

Close-Up on Corpses

**Forensic experts begin to sort
and study the remains.**

The DMORT team had finished the antemortem profiles. Now it was time to create postmortem profiles. These postmortem profiles were records of what the team had learned about the corpses and bones.

Team members would then compare the postmortem profiles to the antemortem profiles and try to find matches. That way, they could identify the corpses.



The remains were in various states of decay. Some were new and well preserved. Some were dried up like mummies. Some were skeletons. Others were just pieces of bones. A forensic pathologist handled the bodies that had a lot of soft tissue left. The anthropology team handled the remains that were mostly bones.

Inside the Coffins

Thirty-five of the coffins held complete skeletons. The anthropologists measured the skulls and the long bones. (Those are bones that are longer than they are wide and are rounded at both ends.)

Personal items, such as watches or blankets, were often found inside the coffins. That information was added to the postmortem profiles.

Some bodies had been torn from their coffins. Sledzik and the others did what they could to create profiles of these skeletons. They measured bones to figure out a person's age, race, gender, and height. The anthropologists also looked for evidence of broken bones or diseases. But these were the easy cases. Others would turn out to be more difficult—and gruesome.

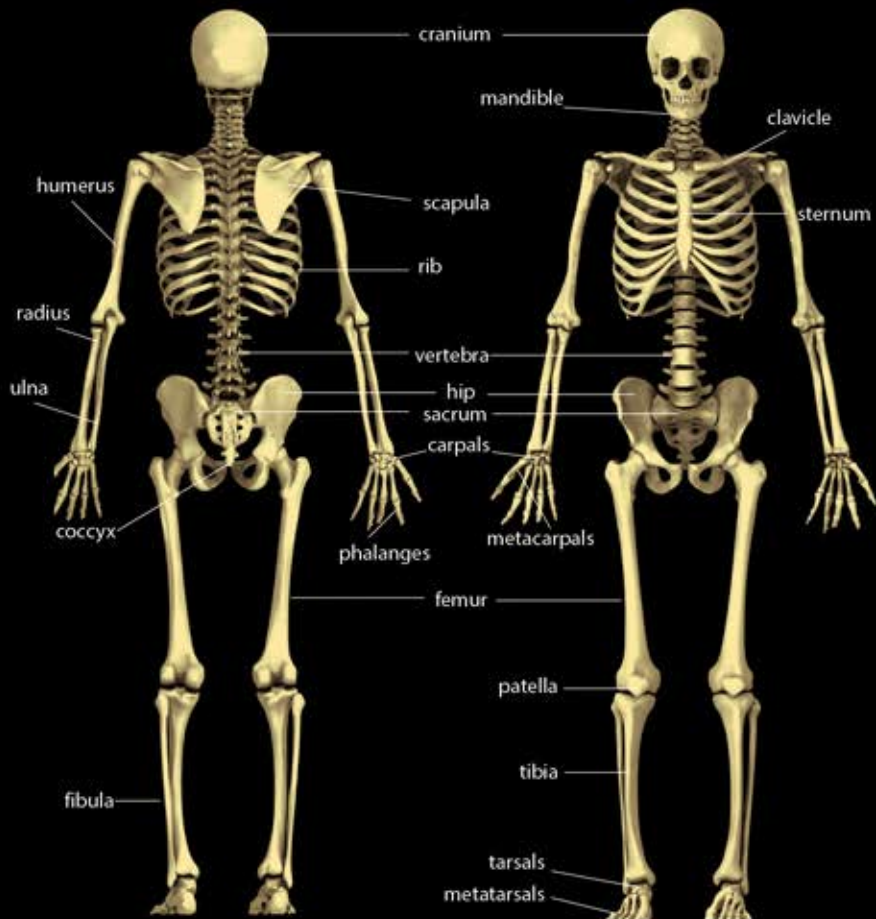


SKULLS ARE LINED UP at the morgue that was set up outside Hardin.

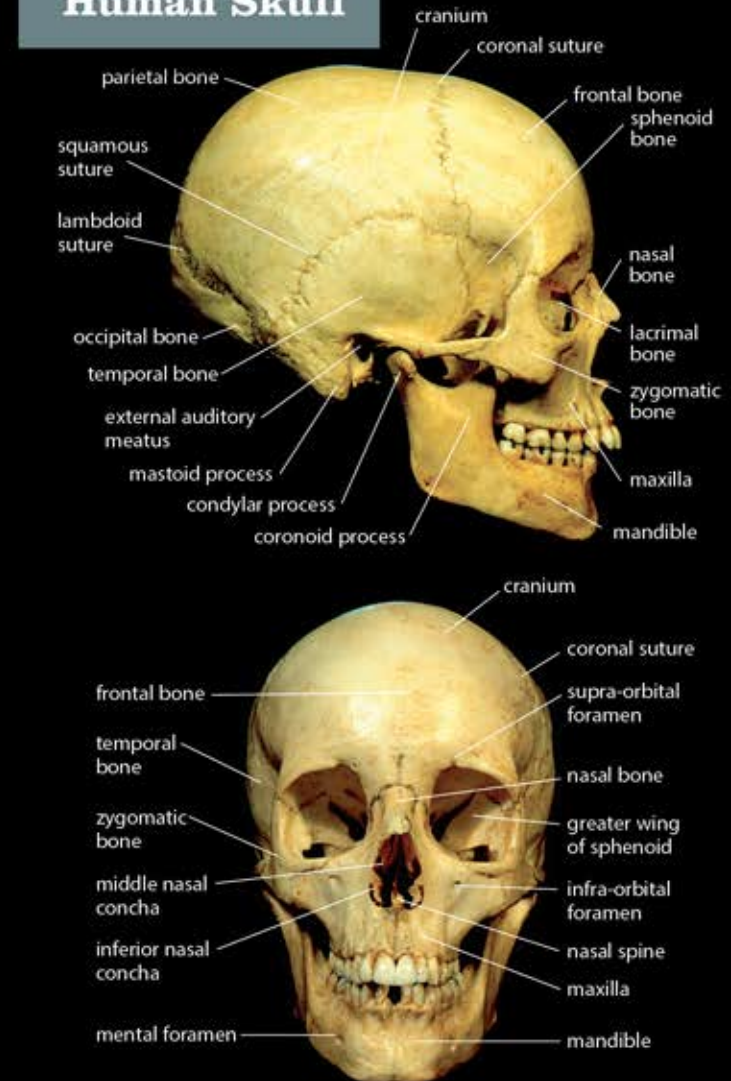
Skull & Bones

The skeleton is the bony framework of the body. When people are born, they have more than 300 bones. As they grow, some of those bones join together. Adults have only about 206 bones.

Human Skeleton



Human Skull



The cranium, or upper part of the skull, holds and protects the brain. Eight bony plates form the human cranium. They fit together at joints called sutures. The human head also includes 14 facial bones that form the lower front of the skull. They provide the framework for most of the face.