

ARGENTINA

INTRODUCTION > Argentina's last military government ruled 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 (see below) — that have allowed us to resolve difficult cases of disappearance. Crucial to our investigation have often been the testimonies of survivors of Clandestine Detention Centers that operated during the military government, and interviews with relatives of disappeared persons, social and political activists, and former guerrilla members. EAAF has spent a significant amount of time interviewing them. Here we provide an overview of the whole investigative process carried out by EAAF, which is necessary to finally be able to identify the remains of disappeared people. >>





Hundreds of people gathered at a memorial service in June 2005 in Buenos Aires for Esther Ballestrino de Careaga, María Eugenia Ponce de Bianco, and Azucena Villaflor, co-founders of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo) who were identified early in 2005. *Photo courtesy of Jorge Larrosa.*

During the last military government, most of the bodies of disappeared persons were disposed of in one of two ways: they were thrown from military aircrafts into rivers and the Argentine Sea; or they were buried in public cemeteries throughout the country as “N.N.” (*Ningún Nombre*/No Name or John Doe). Bodies that met the latter fate often first “appeared” again on the streets or barren lands before their eventual burial. EAAF is primarily dedicated to investigating these cases, as they are the ones where it is more possible to recover the remains. Once the bodies “appeared,” contrary to what was long believed, state bureaucrats often documented cases of state-sponsored disappearance just as they did in almost every other “N.N.” case that they processed. It is through access to these documents that EAAF is able to reconstruct the whereabouts and eventually identify the remains of disappeared people.

In very few cases, EAAF has been able to investigate and recover the remains of disappeared people who were sedated and dumped from marked armed forces airplanes into the Argentinean Sea, and whose bodies washed up on the Argentinean and Uruguayan Coasts. (See the *General Lavalle* section in this report, and the *Uruguay* section in EAAF’s 2002 and 2003 Annual Reports). Unfortunately, however, these cases have been the exception. Thus, EAAF concentrates on the search for the remains of disappeared people that were buried as “N.N.” in municipal cemeteries.

Bureaucratic Documentation of Disappearances by the State

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 in the local civil registry, 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. He published an investigation of cemetery records in the Province of Buenos Aires¹ that showed an increase in the annual number of “N.N.” buried in a group of cemeteries during the peak of the repression (1976-1978), which also revealed a change in their biological profile — they were much younger than the typical John or Jane Doe and there was a larger number of women. He also noted a change in their traumatic profile, as their cause of death tended to be violent, mostly by gunshot wound, while the usual “N.N.” people die from chronic diseases (malnourishment, cirrhosis) or street and train accidents.

EAAF has expanded on Dr. Snow’s work in this field. While 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 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 la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP) records, which to date are the most complete archives, approximately 70% of the kidnappings of disappeared people occurred in these areas. Over the last three years EAAF has started to work more intensively in other provinces.

Military Jurisdiction of Argentina during the Last Military Government (1976-1984)

To find, recover, and identify the remains of disappeared people, we need to know how the repression worked during Argentina’s last military

government. To understand the *modus operandis* of the repression, it is necessary to take into account the logistical and administrative structure organized by the State in pursuit of its fight against “subversives.”

For most of the military period — between March 1976 and 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, and part of the Province of La Pampa. Zone Two included the northeastern provinces, with headquarters in Rosario, Santa Fé Province. Zone Three contained the central, west, and northwest regions, which was controlled by the Third Army Corps, and was headquartered in Córdoba, approximately 780 km northwest of Buenos Aires.

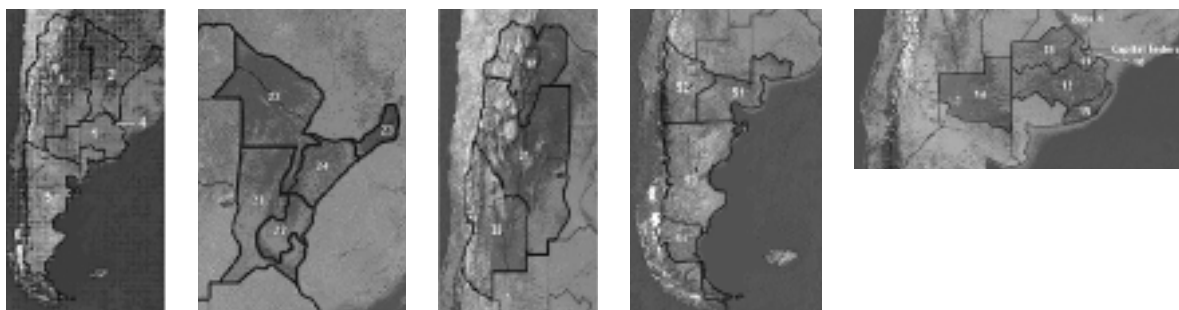
The Fifth Army Corps controlled southern Argentina. The headquarters of Zone Four, located at the Campo de Mayo Army base in Buenos Aires Province, was the most important military installation in the country, and had jurisdiction over the northern zone of Buenos Aires Province.

Most of EAAF’s investigations in Argentina have focused on the Greater Buenos Aires metropolitan area, which includes the Federal Capital and the suburban part of Buenos Aires Province. The main reason for this focus was the fact that two thirds of all disappearances in Argentina reportedly occurred in the metropolitan area. Consequently, most of our previous investigations have centered on the patterns of repression in Zones One and Four.

I. EAAF INVESTIGATION PROCESS

From the beginning of the investigations in Argentina, our reports have emphasized the difference between the state’s role as clandestine repressor and the bureaucratic state. This distinction has permitted us to learn a lot 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 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 with certain similar 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.



Maps showing the division of Argentina into five Command Zones by security forces during the military repression (1976-1983).

1.1 Documental Evidence: 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.

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 in the cemetery books of most major cemeteries in the Federal Capital as well as in Buenos Aires Province.

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 2) institutionally, through an arrangement with 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 was 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 still found in the “Cadaver” files of the police archives.

Similarly, the Federal Police kept fingerprints of the people who died in a violent or suspicious manner 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 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 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 identity cards.

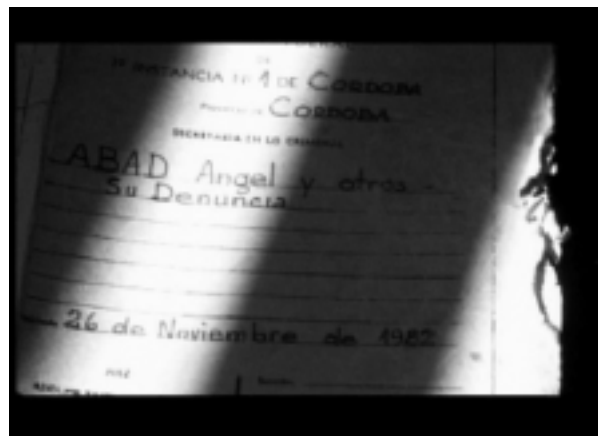
In 2003, EAAF continued to analyze and compare fingerprints. Fingerprints from the “N.N.” section of the Microfilm “Cadavers File” and the Cadaver registration book in the *Antecedentes* (police records on individuals arrested previously) served as a primary source. By comparing information such as dates of kidnapping, general physical information, dates of “transfers” — often

a euphemism for extrajudicial execution — of disappeared people from clandestine detention centers, information 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 “N.N.” individual fingerprinted in 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 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 between 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 to 6,792 that correspond to disappeared people (nearly 75% of the total).

During 2003, the number of reported disappearance cases during the last military regime grew to 9,225. This was 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



Death certificate of a disappeared person from the province of Córdoba. Photo taken from the Mambo Productions film, *El Último Confín del Mundo/the Last Place on Earth*, about the experiences of families of disappeared people from Córdoba.

registry to 7,043 of 9,225. In 2004, the number of fingerprint files remained the same.

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, who 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 have 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 fees are unpaid, as is typical in cases of indigents and “N.N.” cadavers. As a result, we can no longer recover them since the remains are mixed with thousands of other bones.

Improving 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

Fingerprint 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 we do not 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. 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. In 2004, we made an additional ten matches.

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 of 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 Martin, 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 2004.

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 of 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, which 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 other people who might have information about the missing individual or the incidents under investigation.

Informational Meetings on Political-Military Organizations

As part of the historical reconstruction of events, EAAF has conducted meetings with members of political-military organizations from the last military regime. 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 historical reconstruction is to establish reasons why each act of clandestine repression happened in the way it did, 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 is not 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 disappeared person. The differences between oral and documental information make their comparison useful. Often, the documents have been altered and interpreted, but at times the information from the two types of sources is complementary. During 2003, EAAF focused on contacts with militants from the Revolutionary Party of the Workers/Revolutionary Army of the People. This group is less understood than 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 2004, EAAF conducted approximately 100 interviews each month and stored the information in our database.

Research on 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 which 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 since 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 had 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 to link their memories to existing data.

II. IMPORTANCE OF DNA ANALYSIS IN EAAF'S WORK

The complexity of the pattern of repression in Argentina usually results in the need for extensive historical research before EAAF can form a hypothetical match between remains and a particular family. Furthermore, the biological and traumatic profiles of victims from the Dirty War often are similar, typically consisting of young people killed by gunshot wounds. In these cases, the lack of sufficient *ante-mortem* information about the victims, such as medical and dental records, makes a positive identification of the remains using traditional anthropological and odontological techniques challenging.

During the last decade, the successful development and application of DNA testing methods for skeletal remains has fundamentally altered the way such identifications can be made.

Collaboration with Genetic Laboratories

Beginning in 1991, laboratories in the US, UK, Canada, and other countries generously began providing DNA testing to EAAF in laboratories outside Argentina. While this assistance has been extremely helpful, EAAF was only able to identify a few people each year given resource and technological limitations. As a result, EAAF only used DNA testing in a small number of cases where there is a strong likelihood of positive identification. Many of the recovered remains that very likely correspond to disappeared people have been left only tentatively identified or unidentified.

Furthermore, in the past few years, EAAF began working with LIDMO S.R.L., a private genetic



Dr. Carlos Vullo, head of the private genetic laboratory LIDMO SRL in Córdoba, Córdoba Province, processes samples. EAAF has worked with LIDMO to identify disappeared people since 2002.

laboratory in Córdoba, Argentina to process DNA samples. EAAF has worked with LIDMO to identify approximately ten to thirty sets of remains per year since 2002.

The war in the Balkans and the attack on the World Trade Center generated major technological improvements in the field of identifying remains through genetics, including: 1) accelerating the processing time for each sample and lowering its cost; 2) improving the possibility of extracting DNA from samples that are highly degraded and/or contaminated; and 3) developing new software that can rapidly compare thousands of genetic sequences obtained from the remains with thousands of genetic samples from possible family members.

These improvements have made processing large amounts of samples possible, and can be used in similar cases throughout the world. EAAF hopes to benefit from these advances, enlarging the possibility to identify remains of human rights victims.

III. 2004 INVESTIGATIONS

Province of Buenos Aires

THE FATIMA CASE

During 2004, EAAF identified more individuals killed in the Fatima massacre, a case the team has been investigating since 1987.

BACKGROUND

On August 21, 1976 the local newspaper *La Opinión* reported the following story:

“Early yesterday morning, the residents of the town of Fatima, in Pilar (Buenos Aires Province) heard a very violent explosion within the radius of 3km. Shortly afterward, the workers at a brick factory discovered the dismembered bodies of about thirty people near the train tracks. At 3 o’clock in the afternoon, the Ministry of the Interior issued a communiqué saying that the number of dead was 30. According to witnesses the bodies, which were practically unrecognizable, were mostly of young people killed by gunshots, many of whom had their hands tied behind their backs. According to the residents, gunshots were heard early in the morning. The shooting apparently lasted 20 minutes and immediately afterwards the explosion was heard. Other sources from nearby stated that on Thursday afternoon they had observed the presence of two blue trucks with license plates from the Capital, which circled the area several times. Police sources say that at least 23 of those killed were men, five bodies were women, and the rest were undetermined. Another source said that there were 12 women, and according to unconfirmed sources the authors of the massacre had left a sign saying that the 30 dead were extremists...”

No further information was available at the time.

EAAF’s investigation reconstructed the multiple layers of this incident. On August 19, 1976, a commando unit from the guerrilla movement known as the *Montoneros* murdered general Omar Actis, who was the president of the commission in charge of organizing the Soccer



A 1976 press clipping from the newspaper, *La Opinión*, announcing the discovery of thirty bodies in Pilar, province of Buenos Aires. To date, EAAF has assisted in identifying twelve of the individuals who were killed in the incident all of which were listed as disappeared people.

World Cup to be held in 1978 in Argentina. The following morning, the remains of thirty unidentified persons (20 men and 10 women) were found in Fátima, located 70 kilometers north of Buenos Aires. Their hands and feet were bound. The forensic official’s report based on the external examination of the bodies stated that every victim had at least one bullet wound in the back of the head. Additionally, in at least three cases, the remains showed trauma consistent with an explosion which corroborated the testimony of neighbors who heard the gunfire and explosion coming from the direction where the bodies were found. The police fingerprinted the 30 bodies, though according to officials the fingerprints were subsequently lost. The officials also issued death certificates for each body, and the bodies were buried in individual plots as “N.N.” (John/Jane Doe) in the Derqui Cemetery, near Fatima. A case was opened in the Federal court at the nearby city of Mercedes but no further investigation was conducted and the case was eventually closed. In 1982, the case was re-opened and five bodies were identified. All five people had previously been listed as “disappeared.”

Based on the identification of the five bodies and the testimony from police guards at both the Junta Trial in

1985 and at CONADEP, it was likely that the victims were taken from the Clandestine Detention Center (CDC) known as the Superintendent of Federal Security (SSF), which was operating at the time within the headquarters of the Federal Police building in the city of Buenos Aires.

At the request of a local human rights group, Relatives of Disappeared Persons and Political Prisoners, EAAF started to work on this case in 1987, exhuming and analyzing the remaining 25 individuals. EAAF also conducted a thorough historical investigation, interviewing survivors from the CDC at the SSF and reconstructing the list of people seen at that CDC around the date of the incident. According to survivors and former guards, on the night of August 20, 1976, the police took 30 people away in trucks, most likely the ones killed in Fatima. EAAF reconstructed a list of possible victims and interviewed dozens of their relatives. However, the extraction of DNA from bone samples was not available at the time and the pre-mortem information about the possible victims was either insufficient or did not match the data collected from the skeletons. At the time, EAAF was only able to identify one person, **Alicia Spagnoli de Vera** (*see below*).

On October 17, 1997, the president of the National Court of Criminal Appeals Federal Corrections, Dr. Martin Irurzun stated that EAAF could re-examine the remains. This time, the team's goal was to confirm tentative matches by using DNA techniques.

Financial constraints limited the amount of DNA testing that we could request. Thus, the list of possible candidates needed to be reduced to a one-to-one possibility (for example, one tooth sample compared with samples from one or more potentially related family members). This meant that further historical investigation was needed. Once EAAF was able to link the killing of the 30 people with the assassination of General Omar Actis by the *Montoneros*, the team suspected that the majority of the victims could have links to the *Montoneros* organization. With this information, EAAF narrowed its list of potential victims by comparing it with lists of people who were seen at the SSF CDC, many of whom belonged to the *Montoneros* and were active in the northern zone of Buenos Aires where the CDC was located. The team then directed its

efforts to gathering DNA samples from the families of victims who had been associated with the *Montoneros* in the North Zone of Buenos Aires. Special attention was given to families of victims who had been seen in the SSF before August 20, 1976. In March 1998, EAAF extracted two molars from each of the remaining 25 skeletons, including tooth samples of the remains that were identified in 1987 for control purposes as well as blood samples of possible relatives of the victims. EAAF sent tooth and blood samples to Ana Topf, a biologist working in the Biological Sciences Department at the University of Durham.⁵ Genetic analysis confirmed the identification of eight victims in 2000.

In July 2004, EAAF received new positive genetic results from Durham University identifying three more victims from the Fatima case:



JUAN CARLOS VERA was kidnapped from his home in the early hours of August 3 or 4, 1976. Both he and his wife, Alicia Spagnoli de Vera, worked in the shantytowns along with catholic liberation theologian Father

Mujica. They were seen alive in the CDC at the SSF. As mentioned above, Alicia was identified in 1987.



CARLOS RAÚL PARGAS was kidnapped on July 12, 1976 at the age of 28. He was born in Gualguaychu, province of Entre Ríos, and worked in the National Bank (*Banco de la Nación*) at the time of his kidnapping. His

sister, Rosa María, was kidnapped on August 16, 1978. She remains disappeared.



JOSÉ RICARDO RAÚL HERRERA CARRIZO was kidnapped on July 21, 1976 from his home in Boulogne, in Buenos Aires province. José Ricardo was 31 years old and worked in advertising at the "Colorin" paint factory. In

the kidnapping operation, security forces also kidnapped eleven neighbors, five of whom were later released.

AVELLANEDA CEMETERY SECTOR 134

EAAF recovered the remains of 324 individuals from sector 134, an area within the Avellaneda Cemetery used during the military government to bury the remains of disappeared and indigent people.

In 2003, with support from the German foundation Diakonische, EAAF began an identification project for the remains of 50 unidentified women who had been exhumed from Sector 134 using DNA analysis, processed by LIDMO, a private laboratory in Córdoba. The first identifications from this project are presented below. At the time of this report, there are four new cases of positive identification that are waiting for legal confirmation from the Federal Chamber.

BACKGROUND

In 1986, at the request of the office of the Prosecutor that conducted the trial against Junta members, EAAF began a long-term investigation in Sector 134 of the Avellaneda municipal cemetery. This cemetery is located in a densely populated zone in the south of Greater Buenos Aires, 12 km from the Federal Capital. The investigation resulted in the initial excavation of several mass graves possibly containing the remains of disappeared persons. In 1988, EAAF was authorized to resume its work at the Avellaneda cemetery and launch a deeper investigation into Sector 134.

