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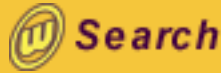


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Harcrow Tops Shanagher

The Chief Leader
The Civil Employees' Weekly
July 26, 22002

NYSCOPBA Founder Out After One Term
By Reuven Blau

Rick Harcrow was elected president of New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association this past week, ousting the union's founder, Brian Shanagher, by roughly 1,700 votes.

Mr. Harcrow, according to unofficial union figures, got 6,400 of the votes while Mr. Shanagher received 4,700, with less than half of the 25,000-member union voting.

Eye on Compensation

Mr. Harcrow, a steward from Attica who formerly held the post of special assistant to Mr. Shanagher, said he wants "to be a leader in the field by speaking to members and knowing issues." He said that his members "are still below industry standards, we are underpaid for law enforcement."

Mr. Shanagher slightly over three years ago convinced the rank and file to break away from their old union, Council 82 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, to join NYSCOPBA. He complained that Council 82 had settled for the same contract terms as state unions representing civilian employees, and vowed to deliver a "law-enforcement contract" on a par with what was won by State Troopers.

He was unable to make good on that pledge, although he secured increases in benefits and longevity differentials that he contended gave correction officers parity with the Troopers' most recent contract. Clearly much of his rank and file did not buy that argument.

Mr. Harcrow will immediately inherit a challenge prompted by dissatisfaction with Mr. Shanagher's contract that could produce the third bargaining agent for state CO's in the past 40 months.

His victory comes as Rick White, a veteran correction officer who had been a union official with Council 82, attempts to decertify NYSCOPBA and affiliate with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Mr. White and his group, the Benevolent Law Enforcement Union (BLEU) have until Aug. 31 to present the Public Employment Relations Board with the signatures of at least 30 percent of NYSCOPBA's members.

"We just did a second mailout. It will take us 30 days to review what we turned in." BLEU official Brian Fort said. "Independence in some states works. Here, for us, it's a failure. The bottom line is you have to have some backing."

'Can't Do it From D.C.'

Mr. Harcrow, who has been a Correction Officer for 19 years, contended that joining the Teamsters would be counterproductive, citing the problems CO's experienced before they bolted Council 82. "We don't need to send money to Washing to hear them say, 'We are doing the best we can,' " he said.

Mr. Fort said Mr. Shanagher "never visited any of the jails. A lot of people thought he didn't fight hard enough for us. He took the state line on a lot of issues."

Mr. Harcrow insisted that attaining a "law-enforcement" deal was possible. "I am going to give it my best try ever," he said.

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Winning is the Easy Part

The Chief Leader
Editorial
July 26, 2002

Brian Shanagher and Steve Cassidy were like two ships passing in the night last week, one on his way out of a uniformed union presidency, the other on his way in. But if Mr. Cassidy, the president-elect of the Uniformed Firefighters' Association, were able to see Mr. Shanagher as he was three years ago, he might be startled by the similarities between himself and the just-deposed head of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association.

Like Mr. Cassidy now, Mr. Shanagher back in 1999 was frustrated by what he deemed insufficient respect for himself and his colleagues as evidenced by their contract struggles, and believed his union needed a drastic overhauling before conditions would change. He actually took it a step further than the new UFA president, leading a successful bid to disaffiliate from the state correction officers' old union, Council 82 of the

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and founded NYSCOPBA as the engine to produce a "law-enforcement contract" for his rank and file.

Ultimately, Mr. Shanagher found himself unable to make good on that pledge. While he won additional differentials that he claimed gave his members parity with State Troopers under their most recent contract, the actual wage terms remained at the level won by state unions representing civilian workers. Although the man who unseated him, Rick Harcrow, made an issue of what his supporters claimed was a lack of field work by Mr. Shanagher, it would be surprising if that was the biggest factor in his defeat; contract negotiations far more often than not are the standard by which rank-and-file members judge their union presidents.

Mr. Harcrow has picked up the torch for a "law enforcement contract" in the next round. If he survives a decertification bid by the leader of another faction of the union this summer, he may find bringing home such a deal just as daunting a challenge as it was for Mr. Shanagher.

Mr. Cassidy, the new leader of the UFA, is a rarity as someone who did not hold union office above the firehouse delegate level prior to his election. He was actually able to use his lack of experience to his advantage, positioning himself as the outsider in a four-way race in which the other three candidates were past or present members of a union board that was the source of rank and file discontent, part of the wrenching aftermath of the World Trade Center rescue attempts in which more than 250 UFA members lost their lives.

Mr. Cassidy also garnered some early notoriety and name recognition for himself with his opposition to a proposed memorial based on a photograph of the three firefighters who raised an American flag at Ground Zero the day after the terrorist attacks because it would have changed the faces of two of those firefighters.

His position was popular in a department where more than 92 percent of the uniformed firefighters are white. The inherent weakness of the stance, and some of Mr. Cassidy's other positions, was that they catered to rank-and-file sentiment without regard to how they would be received by a city administration with different priorities, not to mention potential candidates for firefighter jobs from minority neighborhoods who might think twice about applying once they saw the kind of reaction his anti-statue campaign generated.

If there was one encouraging sign from the brief interviews Mr. Cassidy gave following his victory last week, it is that he appears to be cognizant of the larger world he will now be traveling in.

