Table of Contents

Virtual Command Center

Real-time Tool to Securely Monitor Criminal Incidents and Major Events Online

On April 18, federal and local officials in Clarksburg, West Virginia, announced the arrest of a major West Virginia synthetic drug supplier. Operation "Hot Stuff Cool Things" was a multi-agency operation of 70 agents that used a Virtual Command Center (VCC) on the Law Enforcement Online (LEO) to share information about the ongoing case. Subsequently, the owner of the Clarksburg and Buckhannon stores, Hot Stuff Cool Things, and three other individuals were arrested on multiple federal drug charges by a task force that included the Drug Enforcement Administration, Internal Revenue Service, West Virginia State Police, U.S. Marshals Service, Clarksburg Police Department, Bridgeport Police Department, and the Harrison County Sheriff's Office. During the raid, officers found over $750,000 in cash and bank deposits. The U.S. Attorney said that millions of dollars of bath salts (a synthetic drug commonly used as a cocaine substitute) had moved through the stores in the last year.

In the modern law enforcement environment, agencies need to share information, collaborate, and join forces to combat crime and terrorism. Often they need to post, track, and spread information across departments and jurisdictions in a quick, secure way for an investigation or for a major occurrence. To satisfy this need for safe, inclusive communication, the LEO Operations Unit created the VCC capability in 2002. The LEO VCC is a situational awareness and/or crisis management tool used to share information about street-level and tactical activities among law enforcement operations centers and command posts. Since its inception, the VCC has been used by numerous agencies for local, national, and international events ranging from major case management to global events like presidential inaugurations.

Right: FBI Buffalo conducts a SWAT exercise at theTactical Operations Center using the VCC.

Left: Multiple agencies monitor a NASCAR event through the VCC.

Because the VCC resides on LEO, it is extremely flexible and can be used or viewed from multiple geographic locations. This makes it feasible for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to create joint efforts in investigations and law enforcement actions. The VCC exists on a secure system for any designated audience members online, not just those physically present at an event or a "brick and mortar" command center. Through the VCC, law enforcement can effectively manage a tactical incident in real time, 24/7, with both operational and technical support. As the VCC receives and posts relevant information and intelligence, it provides a comprehensive account of an incident or event to designated law enforcement channels.

The VCC provides an events board feature that permits information posts as an event occurs and allows listing of data such as photographs, scanned documents, or any information that would be useful to managing an event or crisis. Agencies hosting the VCC can permit access to individual persons or entire agencies as needed. Even critical incident managers, such as emergency planners, can now have remote access to a crisis without having to be on-scene. Recent enhancements to the VCC capability include the ability to display incidents by specific dates or times, improved refresh rates on the screens, and improved critical real-time monitoring of operations.

The FBI and the law enforcement community as a whole have benefited from the increased ability to share vital information and collaborate—even over previously unmanageable locality impediments—by the creation of the VCC. In 2011, LEO members created over 300 new VCCs and opened over 700 VCC event boards to collect, record, and securely publish information. As an indication of its effectiveness and adaptability, the law enforcement community has used the VCC not only during kidnappings, shootings, and special investigations, but also during major events such as NASCAR races, Republican and Democratic National Conventions, a Presidential Inauguration, the Super Bowl, the Pro Bowl, the Academy Awards, and the Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort.

To learn more about the VCC, visit www.leo.gov or call James Carder at (304) 625-5639.

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To share your feedback, success stories, and article suggestions to make this newsletter even better, e-mail *The CJIS Link* staff at cjis_comm@leo.gov. Please be sure to put "CJIS Link" in the subject line.

2012 Latent "Hit of the Year"

IAFIS Identifies Suspect from 1978 Murder Case

Each year, the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division selects a Latent "Hit of the Year" and shares details about the case solved when latent prints were identified by a search of the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS).

On October 17, 1978, the Omaha, Nebraska, Police Department (PD) responded to a crime scene at an apartment where a man had been brutally assaulted and stabbed to death. The man was later identified as 61-year-old Carroll Bonnet, an employee at the local hospital.