Between the years 1976 and 1978, during the last military government under General Jorge Rafael Videla, Sector 134 was used by the security forces as a burial site for bodies of people who had been abducted by security forces, often tortured, and killed. While these burials were performed secretly, neighbors across the street observed military trucks



The archaeological work at the Avellaneda cemetery involved the excavation of 19 mass graves and 11 individual graves, from which the remains of a total of 324 individuals were retrieved. *Photo by Mimi Doretti/EAAF.*

and police vehicles regularly entering sector 134. The bodies were registered and buried as “N.N.” (John/Jane Doe). Between 1976 and 1983, at least 336 bodies were deposited in Sector 134.⁶

EAAF’s review of the Avellaneda cemetery records and death and burial certificates from registry offices showed that despite the efforts to keep the repression secret at least 220 people were recorded as buried with death certificates in Sector 134 during the military government. Of these, 160 were unidentified young people killed by gunshot wound and brought there by police or military personnel. The majority was buried in 1976 (96 individuals) and 1977 (110 individuals) during the peak of the repression. In 1978, these burials decreased significantly; only six individuals were buried that year, and there continued to be very few burials in Sector 134 until 1982 when the government stopped using Sector 134 for burials.

The results of work done by EAAF in sector 134 strongly correlate with Snow and Bihurriet's independent statistical analyses of the biological and traumatic profile of "N.N." populations during military rule.⁷ In contrast to the profile of "N.N." populations in cemeteries from "normal" years, Snow and Bihurriet showed that under military rule, "N.N." populations were far greater in number, skewed younger (most were from 20-35 years old), included more women (approximately 30%), and were mostly violent deaths, mainly by gunshot wound. In addition, they were often brought to the cemeteries by military or police personnel rather than by hospices, hospitals or firefighters.

EAAF's excavations of sector 134 finished in 1992, having recovered a total of 324 skeletons — 104 more than cemetery records indicated would be there.

The laboratory results showed that there were two groups of "N.N." populations as described in the Snow and Bihurriet study — a younger and an older population. The younger "N.N." population does not exist in "normal years." First, among the group that appears during the years of repression, a high proportion of the skeletons fall into the 21-to-35 age group (40.17%). Second, the number of male victims is still higher than the number of females — 78% or 253 males and 71 women or 22% — but the proportion of females is much higher than that of the pre and post peak of the military dictatorship years. Females fall mostly in the young group of "N.N." — one-third fall in the group between 21 and 45 years of age — and only 10% fall in the group of individuals above 60 years of age. The overall pattern reflects the fact that during the six-year period (1976-1982) sector 134 was in use as a burial ground and the bodies of "ordinary" people (mostly elderly male indigents) were buried in the same location as the disappeared, who were predominately young and, often, female. Finally, we observed a considerable increase in numbers of deaths produced by violent means as compared to non-military times, which were also strongly concentrated among the younger group of individuals.

Evidence of gunshot wounds to the head and/or the chest were found in 73.2% of the population under

50 years old, but only in 10.2% of the population over 50 years old. Among the younger individuals, some also show blunt force trauma and burning wounds. All of these characteristics showed strong parallels with the biological and traumatic profiles of the disappeared population in Argentina.⁸

Individual identification of the remains from Sector 134 was a much more complicated process than determining which remains corresponded to disappeared people. As in other cases, EAAF used two strategies in its effort to make identifications. First, the anthropological process consists of comparing the pre-mortem physical information given by the families of the victims with the data taken from the exhumation and laboratory work. Unfortunately, the pre-mortem data from families is not always sufficient or decisive enough to reach a positive identification. Second, and simultaneous to the comparison of physical data, EAAF conducts historical research to trace individual fates through written sources, such as in the archives of the CONADEP, judicial proceedings, death certificates, cemetery records, autopsy reports, and Federal Police archives. Although the team has started to discern patterns in the ways that people were imprisoned and transferred between sites, as explained above, these are among the most difficult hypotheses to establish.

Sector 134 did not have any signs indicating plots or sepultures. As mentioned above, approximately 50% more of the individuals recorded at the cemetery registry were recovered from mass and individual graves. In the burial records, some graves were indicated as "cow hole" or "*vaqueros*," a euphemism that apparently indicated they were large mass graves. All of these features resulted in great difficulties in assigning a specific grave and the bodies in it to a specific time, further complicating the identification process.

For a detailed description of the preliminary investigation, archaeological investigation and laboratory findings, see EAAF 2003 Annual Report.



(Left to right) Adriana Kornblihtt, Alcira Campiglia, Gladis Noemí García Niemann were identified by EAAF during 2004. EAAF Archives, photos provided by their families.

2004 Identifications

ADRIANA KORNBLIHTT was born on March 31, 1961. Adriana died on March 31, 1976, on her sixteenth birthday. Her death was an accident while she was working on an explosive device that injured her upper limbs and abdomen. According to testimonies, she was buried in a common grave at the Avellaneda Cemetery, where officials from the Monte Chingolo police station, province of Buenos Aires, brought her body. She was buried as an “N.N.” At the time, her family was not informed about the whereabouts of her remains.

Among the remains exhumed by EAAF in Avellaneda Cemetery Sector 134, EAAF found skeletal remains D4B-20 corresponding to a female individual. The approximate height was 165.37 centimeters (+/- 3 cm), and age at time of death was estimated to be between 15 to 19 years old. The remains show multiple injuries compatible with those caused by the detonation of an explosive device.

The anthropological characteristics of the skeleton (sex, age, and height) and the peri-mortem traumatic profile of Adriana Lidia Kornblihtt enabled us to form a tentative hypothesis about her identity. However, genetic analysis was necessary to confirm the identification.

Investigators took blood samples from her sister, Victoria, to compare the genetic profile with the genetic profile obtained from the skeleton D4B-20 sample. The

genetic results showed that there was a biological relation between the sisters. Based on these results, on October 26, 2004 the team confirmed that the remains labeled D4B-20 corresponded to Adriana Lidia Kornblihtt. Her remains were returned to her family.

ALCIRA CAMPIGLIA was born March 9, 1946. She was an architecture student at the University of Buenos Aires. She was kidnapped by security forces on the street on June 8, 1977, at the age of 31. According to the testimony of her partner, Alcira was reportedly kidnapped on a street in Banfield in the province of Buenos Aires while waiting for the bus to go to her job.

EAAF's preliminary investigation suggested that Alcira died on June 8, 1977, according to the document Act 639 from book B in the Civil Registry of Lanus, stating that a female died in that location on that date. In addition, Alcira's partner knew that Alcira had taken a cyanide pill, and the death certificate listed the cause of death as intoxication from cyanide. Carrying a capsule of cyanide was a practice that some militants from the *Montoneros* used at the time to avoid being captured, tortured, forced to release information and eventually being killed anyway.

Among the remains exhumed by EAAF in sector 134 in Avellaneda Cemetery, the skeletal remains which we labeled AVD5-5 corresponded to a female individual. She was estimated to be 155 cm (+/- 3 cm) in height and between 26 and 34 years old at time of death.

The results of the comparison of the anthropological characteristics of this skeleton (sex, age, odontological characteristics, and height) with physical information about Alcira Campiglia enabled the team to tentatively identify the remains, but genetic analysis was necessary to confirm her identity.

EAAF took blood samples from her daughter to compare her genetic profile with the sample from skeleton D5-5, resulting in a biological match between the two by LIDMO laboratory. On February 5, 2005, EAAF confirmed that skeleton D5-5 corresponded to Alcira Campiglia. Her remains were returned to her family.

GLADIS NOEMÍ GARCÍA NIEMANN was born on April 24, 1952. A chemical engineering student, she was kidnapped by security forces on June 19, 1976 at the age of 24.

The kidnapping occurred in her home in the city of Mar del Plata in the Buenos Aires province. Her family reported that on the date of her kidnapping, several people with large weapons came to the house asking for Gladis. Since she was not home at the time, they waited for her. When she arrived they took her away in a vehicle to an unknown place in Mar del Plata. Through the testimony of a survivor, her mother learned that three days later, Gladis was taken to a police station in Banfield, Buenos Aires province, where she was illegally detained for approximately one month.

As mentioned above, 70% of all individuals exhumed in sector 134 are recorded in the cemetery registry as buried in that sector. Among them were four people who died July 23, 1976 on the streets of Army of the Andes and Juan Manuel de Rosas, Lomas de Zamora, province of Buenos Aires. In this case, EAAF found a Military file (file R-66 0006/196, summary 590 of the Permanent Council of Special War 1/1) where reference is made to a supposed shoot-out that happened on this date in the same location. (The discovery of documents from this file is uncommon.) The police account of this incident cites that in the early morning of July 23 a group of Army personnel and Police from Buenos Aires province came across two motor vehicles where subversives were distributing pamphlets. Allegedly, a shoot-out ensued that led to the death of four

of the people in one of the vehicles. The medical police in Pascuale conducted post-mortem examinations of the cadavers and described the lesions on each of the victims in great detail. The bodies were deposited in the Judicial Morgue of Avellaneda Cemetery, in sector 134, adjacent to the burial area, on August 9, 1976. Contrary to what was standard practice for burials in sector 134, the cemetery record indicated that the bodies were apparently buried in individual graves.

EAAF worked to establish the location of these particular burials in sector 134. Using the wound description of the victims written by Dr. Roberto Pascuale, the team established which of the recovered skeletons had peri-mortem traumas (trauma that occurred at/or near the time of death) similar to the ones that Pascuale documented. This comparison was not immediate since Dr. Pascuale received cadavers and described the lesions found in soft tissue. The team had to locate the lesions described by him in remains without soft tissue (skeletons).

EAAF established that skeletons B-4/1 and B-4/2 were female, adjacent and buried individually. These remains also showed a marked resemblance to two female victims documented in the military file mentioned above in terms of the number, location and characteristics of the lesions. This was a significant advance but it still did not provide us much information about the possible identity of these women. We had to look for claims of disappearances of women occurring before July 23, 1976.

The team decided to conduct genetic testing of all female skeletons found at Sector 134 and contracted LIDMO laboratory for this purpose. EAAF compared blood samples from the family members of women who had been seen in the clandestine detention centers near Avellaneda cemetery with bone samples taken from the skeletons.

One of the comparisons was made between bone sample AV-B-4/2 and blood sample 184/1382, resulting in the confirmation of a direct relationship between Gladis Noemi Garcia and her mother, Blanca Ofelia Niemann. EAAF confirmed Gladis Noemi Garcia's identity on October 26, 2004, and her remains were returned to her family.



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.

RE-EXAMINING "LOST" REMAINS: Recovery of Remains from Non-scientific Exhumations Stored at the Medical Legal Institute of the City of La Plata

In 2003, EAAF started to analyze remains thought to correspond to disappeared people from non-scientific exhumations conducted at the beginning of the democracy in at least eight municipal cemeteries in the province of Buenos Aires. The remains were stored at the Medical Examiner's Office of La Plata, and very few were identified. We present here EAAF's analysis of these remains conducted in 2004 and the first two identifications.

BACKGROUND

Since the beginning of 1984, when democracy was reinstated in Argentina, Federal Tribunals ordered numerous exhumations of "N.N." (John/Jane Doe) graves where there was a presumption that they might correspond to people who disappeared during the last military dictatorship, between 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



Remains collected during the 1984 non-scientific exhumation of mass graves in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area. Photo from judicial files.

autopsies of cadavers. In addition, Argentina did not have significant experience with archaeological methods for the recovery of skeletal remains. The exhumations were done by people without expertise, such as firefighters or cemetery keepers, and in a completely non-scientific manner, often under the direction of forensic doctors. 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 destroyed. In addition, some official 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, most forensic experts are part of the police, the state and/or the judicial systems. Therefore, during non-democratic periods their independence is severely limited (*see introduction of Annual Report*).

Because most of these initial non-scientific 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 president's appointed *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP) and The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo (a local human rights organization seeking help in the identification of children that were kidnapped with their parent and often were given clandestinely to police and military families). The scientists visited the Medical Legal Institute of La Plata, saw the bags of dusty remains that had come from the poorly-executed exhumations, and made an immediate call to stop the exhumations and ask for archaeologists and forensic anthropologists to be contracted to recover and analyze the skeletal remains.

Among these scientists was US forensic anthropologist Dr. Clyde Snow, who organized the first investigations using archaeological and forensic anthropology techniques to exhume and analyze the remains of disappeared people, at the request of judges and families of victims. Over a period of five years, he trained and helped found 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. On one occasion, in 1986, Dr. Snow and EAAF were given access to the remains exhumed from the Grand Bourg Cemetery in relation to the “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 analyze and try to identify the remains. Despite these challenges, the examination of part of the remains culminated in the positive identification of Leticia Akselman, who had been kidnapped by security forces on June 12, 1976.⁹

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

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

Over the years, the results of the historical investigation conducted by EAAF through interviews with survivors of Clandestine Detention Centers (CDCs), 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 among the boxes stored 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 with the hope of identifying them.

In December 2002, under the authority of the Federal Chamber of Buenos Aires, 90 significantly deteriorated bags and boxes containing human bones, 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 was already at capacity and could not store more remains at the time. We made an agreement with the morgue to ensure the security of the remains and adequate work space for their analysis.

Under the guidance of EAAF members Sofia Egaña and Miguel Nievas, five advanced anthropology students from the University of Buenos Aires are participating in this work: Mariela Fumagalli, Analía

González Simonetto, Victoria Hernández, Mariana Selva and Selva Varela. In addition, Dr. Luis Bossio, forensic pathologist and member of the Forensic Unit of Buenos Aires and the Institute of Legal Medicine, collaborates and advises the team on this project.

2003 Laboratory Analysis

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 on the majority of the boxes. These labels refer to the cemetery where the remains were recovered, including the municipal cemeteries in Moreno, Boulonge, Rafael Calzada, General Madariaga, Lomas de Zamora, Campana, Vicente López and Isidrio Casanova.

The non-scientific recovery and inadequate storage of the remains inevitably resulted in the mixing of bones. 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 La Plata Institute of Legal Medicine. At the same time, we tried to relate the remains with existing information, 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, description of ante-mortem 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 an assemblage or a concentration of 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 largest possible number of individual skeletons from the mixed remains in order to conduct individualized studies leading to their identification. We also 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 or bone fragments of the entire set of remains under consideration. For example, if in one box we have three right femurs and this is the most represented bone in the group, it is safe to say that there are at least three individuals in the container. Another element taken into account when estimating the MNI is to separate the total 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 and ante-mortem lesions, pathologies and anomalies. The results of the analysis were recorded in EAAF's database.

Historical Investigation: Documents

While 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 *modus operandi* of CDCs located near the cemeteries where the remains were exhumed. Ante-mortem information of disappeared persons given by their relatives, such as dental information, age when last seen alive, old fractures, etc. was also collected. In addition, we analyzed administrative documentation that could assist us such as fingerprint records (*see methodology section for Argentina*), cemetery records, and death certificates. Finally, we also studied newspaper articles published at the time about real or mocked armed confrontations, or the “discovery” of cadavers in areas near the cemeteries.

EAAF created a spreadsheet showing which box or bag of remains corresponds or may be related to judicial files about “discovery” of bodies in barren lands and exhumations of cadavers. These files often contain information about where the bodies were found, autopsy reports, fingerprints of the cadavers, photos of them, etc. Similarly, the files related with the 1984 exhumations also contain information about the date the exhumation took place, the sepultures that were exhumed, how the exhumations were conducted, any examination performed, etc. The analysis of this information is helping EAAF with the identification of the remains

Summary of Partial Results 2004

During 2004, EAAF continued the investigation of remains recovered in non-scientific exhumations that were stored at the Medical Legal Institute of the city of La Plata.

During 2003, EAAF examined remains from six cemeteries: Moreno, Boulonge, Rafael Calzada, General Madariaga, Lomas de Zamora, and Isidro Casanova, finding an MNI of 63 individuals represented by partially complete skeletons and bone concentrations or assemblages. Among them, 40 individuals (63.4%) corresponded to male individuals, 17 female individuals (26.9%), and 6 individuals (9.5%) to persons whose sex could not be determined because they were in a bad state of preservation and/or found too incomplete. In relation to the ages of the 63 individuals, 61.9% were young adults (21 to 35 years old) at the time of death. At least 35 individuals, or 55.5% of the total, had traumatic peri-mortem wounds, the majority of which were consistent with gunshot wounds. These three characteristics show a strong coincidence in the biological profile (sex and age) and peri-mortem traumatic profile with the disappeared population (Snow and Bihurriet, 1987).

During 2004 the team worked in the following areas:

- A.** Osteo-anthropological study of skeletal remains in unlabeled boxes with no indication of the



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.*

related judicial file number, in which cemetery they were found, or any other information.

- B.** Osteo-anthropological study of skeletal remains in boxes that were labeled as coming from the Morón and Mercedes cemeteries in the province of Buenos Aires.
- C.** Updating the Minimum Number of Individuals based on the results from points A and B.
- D.** Positive identification of the remains of two disappeared people: **Maria Elena Amadio** and **Liliana Corti de Pietragalla**.

A.) We received eight boxes of remains with no labels regarding the cemetery (or cemeteries) from where they were exhumed and/or the related judicial file. The skeletal remains in each of these boxes often belonged to more than one individual and their remains were commingled and incomplete.

After taking inventory of the content of each box, we tried to associate isolated bones that may belong to the same skeleton, taking into the account the following features:

- Containers with similar written references on the labels;
- Bones of similar age and sex;
- Joint congruence, meaning bones that seem to articulate together;
- Bones sharing a common general morphology;
- Bones showing a continuity in the pattern of traumatic injury;
- Bones showing a consistency of specific ante-mortem features; and
- Bones showing a consistency of postmortem changes.