He made a point of announcing his intention to help the Fire Department to recruit more minority candidates for the next Firefighter exam by appearing at high schools to stress the merits of the job. This is both a good signal and smart politics; while it could be years

before those high schoolers have completed the requirements for hiring, it represents an olive branch to current minority firefighters.

During the campaign, Mr. Cassidy denounced the Uniformed Forces Coalition contract that was reached last summer - but which the UFA never sent to the membership for ratification - as inadequate, and said he felt that way prior to Sept. 11.

Last week, rather than making any bold pronouncements about how much better he anticipated doing at the bargaining table, he said he was going to await the outcome of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association arbitration before starting his own negotiations.

This stance is prudent for reasons that go beyond the political reality that city negotiators would not be offering anything above the UFC terms unless they were forced to by an unfavorable ruling in their arbitration battle with the UFA's police counterpart. Once the emotional impact of the UFA's losses is discounted - as it would be if a Firefighter contract dispute wound up before arbitrators - the PBA is the uniformed union best-positioned to make a case for a wage hike above the UFC deal, because its members are worse off than other employees when their salaries are compared with colleagues in neighboring jurisdictions.

Thus, a good award for the PBA would offer Mr. Cassidy a favorable pattern to pursue, while one that is held within the framework of the UFC deal would alert his members that expecting more is probably unrealistic.

The dilemma insurgents face is that they must make bold promises on matters like contracts to win election; once in office, they must deal with the practical difficulties of living up to their rhetoric.

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Attica victims seek justice

From: Timesunion.com 07/28/02

Albany -- Decades after 1971 carnage at state prison riot, 50 families of prison workers ask for payments, apology

By ANDREW TILGHMAN, Staff writer
First published: Sunday, July 28, 2002

Michael Smith couldn't see the prison yard in Attica on the morning of Sept. 13, 1971.

The 21-year-old corrections officer was blindfolded, a hostage surrounded by three inmate-captors, a handmade spear poking at his chest.

But Smith could feel the wash from the blades of the helicopters overhead, hear the "pop" of the tear gas bombs and a deafening roar as 2,000 rounds of ammunition were unleashed in prison Yard D at the end of the four-day standoff.

Smith was shot four times in the abdomen with one gun, once in the arm with another. The corpse of one of his captors was sprawled across his lap when authorities began sifting through the carnage, unsure who were inmates and who were jail guards.

"A trooper came out on the catwalk and he approached me and he pointed his gun at my head and said, 'If you move, I'll blow your head off,' " Smith recalled last week.

Smith, other former hostages and family members of state employees who died in the bloodiest prison riot in American history will be in Albany this week to tell their stories to state officials.

Gov. George Pataki appointed the Attica Task Force last year shortly after the state agreed to a \$12 million settlement with former prisoners and the families of inmates who were killed. The task force was set up to hear from a group representing surviving Attica prison guards and the relatives of those who were killed, and consider their calls for a public apology and reparations payments from the state.

"These survivors deserve some type of assistance," said Craig Miller, an aide to state task force member Sen. Dale Volker. He represents Wyoming County and the village of Attica, which is home to many of the 50 families that make up the group known as The Forgotten Victims of Attica.

Twenty-eight hostages lived through the prison riot in which 11 state employees and 32 inmates died. All but four were killed when State Police stormed the prison yard to end the uprising. On orders from Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, police fired into a crowd of about 1,500 inmates and the prison workers they had taken captive.

Prison officials first announced that inmates had castrated and killed 10 hostages, but autopsies proved that to be a lie: All the dead hostages, none of them castrated, were killed by gunfire -- mostly from the State Police.

Many among the group of former hostages have gone to court, but their cases were thrown out because they had accepted state workers' compensation checks and, in doing so, unknowingly signed away their right to sue.

While many survivors received medical benefits and paid time off, the group claims state officials in 1971 deliberately convinced the prison workers and their families to cash the

checks early in a plan to protect taxpayers from liability.

"It was identical to the checks we got before the riot, it looked the same, it was signed the same. We didn't even know," said former hostage Dean Wright.

Morris Jacobs, a retired State Insurance Fund supervisor from Long Island, plans to testify on Tuesday about how the money was distributed. "They had been manipulated to give up their rights to sue," Jacobs said Friday.

With no option for legal redress, The Forgotten Victims of Attica are seeking a political solution, said Gary Horton, the public defender in Genesee County who has been advising the group.

The only widow allowed to take her case to court was Linda Jones, who hired an attorney immediately after the riots that killed her husband, Hubert Jones, a prison accounting clerk. She never cashed the state-issued checks and after 11 years of litigation, won a \$1 million settlement in the Court of Claims in 1982.

The group of victims and survivors said the Jones case should serve as a benchmark for reparation payments, which could total more than \$30 million.

Also expected to testify Tuesday when the hearing begins is Malcolm Bell, a former state prosecutor who wrote a book about his preparation of criminal indictments against State Police for misconduct in the botched mission, cases which he was told to drop shortly after Rockefeller was nominated for vice president in 1974.

In 1976, Gov. Hugh Carey tried to close the book on the Attica riot. He commuted the sentence of John Hill, the man convicted of murdering the only guard killed by inmates. And Carey ordered that no disciplinary action ever be taken against police officers involved in storming the prison.

About six months after the riot, Wright went back to work at the Attica prison, where he stayed for 26 years until his retirement in 1997. After the trauma of 1971, he said he preferred assignments in the prison's observation tower rather than working in direct contact with inmates.