Law enforcement officers investigating the case collected a variety of evidence, including latent fingerprints and palmprints lifted from the victim's bathroom. Officers believed that the suspect left behind the biometric evidence while attempting to clean up blood and other evidence before leaving the man's apartment and then allegedly stealing his vehicle. Of particular interest to officers was a note left by the suspect that read, "I am leaving this crime with one clue. Find it yourself. Die Pig." Days later officers recovered the stolen vehicle without incident and obtained additional latent print evidence from the vehicle for further analysis.

The Omaha PD processed all of the evidence from the crime scene and searched the latent prints against all available latent prints from its known fingerprint repository without success. In an effort to identify a suspect in the investigation, the Omaha PD forwarded a teletype to various law enforcement agencies and requested additional support to search the latent prints against other available biometric repositories. Unfortunately, the suspect remained at large, and with no new leads, the case went cold for the next 30 years.

However, in December 2008, the Omaha PD's Cold Case Squad received a facsimile from the Criminal Laboratory Services Section of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) regarding the latent print evidence from the Bonnet Case. The FDLE wanted to know if the latents had been searched and linked to a suspect, or if the case had been solved. After confirming the case was still unsolved, the Omaha PD's Cold Case Squad contacted its Crime Laboratory to determine if the latent prints should again be searched for potential suspects, since new and automated biometric technologies that did not exist in 1978 were now available to them.

On December 19, 2008, Laura Casey, a Crime Laboratory Technician for the Omaha PD, searched the latent prints against the FBI's IAFIS. In less than 5 hours, the IAFIS returned responses containing possible candidates for comparison purposes. Casey devoted several days to examining the latent print evidence and made a positive identification to one of the returns from the IAFIS response. Investigators later located the suspect, Jerry Watson, at the Lawrence Correctional Center in Illinois, where he was serving time for burglary.

As a result of the identification, the Bonnet Case was officially reopened and assigned to Cold Case Squad Detective Doug Herout. Herout coordinated with Omaha Crime Laboratory Technician Steve Vaccaro and Nebraska State Highway Patrol Analysts Angela Adle and Kim Van Den Akker to further analyze the evidence originally collected in the case. Consequently, a "Thrifty Nickel" advertisement was found amongst the evidence with the name "Jerry W." scribbled on one of the pages. Detective Herout believed this referred to the suspect and was the clue referenced in the note left at the crime scene.

After researching the suspect's background, investigators discovered that he had lived only a few blocks from where the stolen vehicle was recovered. Because of the biometric evidence, investigators were able to obtain a warrant just days before Watson was to be released from the Lawrence Correctional Center. During an interview, the suspect denied having any involvement in the murder, knowing the victim, or being in the victim's apartment. However, investigators presented the suspect with an order to obtain his deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and a DNA sample was collected. In addition to the latent fingerprints positively identifying Watson as a suspect, his DNA further substantiated that he was responsible for the homicide of Carroll Bonnet.

In August 2011, the man faced a jury for the crime from more than three decades earlier. After 10 days of testimony, the jury returned a guilty verdict for first-degree murder and possession of a deadly weapon to commit a felony. On October 17, 2011, 33 years to the day when Carroll Bonnet's body was discovered, Watson was sentenced to life in prison.

Laura Casey, Senior Crime Laboratory Technician

Douglas Herout, Detective

Laura Casey, Senior Crime Laboratory Technician, Latent Prints, Certified Crime Scene Analyst

Laura Casey began her career as a Crime Laboratory Technician with the Omaha Police Department (PD) in 1995. In 2001, Casey was certified by the International Association for Identification as a Crime Scene Analyst, and in 2011, she was promoted to Senior Crime Laboratory Technician.

Douglas Herout, Detective

Douglas Herout began his civilian law enforcement career with the Douglas County Sheriff's Department in 1996. Herout was later hired to the Uniform Patrol Bureau of the Omaha Police Department (PD), where he became a detective in 2005. He currently serves as a member of the Omaha PD's Cold Case Homicide Squad. Herout was nominated for the "Crime Stoppers Officer of the Year Award" for his work on the Bonnett Case.