Bulldozers and other heavy equipment were used by judges and forensic officials to excavate the skeletal remains at La Plata resulting in the damage and loss of many of the remains. *Photo from judicial files.*

Our results indicated that the morphological associations made on the basis of the macroscopic observations mentioned above were of limited reliability. These limitations lead to the conclusion that reliability of association will be greater as the number of variables contributing to positive association increases. For example, the more features that are in common, the more likely two bones belong to the same individual.

In many cases, we were unable to re-associate bones into complete or almost complete skeletons. Often, we were only able to re-assemble parts or anatomical sections of them. We understand “anatomical sections” as groups of bones from the same anatomical part of a skeleton (for example, right lower limbs and pelvis) that are formed by bones that articulate with each other, such as the right femur, right coxal bone and sacrum (pelvis bones) and that are associated by morphology. Finally, we labeled as

“isolated bones” those pieces that do not articulate with any other bones and cannot be associated in any other way with other bones.

Due to the complexity of estimating age at death for incomplete skeletons, in many cases we could only aim to estimate the age by placing the remains into broader age groups. Thus, we define a sub-adult group, for example, as all individuals under 20 years of age, and adults as all individuals between 20-50 years of age.

After attempting the morphological re-association of remains in the unlabeled boxes, EAAF reached the following results and conclusions:

- The Minimum Number of Individuals present in all of the unlabeled boxes is thirteen, including: eleven adults through maximum representation of the mandible and age range at the time of

estimated death; one sub-adult, probably male, represented by an anatomical section; and one newborn or fetus, represented by a large bone, possibly the tibia of undetermined laterality.

Of the unlabeled boxes,¹⁰ we were able to re-associate some of the bones into larger units:

- Four adult skeletons were re-associated, of which three were male and one was female.
- Twenty anatomical sections were re-associated, corresponding to ten adult males, three adult probable males, three adult females and four adults whose sex could not be determined. This does not mean that these 20 anatomical sections represent 20 individuals, as some of these sections could correspond to the same individual.
- Finally, there were 24 pieces of bone that could not be re-associated, the majority of which belonged to upper limbs.
- Of the four re-individualized skeletons, one male exhibited peri-mortem wounds. Of the re-associated anatomical sections, three corresponding to males had peri-mortem wounds (one anatomical section was the skull and two sections were pelvis and lower limbs, thus they can correspond to one, two or three individuals). Of the isolated elements, four had peri-mortem wounds: 1 clavicle, 2 humerus, and 1 radius. For the most part, these wounds are consistent with those produced by gunshot wounds.

B.) Synthesis of the results from the laboratory analysis of the remains from the Medical Legal Institute of the city of La Plata from boxes with labels from the Mercedes and Morón cemeteries:

- The remains in the labeled boxes from the Mercedes cemetery corresponded to an anatomical section (skull and mandible) of a male adult. No peri-mortem wounds were observed.

- The remains in the labeled boxes from the Morón cemetery belonged to more than one individual. We established that the Minimum Number of Individuals present was nine people: eight adults and one person estimated to be a sub-adult. Morphological re-association of the bones produced 13 anatomical sections, leaving 35 isolated bone elements unassociated.

C.) Adding these results to our previous conclusions:

The Minimum Number of Individuals for all the remains analyzed to date from the Medical Legal Institute in the city of La Plata is eighty-one. Seventy-seven were represented by the right tibia and were estimated to be adults. Four were estimated to be sub-adults. Of the total remains present in all of the containers coming from the Medical Legal Institute in La Plata to date (60 boxes):

- We morphologically re-associated forty-three skeletons: fourteen were determined to be female and twenty-nine were male.
- We morphologically re-associated eighty-eight anatomical sections: twenty-seven of which were male, seven probably male, twenty female, one probably female and thirty-three of undetermined sex.

D.) Identification

Currently, the work to cross-check these results continues, including the study of the recovered skeletons, the physical information (ante-mortem) of the disappeared people whose remains might have been exhumed in the early 1980s from the cemeteries included in our study, and the historical information we have compiled.

To date, two females whose remains were exhumed in 1984, one from the Bolougne cemetery, **Liliana Corti de Pietragalla**, and other one from Moreno cemetery, **Maria Elena Amadio**, have been positively identified through anthropological examination, historical research and DNA analysis.



(Left to right) María Elena Amadio and Liliana Corti de Pietragalia who were identified by EAAF during 2004. EAAF Archives, photos provided by their families.

MARÍA ELENA AMADIO disappeared on March 29, 1976 in Moreno, Province of Buenos Aires. She was 30 years old and worked for the magazine *Discusión* in the International Politics Section. She died or was wounded at a weekend home in Moreno when the security forces interrupted a meeting of the enlarged Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), a guerrilla group. When they escaped, María Elena was wounded in her back. It is not known whether she was detained alive or died in the attack.

Fourteen people were buried as "N.N." in the Moreno cemetery, the majority of which came from this confrontation. They were later exhumed.

Once the comparison of the historical investigation and the physical data was made, bone samples of a female skeleton were sent to the Lidmo Laboratory in Córdoba with the strong hypothesis that the remains belonged to María Elena. At the end of May 2004, the result of the DNA analysis came back positive.

LILIANA CORTI DE PIETRAGALIA was 26 years old when she was killed on August 4, 1976 by security forces that conducted an operation in the house where she was, located in Independencia Street,

Number 1940, in the neighborhood of Villa Adelina, Province of Buenos Aires. At the time of the raid, she was with her companion and a friend who were also assassinated, and a 5 month-old baby who was kidnapped, given illegally to another family and registered under a different name. In April 2003, the organization the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo was able to locate the (by now) young man and provided him with his real identity.

Once the comparison between the historical investigation and the peri/ante-mortem data was made, bone samples of a female skeleton were sent to the Lidmo Laboratory in Córdoba Province with the strong hypothesis that the person in question was Corti de Pietragalla. In October 2004, the DNA results confirmed her identification. Liliana's remains were returned to her relatives.

Liliana's husband was killed in October 1975 in the Province of Córdoba. His remains were exhumed and identified by EAAF from the San Vicente cemetery mass grave were returned to his relatives in 2003.



EAAF members begin preliminary investigations at the Lomas de Zamora Cemetery. *Photo by EAAF.*

INVESTIGATION IN THE LOMAS DE ZAMORA CEMETERY (1976-1980)

EAAF research has indicated that a large number of remains, probably corresponding to disappeared people, were buried as “N. N.” in the Lomas de Zamora municipal cemetery in the province of Buenos Aires. In 2004, EAAF started to exhume and identify these remains, which were buried between the years 1976 and 1978. These three years represent the peak of

the repression during Argentina’s last military government.

The work was divided into three phases:

- Preliminary investigation
- Field work and exhumation of remains
- Laboratory analysis

FIRST PHASE: EAAF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

BACKGROUND

To identify the “N.N.” burials in Lomas de Zamora cemetery, it was necessary to investigate the repression in that area during the last military dictatorship. In particular, we need to establish which of the clandestine detention centers (CDC) operated during the dictatorship and could be related to the “N.N.” burials in Lomas de Zamora.

During the military regime, the country was divided into five Command Zones (see introduction of Argentina section). Lomas de Zamora was part of **Zone 1, subzone 11, area 112**. The unit responsible for area 112 was the Mechanized Infantry Regiment Number 3, located in La Tablada, county of La Matanza, Province of Buenos Aires. Another unit controlling the area was Cavalry Exploration Squadron Number 10. The CDCs in area 112 that functioned from 1976 to 1978 were “Pozo de Banfield” (Banfield Hole) under the official name of the Investigations Brigade in Lomas de Zamora and Investigations Brigade No. 2 in Lanús. However, as we will show below, other CDCs such as “Pozo de Quilmes” and “Vesubio,” also maintained close links with area 112.

Lomas de Zamora is located in the southern zone of Greater Buenos Aires, creating a semi-circle around the Federal Capital. In principle, subzone 11 covered some 25 neighborhoods in the south zone; however, the repressive forces concentrated principally on the following localities: Avellaneda, Lanús, Lomas de Zamora, La Matanza, Quilmes, Almirante Brown, Esteban Echeverría and La Plata.

In April 1995, at the request of the Federal Capital’s Federal Chamber, EAAF conducted an investigation of a “disappearance” case in the Lomas de Zamora municipal cemetery. The results of the investigation were included in lawsuit No. 44 “CAMPS, Ramon,” named for one of the generals charged with abuses during the repression. The lawsuit is one of the



Map I: Zone 1 during the military period included the southern zone subdivision of Greater Buenos Aires.

principal lawsuits initiated by virtue of Decree 280184 from the Executive Power.

During the course of the above-mentioned investigation, the team realized that the cemetery had been used to hide numerous cadavers belonging to “disappeared” people. Because of this, EAAF decided to investigate all “N.N.” graves registered in the Lomas de Zamora cemetery records during the military dictatorship.

Since 1986, a “do not disturb” judicial order has been in place for graves that were likely to hold “N.N.” remains from the last military government. This measure was applied to many other municipal cemeteries in Greater Buenos Aires in response to results from investigations brought by EAAF before courts.

During the investigation of numerous irregular burials, the team searched for the identity of each “N.N.,” where they could come from, who could have killed them and who could be responsible for their death. In the case of Lomas de Zamora, the responsibility and chain of command seems to confirm the involvement of the Mechanized Infantry Regiment No. 3 (La Tablada), in military area 112.

Between October 1976 and 1978, the Lomas de

Zamora cemetery was one of the places receiving large numbers of “N.N.” bodies thought to correspond to disappeared people. The practice of disposing the remains of the disappeared as “N.N.” seems to have been among the few disposal possibilities available for the CDCs operating in this area, as they did not have access to airplanes or helicopters to dump bodies into the sea as other CDCs did.

These limitations of the CDCs support the team’s hypothesis that people who had been seen in the CDCs within the zone were later buried as “N.N.” in the Lomas de Zamora cemetery. Unlike other areas in the country, the organization of burials in Lomas de Zamora showed an unusual neatness in the disposal of bodies and careful registry of burials. EAAF has not found significant differences between the information in the burial registry book and the actual location of the graves. The administrative order is also reflected by the fact that these bodies were buried in the individual grave section of the cemetery, as any other “normal” burial and not in marginal areas of the cemetery, as was the case in other cemeteries in this same area.

The fact that the records were so well organized and preserved allowed us to divide our work by individual graves. Knowing the date of each burial also helped us establish a hypothesis about the identification of the remains.

EAAF INVESTIGATION: DOCUMENTAL AND TESTIMONIAL SOURCES

EAAF analyzed both written and oral sources, compiling a database of all existing information pertinent to the cases of disappeared individuals in the South Zone.

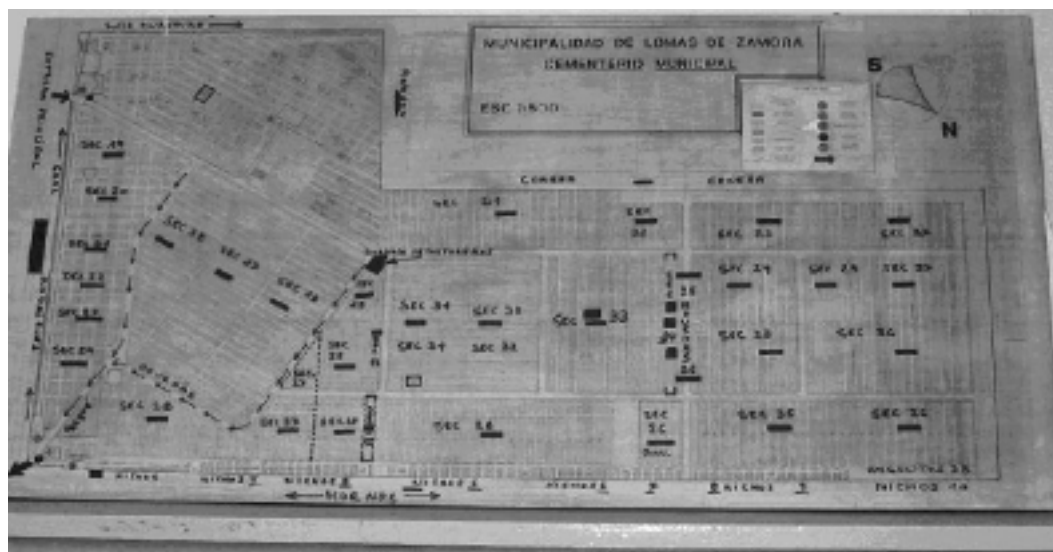
1. Document Sources

1.1 Judicial Lawsuit on Lomas de Zamora Cemetery

Initiated in 1985, “*Maria Consuelo Alvarez de Arias in charge of Ernesto Devoto*,” lawsuit No 13.348 ordered an investigation to establish the possible existence of illegal burials in Lomas de Zamora municipal cemetery. According to witness testimony in the lawsuit, from 1976 until 1982 the Buenos Aires Army and Police were involved in more than 70 irregular burials.

1.2 Related Judicial and Military Files

Other judiciary files — from federal and military courts — also provided important information about the “discovery” of cadavers from both real and mock armed confrontations. Some of these files contained



Map of Lomas de Zamora municipal cemetery.

autopsy reports by police forensic doctors, photographs of the bodies and their fingerprints.

1.3 Lomas de Zamora Cemetery Burial Records

Much of the information obtained from the cemetery records was already photocopied and incorporated into the main judicial file initiated in 1985.

EAAF compiled the following information about each “N.N.” from the cemetery book: death certificate number, date and place of death, date of burial, sex, approximate age at death and height, cause of death, doctor in charge of the autopsy, entity that intervened sending or bringing the body to the cemetery (military or police) and place of burial.

When comparing the information gathered from the cemetery burial licenses with the true or mock armed confrontations from the years 1976 to 1978, we found 27 cases of confrontations between security forces and guerillas related to the Lomas de Zamora cemetery. Of these 27, two confrontations correspond to 1976, 20 to 1977 and five to 1978.

Table I. Distribution by Sex of N.N. Burials

	Men	Women	Total
1976	17	03	20
1977	47	23	70
1978	20	06	26
TOTAL	84	32	116

Biological and Traumatic Profiles of “N.N.” Remains in Lomas de Zamora Cemetery (1976-1978)

Based on the data found in the cemetery record, the following tables illustrate the distribution of “N.N.” males and females in Lomas de Zamora cemetery between 1976 and 1978.

Table I indicates that men represent 72% (84 individuals) of the population in the study and 28% (32 individuals) correspond to women.

Table II shows that 11% of the cases (13 individuals) were between 14 and 20 years old at time of death, 58% (67 individuals) were between 21 and 35 years old, 7% (8 individuals) were between 36 and 50 years old, 16% (18 individuals) were older than 50 years, and 9% (10 individuals) were of an undetermined age at death.

The cause of death among the “N.N.” was classified on their death certificates in the following categories: 1) Gunshot wound 2) Trauma; 3) Hemorrhage; 4) Heart accidents; 5) Acute Pulmonary Edema; 6) Other and 7) Undetermined.

Table III shows that 54% (63 N.N.) died from “gunshot wound”; 5% (6 N.N.) from “traumatism”; 15% (17 N.N.) from “acute internal hemorrhage”; 10% (11 N.N.) from “cardiovascular accidents”; 2% (2 N.N.) from “Acute Pulmonary Edema”; and 14% (17 N.N.) from causes not written on the certificates.

It is important to point out that some of these categories may correspond to the same cause of death. For example, “acute internal hemorrhage” or “skull traumatism” may

Table II. Distribution by Age of N.N. Burials

	0-3 years	4-13 years	14-20 years	21-35 years	36-50 years	50+ years	Undetermined	Total
1976	00	00	00	13	01	04	02	20
1977	00	00	03	48	04	08	07	70
1978	00	00	10	06	03	06	01	26
Total	00	00	13	67	08	18	10	116

Table III. Distribution of Cause of Death in N.N.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
1976	10	1	2	3	0	3	1	20
1977	47	3	11	2	1	4	2	70
1978	6	2	4	6	1	5	2	26
TOTAL	63	6	17	11	2	12	5	116

EAAF classified the cause of death in one of seven categories: 1) gunshot wound; 2) trauma; 3) hemorrhage; 4) heart accidents; 5) acute pulmonary edema; 6) other; 7) undetermined.

actually correspond to “gunshot wound.” Over the years, this was confirmed by EAAF through investigations comparing death certificates and the actual examination of remains of “N.N.” in cemeteries in area 112.¹¹ Typically, when the death certificate indicates “acute hemorrhage,” we actually find gunshot wounds to the head and/or thorax, often even recovering bullet fragments associated with those body sections.

The documents examined show the following biological and traumatic profile for the 1976 to 1978 “N.N.” population in this cemetery:

1. An increase in the total number of “N.N.” burials for the years 1976, 1977, and 1978 when compared with “normal” years (non-dictatorship years and years during the dictatorship but after its repressive peak);
2. An increase in the number of female “N.N.” when compared with “normal years”;
3. The most represented age group between 1976 and 1978 corresponds to individuals aged 21 to 35 years old; a much younger group than the “normal N.N.” population whose ages tend to be in the “50 years and older” age group;
4. A high percentage of violent deaths, particularly from gunshot wounds.

These biological and traumatic characteristics are consistent with those observed in Snow and Bihurriet’s study (1992)¹² of the “N.N.” population from the last military government (1976-1983) and especially during the years of extreme repression (1976-1977). They are also consistent with the biological profile of disappeared people.

1.4 Provincial Registry Office of Persons

At the Civil Registration Office of Lomas de Zamora, EAAF recovered 116 death certificates related to the “N.N.” remains buried at the Lomas de Zamora cemetery, from the end of 1976 through the first half of 1978. Seventy-nine of these death certificates were of particular interest to the team because they were from young people (the age groups targeted by the repressive apparatus) with traumatic causes of death. The other 37 death certificates corresponded to newborns, premature babies or adults who did not have trauma-related causes of death.