He said reparations and calls for a public apology are not his only goal. The hearings are a victory themselves, he said.

"If nothing else comes out of it, at least the truth of what happened will be out," he said. "It's always been covered up, but now it will be on the public record. It's part of our history. Someday somebody might want to know something about it."

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Prison guards voice complaints about conditions in new towers

By TOM ERNST
News Staff Reporter
7/30/2002

There are some unhappy people at state prisons, and it's not just the inmates.

Guards are complaining that temperatures often exceed 100 degrees inside the new guard towers built at medium security facilities - with little ventilation and no running water. "The inmates would not be put in such conditions," said Larry McCormick, union steward for corrections officers at Gowanda Correctional Facility.

The union - the New York State Corrections Officers and Police Benevolent Association - has filed numerous grievances over the issue, but it can take two or three years for them to be resolved, McCormick said.

James Flateau, spokesman for the state Department of Correctional Services, said running water and air conditioning were never in the plans and the union knew that from the start.

Air conditioning could diminish the effectiveness of the towers because of the noise factor and the fact that the windows would be closed.

"Officers have to be able to respond immediately to something that might be going on in the yard," Flateau said.

He said conditions inside the towers are no worse than for guards stationed outside, and most of the towers are only manned for four or five hours in the afternoon and three hours at night.

"And within that four-hour block is a shift change," so no officers have to spend a prolonged period in the towers, he said.

The union, meanwhile, is going public and also taking its complaints to state legislators.

Assemblyman Richard A. Smith, D-Hamburg, said he has met with McCormick and will meet with officials at Gowanda to see what can be done.

It is a statewide issue, involving 29 towers built at 22 medium security prisons at a cost

of \$157,805 each, according to Jim Littlefoot, grievance director for the union in Albany.

McCormick said the towers lack window screens, so they are havens for bugs at night.

The older towers, such as those at maximum security Attica Correctional Facility, have running water and the union has been permitted to install air conditioners, he said.

The union offered to do the same at Gowanda and other facilities but was turned down for reasons McCormick does not understand.

The officers are permitted one eight-inch fan, but it is not sufficient, he said. They can take breaks, but must call for a relief officer

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Attica widows were persuaded to give up right to sue, official says

By TOM PRECIOUS

Buffalo News Albany Bureau

7/31/2002

ALBANY - Just days after the 1971 Attica prison riot, state insurance officials got widows of guards killed in the uprising to sign documents that eventually blocked them from suing the state for damages, a former senior state Insurance Department official said Tuesday. Morris Jacobs, who retired in 1995 after 50 years at the agency, called the actions of officials, whom he did not name, "unscrupulous and shameless."

"They intruded upon vulnerable widows days after rioting, knowing they were unrepresented by attorneys," Jacobs testified before a state panel looking into the grievances of hostages and relatives of guards killed in the nation's worst prison rebellion.

State officials, Jacobs said, got all but one of the widows to sign papers that made them eligible for workers' compensation death benefits. The state then, in what he called "unprecedented" swiftness, had the checks flowing to the families within a couple of weeks.

Accepting that money, which amounted to only a couple hundred dollars a month in the years following, barred the families from ever suing the state for its handling of the 1971 riot, in which hostages were killed by gunfire from State Police storming the facility.

The visits by insurance officials violated "an inflexible rule" to leave victims alone until they can consult with lawyers to consider their legal options. The death payments came before a hearing - a first in the history of the state insurance fund, Jacobs claimed. The purpose of the push, Jacobs and others maintained, was to keep the state free from potentially embarrassing court actions and huge settlements.

"It was despicable," Jacobs said. He said "insensitive bureaucrats maneuvered to victimize the widows a second time" shortly after the riot ended.

The testimony of Jacobs, who is 81 and served his final 10 years at the insurance department as director of its claims division, bolstered the claims of dozens of hostages and family members of corrections officials killed in the rioting who came to Albany on Tuesday to demand the state do everything from apologize to offer reparations to survivors of hostages killed when the prison was retaken.

Ten corrections officers and 29 inmates were killed; four others had died earlier in rioting.

Nancy Quinn Newton, the widow of William Quinn, the first officer slain, said: "There were promises the state would take care of us, not to worry. I signed the papers because I had no income."

In nearly an hour of wrenching testimony, Newton, along with her three daughters, eloquently told a hushed hearing room of the heartache of losing William Quinn but also of the state's failures in helping victims of the rioting. "They spent more time covering up the riot than helping families," she said.

"If I can't have my father, I want justice. And you can give it to me," Christine Quinn-Schrader told the panel of state officials.

The panel, appointed by Gov. George E. Pataki, is headed by State Correctional Services Commissioner Glenn Goord and includes Deputy Assembly Speaker Arthur O. Eve, D-Buffalo, who negotiated with inmates during the riot, and State Sen. Dale M. Volker, R-Depew.

The several dozen people who came to Albany represent some of the 30 families who formed Forgotten Victims of Attica after the state in 2000 settled a multimillion-dollar federal lawsuit with former inmates and families of inmates killed and injured during the retaking of the prison. The group wants the state to issue a formal apology for its role in the deaths of the hostages, release documents the state has kept hidden that might shed light on the episode, offer counseling to victims and family members, offer annual memorial services, and provide reparations to hostages and family members.