CJIS Helps Identify Escapees from Haitian Prison

In January 2010, an earthquake devastated the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, injuring more than 300,000 people and leaving more than a million people homeless. The earthquake also destroyed the city's main jail, and almost all of the jail's 4,000 inmates escaped.

The FBI's Legal Attaché in Santo Domingo, which covers criminal events in Haiti, obtained biographic information of the escapees and provided the information to the CJIS Division's Global Initiatives Unit (GIU). The GIU gave the information to the Division's Special Identities Unit (SIU), which placed stops on the records so that if an escapee was located, the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) would alert the CJIS Division of the match.

In February 2010, the GIU received a compact disc containing 256 fingerprint records, including 147 complete tenprint submissions and 89 two-finger submissions related to the escaped prisoners. CJIS Division personnel processed the submissions via the IAFIS resulting in 139 matches with existing records. Those fingerprints were added to the records that the SIU had already placed stops on.

Since the earthquake, some of the escapees have gone to the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince to apply for visas in an effort to flee to the United States. When an individual applies for a U.S. visa, the individual is required to submit their fingerprints and biographic information.

When personnel at the Embassy process the fingerprints and biographic information that matches the information from an escapee, a silent hit is activated, and the SIU is notified. The SIU personnel then contact the Embassy personnel to inform them that the individual is an escaped prisoner. Embassy personnel then contact the Haitian Police. In many cases, Embassy personnel have been able to coordinate efforts with the Haitian Police to keep the escaped prisoner from leaving the Embassy until the police arrive to take the individual into custody.

Since 2010, the CJIS Division has helped the U.S. Embassy identify several escapees who have applied for visas for entry into the United States. As a result, 13 escaped prisoners were arrested and returned to the custody of the Haitian Police.

Damage to the prison at Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

BUSTED…With an Assist from RISC, N-DEx, and IAFIS

Florida Highway Patrol ★ During a traffic stop in Plantation, Florida, on April 4, an officer with the Florida Highway Patrol was talking to the vehicle's driver when another vehicle approached at a high rate of speed and narrowly missed hitting the officer. The officer returned to his vehicle and pursued the speeding vehicle for Failure to Yield Right of Way to an Emergency Vehicle. The driver of the speeding vehicle pulled over, and when approached by the officer, he provided a New York driver's license. When the officer asked the man his date of birth, the driver gave a birth date that didn't match the information on the driver's license. The officer then used a mobile identification device to get a fingerprint from the man and submitted a search of the FBI's Repository for Individuals of Special Concern (RISC). Within seconds, the RISC system returned a "red" response and identified the man by a name other than what was on the driver's license he had provided. He had 14 outstanding warrants dating back to 1995.

Kansas Highway Patrol ★ A Kansas State Trooper recently stopped a vehicle late one Friday night and discovered that the vehicle in question contained 11 individuals who were not native English speakers. Based on his experience and the circumstances at the scene, the trooper suspected that he was witnessing a case of human trafficking. The driver possessed a valid driver's license, but spoke limited English and was unable to produce any immigration documents. He also denied any previous adverse immigration-related events. The trooper was able to conduct an on-site search of the Law Enforcement National Data Exchange (N-DEx) through the state information sharing system using the driver's name and date of birth. N-DEx quickly returned information about the driver, such as his previous convictions for alien smuggling and other crimes, as well as several aliases he had used. Most importantly, the information included booking photos that enabled the trooper to positively identify the driver as a convicted human trafficker in the N-DEx records. With this information, the trooper was able to solicit the assistance of Special Agents with the Department of Homeland Security, who subsequently charged the driver with human trafficking and aggravated re-entry. The passengers were safely returned to their country of origin.