1.5 Archives of the Province of Buenos Aires Police

In 1997, EAAF was able to access (but could not make copies of) microfilms labeled “Cadaver Registries” archived at the Police Data Processing Division of the Province of Buenos Aires Police (DIPPBA). These microfilms were sent at the time to the Police Criminal Record Division to see if the bodies could be identified by comparing the fingerprints on the films with Criminal Records. The deceased lacking a criminal record could not be identified and were passed to the “N.N.” list. In early 1998, the Buenos Aires Provincial Police Department was taken over by the governor of Buenos Aires province, who allowed EAAF total access to the archives.

In the DIPPBA archives, EAAF found 32 entries of unidentified cadavers registered in the Lomas de Zamora district for the years under investigation. From this total, military forces from area 112 were



EAAF member Patricia Bernardi working at a grave in Lomas de Zamora Cemetery. Photo by EAAF.

involved in a total of 22 cases, five of which were taken to the nearby Avellaneda Municipality Morgue and buried in the Avellaneda cemetery. The remaining seventeen were taken and buried at Lomas de Zamora cemetery.

1.6 Newspaper Clips

The team was interested in relating the “finding” of bodies and information on shootouts — mock or real — between security forces and “subversive groups” related to the “N.N.” bodies buried at the Lomas de Zamora cemetery with larger events occurring at the time. This was to help us understand the repression’s *modus operandi*. Thus, EAAF conducted research at the daily newspaper archives of *La Opinión* (national distribution), *El Sol* (Quilmes district) and *La Unión* (Lomas de Zamora district) covering the years 1976 to 1978. In particular, the team focused on the “official press comunicués” given by military officials that could be or were related to armed conflicts during those years.

Some of those official press comunicués provided important information, including the number of

people who died in the confrontation, and sometimes first names and/or last names, sex, approximate age and political affiliation. On some occasions, the information included the place of work, especially factories (Astilleros Río Santiago, Bendix, and others), shootout location, the alleged political or guerrilla allegiance of the individuals and their clothing, among other data. In at least one case, the individuals’ ages and their political affiliations published in a military press communiqué helped us to determine that the “confrontation” was actually the “transfer” — a euphemism used by security forces when prisoners were removed from a CDC to be killed — of five high school students involved in the Peronist party (*Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios*, UES) to the CDC known as “Vesubio.”

1.7 Other Sources

EAAF Database

EAAF conducted a search of its database on disappeared people kidnapped in the south zone of Greater Buenos Aires between January 1976 and December 1978. The search resulted in a list of 634 people reported to have disappeared from that place and time. When focusing only on Lomas de Zamora, the search narrowed to 131 people who disappeared between these years in the municipality. It is important to clarify that the place of disappearance does not necessarily imply that the body was buried in the same location.

2. Oral Sources

2.1 Testimony of Victim’s Family Members

The team has already interviewed at least 20 family relatives of disappeared people whose remains may be among the “N.N.” of Lomas de Zamora cemetery. The interviews with relatives of the disappeared are crucial for EAAF’s work to establish direct contact with them, and to explain who we are and the work that we are conducting, gather information about the

date and place where their loved one disappeared, ante-mortem information, if he or she was seen in any CDC, etc. This information is then entered in the EAAF database.

2.2 Testimony of Political Militants

Another important source of information results from interviews with former political militants. EAAF is conducting interviews, particularly with survivors from CDCs, related to the Lomas de Zamora cemetery. They can provide information about the structure of the social, union, political or guerrilla organization they belonged to at the time which can help us connect people and events.

SECOND PHASE: FIELD WORK

Challenges

Since the exhumations started in August 2004, a typically rainy month, upon digging 50 cm deep, we found the freatic layer or underground water level in

some sepultures. This is due to the fact that the terrain where the cemetery is currently located was once a marshland. The situation worsened when the cables and pumps that drained the water were stolen. With the help of cemetery personnel, we marked certain zones where the team could excavate without difficulty. We exhumed the sepultures located in the areas that were affected by the water layer during the drier months of early 2005.

In addition, the size of the graves was not necessarily related to the number of individuals buried there. In all of the cases, the graves measured two meters long by one meter in width, the typical size of individual graves. However, we actually found several individuals per grave. Additionally, the traumatic peri-mortem lesions on many of the skeletons required a meticulous recovery of the ballistic evidence so that it could be properly assigned to the correct skeleton. A similarly thorough recovery of dental pieces was needed since dentition is important in the identification process.

The archaeological and laboratory work was done simultaneously. Below is information about all the

Table IV. Exhumed N.N. Individuals

Date of Burial	Location of sepulture	Male	Female	TOTAL
09-07-76	26-LL-1	1	2	3
12-24-76	28-P-126	9	-	9
02-18-77	24-I-12	4	3	7
03-17-77	24-J-90	1		1
03-23-77	35-D-2	1	-	1
04-06-77	35-F-46	1	-	1
04-22-77	35-C-5	4		4
04-22-77	35-D-6	2	2	4
04-28-77	35-F-10	2	3	5
04-29-77	35-F-3	1	1	2
06-01-77	21-E-60	3	2	5
09-16-77	35-C-6	2		2
11-17-77	33-B-4BIS	-	-	(exhumed and sent to ossuary)
03-14-78	31-K-110	3	2	5
TOTALS		34	15	49

graves that have been excavated to date.

THIRD PHASE: LABORATORY WORK

EAAF conducted the laboratory work in EAAF's office located in the city of Buenos Aires.

The first step in the process was to prepare the evidence for its study. The remains were carefully washed using water and soft brushes to remove the dirt minimizing any possible damage to the evidence. Next, the remains were displayed on metal tables over paper to dry. Then, we labeled each piece of each skeleton and reconstructed fragmented bones using an *ad hoc* glue.

Once this work was completed, the team analyzed the remains to establish a biological profile. The study typically focused on:

1. Ancestry group estimation
2. Sex determination
3. Age estimation
4. Height estimation
5. Laterality (writing or predominantly used hand) estimation
6. Description of pathologies and lesions
7. Dental chart
8. Cause of death estimation
9. Registry and description of associated evidence
10. Identification

EAAF created a Microsoft Access database to enter all of the laboratory information from the remains exhumed at the Lomas de Zamora cemetery.

Table V. Distribution by Sex of the Exhumed N.N.

	Males	Females	Totals
Exhumed skeletons	34	15	49
Percentages	68.75%	30.61%	100%

Analysis of Bone Remains

A clear correlation exists between the general biological profile of the “disappeared,” the profile of the “N.N.” in the cemetery’s registry book, and the biological profile of the exhumed skeletons from the Lomas de Zamora cemetery.

Most of the individuals exhumed fall within the 21 to 35 year age group (Table VI). The data is consistent with the age characteristics of the “disappeared” population, showing a strong difference from the “normal” years in which the typical “N.N.” age range tends to be within the “50 years or older” age group. During “normal” years, the practice of forced disappearances of people was not done on a large scale, but rather in isolated cases.

It is important to emphasize that when studying bone remains to estimate cause of death, we can only observe the lesions that have left trauma on the bones. In the cases of natural death, intoxication from cyanide or asphyxiation from immersion, for example, no lesion can be observed on the bones, making it impossible to estimate the cause of death.

During “normal years” the typical cause of death of the “N.N.” population is often related to chronic processes — such as cirrhosis, malnourishment — or street, subway and train accidents.

Table VI. Distribution by Age of the Exhumed N.N.

Age Group	0-13	14-20	21-35	36-50	>50	Total
Exhumed Skeletons	0	3	34	11	1	49
Percentage	0%	6.13%	69.38%	22.45%	2.04%	100%

Table VII. Cause of Death of Exhumed N.N.	
Individuals with Gun Shot Wounds	Individuals with undetermined cause of death
43	6
87.8%	12.2%

Table VII shows that a large majority of the skeletons analyzed to date (87%) presents evidence of a violent cause of death produced by gunshot wounds. This is also a typical characteristic of the “N.N.” population during the years of the peak of the repression in Argentina (Snow et al, 1992).

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

To date, 49 individuals — 34 males and 15 females — have been exhumed from 14 graves (nominally individual graves) located in different sectors of the Lomas de Zamora cemetery. More than 70% of the burials correspond to individuals in the 21 to 35 age range. The majority of exhumed individuals (43 cases) exhibit gunshot wounds.

The project focused primarily on the excavation and laboratory analysis of “N.N.” in the Lomas de Zamora cemetery that corresponded to “disappeared” people. EAAF’s ultimate objective is to identify the “N.N.” by comparing the field and laboratory work with other information from diverse documented sources, ante-mortem data and genetic analysis. To date, a total of 11 initial identifications have been made by fingerprint comparison (*see police archive section*), along with five other likely identifications. In early 2005, the last four graves in Lomas de Zamora were excavated. Additionally, the team has been searching for more relatives of disappeared people that may be related to the “N.N.” remains exhumed from Lomas de Zamora to donate genetic samples so that the DNA identification process can begin.

Our next steps include confirming these tentative identifications and continuing to try to identify the remaining individuals so that the remains can be returned to their families.



GENERAL LAVALLE MUNICIPAL CEMETERY

Since the early 1990s, EAAF has known about the existence of Report 90/77 from the Necropapiloscopic Laboratory of Investigations conducted by the Buenos Aires Province police. The report contains the fingerprints of a woman who was found dead on a beach along the Argentine coast at the end of December of 1977. It was very likely that these remains corresponded to a victim from the “*vuelos de la muerte*” (death flights), a practice used during the military government of disposing disappeared people from airplanes into the Argentinean sea. It was known that some of these bodies washed out to the Uruguayan coast and the south coast of the Province of Buenos Aires. However, the team had to wait many years to identify this individual.

As explained at the beginning of the Argentina section of this report, bodies of disappeared people that “re-appeared” in barren lands and on the streets were often fingerprinted by the police but buried as John or Jane Doe, whether they were identified or not. In 1998, EAAF first obtained access to government files that included these fingerprints.

We started collecting thousands of sets of fingerprints of individuals who were disappeared from offices that had issued passports and the two mandatory national identity cards. We could then compare the fingerprints with those from the cadavers found in the streets (previously mentioned) and try to identify the remains.

(Above) Representatives of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo gather at a June 2005 press conference announcing the identification of the remains of founding members of the organization, Esther Ballestrino de Careaga, Maria Eugenia Ponce de Bianco and Zucena Villafior, who were identified by EAAF in April 2005 after being recovered from the General Lavalle Cemetery. Photo courtesy of Marcos Brindicci/Reuters.

While these comparisons produced several identifications, EAAF could not find out to whom the fingerprints from Expert Report 90/77 belonged until November 2004.

EAAF INVESTIGATION: Archaeological Report, December 16 – 17, 2004

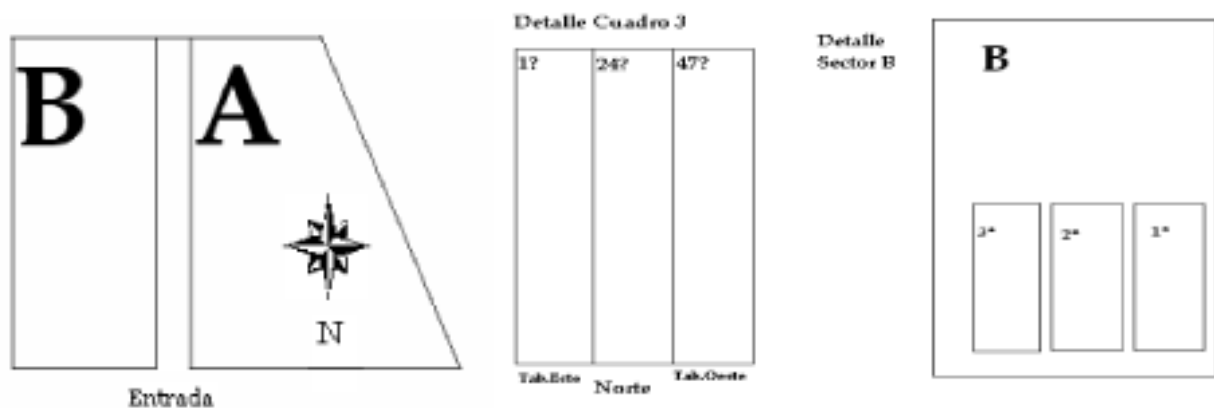
When recovering remains from the cemetery, it is important first to determine whether cemetery records match the actual location of the remains in the terrain. Ideally, they should match, but this is often not the case, particularly when searching remains in the free cemetery areas, normally located on its margins, where John and Jane Doe or indigents are and disappeared people were usually buried. This was particularly challenging in this case.

In the case of General Lavalle municipal cemetery, what was in the registry book did not accurately reflect the location of the burials, preventing us from finding the graves we needed to exhume. Thus, before starting any excavation we conducted an investigation so that we would not be digging in the wrong graves. This needed to be done in the cemetery, because the cemetery records in the “Zuetta” judicial file relating to this case were not present. We noticed that some of the sepultures in the area where we were searching for graves had a code that was consistent with the ones recorded in the cemetery book.

The cemetery is divided into two large sections, “A” in the west and “B” in the east. Each of these sections was divided into squares. EAAF’s investigation was centered in square “3” of section B. This square was actually designated as “2” at the time of the burials of the remains we were searching for, but was renamed “3” in 1980, and was referred to as such in the 1983 file investigating clandestine inhumations in that cemetery (Zuetta file).

EAAF’s review of the cemetery records showed that identified and unidentified people from that municipality who died between July 1977 and October 1979 were buried in square 3 in graves numbered 1 to 71. From these, some sepultures or graves preserved the name of the deceased and date of death. This allowed the team to estimate relative locations of these graves within the square, and in turn, the approximate location of the graves containing the remains of unidentified people, in particular, the remains buried in December 1977.

The bodies of six people who had initially appeared on the beaches of the municipality of the coast between December 20 and 29 of 1977 were buried in graves 17, 18, 19, 20, 23 and 24. The initial hypothesis was that all of them could have been victims of an aerial “*traslado*” or “transfer” (a euphemism used by security forces indicating when a prisoner was taken sedated from a CDC) and dumped into the Argentinean sea from a plane (by the Armed Forces). Victims of a similar practice were probably buried in grave 31 (which washed up on February 18, 1978, file number 41.412), grave 57 (which appeared



An EAAF graphic illustrates the location of the graves in sectors A and B of General Lavalle cemetery.



Our priority tasks for the second day were the discovery of the body in grave 31 and the test hole corresponding to the lower limbs of the remains on the 17/23 axis. The remains found in grave 31 clearly showed the expected pattern: multiple peri-mortem fractures. The extension of the excavation towards the north (always in the central area) led to the discovery of what EAAF initially thought was grave 32. However, the absence of lesions in the adult skeleton recovered there and the detection of the skeleton of a recently born child led the team to an alternative hypothesis. After further research in the judicial file and cemetery records, it became apparent that none of the remains recovered in grave 32 were related to our investigation. Nevertheless, EAAF recovered both the remains from graves 31 and 32 for examination in the laboratory.

Meanwhile, the excavation of the trench in the north part of the east area of Square 3 uncovered four sepultures. By now, it was quite certain that they corresponded to graves 20, 21, 22 and 23, especially since a bottle like the ones used at the Necropapiloscopic Laboratory was found in the last grave, suggesting that fingerprints were probably taken from the cadavers.

In addition, the remains found in sepultures 21 and 22 showed no peri-mortem trauma. This was consistent with the cemetery record information (*see graphic page 48*) that indicated that these two

sepultures corresponded to Ludmila (or Leonilda) Milibill (in grave 22) and Jose Muller (in grave 21). Thus, these graves correspond to identified people who are not part of EAAF's investigation but reaffirm the premises of our recovery strategy.

EAAF exhumed the remains from sepultures 20 and 23 and left the remains from sepultures 21 and 22 in the graves.

By the end of the excavations, the team recovered the remains of 7 individuals thought to correspond to disappeared people.

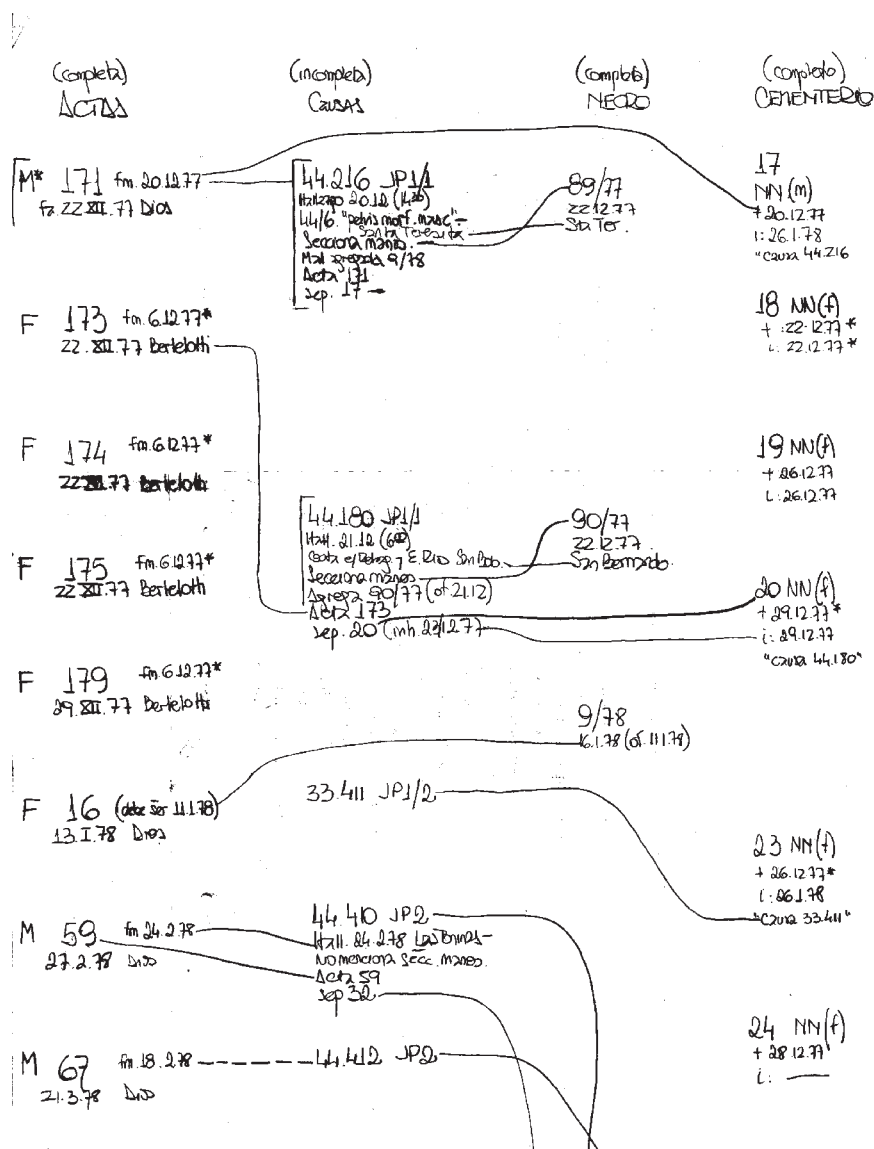
Identifications and Peri-mortem Trauma

One of the reasons the process was so slow was because there were spelling errors in the last name. One of the disappeared people for whom the team had requested a fingerprint comparison had always been identified with the last name AGUAD; however, the person's correct name was AUAD. When EAAF recognized the error, the team asked the National Registry for the fingerprints of Angela AUAD. Thus, they were finally able to figure out whose prints were taken in Expert Report 90/77.