"I've never even seen an autopsy report on my brother," said Don Werner, whose brother, Ronald, and uncle, Elon, were killed by police bullets after being held hostage for four days. Werner says he wants no cash from the state, only what he said "is to get the

truth to come out."

Besides the emotion, there were the theories and conspiracies that continue to swirl from an incident critics say was swept under the rug. At the heart of it was what critics say was a premature armed assault by police on the prison; several of those at the hearing Tuesday said that the state gave up too soon on negotiations and that then-Gov. Nelson Rockefeller at least should have spoken by phone with the inmates to guarantee they would not be beaten if they surrendered.

Eve said he will go to his grave believing Rockefeller approved the storming of Attica at the behest of the Nixon White House, which was intent on sending a get-tough message to other prisons around the country. Eve, who spoke of his hours at the prison during the rebellion, at one point clashed with Volker, who disputed some of the testimony of the day's leadoff speaker, Malcolm Bell.

Bell was the lead prosecutor in the state attorney general's office assigned to investigate the killings by police during the retaking. He said prosecutions were thwarted by State Police officials who destroyed evidence and a Rockefeller administration that wanted to simply get past Attica. He said he believes about 70 State Police and corrections department guards could have been prosecuted for murder in some cases or at least reckless endangerment for the thousands of bullets and shotgun pellets that were fired.

Bell said the state engaged in a massive coverup, in part to later help smooth the way for Rockefeller to become vice president. "I don't know whether he planned a coverup or just sat back and enjoyed it," Bell said of Rockefeller in an interview.

But Volker bristled at Bell's contention, claiming that while there were mistakes made, the "hostages would have been dead anyway" at the hands of the inmates, who he said were growing increasingly out of control by the fourth day. He also characterized Bell as the "inmates' guru," which Bell dismissed, insisting he was assigned to investigate the police actions.

"They need some closure to 30 years of pain, and I think we need to help them do that," Goord, the panel's chairman, said after the hearing.

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Other Attica Victims Seek Fairer Share

By Reuven Blau

A task force convened by Governor Pataki heard testimony in Albany this past week from aggrieved widows and survivors of state Correction Officers and civilian employees killed in the 1971 Attica prison riot who want financial compensation from the state for its wrongful actions that contributed to their deaths.

Newly elected New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent President Rick Harcrow spoke at a press conference outside the hearings asking that the victims' families "be fairly compensated."

Ceremony, Data Sought

In addition to a public apology from the State of New York for actions taken during and after the uprising, the families want to see an annual ceremony organized at Attica in honor of the slain hostages. They also want sealed autopsy reports and other documents relating to the riot to be released.

"We are very optimistic," said Deanne Quinn, whose father William, a 27-year-old Correction Officer, was the first to be killed in the riot 31 years ago.

She and other family members of employee victims formed the "Forgotten Victims of Attica" to press their grievances against the state. The group was started after a Federal court awarded \$12 million to inmates who charged that they were brutalized after authorities retook the correctional facility. The award was split among some 600 surviving inmates.

Declined \$50G Awards

Two years ago the employee group rejected a \$550,000 compensation package that was included in the 2000-01 budget. The final deal would have brought the family members roughly \$50,000 each. "It didn't compensate the hostages; just the 11 widows were included," Ms. Quinn noted. There were some 50 families affected by the riot, she said.

Mr. Pataki's task force is led by Correctional Services Commissioner Glenn S. Goord and includes Assembly Member Arthur Eve and Senator Dale Volker.

Described by an official investigator panel as the "bloodiest encounter between Americans since the Civil War," the uprising at the Attica Correctional Facility in western New York began on the morning of Sept. 9, 1971. Over 1,200 inmates seized control of the prison, taking 50 Correctional Officers and civilian employees hostage and issuing demands for improved conditions.

Rockefeller's Crackdown

After four days of negotiations, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ordered State Troopers to retake

Attica. In storming the facility, they unleashed a barrage of 2,000 rounds of ammunition in just over six minutes. Most of the 11 prison employees and 32 inmates who lost their lives at Attica were killed by police bullets.

Three decades later, family members of the slain prison employees are still bitter over the way they were treated by the state in the aftermath of the riot.

Department of Correctional Services Commissioner Russell Oswald visited their home shortly after her father's death, Ms. Quinn said. "He told my mother that he would take care of us."

Instead, state officials induced her and other widows to sign forms and death-benefit checks, legally waiving their right to sue the state. In 1983, the state Court of Appeals ruled that the widows and hostages forfeited their right to file wrongful death actions when they cashed the benefit checks.

The widow of one of the slain hostages refused to sign any of the forms on the advice of a relative who was an attorney. She subsequently settled with the state for \$1.1 million.

"I want her case to be a measuring stick," Ms. Quinn said.

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Inmate lashes out; 2 officers treated

8/17/2002

Two corrections officers are receiving precautionary treatment against infectious diseases after they were bitten, and two others assaulted, by an inmate in Attica Correctional Facility, union representatives said Friday. It happened Thursday morning in the maximum-security prison, where Omar Triplett, 22, was brought out of a cell in the special housing unit to be interviewed by a lieutenant, according to the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association.

Triplett began lashing out at all officers in the area; one was punched in the nose, another kicked in the chest, and two suffered puncture wounds when they were bitten, the union said. The officers who were bitten were taken to a hospital to begin a six-week treatment against infectious diseases, including HIV.