Salt Lake City (Utah) Police Department ★ In May, the Salt Lake City Police Department apprehended an individual who was suspected in a string of armed robberies during the previous 3 weeks. The man had no identification and refused to provide his name. Therefore, police officials contacted the FBI Salt Lake City and requested assistance in identifying him. The FBI used a mobile collection device to capture and submit the suspect's fingerprints, at which the suspect laughed and said, "Good luck. Have fun with my shaved fingerprints." Despite the suspect's mutilated fingerprints, the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) returned a match for the individual and also revealed outstanding arrest warrants.

The Salt Lake City Police Department recently arrested another individual suspected in a series of extremely violent robberies. The individual was an illegal immigrant who did not speak English. At the request of the police department, the FBI took the suspect's fingerprints with a mobile collection device. Upon submitting the prints, the FBI received a hit from the IAFIS and confronted the suspect with his true identity. This prompted the man to divulge details of the robberies as well as information concerning drug cartel and gang activity in Utah. This valuable intelligence has resulted in further arrests by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the FBI gang task force.

Need to Know

CJIS Information Letters available on the Law Enforcement Online

CJIS Information Letters are available via the Internet on the Law Enforcement Online (LEO) at <https://www.leo.gov/http://leowcs.leopriv.gov/lesig/cjis/general_information/newsletters/information_letter/> or by clicking the following series of links: SIGs, Unrestricted, CJIS, General Information, CJIS Informational Letters. Users with questions concerning access to the LEO should contact the LEO Help Desk by telephone at (888) 334-4536.

The Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted Program—Data and Training Aimed at Saving Lives

The FBI's CJIS Division serves its mission—to equip its law enforcement, national security, and intelligence community partners with the information they need to protect our nation while preserving civil liberties—with every program and system it oversees. Through the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Program, the FBI is committed to providing data and training that help keep law enforcement officers safe as they protect our nation's communities.

The first effort of the two-tier approach to officer safety, and perhaps the most well-known, is the long-running LEOKA data collection and its annual publication *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*. The second effort of the CJIS Division's commitment to officer safety is the LEOKA Program's Officer Safety/Awareness Training, which uses much of the information provided by the data collection to add an applied approach to safety education. In tandem, these components provide statistics, knowledge, and education to advance safe procedures for officers everywhere.

The FBI has collected data regarding assaults on law enforcement officers since 1960. Beginning in 1972, detailed facts about line-of-duty deaths have been published. Recent expansion of the data collection methods are providing even more facts that can be studied by experts and officer safety trainers in order to tailor training to real world circumstances. For instance, recent LEOKA data has shown an increase in ambush situations in assaults and officer deaths. As a result, the LEOKA Program's Officer Safety/Awareness Trainers are studying the data with the purpose of shaping future training that addresses this problem.

Since 2008, the number of officers feloniously killed has been on the rise. In 2011, 72 officers were slain while performing their sworn duties. It was the deadliest year for police officers since 1995. The aim of the LEOKA Program is to help reverse this trend with information and education that will keep officers safer on our nation's streets.

In 2011, the CJIS Division's LEOKA Officer Safety/Awareness Program trained more than 11,000 officers in over 3,000 agencies. CJIS' LEOKA trainers are all former law enforcement officers who have extensive law enforcement backgrounds that provide credibility to the training. They travel throughout the nation each year providing targeted officer safety instruction in topics such as felony pursuit situations, conducting traffic stops, and other relevant subjects for modern law enforcement.

To access the *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted* publications, visit the FBI's UCR page at www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr. LEOKA trainers can provide a full day of training or adapt topics to shorter amounts of time to accommodate conferences or specific agency needs. To find out more about the LEOKA Program's Officer Safety/Awareness Training, agencies can e-mail LEOKA.training@leo.gov.


CJIS Law Enforcement Memorial
May 21, 2012
Honor Guard on the CJIS Plaza
CHAPLAIN
HONESTY
COMMITMENT
Assistant Director David Cuthbertson
Photo Finish
Federal Bureau of Investigation
CJIS Division
Fallen West Virginia Law Enforcement Officers Memorial at CJIS