This was the key to reach the other identifications. Once Angela's identification was confirmed, EAAF



Two tibia bones showing peri-mortem fractures of their distal ends found among the remains from aerial flights. *Photo by EAAF.*



Graphic comparing records on the N.N. skeletal remains with the remains found by EAAF in the Lavalle cemetery. Photo by EAAF.

was able to narrow the list of disappeared people to whom the other remains could potentially belong to those kidnapped on similar dates and/or in similar circumstances as Angela. The strongest hypothesis the team had was that they belonged to a group of twelve people kidnapped with Angela from the Santa Cruz church, located in the city of Buenos Aires, between December 8 and 10, 1977.

On December 16, 2004 and January 4, 2005 EAAF recovered seven skeletons (six females and one

male) who were buried as "N.N." in the General Lavalle cemetery. Later the team contacted family members of the likely victims to try to confirm the identity hypothesis through an anthropological and genetic analysis.

In April 2005, EAAF positively identified three of the exhumed bodies, corresponding to the three kidnapped Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo: **Esther Ballestrino de Careaga**, **María Eugenia Ponce de Bianco** and **Azucena Villafior**. In August 2005,

EAAF also identified **Angela Auad** and the French nun, **Leonie Duquet**.

Part of this group had been seen alive by survivors from the Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA). Additionally, according to witnesses, a photograph had been taken of the two French nuns inside this CDC in an apparent attempt to use it to accuse an armed organization for their kidnapping.

During the laboratory study the team established that the fractures on the bodies were consistent with those of people who had fallen from a great height onto a hard surface (even though water is not a “hard” surface, when a body falls from a great height, it acts as a hard surface).

This case is important because it is the first forensic investigation providing strong evidence indicating that kidnapped people who had been seen alive in ESMA and remained disappeared were actually dropped into the ocean.

EAAF is working on the identification of two more people who appear to have suffered the same treatment. In these cases, EAAF is certain that they were not part of the “Santa Cruz” group. Additionally, there are other cases under investigation.

A more detailed report will be provided in EAAF's 2006 Annual Report.

OTHER CASES

IDENTIFICATION AT LA PLATA CEMETERY

On March 12, 2004, Julia Esther Libralato, the daughter of **Adela Esther Fonrouge**, brought a new claim before the Federal Appellate Chamber in La Plata that was added to case 1482 “Fonrouge Adela Esther, Forced Disappearance of a Person.” She claimed that the person who died in an event on October 11, 1977 near 80th and 131st streets in La Plata city could be her mother. The date and place were consistent with Ms. Fonrouge's disappearance. Adela had received the information about the incident from the Directory of Disappeared Persons Registry, an office under the Minister of Security in Buenos Aires province. Ms. Fonrouge was four months pregnant when she disappeared.

As a result, on May 28, 2004, at the request of an order given by the Federal Chamber of Appeals in La Plata, members of EAAF went to the La Plata municipal cemetery in Buenos Aires province to exhume the remains in sepulture 48, grid C, section 26.

Before starting the exhumation, EAAF checked the cemetery records to confirm that the grave had not been disturbed. Based on the records, the remains should have still been there. The excavation then began with the help of cemetery personnel. Once the team demarcated the two meters by one meter working area, we removed a cement block and a cross found over the grave with the inscription “N.N. 197.” Then, we defined a test area in the foot area. After digging 70 centimeters deep in this area we found the foot bones. The excavation then continued horizontally along the length of the grave.

The skeleton was found in a supine position (face up) and extended, oriented north- south. EAAF sifted the sediment surrounding the remains to recover all of the bone fragments and other evidence of interest.

Once all of the bone remains were exposed, the team photographed them. The cranium was fragmented.

The remains had purple pants that covered the feet, two pieces of clothing on the upper body of the same color and underwear. EAAF packaged the remains according to anatomical sections and sent them to our laboratory in Buenos Aires.

In the laboratory, EAAF determined that the skeletal remains, labeled LP-48-1, corresponded to a female individual, 157.5 +/- 3.5 cm tall, who died at an estimated age of 26 +/- 3 years (23 to 29 years old), from a cause of death that left no traces in her skeletal remains. There was no peri-mortem trauma, meaning that trauma around the time of death was not observed. Thus the team could not provide information about the cause of death.

Odontologically, the remains included all of the teeth, except for the first lower left molar, which was absent ante-mortem (before the death of the individual). Furthermore, the team observed that the woman had two odontological treatments — fillings — during her life and that the third lower right molar was slightly rotated towards the second molar. EAAF did not observe any other odontological features or significant osteological characteristics.

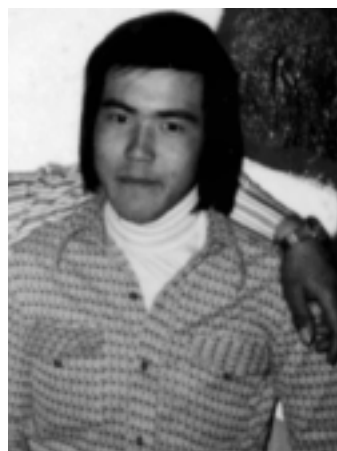
These odontological characteristics (sex, age at the time of death, and stature) for skeleton LP-48-1 were compatible with the ante-mortem data provided by relatives of Ms. Adela Ester Fonrouge. However, the results were not sufficient to positively identify the remains, making genetic analysis necessary to confirm the identification.

On October 10, 2004 EAAF sent bone samples from LP-48-1 to the National Genetic Database Bank in Durand Hospital in Buenos Aires to conduct the DNA analysis. The Bank stored many samples of relatives of children who had disappeared. Blood samples of Ms Fonrouge's relatives were already stored in this DNA database as she was four months pregnant when she disappeared. The Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo included her case due to the fact she could have given birth in captivity. These samples were compared with those of LP-48-1. The genetic results concluded with 99.9996% certainty

that the skeleton labeled LP-48-1 was that of Adela Esther Fonrouge. On November 4, 2004, the Federal Chamber of Appeals at La Plata announced that she had been identified. On November 29, 2004 the court ordered that the remains of Adela Esther Fonrouge be given to her daughter, Julia Esther Libralato, to be buried in the Municipal Cemetery of la Plata.

According to CONADEP's file and the Grandmothers of the Plaza del Mayo, Adela Esther Fonrouge disappeared from her home on October 10, 1977. She was born on December 9, 1951 and was 25 years old at the time of her kidnapping. Adela was married to Juan Jose Libralato. She had a six month old daughter and was four months pregnant at the time of her disappearance. On the day of Adela's disappearance, her husband also disappeared. He remains "disappeared."

CARLOS HORACIO GUSHIKEN is on the list of disappeared people from the Japanese community in



Argentina. He was 22 years old when he disappeared on April 8, 1978 in the municipality of Florencio Varela in the province of Buenos Aires. He worked as a machinist in the Rigolleau firm. For many years, his family did not know

about the kidnapping, and reported his disappearance to the National Commission on the Disappearance of People in 1984 (CONADEP file number 1612).

According to EAAF's investigation, the body of Gushiken was in the PC 50526 (Cadaver Records for the Office of Criminal Records of the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires). He was shot by the military in the city of Mar del Plata. Two women were killed along with him (one was identified at the time by her fingerprints as Ana María Tortti, though her family was not informed).

According to data found at the Act 104, Vol 1 at the National Registry of Persons, Gushiken died July 13, 1978 in Barranco de los Lobos, Mar del Plata. He was buried as an “N.N.” in the El Parque Cemetery on July 14, 1978 in grave number 3992-B.

First, EAAF checked the documents in the cemetery records to make sure the grave had not been altered.

Since 1985, a number of legal problems relating to the court’s jurisdiction in the case needed to be resolved in order to exhume Gushiken’s remains (see EAAF 2002 Annual Report). Finally, on July 2, 2003, EAAF was given approval by the National Appeals Chamber in the Criminal and Correctional of Buenos Aires to exhume the remains in grave 3992, Section B in the El Parque Cemetery in the city of Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires. In the excavation, EAAF recovered the remains of one individual with two bullets inside the skull.

The anthropological study conducted by EAAF established that the exhumed remains belonged to a male individual between the ages of 18 and 22 at time of death. The individual’s death was caused by multiple gunshot wounds to the head and thorax. Even though age at time of death, sex, height and Mongoloid features — referring to physical features consistent with a person from an Asian ancestry — could be established and were consistent with Gushiken’s ante-mortem data, this information was not sufficient to reach a positive identification of the remains. Thus, samples of the father’s blood were taken to compare the DNA extracted from a bone sample of the exhumed remains. Carlos Horacio Gushiken was positively identified in July 2004. The remains were returned to his family and buried in a ceremony that members of the community attended, including the Japanese ambassador to Argentina.

QUILMES CEMETERY, PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES

ELEONOR MARIA VLAHOVIC In April 2004, the son of Eleonor Maria Vlahovic, Damian Mayer, requested the help of EAAF to recover the remains of his mother. He believed she was buried in the Ezpeleta cemetery, located in Quilmes.

Damian Mayer only knew that his mother was a teacher and lived in Souriges neighborhood (Antartida Argentina and Con. General Belgrano streets). He also said that in January or February 1977, security forces conducted a raid of her house related to her involvement in the Montoneros guerrilla group, forcing her to move to a different home.

At the end of April 1977, Eleonor was on a minibus on the 148 line (“El Halcon”) that was detained at a military checkpoint. She took a cyanide pill (a pill that some Montoneros militants carried with them at the time so that they would not be captured alive, be tortured, be forced to turn in other militants and eventually get killed anyway) and died two days later at the Police Clinic in Quilmes. Her body was returned to her relatives and buried under her first and last name in Ezpeleta.

The information Damian gave to the team coincided with information from a file of the former Intelligence Direction of the Buenos Aires Police which EAAF obtained access to when the Direction was dissolved in 1988. However, in the intelligence report her last name was spelled ULAHOVICH.

According to File 10013 from the former Police Intelligence Direction of Buenos Aires province:

“...April 29 of the current year at 23:45 hours, when Air Force personnel from the Regional Division of Quilmes took operational control of vehicles in the intersection of Felipe Amoedo and Crisology Larralde streets in this jurisdiction when stopping a minibus from line 148, the HALCON, to demand tickets from the passengers, the officers heard people traveling on the minibus say that a person had collapsed or fainted thus one of the officers from the commission made everyone evacuate the bus... verifying that this

person had presumably taken cyanide, and when searching her verified that this person was carrying a grenade and a 38 caliber revolver with 30 intact bullets, and documents with the name ELENORA MARIA ULAHOVICH, 27-year old Argentine, whose home was on Jujuy Street No. 550 in West Quilmes, the officials also found and took from her bag an altered Argentinean identity card under the same name. Later the victim was taken to the local hospital, where it was confirmed that she indeed had taken cyanide and died immediately. It needs to be pointed out that the elements found on her person remain in control of the intervening security personnel. The cadaver is deposited in the judicial morgue, and steps are being taken to proceed with her burial. This corresponding summary was done with the intervention of Military Area 112, the Tablada."

According to EAAF's preliminary investigation in Ezpeleta Municipal Cemetery, Eleonora was indeed buried in 1977 in that cemetery but in 1982 (five years later), a man with the surname Bentos was buried in the same grave. Since there was no documentation of what happened to the remains of VLAHOVIC, the team wanted to find out if they had been exhumed and reburied in the common ossuary or if they were all or partially in the original grave. This is standard practice when the cemetery needs to bury someone else in the same location and no fee has been paid for five years, as is the case for the "N.N." or indigents.

With this information EAAF petitioned the Federal Chamber for permission to conduct an exhumation to find out if the remains of Eleonora were still in the location where they were buried in 1977. With the judicial order, on October 28 EAAF went to Quilmes Municipal Cemetery (Ezpeleta, Province of Buenos Aires) to excavate grave 211-4bis-7.

Damian Mayer and his father Hugo Marcelino Mayer were at the grave site as EAAF began the exhumation. Cemetery personnel assisted EAAF at the beginning of the exhumation. At 58 centimeters in depth the team found one articulated skeleton that showed characteristics similar to the person buried there in 1982. After carefully removing these

remains, the team continued to excavate until 1.25 meters but could not find any human bones that could be associated with the event in 1977. At this depth the dirt appeared more compact and hard, and it became clear that the remains EAAF was searching for were not buried there.

OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

SANTA MONICA CEMETERY, PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES

At the request of the National Chamber of Criminal and Correctional Appeals in the Federal Capital, on November 30, 2004, EAAF went to the Santa Monica Municipal Cemetery in the municipality of Merlo in Buenos Aires province to exhume skeletons from graves 181 and 183 in Sector K. As often happens in the places where unidentified people are buried, there were marked discrepancies between the location of the graves indicated in the cemetery book and their actual placement in the terrain.

The general area where the sepultures were located had several monuments whose inscriptions had been preserved and were numbered successively, which allowed the team to establish a hypothesis about the location of the graves they were searching for. The director of the cemetery informed the team about renovations since the period of repression that involved removing some of the original graves. We found not only discrepancies in the location, but also in the number of graves in each sector.

EAAF conducted two exhumations, recovering the remains of two individuals. The first, labeled ME-3-K-181, corresponds to a male individual with a height of 170.03 +/- 3 cm who died at an estimated age of 41 +/- 5 years (36 to 46 years old). In the laboratory analysis, the team established that the frontal bone of the skull showed an exit gunshot wound, with beveling in its external table. EAAF did not find an entrance wound most likely because large sections of the skull were missing. However, the fracture lines observed at the base of the skull and the



EAAF members place the remains of a person who has been identified in an urn to be returned to the relatives. Photo courtesy of Stephen Ferry.

temporal bones and zygomatic arcs enabled EAAF to infer that the trajectory of the bullet was probably from left to right and from above to below. The team also noted peri-mortem lesions on the first cervical (neck) vertebrae.

Taking into account the peri-mortem lesions observed in the skull and surrounding areas, the team concluded that the individual probably received at least two gunshots that affected vital centers.

The remains of skeleton ME 3-K-183 correspond to a male individual with a height of 178,03 +/- 3 cm, who died at an estimated age of 60 +/- 8 years (52 to 68 years old).

In the laboratory analysis, EAAF established the existence of multiple peri-mortem wounds in the skull, mandible, left ulna, right hemi-thorax and vertebrae.

SAN ANDRES DE GILES, PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES

Preliminary Investigation

As part of EAAF's historical investigation searching for the "disappeared," the team examines all cemetery records and old newspaper articles from the areas where the repression was prevalent.

When examining the burial records of the North cemetery in the Municipality of San Andrés de Giles, EAAF found an entry without a specified burial site in which three people killed on December 22, 1975 had the same cause of death: "wounded by bullets and burning." There was no reference to the sex of any of them. When crossing this information with information from newspapers from that time, the following information appeared in the newspaper *La Opinión* on December 29, 1975: "Three cadavers with multiple gunshot wounds were found burned early yesterday morning in Capilla del Señor, near San Andrés de Giles."

As mentioned above, there was no mention of a burial site in the records; however, in 1984 a request for information by CONADEP about this incident to the municipality of San Andres de Giles showed that these three individuals were buried in grave 57, Section 12 of the local cemetery.

EAAF also found records indicating that on August 29, 1976 two bodies were entered in the cemetery with the cause of death recorded as "total burning." Initially they were deposited in niche 65 of Section 1, although later (the registry did not specify the date) they were moved to grave 57 of Section 12. It seems these are the same two people whose bodies appeared in Solis on August 26, 1976 and had been requested for burial by a court.

File 8178 of the Intelligence Unit of the Buenos Aires Police contains the discovery of two totally burned bodies on August 26, 1976 in the "7th Cuartel, on a local road, 600 meters from the national highway 8, Solis, {relating also that the} San Andres de Giles Precinct intervened, Regional Unit of Morón.

Cadavers {were sent} to the Solis morgue, penal judge Dr. Oliva.”

Finally, on November 26, 1980 the remains of Ramon Felix Valdez, 59 years old, were entered into the same cemetery and buried in exactly the same location as the other two groups of individuals: sepulture 57, section 12. The cause of death is labeled “*Cachexia*.” He is not a disappeared person and thus, he is not part of EAAF’s investigation.