The two other officers were examined in the prison hospital and returned to duty.

Triplett, who is serving a sentence of 123 years to life on robbery convictions in New York City, had assaulted two officers less than two weeks ago while in the general prison population, the union said.

"The officers know the dangers they face working in maximum-security Attica. However, after these types of incidents, the (state) has never taken the necessary steps to have an inmate tested to see if he has these dangerous diseases," said Fred Kintzel Jr., the union's business agent. "The officers' families need to know if they've been exposed to these diseases, not only to protect them, but to protect their families."

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PRISON LOCKDOWN PROMPTS VISIT BY NEW UNION CHIEF

Post Star 8/25/02

UNION CONCERNS TO BE ADDRESSED BY PRESIDENT

by John Gereau gereau@poststar.com

COMSTOCK* Standing at the front gate at the Great Meadow Correctional Facility on Thursday, union president Richard Harcrow said correction officers walk the toughest beat of any police agency. "In our neighborhoods everyone is a convicted felon," Harcrow said. "Our safety is in peril every day of the week, and it's an issue that the public and legislators need to be made aware of." Harcrow was elected in July to the three year statewide position of president of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association. He was at Great Meadow on Thursday in response to a lockdown at the maximum security prison that began Sunday night and was expected to last until Monday.

The lockdown occurred after a fight between 20 inmates in the recreation yard Saturday night had to be broken up with tear gas, followed by 11 other separate incidents on Sunday that officers link to gang related activity inside the prison. "We have a gang problem going on inside that leads to this violence," Harcrow said. "It's a daily occurrence." For instance, even though the prisoners were confined to their cells Thursday as part of the lockdown, a fight broke out in the mess hall when they were allowed out at lunch time--a brawl that Harcrow said was also gang related.

Harcrow met with more than 100 correction officers Thursday. Issues of concern are always the same--officers want pay and retirement benefits equal to other law enforcement agencies like the state police. But mostly, they want to feel safe on the job, Harcrow said. That means outfitting officers with state of the art equipment to guard

against blood borne infectious diseases like tuberculosis, hepatitis, and aids. And it means having enough staffing to dissuade violent prisoner behavior. Harcrow, 42, said his 25,000 union members will begin a new contract on April 1.

He said he'll fight for 20 year retirement--a benefit now enjoyed by agencies like the state police--and an increase in salary, which he said averages 20 percent less than the state police. Mike Houston, spokesman for the state Department of Correctional Services, would not comment about the work condition of correction officers, or how their pay and benefits stack up against other law enforcement agencies in the state. "It's a difficult, dangerous, stressful job," said Lyndon Johnson, NYSCOPBA vice president for the Northern Region.

NYSCOPBA is the third largest independent law enforcement union in the country and second largest in the state next to the New York City Police Benevolent Association. Johnson, who represents officers in 15 of the state's northernmost prisons, said that while inmates are guaranteed a safe and secure environment, correction officers are not afforded the same. They deal with prisoners spitting blood, throwing feces and threatening them with bodily harm every day, he said. "It's a very stressful environment," Johnson said. "It's tough to go home to your family at night and leave the job behind." A 19 year veteran correction officer, Harcrow worked for 15 years at Attica.

Past elected offices include president of the Attica local under Council 82, another law enforcement union. Harcrow, who defeated incumbent Brian Shanagher for the position of NYSCOPBA president, said he wants to raise the volume on issues important to correction officers and do more lobbying in Albany than his predecessor. "I think the public has a right to know what goes on," he said.

"This is the most misunderstood profession in law enforcement." Harcrow said when he asks an officer how it's going, they'll often answer with a number, "like 5 or 10." "That's the number of years they have left to retirement," he said. "The job is so stressful and dangerous, they can't wait to get out."

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Officer Of The Month - May 2002

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) has announced the selection of Corrections Officer Glen M. Williams as its Officer of the Month for May 2002. A sixteen year veteran of the New York State Department of Correctional Service, Officer Williams is currently assigned to the Crisis Intervention Unit at the Green Haven Correctional Facility.

Although he grew up in New York City, Glen Williams spent many summers in rural upstate New York hunting and fishing with his Uncle Frank. Young Glen greatly admired his uncle, who served as a corrections officer at the Attica State Prison for nearly 25 years, and so few people were surprised that upon graduating from high school, Glen too joined the New York State Department of Correctional Services. Graduating at the top of his class from correctional officer training, Officer Williams served a one-year probation period at Attica and was subsequently assigned to Green Haven. Opened in 1949, this maximum-security facility located in Dutchess County, New York, currently houses approximately 2,100 inmates.

Upon arrival at Green Haven in 1987, Officer Williams quickly established a reputation as a conscientious and thorough officer who had the gift of always knowing what was going on in his area. He honed his observational skills by closely monitoring inmates and consistently displaying an eagerness to learn and improve his overall knowledge of corrections. He emulated more seasoned staff in an effort to improve his performance and exhibited a level of maturity and responsibility that far exceeded his actual years of service, demonstrated by his role on the Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT).

