer Cuerpo de Ejército*) and the Police, in the San Vicente neighborhood of Córdoba City. According to judicial files, Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo was killed by three gunshots to the head and thorax by soldiers of the Third Army Corps, which at the time was commanded by General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez. His remains were registered as entering in the judicial morgue on March 26, 1976. Through testimonies, EAAF learned that he survived an attempt on his life days before on March 5, when security forces dynamited his home. A group of soldiers found and killed Olmedo and his friends José Luis Nicola and Vilma Ethel Ortíz in a house in the San Vicente neighborhood. The bodies of Nicola and Ortiz could be identified by family members and retrieved from the morgue.

The morgue records entry No. 760301 shows an “N.N.” cadaver, with tag No. 159 which arrived on March 26, 1976 at 10:40 p.m. from the Fifth Precinct. The cause of death was listed as “police commando confrontation.” The body was removed from the morgue on April 27, 1976 by the Minister of Social Welfare to the San Vicente Cemetery to be buried in a common grave.

While excavating one of the floors of the mass grave in the San Vicente Cemetery, EAAF found a tag labeled 159 associated with a skeleton. After finding general consistency between Olmedo’s ante-mortem data and those of the remains associated by tag 159, EAAF



Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo.
Photo provided by family.

confirmed the identification through DNA analysis conducted by Dr. Carlos Vullo from LIDMO laboratory in October, 2003. The Federal Judge No. 3 of Córdoba returned Gustavo Gabriel’s remains to his relatives.

The identification of these four people enables us to verify the date of burial in grave SVcb CN in the San Vicente Cemetery as April 27, 1976. It also helped us to corroborate that it was a clandestine burial, containing the remains of disappeared people, that was not registered on the cemetery records or death certificates. In addition,

testimonial and/or documentary sources helped to establish that the victims were kidnapped and/or killed and entered the morgue and buried between December 1975 and April 1976. This corroborates the fact that in some cases the bodies were deposited in the morgue over a long period of time, and moved together to the common grave.

The remains of the four persons identified to date were found together in the grave, indicating that the order in which they were deposited was not random. The skeletons for which we have a hypothesis about identity (though not yet verified pending genetic analysis) also were found in this part of grave SVcb CN.

Grave SVcb FC: Central Strip or *Franja Central*

EAAF recovered a total of 32 skeletons, presumably all buried at the same time, in which the majority of the bodies were buried without clothes or personal effects, without a coffin or container. The majority of the skeletons were incomplete, with a severe grade of erosion and post-mortem fragmentation, which made the analysis of the remains difficult and severely limited our ability to obtain results.

The distribution of the skeletons by sex and age differs in grave SVcb FC from the ones found at the floors of the North Head or SVcbCN, including 50% of the individuals of each sex and a higher proportion of persons older than 40 years (75%) than in the North Head. In the Central Strip, 94% of the women correspond to adults over the age of 40, and most were over 50.

In the same way as in grave SVcbCN, only 6 of the 32 skeletons analyzed showed evidence of autopsy, which meant that 81% of the bodies from SVcb FC entered the morgue but did not have a medical examiner's autopsy to determine the cause of death.

Only two skeletons had associated numbered tags, with form and numbering different from the ones recovered at SVcb CN (see above). In both cases they relate to individuals with an age less than or equal to 35 years, with evidence of violent death and without indications of an autopsy. Again, this may suggest that their allocation was not random, presuming, as we described in the other grave, a tendency by morgue staff to put a tag on young bodies with traumatic lesions.

As opposed to grave SVcbCN, most skeletons from this grave did not show an important number of peri-mortem or post-mortem lesions. Peri-mortem lesions were found on 5 skeletons and post-mortem lesions were found on 2 skeletons. In these five individuals, peri-mortem trauma was consistent with gunshot wounds.

All of the skeletons with evidence of lesions caused by gunshots showed poly-trauma, meaning more than one impact (in the range of 2-5). The anatomical distribution of these lesions is variable, finding lesions in the cranium, trunk (thorax and abdomen), and limbs. We did not observe clear patterns of distribution. Nevertheless, the impacts predominately described posterior-anterior trajectories. Pieces of ballistic interest were found associated with two skeletons.

All of the skeletons with evidence of gunshot wounds corresponded to males, and 4 of the 5 cases are under 40 years old. This fact corroborates the existence of two

populations: a small cluster of young people with higher frequency of signs of violent death and a larger group of people over the age of 40 with a lower frequency of traumatic peri-mortem lesions. As in grave SVcb CN, the majority of the skeletons included in this last group correspond to people with an advanced age, with a higher frequency of degenerative illnesses and general bad oral health. They seem to correspond to unclaimed bodies (indigents, the elderly, etc.) that entered in the morgue for reasons not related with this investigation.