Archaeological work

According to the order given by the National Chamber of Criminal and Correctional Appeals in the Federal Capital, on December 16, 2004, three EAAF members went to North Cemetery to exhume the bodies originally found on August 26, 1976.

The first discovery was at a depth of 1.10 meters and consisted of visibly burned, disarticulated bone remains. Once we recovered the remains, at a depth of 1.25 meters we discovered more articulated bone remains lying in a white plastic sheet, characteristic of remains that are buried in low quality coffins. There was no sign of burning on the remains. This suggested that these last set of remains probably corresponded to Ramon Felix Valdez.

At a depth of 1.40 meters, EAAF discovered remains with characteristics similar to the first burned, disarticulated bones only this time they were found inside a woven plastic bag. EAAF then realized that the soil under this grave had never been disturbed; the sediment showed that the grave ended there. All of the bones that were recovered were human. No associated evidence — such as clothing or ballistic evidence — was found in association with the remains.

Laboratory Work

The laboratory analysis of the remains exhumed from grave 57 of section 12 of San Andres de Giles Municipal Cemetery confirmed the absence of

complete skeletons. EAAF only recovered some articulated bones or bones from the same anatomical sections, and isolated bones without any associations or articulation among them.

EAAF tried to analyze and associate the different anatomical sections found in the grave. However, the state of fragmentation made this impossible. The majority of the disarticulated bone remains was burned and/or charred. All of these characteristics complicated the laboratory analysis to try to determine the Minimum Number of Individuals within the grave, their biological profile, traumatic lesions and any other element that would help to identify the remains.

Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI)

The Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) is estimated by the most represented bone or bone fragment among the total of bones recovered. In this grave, grave 57 section 12, the MNI was 4 adult individuals.

Anthropological Determinations

In terms of sex determination the team could only conclude that at least one of the four individuals represented in the samples was female. In terms of age, the four adults were adult individuals under the age of fifty.

Peri-Mortem Lesions

EAAF recovered four occipital bones, corresponding to four skulls from adult individuals. They were found fractured, incomplete and burned. In two of them the team observed entrance gunshot wounds that occurred peri-mortem (around the time of death). We also observed bullet imprints in the foot bones (metatarsals) and in a pair of fibula. This peri-mortem traumatic profile is consistent with that of the disappeared.

Identification

Because the hypothesis of our investigation focuses on the possibility that two Cuban citizens that disappeared in Argentina may be among the recovered remains, specialists from the Medical Legal Institute of Havana, Cuba requested bone samples for DNA analysis. No results were available at the time of the writing of this report.

ENDNOTES

1. Snow, C.C. and Bihurriet, M.J. 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 Forensic Sciences category awarded by 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 were published in the Journal of Forensic Sciences, in May 1998.
5. Toft is one of the scientists who conducts DNA analysis for EAAF cases at a reduced rate.
6. The figure 336 is the minimum number of skeletons that EAAF retrieved during the archaeological phase of the project.
7. Snow, C.C., and Bihurriet, M.J. 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, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
8. Information collected by the CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons) in 1984 revealed that 80% of reported disappearances were registered in 1976 and 1977, 30% of the almost 10,000 disappeared persons were women, and 70% of the victims were between 21 and 35 years of age at the time of death.
9. 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 a victim of a homicide in the area of Del Viso with two others: Federico Martu and Gabriel Dunayevich. The relatives of Akselman and Dunayevich only were informed about this by judicial authorities in February, 1985. Akselman, Dunayevich, and Martul had been kidnapped by security forces weeks prior to being found dead.
10. These refer to bones in which we do not know from which cemetery they came, but the remains found are thought to correspond to disappeared persons.
11. See for example, EAAF investigations in the cemeteries of Avellaneda and Isidro Casanova, Province of Buenos Aires.
12. Snow, C.C. and Bihurriet, M.J. 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.



EAAF members work in a grave in San Vicente Cemetery. *Photo by EAAF.*

Province of Córdoba

EXCAVATIONS IN SAN VICENTE CEMETERY, CÓRDOBA

INTRODUCTION > 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. This is due to the fact that two thirds of all disappearances in Argentina reportedly occurred in the metropolitan area. However, Córdoba City, the second largest city in the country and capital of the north-central province of Córdoba, was also seriously affected by the repression. As previously explained, for most of the military period, March 1976 through June 1982, the Armed Forces divided the country into five army command zones, each containing a major population center. Zone Three contained the central, west, and northwest regions and was controlled by the Third Army Corps headquartered in Córdoba city, Córdoba province, approximately 780 kilometers northwest of Buenos Aires. >>

The Third Army 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. At least forty Clandestine Detention Centers (CDCs) are documented to have operated in this region from 1975 to 1980. The city of Córdoba was in Subzone 31 under the second command of the Third Army Corps.

Preliminary Investigation

Based on information collected to date, most of the people “disappeared” by the state in Córdoba and its outskirts were taken to two CDCs controlled by the Army, *La Perla* (The Pearl) and *Campo La Ribera* (The Shore). *La Perla*, located in a military post on the highway between the cities of Córdoba and Carlos Paz, started functioning as a CDC after the military coup of March 1976.¹ The *Campo La Ribera* military prison began operating as a CDC in December 1975, a few months before the military 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 some coordination among command zones, Zone Three had a high degree of autonomy. Unlike most of the CDCs managed by the army where prolonged contact between repressors and prisoners was avoided, there were several cases of prolonged imprisonment at *La Perla*. There was also a greater number of survivors who have detailed memories about the way the unit functioned, including who was on the staff and who was detained at the CDC. EAAF has also learned that the bodies of most of the people who disappeared in Córdoba city passed through the Córdoba city morgue and were later buried in San Vicente Cemetery (also in Córdoba city).

In 1984, the existence of at least one mass grave in San Vicente Cemetery became public when morgue and cemetery employees submitted official

testimonies to CONADEP. They testified that beginning in 1976, members of the security forces delivered a large number of unidentified bodies to the Judicial Morgue in Córdoba city, located in the San Roque Hospital and later in the Córdoba Hospital. In almost every case, the victims reportedly exhibited gunshot wounds, clear signs of torture, and ink stains on their fingers, implying that they had been fingerprinted. A majority of the bodies arrived without papers, so there was no indication of which state agency had sent them, although reportedly the security forces delivered them. Additionally, most of the bodies were entered as “N.N.,” / *Ningún Nombre*, (John/Jane Doe). At the morgue, the bodies were recorded as “found in the street,” or “killed in confrontations with security or military forces.”² In some instances, the bodies were identified while at the morgue, and Military Judges (*Jueces de Instrucción Militar*) sometimes delivered the remains of the victims to their families. Police physicians signed the death certificates.

Some morgue employees also stated that they had taken part in transferring bodies to the San Vicente Cemetery. At least four mass transfers of bodies were documented in 1976, involving approximately a total of 200 bodies. The bodies were placed in a mass grave that was used multiple times; they were naked and had no identification, except in a few cases in which a metal tag corresponding to a morgue number was hung from their carpal bones (wrists). Beginning in 1977, there were transfers of smaller groups of bodies, most of which were buried individually. The total number of bodies delivered to San Vicente during 1977 seems to be similar to the figures indicated for 1976.

According to morgue and cemetery workers, the bodies were buried secretly during the night, in common or individual graves, without coffins or any identifying markers or 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. After democracy returned to Argentina in 1984, Federal Court No. 3 in Córdoba City opened an investigation based on this information.

In 1984, judicial and CONADEP investigations led to the identification of some bodies buried in this manner. Investigators determined that a large mass grave contained the bodies of seven youths who had been sent to the Córdoba city morgue in October 1976 from the town of Los Sargentos, Córdoba Province. Their records state the youths died in an “armed confrontation.” The investigation revealed that the corpses had been bound at the wrists, which allowed the judge to qualify them as homicides. 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 those of one of the exhumed individuals led to the identification of a young woman whose remains were delivered to her family. Subsequently, CONADEP and the Federal Judiciary declared that they were unable to make further identifications given the information and technology available at the time.³ (The extraction of DNA from bones became possible at the end of the 1980s.)

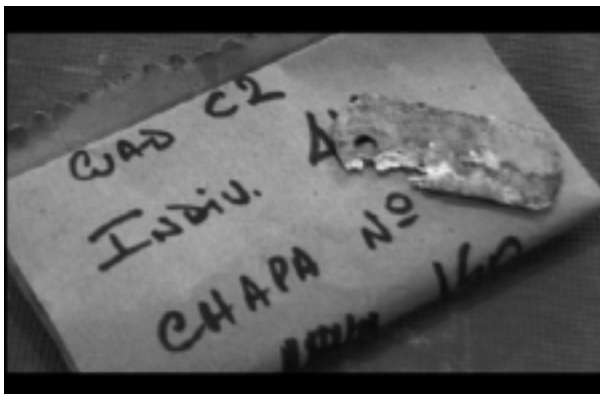
EAAF Preliminary Investigation

In the early stages of the investigation in San Vicente Cemetery, EAAF compiled and analyzed different sources of information relating to clandestine burials in the cemetery. The aim was to compile and compare the names, number of victims, dates of disappearance, burial dates, and death certificates, among other sources, to establish a hypothesis about the identity

of the victims in the graves. EAAF and the local human rights organization, *ARHISTA*, also conducted in-depth interviews with survivors from *La Perla* and *La Ribera* CDCs and relatives of disappeared persons.

At the end of 2002, EAAF conducted exhumations of individual graves in San Vicente Cemetery. During the first half of 2003, the team organized large-scale exhumations that were conducted with the assistance of a Córdoba morgue employee who participated in the 1976 burials and could identify locations where common graves had been dug. This resulted in the discovery and excavation of the largest common grave relating to the Dirty War, found in Sector C of San Vicente Cemetery. In this grave, EAAF found remains corresponding to a total of 91 individual skeletons and numerous clusters of incomplete remains from two different “floors” or layers, presumed to correspond to different burial dates.

Following the excavation, EAAF completed laboratory work at the Córdoba Institute of Legal Medicine. The position of the skeletons on the different “floors” did not follow traditional burial practices. They were intertwined, one on top of each other, with lower and upper limbs in different positions. This confirmed the witness testimony that the bodies had been thrown into the graves. Additionally, markings found in the sediment, as well as the sediment’s consistency and coloration indicated that the graves had been dug with mechanical shovels or bulldozers. The team also estimated that approximately 30% of the skeletons



(left) A tag associated with remains exhumed in Córdoba province. Photo from Mambo Productions film, “*El Último Confin del Mundo/The Last Place on Earth*.” Photo courtesy of Mambo Productions; (right) Security forces in the streets of Córdoba city during the last military dictatorship. Photo courtesy of Mambo Productions, from the film “*El Último Confin del Mundo/The Last Place on Earth*.”

exhumed in these graves most likely correspond to persons disappeared at the end of 1975 and during the military dictatorship (1976-1983).

Based on EAAF's identity hypothesis, LIDMO, a private genetic company in Córdoba, conducted DNA analysis on bone samples from some of the individuals exhumed from the San Vicente mass grave as well as blood samples from their possible relatives. As a result, EAAF was able to make four identifications of disappeared persons: **Mario Andrés Osatinsky, Liliana Sofía Barrios, Horacio Pietragalla** and **Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo**. Their remains were returned to their families (*see 2003 Annual Report*).

2004 EAAF WORK

In 2004, EAAF worked in two main areas: identifying the remains exhumed in 2003 from the large mass grave, and investigating the location of other clandestine graves in San Vicente Cemetery.

Other Clandestine Graves in San Vicente Cemetery

From February 24 to December 29, 2004, EAAF conducted archaeological excavations in Sector B of San Vicente Cemetery in Córdoba city.

Site One: The Crematorium

The cemetery's Crematorium oven, built in 1978, was one of the main areas the team searched for other graves possibly containing the remains of disappeared people. Based on previous EAAF burial findings in areas near the Crematorium and testimonies in the judicial file about clandestine burials in the cemetery, we hypothesized that the presence of a mass grave underneath the Crematorium was possible.

Darío Mariano Olmo from EAAF led a team of investigators, including Professor Fernando Olivares, Marina Mohn and Melisa Paiaro (from the Museum of Anthropology, Department of Philosophy and



EAAF members work in San Vicente Cemetery, Córdoba.
Photo by EAAF.

Humanities in the National University of Córdoba), and Alejandro Gómez, Andrés Antonio Agüero and Roberto Gaspar Ramallo. Custody of the site was provided by the Federal Police from Córdoba as requested by the judge.

The Crematorium Oven in San Vicente Cemetery is a one-story, rectangular building, approximately 29 meters long and 12 meters wide. The ovens are located 10 meters from the entrance at the center of the building, covering an area of about 100 square meters.

The excavation work began on February 24, 2004. The team could not locate construction reports for the Crematorium at the Municipality of Córdoba, but EAAF's preliminary investigation work shows that the Crematorium was built at the end of 1977 and into 1978, inferring that graves had been dug before its construction and could be located underneath the building.

The excavation strategy was to first excavate trenches

outside and along two walls of the building, digging several meters deep to reach the same level of a possible mass grave. If it existed, the grave would have been dug before the building was built. Once reaching that depth, the team continued excavating towards the building, penetrating as much as possible in order to get underneath the base of it.

EAAF labeled the first excavation area Eastern Border (*Franja Oriental*). Below the east wall of the Vigil Room, EAAF excavated a section four meters deep, 5.6 long and 3.7 meters wide. We did not find any anomalies in this section, only a light brown sediment with a medium to thick granule. Thus, EAAF concluded that there were not any signs of burials in this area.

Based on information from witness testimonies, the next step was to search along the back wall of the building. This work began on March 1, 2004. The team excavated a 3 by 6 meter trench along the back wall of the building. At a depth of 3 meters, the team began digging towards the building under its base in search of graves that might have been dug before the building was constructed.

Because EAAF was working during a period of heavy rains, occasionally the trench flooded, delaying the work. Despite this delay, two weeks after starting the work, the team discovered the beginning of a mass grave underneath the building containing articulated human remains, including a bullet fragment associated with a pelvic bone. The grave's sediment was completely different from its surroundings, and the regularity of its borders and its width of four meters, suggested that it was originally excavated with a bulldozer. This corresponded to witness testimonies.

In the second half of March, the team began digging from the other side of the building to expose more of the grave underneath the building. However, the building blocked the team's ability to remove the remains from this and other entry points that had been dug to understand the limits of the grave and to try to remove the remains. Once EAAF identified the edges of the grave, we built a fence to not disturb the functioning of the Crematorium, which continued to operate during the archeological work.

The Vestuary at the Crematorium

In June 2004, EAAF began new excavations inside the Crematorium because we were unable to reach the remains from the sides. This site was labeled the *Vestuary* (*El Vestuario*), the room where workers at the Crematorium change their clothing. EAAF began to break through the floor inside the *Vestuary* room of the building to reach the top of the grave. First, EAAF removed the tiled floor, then the lower layer of the building's foundation; we then reached the top of the grave.

The first skeletons were lying at a depth of 40 centimeters below the original tile floor. EAAF registered the remains and took photos, notes and drawings. We recorded general descriptions of each individual and the position of each skeleton in the grave with twelve points of reference for each skeleton, and sent the remains to the Forensic Medical Institute, where they will remain under custody during the laboratory work.

EAAF continued the excavations in *The Vestuary* site until September, 2005. We concluded that the burial site is a primary grave, meaning that the grave is the first place where the bodies were buried or, at a minimum, the remains still had soft tissue when buried there.

Site Two: Paradise

On March 6, 2004, EAAF continued excavations at a second site 35 meters north of the Crematorium. EAAF started exploring the area in 2003 based on witness testimony that clandestine burials had taken place in this area. During the 2003 exploration, we discovered articulated human remains located near a *Paradise* tree. We marked out a grid of 28 squares, creating a seven by four meter rectangle. At a depth of approximately one meter EAAF discovered a layer of articulated human remains and began removing the skeletons on April 15, 2005.

At the time of this writing, EAAF has exhumed remains corresponding to 40 individuals. We transported them in cardboard boxes to the Medical

Forensic Institute in Córdoba City, under the Provincial Justice, where the team conducted initial forensic anthropological analysis. Because additional remains are still in the *Paradise* site, EAAF will continue to excavate during 2005 and 2006.

Main Findings

The excavations at *the Crematorium* led to the discovery of a single mass grave. EAAF recovered remains corresponding to 53 individual adults and eight fetuses from *the Vestuary* and *the Crematorium*. The remains corresponding to 40 individuals were recovered from the mass grave at *Paradise*. We placed the 93 individuals and their associated evidence in labeled boxes and transferred them to the custody of the Forensic Medical Institute in Córdoba city of the Superior Tribunal of Justice of the Province.

EAAF conducted the laboratory examination of the remains recovered from *the Crematorium*, *the Vestuary* and *Paradise* in 2005. Based on the preliminary analysis of the remains, we observed minor signs of violence. However, many of the remains showed clear signs of autopsy, suggesting that they came from morgues in Córdoba city before 1978 (when the Crematorium was built). This corresponds to the worst period of state-sponsored terrorism in Argentina.

The biological profiles of the remains exhumed from *the Crematorium* and *the Vestuary* show a group of mature adult individuals; 80% of the individuals are males, showing a low frequency of signs of trauma. The laboratory study of the remains from these sites was finished in August 2005. This study was done in the EAAF Forensic Anthropology Laboratory at the Forensic Medical Institute in Córdoba city and was carried out by EAAF team members and students from the University of Córdoba who participated in the excavations in 2004. While the analysis of the 40 recovered skeletons from the *Paradise* site has not been finished, thus far they present a similar biological profile as those from *The Crematorium* and *the Vestuary*. The biological and traumatic profiles typically identified with disappeared people are young individuals who usually have been shot. However, this

profile does not include all of the disappeared population and further studies are necessary to be able to conclude if the remains found at the Crematorium and the Paradise correspond to or include the remains of disappeared people.