During his first six years Officer Williams served as the officer-in-charge of B block where he ran an efficient trouble-free housing unit comprised of over 200 men. He successfully cultivated and managed a wide network of inmate informants that proved to be a valuable resource necessary to maintain a safe and secure facility on a daily basis. In an effort to learn more about the process of receiving and releasing prisoners, Officer Williams transferred to the Reception Area in 1993. Two years later he assumed the duties of the Recreation Yard Officer and joined the Blood Exposure Response Team (BERT) which provides counseling and support to prison officers following a significant exposure to body fluids. In 1999 Officer Williams transferred to the Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU).

On September 27, 2000, Green Haven's Deputy Superintendent for Security Services, George S. Schneider, was making his rounds throughout the prison yard, which at the time was populated with more than 350 inmates from the E and F blocks. As he crossed the yard, an inmate called out to him by name and as the Deputy Superintendent turned to acknowledge the voice, the inmate suddenly lunged forward with a 10 ½ inch shank taped to one hand and a six-inch long ice-pick-type weapon taped to the other. Already serving a life sentence for murder, the attacker began viciously stabbing Deputy Superintendent Schneider in the face, shoulder and back. Corrections Officer Gary L. Mitchetti ran to assist Deputy Superintendent Schneider receiving puncture wounds to the back of the head and skull.

Acting on pure instinct and without regard for his own safety, Corrections Officer Williams placed himself between the inmate and the Deputy Superintendent as the inmate posed to strike again. He was able to stop the attack on Deputy Superintendent Schneider and safely escort him from the yard. Officer Williams then returned to the yard and persuaded the inmate to surrender the weapons without further escalation of an extremely volatile situation.

Using investigative techniques, inmate informants and intelligence-gathering skills, Officer Williams has spent the last four years helping the facility avert potentially disastrous situations. Always on guard, he states, "Violence is always an option at prison." He remains vigilantly aware of the activities and conduct of his charges. His innate ability to work behind the scenes and sift through volumes of information has foiled numerous inmate plans and actions from ever reaching fruition.

Officer Williams received the 2001 New York State Department of Correctional Services Medal of Honor, the department's premier accolade. He also distinguished himself as the recipient of the American Correctional Association Medal of Valor in January 2002. In addition, he has received numerous letters of commendation recognizing his exemplary achievements as a correctional officer. Officer Williams has served on the Green Haven's Honor Guard, ranked the best in the state, and is a member of the New York State Corrections Officer Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA).

Charles R. Greiner, Green Haven's Superintendent, gives Officer Williams his highest endorsement, saying that he "consistently displayed a willingness to accept additional responsibility whenever the situation warrants and to do whatever is necessary to get the job done. His personal integrity, dependability, and overall performance have earned him the respect of all who have ever worked with him."

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Sing Sing Inmate Slain

By THE JOURNAL NEWS
STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS
(Original publication: September 8, 2002)

OSSINING - An inmate was stabbed to death yesterday inside the Sing Sing prison yard, authorities said.

Robert Brown, 33, was stabbed once in the neck and was bleeding when he approached a guard at 9:30 a.m., said James Flateau, spokesman for the state Department of Correctional Services.

Brown, who is from the Bronx, died an hour later at Phelps Memorial Hospital Center in Sleepy Hollow.

About 200 inmates were taken from the yard and searched, but no weapons were found,

Flateau said.

Brown was serving a 5- to 15-year sentence for three counts of first-degree robbery since 1988. He was paroled in September 1994, but came back as a parole violator a year later.

The facility remained locked down while the correction department and state police investigated the killing.

The Sing Sing Correctional Facility is an all-male, maximum-security prison with 1,775 inmates.

The stabbing death was the first at Sing Sing since June 2001, when 31-year-old inmate Jesus Rodriguez was stabbed to death after a dispute. Correction officers found Rodriguez cleaning his wounds in his cell shortly after the attack.

He was conscious and coherent when taken to the prison infirmary, but he went into cardiac arrest and died after being taken to Phelps Memorial Hospital Center.

In November 1997, 35-year-old inmate Barry Shawn was stabbed three times with a knife fashioned from a soup ladle as prisoners were let out of their cells for evening programs. Fellow inmate Carlos Rodriguez, 28, was convicted for the murder in 1999, alleging that Shawn had tried to sexually assault him.

Since 1996, there were a total of eight inmate homicides in the entire prison system, state prison officials said. In March, an inmate at Elmira Correctional Facility was found dead with his throat cut and multiple stab wounds.

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Cops investigate inmate murder at Sing Sing

(09/07/02) OSSINING - State police and officials at the Corrections Department are investigating a stabbing at Sing Sing State Prison in Ossining. It left one inmate dead and hundreds on lockdown on Saturday.

Authorities said 33-year-old Robert Brown was stabbed to death in the prison yard around 9:30 a.m. He was rushed to Westchester County mMedical Center in Valhalla where he died about an hour later.

A spokesperson for the State Department of Correctional Services said about two

hundred inmates were taken from the yard and searched, but no weapons were found.

The inmates were placed in a lockdown, which means they were confined to their individual cells, until prison officials and state investigators complete their investigation.

As News 12 Westchester's Robert Wolf reports, the maximum security prison was locked down all day, while authorities searched for the murderer.

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Attica motorcycle ride set for Saturday

9/4/2002

ATTICA - The fourth annual Attica Memorial Motorcycle Ride to Attica Correctional Facility will begin Saturday and kick off a weeklong observance.

