

Memorandum**Subject: Possibly Lost Veteran Data****Date: May 5, 2006**

On Wednesday, May 3, 2006 one of the employees in the office of Policy (008A) had his home burglarized. The employee discovered the theft upon returning home that afternoon. Among the missing items were the employee's personal laptop computer and the external USB storage device, memory stick, and CD's. The employee had stored files related to a VA analysis project so that he could continue working on the project at home. The employee promptly notified his supervisor of the theft and VA Security and Law Enforcement that same afternoon. As of the date of this memo the police report of the incident was not yet available.

There was no VA equipment lost but there was sensitive VA data on the personally owned computer equipment and media that was taken. Given the file format used to store the data, the data may not be easily accessible. The data that was loaded on files stored on the hard drive is identified below.

For the most part, the most critical data was stored in files formatted in SAS which is a specialized analytical software format that requires specialized application software and training to write SAS code to access and manipulate the data for use. To effectively use the data in the SAS format, the thief would have to be trained in the use of SAS application software to include access to the software package which is expensive and be trained in writing SAS code. After some discussion it was determined the following is a list of possibly compromised data files:

On the USB Storage Device

It is difficult to be sure what might have been on the external hard drive, but there was a copy of the BIRLS production file in SAS format which contained SSN, DOB and NAME for living and deceased veterans.

On various CD's

Extracted data from BIRLS as a SAS file that contained SSN, DOB, and NAME in formatted fields.

SAS files on CD which contained BIRLS' First, Last, and Middle Names for each veteran in the C&P Mini Master, using SSN as the matching criteria.

For the 2001 National Survey of Veterans (NSV) a SAS file for the entire survey dataset -
- not all contain SSN, but every record has a telephone number.

Files on CD in SAS format from VHA and VBA, and their merged file to form the administrative sampling frame for the NSV; the VHA file contained SSN, name in formatted fields, two lines of address, state, city, ZIPCODE, and telephone number; the VBA file was a subset of variables from the C&P Mini Master, containing SSN, DOB, total SC disability percentage with up to six lines of mailing address.

Related to the NSV, some .TXT files on CD in which recorded the results of attempts to match respondents' telephone numbers against the reverse directory provided at ANYWHO. These files contained telephone number and, whether or not if ANYWHO also had that number, the name of the subscriber.

Flash Memory Stick

The memory stick contains an EXCEL file: MG 07_15_05.XLS. The file had 6744 records pertaining to mustard gas veterans. The file contained SSN, DOB, name, and service number,

There is a short SAS file which contains data extracted from VHA's Patient Treatment File. A single veteran was chosen who visited VA health care on 57 different dates; for each date, there is a record which contains as many as ten different diagnostic codes describing the visit. This file contained REALSSN but no other identifying information.

Mark Whitney
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