EAAF Activities at the Military Base in La Calera

In September 2003, at the request of Federal Court No.3, in Córdoba, EAAF began the investigation of reported clandestine burials of disappeared people in “La Perla,” one of the largest Clandestine Detention Centers (CDC) in the country during the military dictatorship.

To narrow our focus and determine the most logical sites to excavate, we first collected and analyzed various documentary sources including human rights archives, judicial files, and oral sources such as interviews with witnesses and survivors of the CDCs. Using archaeological techniques, we then tried to see how this information could be related to the physical aspects of the terrain.

CDC “LA PERLA”

The National Commission for Disappeared Persons (CONADEP) report describes La Perla as “the most important CDC in Córdoba Province, located on national highway Number 20, towards the city of Carlos Paz, where Cavalry Air Force Exploration Squadron Number 4 currently operates. Based on its size, surroundings and operating capacity, it is comparable to other major CDCs such as Campo de Mayo or the Navy Mechanical School (ESMA). It was incorporated to the network of CDCs at the beginning of the military coup. It is estimated that more than 2,200 people passed through this camp between March 1976 and the end of 1979. Illegal repressive activity in all parts of the Province was coordinated from La Perla. Disappearances that occurred hundreds of kilometers away were planned and ordered from La Perla. It maintained relationships with other CDCs in other parts of the country. In addition to its role as a clandestine detention and torture

center, many extra-judicial executions also took place at La Perla as part of the regime's extermination policy."⁴ Several testimonies from survivors of La Perla, including residents from around La Perla, former police and soldiers, mention possible burial sites.

The CDC was located at the Military Base in La Calera, which measures more than 10,000 hectares and where various military buildings are located, including the Army Third Command Corps.

BACKGROUND: Previous Investigations

"'The Hole' in 'Loma del Torito': The testimonies of the survivors speak of fear of being 'traslados' (transfers), which is a euphemism referring to people who were periodically taken away in a dark Mercedes Benz that would return later without any passengers. The jailers would repeatedly threaten the prisoners by saying they would be sent to 'the hole.' This reference, painful to say, suggests the extermination of many detainees by means of shooting them on the edge of a hole which was dug previously for the burial of bodies. The hole is (reportedly) located in a zone named 'Loma del Torito' within the 'La Perla' camp in the military jurisdiction of the headquarters of the Exploration Squadron of Cavalry Air Force No 4 in Córdoba. This Commission judicially required the excavation of this area which was carried out on March 22, 1984, but did not produce any findings. However, testimony from a witness, a farmer that has worked many years in the area, showed that dirt had been removed. This



A sign shows the "Do Not Disturb" order given by Federal Court Number Three to protect the site of the former CDC La Perla during EAAF's investigation. Photo by EAAF.

is similar to other testimonies, all of which signal exhumation of human remains there, indicating that the detainees 'fear for their lives was completely rational'." CONADEP Final Report "Never Again," 1984.



(left and right) The exhumations that took place in 1984 were done with bulldozers and large shovels and were carried out by officials who were not trained in forensic anthropology, causing damage and co-mingling of remains, which has complicated the identification process.



EAAF team members map the area under investigation at La Perla. Based on witness testimonies the team established two zones, Zone A and Zone B, and identified areas where burials could be located. Photo by EAAF.

The testimony of José Julián Solanilla, a farmer from the area, for CONADEP in Federal Court No. 2 presided over by Judge Becerra Ferrer resulted in a ruling to conduct excavations in the area. The CONADEP delegation consisted of members from Federal Court No. 2, the Chief Commander of Third Corps of the Army, Colonel Horacio Oscar Lullo, and witness who visited the area in March 1984. In the following days they conducted inspections for excavations in two areas. However, only one excavation was conducted and only in a very limited area. A military judge then questioned the witness and stopped the investigations until several years later. Federal Court No.3, presided over by Judge Cristina Garzón de Lascano, reinitiated the investigation for the judicial file 9.693, "Investigation of clandestine burials requested by Pérez Esquivel, Adolfo and Martínez, María Elba."

EAAF WORK

Investigation Team

The investigation team included: one EAAF anthropologist, Anahi Ginarte; two archaeology

students from the National University of Córdoba (UNC); and Ivana Wolff, Laura Lazo and Marcos Gastaldi from the Museum of Anthropology at UNC. Assisting them in the exploratory/inspection work were four groups of four students each from UNC and workers for the San Vicente Cemetery in Córdoba City.

In mapping and demarcating "*Loma del Torito*," the team established two zones, one towards the south labeled Zone A, and the other, labeled Zone B, towards the north. Zone A covers approximately 250 hectares and Zone B covers approximately 75 hectares.

In Zone B, EAAF contracted the company Landwork to remove vegetation from the area to be excavated with a bulldozer driven by Victor Escudero. Victor, who was from the Police Explosives Team in Córdoba Province, also came to verify whether there were explosives in the excavation area, which is under custody of the Federal Police.

Additionally, EAAF worked with Dr. Abril, a geologist and expert witness to Court No. 3 on this case, who carried out investigations during 2002, 2003 and 2004 and produced the report, "Research on

Clandestine Burial Sites in the Military Base in La Calera, Córdoba (Argentina) Using Digital Analysis of Images with Remote Sensors and Field Work.” To date, his investigation has not produced sites to be archeologically investigated. In his last report in December 2004, he indicates five places that need further investigation.

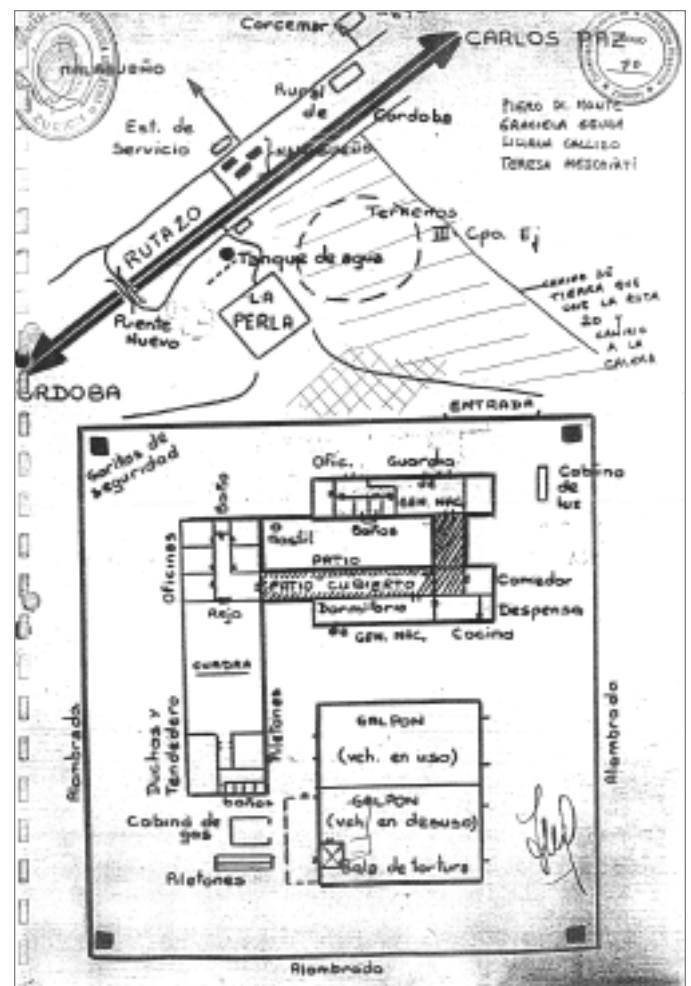
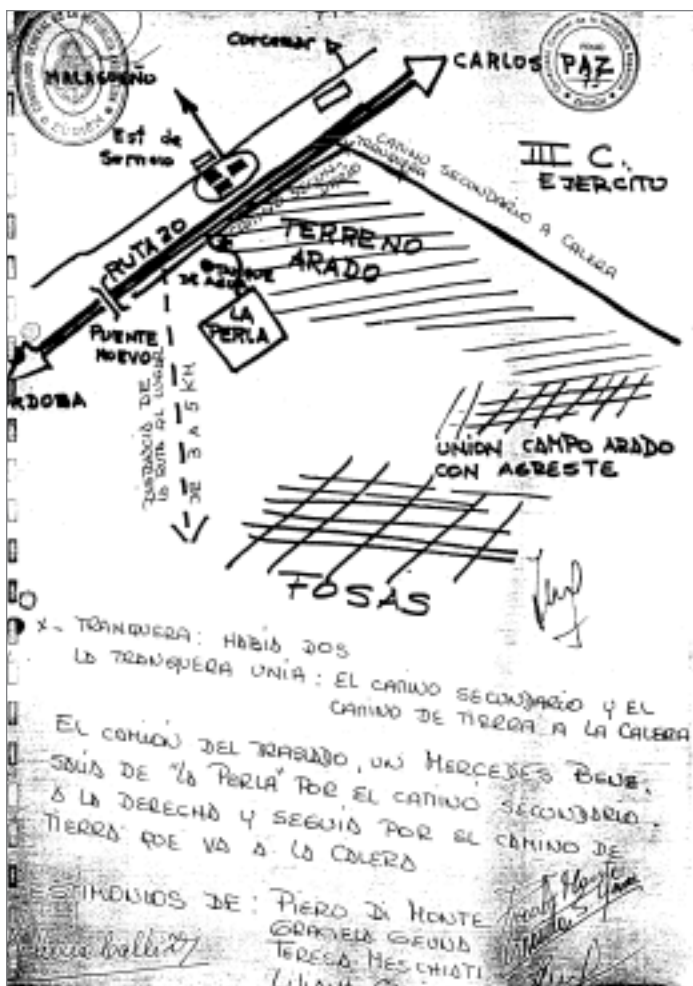
Preliminary Investigation

The first step of the investigation was to review testimony and documents from Federal Court No. 3, all of which either directly or indirectly discussed possible burial places in the “La Calera Military Base.” The team created a database of the most relevant testimony in order to analyze and establish whether the witnesses were detention camp survivors,

residents of the area, military personnel, or whether they had any other position in the armed forces.

The following information summarizes the testimonies of the witnesses:

1. Testimonies indicate that there are clandestine burials at 'La Calera Military Base' within the CDC known as *La Perla*. Most of the testimonies of the survivors are indirect, meaning that the survivors were not present during the clandestine burials but had heard soldiers speak about them. Some testimonies are more specific, given that some of the witnesses say they saw the open graves and cadavers. One witness says he was present at a massive execution where victims were shot. These testimonies are the most important for defining areas to investigate.



Graphics from the judiciary file on the claim of clandestine burials at the military base where La Perla used to operate. They were made by survivors of that illegal detention center.

2. Based on the testimonies, we can expect to find mass graves of more than 50 people, as well as smaller graves containing the remains of one to five people.
3. Reportedly there was an attempt to “clean out” or “transfer” the buried cadavers from these graves in 1979.
4. Some residents from the area reportedly know about the existence of graves.
5. Some of the survivors of the CDC know of the existence of the graves, mostly indirectly from overhearing discussions of burials among soldiers at the time, or through assumptions made during their captivity.

From these testimonies, EAAF defined two large areas where clandestine burials could be located: *La Loma del Torito* and the area known as *Los Hornos* at the “*La Ochoa*” farm.

EAAF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK Methodology

EAAF held meetings with court personnel from Federal Court No 3 and military authorities, requesting permission to mark the boundaries of the working area and asking the military to temporarily cease training exercises in the zone for security reasons. In July 2004, it was agreed that during EAAF’s archeological research activities in the *Loma del Torito* zone, military training would be restricted to an area called “Quebrada de la Cancha.” It was also agreed that due to security reasons and not to alter the surface of the terrain, only small caliber firearms would be used during military practices.

To find the clandestine burials, EAAF conducted an initial inspection of the land looking for depressions in the terrain, as well as changes in the vegetation and color and compactness of the soil, all of which could be indicators of movement of land which could indicate burials. When surveying large areas many years after the event under investigation occurred,

such as in the case of *La Perla*, visual alterations in the surface are no longer obvious. Thus, we tried to add geophysical methods to the archaeological survey to identify changes (disturbances) to the subsoil made by people (rather than by animals or weather). In general, archaeologists and other scientists trying to explore the underground layers of the soil use the same geophysical methods that engineers use when looking for pipes or oil. They look for disturbances and changes in the soil’s components and/or in its layers in relation to the surroundings. These changes can indicate that a natural or man-made intrusion has occurred. In some cases they may correspond to burial sites. In this investigation, the team used geo-electric technology, which signals disturbances in the terrain. However, a “disturbance” does not always signify a burial. Most geophysical methods point out the areas where the archeologists should later excavate to see if the disturbance is either natural, such as a rock, or man-made, such as a burial. EAAF’s strategy included using both archaeological survey techniques as well as geophysics techniques.

Our first visit to the area was on September 20, 2003. We were accompanied by expert geologist Ernesto Abril who reviewed the areas he had identified earlier for further examination. Dr. Abril explained the methodology he used and described the characteristics of the hill landscape, including its geological and vegetation characteristics.

Additionally, geologists David Aguilera and Guillermo Sagripanti from the National University in the nearby Province of San Luis and the University in Rio Cuarto, Córdoba province, conducted geoelectrical resistivity studies in some of the areas indicated by EAAF (see Zone B below).

In the center of the Military Base in La Calera there is a series of hills, two kilometers long, known as *Loma del Torito*, that extend from north to south. Within the internal division of the military base there is a pasture known as *Las Lomitas*. Most of the testimonies collected by EAAF identified this pasture and its small valleys as possible places for clandestine graves. Therefore, the archaeological exploration during 2004 was mostly focused on this area.



EAAF survey trenches in the Lomas del Torito area. *Photo by EAAF.*

EAAF focused on two places where man-made alterations were observed in the landscape: A) the low-lands around the bottom of the hills where there is farming and original vegetation has been completely eradicated, and B) the land on the hill and its slopes that has not been used for agriculture, where there is still original vegetation, and that is used as pastures for cattle. These hills have been modified because they were also used by soldiers at the base for target practice with weapons, including mortars and grenades.

EAAF Work Conducted in *La Loma del Torito*

EAAF mapped and marked the zones with sediment deposit in the eastern part of *Loma del Torito*. The rocky areas were marked with the help of a GPS, making a “track” (or path). It was highly unlikely burials would have taken place in such areas. EAAF arbitrarily established two zones, one towards to south, Zone A, and the other towards the north, Zone B.

Zone A is approximately 250 hectares and Zone B is approximately 75 hectares.

EAAF examined both areas and classified the different changes that could have been man-made along with artifacts that indicated the possible existence of clandestine burials. The man-made alterations observed included “trenches,” “machine gun nests,” “explosion craters,” and other indications that the land has been used for military practice in recent decades. Additionally, EAAF observed clear man-made structures of uncertain origins that we labeled “depressions” or “mounds.” The team also estimated whether the alterations were old, intermediate, recent or undetermined. EAAF’s analysis of each of the alterations included a ranking based on the likelihood that a grave might be found: 0 = no possibility, 1 = little possibility, 2 = medium possibility, and 3 = high possibility.

All of this information was incorporated into a database. EAAF used a GPS to measure and record the geographical coordinates of each structure. We entered this data into a program, Geographical Information System (GIS) that links databases to maps and aerial photographs to obtain additional information such as the location of the mounds and depressions labeled “hierarchy 3” (high possibility) in each one of the zones.

In Zone A, the team mapped and described 576 structures, from which 390 were identified as corresponding to “depressions of uncertain origin” and 14 of which were evaluated as “hierarchy 3,” meaning there is some possibility that they may correspond to a burial site. Thirty-seven “mounds” were identified, 12 of which were catalogued as “hierarchy 3.”

EAAF determined that Zone B was the most likely to contain burial sites. Based on the exploration experience in Zone A, the team decided to modify the exploration in Zone B, establishing subzones and tailored approaches for each one:

A) Subzone with valleys in the southwest: forest of autoctone vegetation and pastoral areas. EAAF decided to continue with the same archaeological inspection methodology designed for Zone A.

B) Subzone with hills in the east: dense forest vegetation and high pastures without cattle. Because of the dense vegetation, the existence of interesting structures and old marked paths, EAAF decided to remove all surface vegetation and excavate trenches with a bulldozer in three different sites: B1, where we excavated a total of 24 trenches; B2, where we excavated 15 trenches, and B5, where we excavated 13 trenches.

C) Subzone in the bottom of the valley: a large arid zone. We selected areas within this subzone and explored them with geoelectric technology, some of which were later excavated, including sites B6 and B10.

Los Hornos Zones, of the “La Ochoa” Farm

At the beginning of 2004, EAAF and Dr. Abril inspected areas towards the west, known as “La Ochoa” Farm and “La Estefa” Farm. This work consisted of: 1) recognizing the eight zones flagged by Dr. Abril’s analysis; 2) entering a description in the field book; 3) making a photographic registry; 4) mapping with the GPS⁵; 5) classifying areas according to their likelihood to contain burial sites as conducted in Zone A. EAAF continued working in this area in 2005.

CONCLUSIONS

The Military Base in La Calera is extremely large, covering more than 10,000 hectares. Through testimonies gathered in our preliminary investigation, EAAF located the areas of interest in *La Loma del Torito* and *Los Hornos* zone at the “La Ochoa” farm. The work in 2004 concentrated completely on *La Loma del Torito*, identifying two zones of interest, Zone A and Zone B and used diverse techniques for exploration.

The investigation work for the clandestine burials in the Military Base in La Calera advanced during 2004. Even though at present EAAF has not found any graves, this is the first time there has been systematic and interdisciplinary work done in the area. The work is still in its initial phases. It is important to continue the investigation to prove or disprove the hypothesis that clandestine burial sites exist in the area.