Marking the 1971 Attica uprising, the event will honor correctional officers who died in the retaking of the prison by State Police on Sept. 13, 1971, after a four-day standoff with inmates. Motorcycles will leave at 4 p.m. Saturday from Stan's Harley-Davidson, 4425 W. Saile Drive, Batavia, and attend a reception at the Town and Country Tavern on Old Buffalo Road, Attica.

A candlelight service will be held on the grounds of the prison at 7 p.m. Monday, continuing each night through Sept. 12. On Sept. 13, a Forgotten Victims of Attica Memorial Service will be held at noon by those who lost family or friends.

The Sept. 13 observance will continue at 2 p.m. in Attica Village Park on Exchange Street. At 4 p.m., the Emerald Society Band will lead a memorial march to the prison, where a state memorial service will be held at 5.

Sponsored by the Blue Knights, the event will raise money to benefit Concerns of Police Survivors.

For information, call Tony Strollo at (518) 483-8303 or Carol Wagar at (518) 276-8528.

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2 corrections guards hurt in attack by inmate

Buffalo News

9/11/2002

Two officers at Attica Correctional Facility suffered severe facial injuries Tuesday when they were attacked by an inmate, a union representative said.

The attack occurred at about 9 a.m., when Isiah Saunders, 22, was let out of his cell to take medication, officials said.

As Saunders approached the nurse, he punched the officers several times before running back into his cell and closing the door, according to Grant R. Marin of the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association. One officer suffered a broken nose, several cuts and a possible orbital fracture; the other suffered a broken jaw.

Both officers were taken to a Batavia hospital for treatment; their status could not be learned Tuesday night.

State Police are investigating for possible criminal charges. Saunders is serving a five- to 10-year sentence for robbery conviction in New York City, according to state records.

"This unprovoked attack by the inmate underscores the dangers of working in New York State's prison system," said Marin, the union's western region vice president. "Many of the inmates are mentally unstable and they need little or no reason to strike out against the officers or staff."

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Prisoners Have a Beef With 'the Loaf'

Let Them Eat Cake

Prisoners Have a Beef With 'the Loaf'

Commentary

By John Stossel

Sept. 13 — The Eighth Amendment to our Constitution says even if we've broken the law, our government can't inflict cruel and unusual punishment on us. Some prisoners say that's exactly what's going on when they're given "the loaf."

"The loaf" is bread with milk, carrots and potatoes added for nutrition, so it's a full meal. At some prisons, inmates who keep misbehaving get the loaf with water and raw cabbage, instead of regular prison food.

Corrections officers say they need tools like the loaf because managing prisoners is a scary job. Some prisoners feel they have nothing left to lose — maybe they're in for life or maybe they're just angry people. After weightlifting all day, some of them are HUGE. At many prisons, prisoners outnumber guards 10 to 1, and guards are unarmed because no one wants a prisoner to get hold of a gun.

So, to keep order, prisons develop systems of reward and punishment. Good behavior gets you privileges, like more outdoor exercise time, or the ability to work at a job for money. Bad behavior means you lose something — maybe TV time, headphones, phone time, or family visits, or finally, in a few states, regular prison meals. Hence the loaf.

Prison officials say they need the loaf because even when they put prisoners in solitary confinement, some still act out.

"They throw feces. They spit it out of their mouths," said Courtney Bennett, a New York corrections officer.

"I've been hit with urine, feces," said Mark Lee, another New York corrections officer.

Many guards have been hit, but they say it's much better since they started using the loaf.

Bennett said the loaf works better than solitary confinement in disciplining prisoners.

"The way to a man's heart is his stomach. That's the saying," said Bennet. "If it isn't any good, they'll straighten up to get a regular meal."

Food as Punishment

But now prisoners are suing the prison system, claiming the loaf is cruel — "causing pain and suffering." For that and other injustices, they want millions of dollars in damages.

Some prison-reform advocates, like Jennifer Wynn of the Correctional Association, author of *Inside Rikers*, agree with the suits.

"When you come across inmates who are living on bread and water in solitary

confinement, you know it's terrible," said Wynn.

But the loaf has carrots and potatoes in it. Is this cruel and unusual punishment?

"Absolutely. The loaf is using food as punishment," Wynn said.

Wynn said the prisoners who throw their feces are mentally ill and should get counseling.

The prison guards laugh at Wynn's suggestion.

"You can counsel them all day. But they're still going to throw," said Bennett.

"They do get counseling if they ask for it. But they don't want it," Bennett said. "They want to throw feces ... You walk off the gallery and all of a sudden you're dripping with urine and feces and they're talking about the loaf as inhumane. Walking off the gallery with feces on you is inhumane."

The prison gave me a sample of the loaf. I was surprised. It tastes fine — just like bread.

The loaf is cruel and unusual? Give me a break.

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31 years later, deadly prison riot recalled

By TODD FIELDING

Buffalo News

Wyoming County Correspondent

9/14/2002

MARK MULVILLE/Buffalo News

Corrections officers came from far and wide to the memorial service in front of the Attica Correctional Facility. The Attica uprising took place from Sept. 9 to 13, 1971.

ATTICA - On a clear, sunny afternoon Friday, Raymond Bogart and Tony Prave somberly gave thanks that they are still alive.

The former Attica Correctional Facility prison guards knew others who didn't survive the

1971 prison riot of Sept. 9 to 13, the worst of its kind in U.S. history.

Eleven state employees died during the tragedy, which took 43 lives in all.