To date it has not been possible to date the burial corresponding to grave SVcb FC. However, regarding the results derived from the analysis of the recovered skeletons from both SVcb FC and SVcbCN, it is possible to infer that, while in some aspects they show a different pattern, both present points in common that suggest the burials occurred close in time.

CONCLUSIONS

The investigation conducted in Córdoba produced the following results:

- We confirmed the hypothesis that common graves related to State terrorism do exist in San Vicente Cemetery. The location of the graves and the fact that there is no documentation about them in the cemetery records enables us to label them as clandestine graves and corroborates the testimony of witnesses to the burials.
- EAAF confirmed the existence of two levels or "floors" containing human remains in the so-called "*Cabecera North*" or North Head: Floor One, containing 19 skeletons; and Floor Two, containing 72 skeletons. In addition, at the so-called "Central Franja", we found one floor containing 32 skeletons.
- The position of the skeletons in different floors, confirm witness testimony that they had been thrown into the graves. In addition, marks found in the

sediment, its consistency and coloration among other features indicated that the graves were dug up by mechanical shovels or bulldozers.

- We estimate that around 30% of the skeletons exhumed in these graves correspond to persons disappeared during the military dictatorship (1976-1983) and at the end of 1975. From these skeletons it was possible to identify — to date — four of them found in Floor Two of the North Grave Head: Mario Andrés Osatinsky, Liliana Sofía Barrios, Horacio Pietragalla and Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo.

The analysis of the skeletal remains, as well as the number, trajectory and location of the gunshot wounds found in the remains of these four people strongly indicates the possibility that they were extra-judicially executed.

Through the identification of these four individuals, the number of skeletons found, their location in the grave, and their associated evidence we were able to confirm that the Floor Two of the grave labeled “North Head” corresponds to the burials conducted in April 1976. Future identifications may provide information that will help us to date the burials of Floor One of the North head and that of the “Central Strip”.

The conclusions obtained through the physical evidence — the identification of these four people, that they were found buried in a common clandestine grave on the property of a municipal cemetery, the corroboration that these burials were conducted in April 1976 and the determination of a violent cause of death in the four skeletons — compared and analyzed with the reports made by relatives of victims, by witnesses to the burials, by survivors of the illegal detention centers and by the records obtained in the preliminary investigation permits assert that:

The government of the Argentine Republic in the time between 1975 and 1983 was responsible for the kidnapping, murder and hiding of the bodies of these citizens and the official version produced at the time, concealed and falsified these events.

ENDNOTES

1. C.C.Snow and M.J. Bihurriet, 1992. “An Epidemiology of Homicide: *Ningún Nombre* Burials in the Province of Buenos Aires from 1970 to 1984” in *Human Rights and Statistics: Getting the Record Straight*. Eds. T.B. Jabine and R.P. Claude. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
2. Although the military government extended to 1983, the 1976-1980 period is considered to have had the highest concentration of “disappearances.”
3. Capital of the Province of Buenos Aires, the city of La Plata is located about 60km south of the city of Buenos Aires.
4. Dr. Mollers’s work was submitted and approved as a research project within the initiatives supported by the University of Mar del Plata, and won the “Solution of the year 2000” prize in the category Forensic Sciences awarded by the Advanced Magazine. The candidates for this prize are selected from research groups that work in the area of Digital Imaging Processing (IDP) around the world, and who make significant contributions to the technological development of this field. Her research findings have been published in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, in May 1998.
5. This is discussed in detail in EAAF’s 2002 Annual Report.
6. Penal Judge No. 6 San Martín, Province of Buenos Aires, Case 5.807. The body of Leticia Akselman was identified on July 3, 1976 as victim of a homicide in the area of Del Viso with two others: Federico Martu and Gabriel Dunayevich — but the relatives of Akselman and Dunayevich only were informed about this by judicial authorities in February, 1985. At this time they also said that the remains of Leticia and Gabriel had been exhumed, together with the remains of 127 other No Names from Grand Bourg cemetery in 1984, finding them deposited in the Asesoría Pericial of La Plata.
7. We consider in this range cases in which remains were found in poor state of preservation or in which there was only one insignificant anatomical unit, preventing us from placing them in the Young Adult or Mature Adult categories.
8. The work at the San Vicente Cemetery and other places Hill continue during 2004, inspecting new sites that may contain the remains of disappeared people.
9. La Perla is located on the site of the Air Cavalry’s Exploration Squadron #4 (*Escuadrón de Exploración de Caballería Aerotransportada N° 4*).
10. Sources: CONADEP, *Nunca Más*, p. 245; EUDEBA (Editorial Universidad de Buenos Aires) CONADEP Archive #1420, entitled “Interior Ministry of the Province remits presentation by staff of the Judicial Morgue before the President of the Nation,” opened at the Tribunal Superior de Justicia, Córdoba, on August 8, 1980.
11. See CONADEP and EAAF, *Tumbas Anónimas*, Catálogos Editora, 1992..