

How to Construct a VIRIN

A VIRIN consists of fifteen (15) data elements, in four (4) fields, separated by three hyphens, for a total of 18 characters, organized in the alphanumeric format NNNNNN-A-NNNNA-NNN.

Field 1 (NNNNNN): The year, month and day the photo was taken.

Field 2 (A): The service affiliation or status of the photographer. Service affiliation or status shall be abbreviated as follows:

- A = Uniformed member, civilian or contract employee of the Army
- N = Uniformed member, civilian or contract employee of the Navy
- F = Uniformed member, civilian or contract employee of the Air Force
- M = Uniformed member, civilian or contract employee of the Marine Corps
- G = Uniformed member, civilian or contract employee of the Coast Guard
- D = Other Civilian or contract employee of the DoD
- O = To indicate a person not falling into one of the categories above

Field 3 (NNNNA): In the case of all categories above except O, the last four numbers of the photographer's Social Security Number, followed by the first letter of his or her last name. In the case of category O above, 9999 followed by the first letter of the photographer's last name.

Field 4 (NNN): The approximate order in which each photo was taken by the person identified in Fields 3 and 4 on the day identified in Field 1, starting with 001 and continuing consecutively as necessary up to 999. Field 4 of the VIRIN shall reflect the approximate order of the photographs taken on a given day, without regard to variables such as media (e.g. digital or film), so that no two photographs are assigned identical VIRINs.

Example of a VIRIN: The fourth image created and not discarded by PH1(AW) John Doe, SSN 123-45-6789, on March 23, 2002, would be assigned the VIRIN 020323-N-6789D-004.

Fields 2 and 3 of the VIRIN for an image created by more than one individual shall reflect the individual who was the lead creator or head of the team responsible for creating the image.

Copies shall bear the VIRIN of the original, even if conversions between analog and digital, or changes in medium, format, compression, or size occur during the copying process.

Imagery or other units of media which are derived from existing, VIRIN-bearing materials, but which differ significantly in appearance relative to that from which derived, shall, upon creation and unless discarded, be assigned their own VIRIN.

The "Image Number" field of any embedded IPTC caption shall reflect the image's VIRIN.