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FBI missing computers, weapons

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WASHINGTON (CNN) -- An internal FBI review has turned up hundreds of stolen or missing firearms, including submachine guns, and laptop computers, including at least one containing classified information, the Justice Department announced Tuesday.

Headline



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Attorney General John Ashcroft responded by asking the department's Inspector General to conduct a department-wide review of weapons and equipment

inventories.

Nearly 500 weapons were missing, including rifles, pistols and submachine guns, officials said.

The FBI found 184 stolen or missing laptops, including one containing classified information from two closed investigations. Officials refused to identify which investigations were involved, but said they were two or three years old. FBI officials insist there is no evidence any investigation was compromised.



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Two FBI officials also said the preliminary findings indicate possibly three other laptops also contained classified information, but they are still checking on that. Of the 13,000 laptops used by the FBI, they said 171 were missing and 13 were stolen.

Languages

Time, Inc.

The disclosures come as part of a "top-to-bottom review" of the FBI. Acting FBI Director Tom Pickard has described the process as the most thorough inventory search in more than a decade.

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The FBI attributed many of the missing laptops to a lack of documentation on the destruction of outmoded computers.

The agency said it has tentatively determined 184 weapons of various types had been stolen, most of them from vehicles during the past eleven years. Another 265 weapons have been reported lost.

About 91 of the weapons had been used in training, 66 were lost to agents who had retired and apparently not turned in their service revolvers. Another four of the unaccounted for weapons were associated with agents who were

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fired or had died, FBI officials said.

The news comes just a day after Ashcroft told a congressional hearing that a string of publicized troubles over the past decade have damaged public trust in the bureau.

This year alone, the FBI has been rocked by news that longtime counterintelligence agent Robert Hanssen spent 15 years spying for Moscow. Revelations that FBI agents failed to disclose thousands of pages of documents in the Oklahoma City bombing case forced Ashcroft to postpone the execution of convicted bomber Timothy McVeigh for a month.

Last week, Ashcroft tightened Justice Department control over the FBI by giving the department's inspector general jurisdiction over allegations of FBI misconduct. Several members of Congress have complained that the FBI has tried to cover up rather than correct its mistakes.

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