In 2005, EAAF hopes to excavate the “mounds” and “depressions” of uncertain origin where there is a high probability for discoveries in the archaeological exploration of Zones A and B. Additionally, the team will continue to conduct geoelectric exploration in Zone B, widening it towards other valleys in the northeast of *La Loma del Torito* and beginning exploration in the “La Ochoa” and “La Estefa” farms. Geophysicists Aguilera and Sagripanti will continue to support EAAF work on this case during 2005.

AWARD July 7, 2004

In recognition of the team’s work in Córdoba, EAAF was given the Mayor Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera award, by the City of Córdoba on its 431st birthday.

ENDNOTES

1. La Perla is located on the site of the Air Cavalry’s Exploration Squadron #4 (*Escuadrón de Exploración de Caballería Aerotransportada N° 4*).
2. 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.
3. See CONADEP and EAAF, *Tumbas Anónimas*, Catálogos Editora, 1992.
4. CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons) report, *Nunca Más (Never Again)*, 1984.
5. GPS (Global Positioning System) is a measuring instrument that reads information sent by different satellites and gives location based on longitude and latitude coordinates. Having this information allows the investigation to continue with the location having a probable margin of error of within five meters.



EAAF team members and collaborators from the national university of Rosario work in San Lorenzo Municipal Cemetery near the city of Rosario in the province of Santa Fe, where witnesses testified seeing military personnel place coffins and large black bags into a mass grave in 1976. *Photo by EAAF.*

Province of Santa Fe

CITY OF ROSARIO

On June 3, 2003, in Rosario, Santa Fe Province, EAAF was asked to serve as an expert witness on a claim filed in December 2002 in Federal Court Number Four. The court, under Judge Dr Omar Di Jeronimo, asked EAAF to investigate the reported existence of a mass grave in San Lorenzo Municipal cemetery, located near the city of Rosario. According to witnesses, in the winter of 1976, a military truck entered San Lorenzo Cemetery and military personnel unloaded black sacks and coffins, burying them in a large grave in the northeastern corner of the cemetery. This claim initiated judiciary file No. 654/02 regarding clandestine burials in that cemetery.

BACKGROUND

As previously explained, during the military government from March 24, 1976 until June 1982, the country was divided into five military command zones. Command Zone Two included all of the provinces in the Northeast

with central command in the city of Rosario, Santa Fe Province.

The commanders in charge of Zone Two were Brigade General Andrés Anibal Guerrero from February 1976 to November 1977; Brigade General Luciano Adolfo Jáuregui from December 1977 to February 1979;



EAAF excavations in San Lorenzo Municipal Cemetery during 2004. Photo by EAAF.

Brigade General José Luis Sextón from February to December 1979; and General Hector Humberto Gamen beginning in December 1979. All were located in Sub-zone 21. The Santa Fe Province includes areas 211 and 212.

The city of Rosario was an important urban area targeted by the repression, yet further investigations of forced disappearances during the military dictatorship still need to be conducted throughout the province. In Rosario and its outskirts, 440 claims of disappearance were registered as occurring during the last military regime. EAAF is working with a register of more than 400 disappeared people compiled from the list made by the National Commission on Disappeared Persons (CONADEP), lists from human rights organizations, and testimonies of family members and survivors.

Since the headquarters of the Second Army Corps and the leadership of Zone Two were located in Rosario,

EAAF worked on the hypothesis that orders for clandestine repression in Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Misiones, Chaco and Formosa (all provinces under Zone Two) came from the base in Rosario.

Through testimonies, EAAF learned that the majority of people kidnapped in Rosario were initially brought to the *Servicio de Informaciones de la Unidad Regional N° II de la Policía de la Provincia de Santa Fe* (Information Service of Regional Unit No. II of the Police of the Santa Fe Province), also known as “*El Pozo*” (“The Hole”) or “*La Favela*” (“The Shanty”). The existence of other Clandestine Detention Centers (CDCs) is known and documented. In Santa Fe Province, at least 35 clandestine detention centers were operating in locations such as police precincts, military facilities, and private houses (*see list of CDCs below*).

The system of repression in Zone Two is identical to that practiced in other zones throughout the country during those years, including mostly arbitrary and

illegal detentions, kidnappings, torture, forced disappearances, executions, raids, and other forms of suppression. The same hierarchical system was also used, with the Commander in Chief giving directions and orders to lower officers.

City of Rosario

At this point in the investigation, the manner in which extra-judicial executions of disappeared people were carried out and how their bodies were disposed remained largely unknown. In the main cemetery in Rosario named “*La Piedad*” (“Mercy”), less than one hundred of the unidentified people registered from that period seem to correspond to the profile of the disappeared people.

Unfortunately, according to the Rosario municipal records, between 1979 and 1981, nearly all unidentified bodies were exhumed from their original graves and deposited in the common ossuary. In Argentina, based on municipal decrees, if the burial fees are not paid for five years, the cemetery is legally allowed to exhume the remains and deposit them in a general ossuary with thousands of others, mostly filled with bones. Because the disappeared were buried as N.N. (John/Jane Doe), nobody paid their fees. If the cemetery needed the space, they could exhume the remains and place them in the ossuary. This made it practically impossible to retrieve them. When democracy returned to Argentina, judges issued “do not disturb” orders on N.N. graves that were suspected to correspond to disappeared people. However, these orders were not always respected.

In the case of Rosario, it was important to find out whether there were other N.N. burials in other cemeteries in the outskirts of Rosario that may have corresponded to disappeared people and if so, whether the bodies remained in their original burial sites.

If the investigations did not reveal findings, this suggested either that other locations of unregistered clandestine burials may have existed within or outside the cemeteries or that another type of mechanism possibly was employed to eliminate people who were clandestinely detained.

Work in Rosario

In 2004, EAAF coordinated an investigation team consisting of:

1. The Investigation Team for Cultural-Political Memory. National University of Rosario (UNR) – Faculty of Humanities and Arts, headed by Silvia Bianchi.
2. Gabriela Águila, Director of the History Department in the Faculty of the Humanities, National University of Rosario, who is an expert witness for the investigation of clandestine burials in San Lorenzo cemetery and led a team of ten students from the History and Anthropology departments.
3. Juan Nobile (UNR) and Pedro Mondoni (MMCSL), archaeologists from the National University of Rosario.
4. The association of ex-political prisoners and survivors.
5. Association for the Historical Recuperation of Argentina (ARHISTA).
6. The Office for Historic Reconstruction of Human Rights, Secretary of the Province of Santa Fe.
7. HIJOS, representing sons and daughters of the disappeared.
8. Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.
9. Municipal Museum of the City of San Lorenzo (MMCSL).

1. Activities of the Investigation Team for Political and Cultural Memory

Headed by Silvia Bianchi (National University of Rosario) and advised by Doctor Alcira Argumedo from *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* (National Council on Scientific and Technical Investigations), the team is comprised of 20 students majoring in Anthropology, Philosophy, Science, Politics, History, and with double majors in Library Studies, Archival Studies and Teaching.

Work on the CDC Information Service within Regional Unit II

- Developing maps of the CDC, both current and from the specific time periods, marking the function of every part of the building when it was utilized as a CDC as well as any modifications that may have been made.
- Analyzing the basement below the CDC, using the Harris matrix to understand the inscriptions written on the walls (dates, names, slogans, etc.).
- Archival work:
 - a) Maintaining a list of detainees (approximately 1,000).
 - b) Creating a chart of facts about detained people in this CDC from 1976 to 1979. This chart allows for cross-referencing between who was seen there and by whom. In this manner, we can approximate the time the detainees were there and establish the dates for the “*Traslados*” or “transfers,” a euphemism used by security forces indicating the removal of one detainee or a group from a CDC to be extra-judicially executed.
 - c) Recording and filming interviews with the survivors of the CDC.

2. Activities of Gabriela Águila and the Student Team

This working group is collecting the following documents:

- A) Death certificates of unidentified individuals, where the cause of death was recorded or suspected to be violent, such as “gunshot wound,” “acute internal and external hemorrhage,” or “skull traumatism,” among others. The offices being researched are:
- Civil Registry Death Certificates from Rosario, between 1975 and 1983.
 - Civil Registry Death Certificates from the Department of San Lorenzo between 1977 and 1983.
 - Civil Registry Death Certificates from the Department of Caseros between 1975 and 1983.

B) Cemetery books from Rosario and its outskirts: San Lorenzo, Granadero Baigorria, Villa Gobernador Gálvez, Ibarlucea, Andino, Serodino, Capitán Bermúdez, and Fray Luis Beltrán. We collected information from N.N. cadaver entries in these cemetery books, favoring those who were recorded as experiencing a violent death.

C) Press articles from local newspapers *La Capital* and *Tribuna* from 1975-1983 that had any information about shootouts and/or the discovery of cadavers.

D) Judiciary files from Federal Courts. The goal was to find claims and investigations brought by organizations and family members in addition to initial cases from 1984, as well as judiciary files in the Provincial Courts that pertain to the discovery of cadavers from 1976-1983. These latter judicial files were the official way to “legalize” the dumping of cadavers belonging to disappeared people.

3. Activities of the Archaeology Team

Under the supervision of EAAF member Miguel Nieva, a team of archaeologists led by Juan Mobile (UNR) and Pedro Mondoni (MMCSL) was in charge of the excavation and investigation of the N.N. or unidentified individuals buried in San Lorenzo Cemetery within judicial file No. 654/02.

The team found at least 34 primary and individual burial sites in its excavations of the northeast corner of the cemetery. Currently, more than a dozen bodies have been recovered, three of which correspond by age and cause of death to the profile of disappeared persons in the 1970s. In early 2005, EAAF completed an anthropological analysis of these remains and is now working to identify them.

4. Activities of the Collective of Ex-Political Prisoners and Survivors (Civil Association)

This group is made up of survivors from the CDCs and ex-political militants from political and guerilla groups such as *Montoneros*, *Juventud Universitaria*

Peronista (JUP), *Union de Estudiantes Secundarios* (UES), *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP), *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (PRT), etc. Currently, they are working on:

- Compiling a list of the disappeared from Santa Fe Province.
- Conducting interviews with survivors.
- Contacting relatives of disappeared people so that EAAF can interview them and collect pre-mortem data and samples for DNA analysis.
- Creating charts with dates of detention of individuals in the CDCs, his or her affiliations, and dates of kidnapping or detention.

ARHISTA, the Office for Historic Reconstruction of Human Rights, HIJOS, the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, and the Municipal Museum of the City of San Lorenzo also assisted and supported the project.

Other work carried out by EAAF

EAAF reviewed the record of the Rosario Judicial Morgue, looking for entries of remains that could correspond to disappeared people. This book is not complete, and it is possible that the majority of the most relevant cases for EAAF's investigation did not go through the Judicial Morgue. In Rosario, from 1976-1983, there were at least four places where bodies could have been deposited, including the Cadet School Morgue for the Provincial Police, the *Gendarmería Morgue*, the Public Assistance Morgue (*Maternidad Martín*) and the Judicial Morgue. The majority of the judicial files that could be related with unidentified bodies from that period was burned by a Supreme Court Justice order in Santa Fe Province in 2002, alleging the need for space in their offices. Today, only photocopies of the Judicial Morgue entry book remain, which EAAF recovered in the "El Salvador" Cemetery along with a few judiciary files about the "discovery" of cadavers.

Most Known CDCs in Santa Fe Province:¹

1. Mayor's Office, Santa Fe City
2. Alejandra, Santa Fe City
3. Ayacucho al 2000, Rosario City (Former Textile Factory)
4. Batallion 121, Rosario City
5. Investigation Brigade of Santa Fe City (Bishop Gelabert and San Martín Streets)
6. Women's Prison, El Tránsito. Santa Fe City
7. Second Command Army Corps - Moreno and Córdoba, Rosario City
8. 11th Precinct, Santa Fe City
9. 4th Precinct, Santa Fe City
10. 7th Precinct, Santa Fe City
11. 13th Precinct, Rosario City
12. 14th Precinct, Rosario City
13. 17th Precinct, Rosario City
14. 24th Precinct, Rosario City
15. 3rd Precinct, Rosario City
16. 6th Precinct, Rosario City
17. El Chalet, Funes
18. El Fortín, Funes
19. Industrial School N° 288 "Osvaldo Magnasco", Rosario City
20. Military Factory for Portable Arms "Domingo Matheu", Rosario City
21. Reinforced Infantry Guard (G.I.R.), Santa Fe City
22. Reconquista Third Aerial Brigade, Reconquista
23. Reconquista Headquarters, Reconquista
24. Reconquista Headquarters, Santa Fe City
25. Santa Fe Headquarters, Santa Fe City
26. La Calamita, Granadero Baigorria
27. La Intermedia, Villa La Ribera
28. Federal Police, Santa Fe City
29. Federal Police, Rosario City
30. Pumas, Vera
31. Fisherton Fifth Operation, Rosario City
32. Fifth Operation, Puerto Gaboto
33. Information Services - URIL, Rosario City
34. SIDE, Santa Fe City
35. Second Army Corps House, Villa Gobernador Gálvez

ENDNOTES

1. Snow, C. and M. Bilhurriet, "An Epidemiology of Homicide," Human Rights and Statistics, p.328-363.

Province of Santiago del Estero

On March 15, at the request of Dr. Angel Jesus Toledo, Federal Judge of Santiago del Estero, three members of EAAF traveled to the province of Santiago del Estero with Dr. Luis Bosio, a forensic pathologist and expert witness for the Medical Forensic Institute in the Federal Capital. The objective of the trip was to determine the cause of death of Ms. Consolación Carrizo and assist with the Cecilio Kamenetzky case. On March 16, EAAF exhumed the remains of Consolación Carrizo from the Sumamao Cemetery. On March 17, the team exhumed the remains of Cecilio Kamenetzky from the Misericordia Cemetery.

CONSOLACIÓN CARRIZO

In 2003, Julio Alejandro Carrizo brought a complaint to the Secretary of Human Rights (File Number 9002/03) denouncing Musa Azar, former intelligence chief of the province, for the disappearance and death of his daughter, Consolación Carrizo. On the morning of November 20, 1976 security forces raided the home on 25th of May Street, number 300, in the neighborhood of Centro de Santiago del Estero, where Consolación worked as a domestic employee. The security forces probably suspected that Consolación knew the whereabouts of her boyfriend, Mario Rene Orellana, a *Montonero* militant from the City of Tucuman.

The “official version” about the cause of death is that Consolación “was fatally hurt as a result of a fall when she tried to flee through the back of the house,” producing her death. However, the case has been re-opened, and there is an official claim of her disappearance based on testimonies from survivors, her relatives and their lawyers. They believe that she died from “torture applied in the office of the provincial Intelligence Service (SIDE) on Belgrano and Alsina Avenues in the capital.” Orellana Mario Rene, Consolación’s companion who was kidnapped in the same raid, is one of the witnesses of the conditions of her captivity and ill-treatment.

After two days in SIDE, Consolación was admitted to the Regional Hospital where her sister reported seeing her showing signs of having been beaten. When she died her body was taken to her house, and the authorities ordered her relatives to keep her coffin closed.

Consolación’s father remembers that Musa Azar gave him the jacket that Consolación was wearing when she was kidnapped. Azar, former Police Commissioner (*Comisario General*) and intelligence chief of department D-2 in Santiago del Estero, had close ties with then-governor Carlos Arturo Juárez and was named in 23 of the approximately 60 cases of disappearance included in CONADEP’s report.

Twenty-seven years later, at the request of the Federal Judge in Santiago del Estero, the case was re-opened with the proposal to establish the cause of death of Consolación Carrizo.

EAAF Participation

Three members of EAAF and pathologist Dr. Luis Bosio, a forensic expert from the Medical Legal Institute, conducted the exhumation and study of Consolación Carrizo’s remains at the Judicial Morgue. On March 16, 2004, EAAF went to the Sumamao cemetery, 65 kilometers south of the capital of Santiago del Estero to exhume the remains.

EAAF drew the following conclusions from the laboratory analysis conducted later:

The skeleton recovered corresponded to a female individual with a biological age between 19 and 23 years, and a height between 157 cm and 166 cm, consistent with the ante-mortem information for Consolación Carrizo. The identification was documented by the family at the time; nevertheless, EAAF corroborated the



EAAF member Patricia Bernardi works on the laboratory analysis of remains found in Santiago del Estero. Photo by EAAF.

identification based on the information given by the relatives who had seen her just before she died.

Based on the osteological findings in Consolación Carrizo's remains and the circumstantial background information present on her judicial file, EAAF determined that the cause of death was trauma to the skull. Furthermore, the remains also showed thoracic trauma (peri-mortem rib fractures and sternum lesions) but these were not part of the cause of death. We could not determine if these lesions were the result of a fall or if she was beaten.

Kamenetzky Case

Cecilio Kamenetzky was detained and died on August 9, 1976 in a men's prison, when the so called "escape law" was applied, a euphemism to imply that the killing of a prisoner was necessary because he/she was trying to escape or that he/she was killed a few blocks outside the prison when he/she was released. The cause of death is not included in the death certificate in the judicial file; thus, his family requested that EAAF conduct an investigation. On March 17, 2004 EAAF exhumed the grave corresponding to the Bulgarelli family (mother's maiden name).

In the laboratory analysis conducted later, EAAF reached the following conclusions:

The remains recovered correspond to a male individual with an estimated age between 18 and 20 years, with a height between 165 cm and 171 cm, consistent with the ante-mortem information for Cecilio Kamenetzky. The identification was documented by the family at the time of his death; nevertheless, EAAF interviewed his sister to obtain ante-mortem information to corroborate the identification. Regarding cause of death, the osteological findings and ballistic evidence gathered from the body of Cecilio Kamenetzky showed the existence of at least two bullet wounds from an Ithaca semi-automatic shotgun that affected the skull and thorax. The shots entered from the back to the front of his body. EAAF concluded that the cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.



X-rays help EAAF members determine peri-mortem wounds, which occurred around the time of death, and ante-mortem wounds, which occurred earlier in the individual's life. This evidence helps us identify remains when compared with information from survivors and family members.