"I'm fortunate to be here," said Prave, who was stabbed in the stomach by an inmate on Sept. 13, 1971, but survived. "There's a lot of others who can't be."

Prave and Bogart made the trip to Attica from Auburn to mark the 31st anniversary of the riot, along with the families of survivors from the riot and corrections officers from throughout the United States.

An afternoon of events to mark the occasion Friday was sponsored by the Forgotten Victims of Attica group and the New York State Corrections Officers and Police Benevolent Association.

For the survivors of the Attica riot, the tragedy has resonated for the last 31 years.

"I'm very thankful that I survived," said Bogart, who was wounded Sept. 9 in Yard A of the facility. "I'm saddened by the way the state has treated us. I feel sadder for the widows."

A first-year corrections officer at the time of the riot, Bogart gave thanks to his family, including his wife of 46 years, Catherine; four children; and eight grandchildren. "To this day, I do not know how we got out," Bogart said.

He said prison guards had feared that the riot was going to happen, because of inmate overcrowding. "I hated to go to work," Bogart said. "We knew something was going to happen."

Friday's program included a memorial service at the correctional facility, along with a welcome ceremony with several guest speakers in Attica Village Park.

"Even though today marks one of the most painful events of our lives, we are making progress," said Michael Smith, a former Attica corrections officer and prison riot hostage, who spoke to residents at the park.

Events Friday also included a march to the prison, where a state ceremony was held.

Several speakers echoed calls by the survivors group to support the families of victims who lived through the tragedy.

"Together, we can show the State of New York that these hostages and their families are not expendable and deserve justice and closure," said Richard Harcrow, president of the corrections officers association.

Jonathan Gradass, executive director of the New York State Defenders Association, said he remains hopeful that the group's five points will be addressed by the state.

The group has called for an official apology from the state; the opening of prison records regarding the riot; counseling for those affected by the riot; a memorial service every Sept. 13, when the prison was retaken; and compensation deemed fair by the victims' families.

He praised survivors for their patience during the past more than three decades.

Group members have lobbied state leaders in Albany and testified during hearings in Rochester.

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ATTICA'S 'FORGOTTEN' KIN

By JENNIFER FERMINO
NY Post

September 16, 2002 --

Three decades after the bloodiest prison riot in American history, questions linger about the state's treatment of the widows and survivors of Attica employees who died in the uprising.

Family members of slain Attica employees and surviving prison guards gathered at the upstate prison last week to remember the 31st anniversary of the bloody, four-day standoff on Sept. 13, 1971.

Eleven state correctional employees were killed, 10 of them when State Police opened fire in the prison courtyard under direct orders from Gov. Nelson Rockefeller. The troopers' indiscriminate firing killed a total of 39; four more people were killed earlier in the siege.

While Attica inmates received a \$12 million settlement from the state in 2000, after a long legal battle, the employees' widows say they have been completely ignored. Gov. Pataki recently set up a task force to examine their claims and ordered a panel of experts to come up with ways to compensate the guards or their survivors.

The employees' survivors have formed Forgotten Victims of Attica to press their case. In

addition to an official apology and the unsealing of state records on the riot, they want compensation of at least \$250,000 per victim, the exact amount paid by the state for each inmate killed or wounded.

The widow of correction officer William Quinn, who was beaten to death by inmates at the start of the riot, said she was grief-stricken and in shock when, soon after her husband's death, she accepted workers' compensation death benefits of \$56 a week.

Her daughter, Dee Quinn, said the state had been quick to pay the benefits, knowing full well that as soon as the survivors cashed them in, they would be precluded from suing the state.

"[New York] shuffled checks out as fast as they could," said Quinn. "My mother cashed a check she thought was [her husband's] paycheck."

One of the widows refused the benefits and sued the state in 1984. She was awarded \$1 million.

Genesee County Public Defender Gary Horton, one of the leaders of the survivors' group, said they "deserved better treatment than this."

"These people were law enforcement - they're the heart and soul of it," he said. "You'd think the state would have cared for them."

A member of Pataki's task force, Republican state Sen. Dale Volker (R-Erie), said the widows accepted the benefits because "they needed the money." But he denied that state officials had pressured them to accept.

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Clinton prison locked down for search, drug-testing of inmates

Department of Correctional Services

Glenn S. Goord, Commissioner

Contact: Spokesman James B. Flateau at 518-457-8182

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2002

Clinton prison locked down for search, drug-testing of inmates

The main section of Clinton Correctional Facility was locked down at 3 p.m. today to begin a facility wide search that will include the random drug testing of approximately 300 inmates, Commissioner Glenn S. Goord announced this afternoon.

The lock down affects the main complex housing 2,070 inmates in this maximum-security prison that opened in 1845 in Dannemora in Clinton County. The adjoining annex housing 831 inmates is unaffected by the actions in the main.

This is the first time that a state prison lock down has been accompanied by a random, computer-selected drug testing of inmates. Approximately 4,600 Clinton inmates are drug tested annually, with an average 9 percent positivity rate over 2000 and 2001. In the first six months of this year, the rate has risen slightly to 10 percent. In addition, five inmate-on-inmate assaults at Clinton this month appear to be drug-related. No further comment will be made on those incidents until the investigations are completed.

"Clinton's staff is among the best in their vigilance in detecting contraband and preventing its introduction into our facilities, thereby decreasing the incidence of inmate-on-inmate violence," the Commissioner said.

Inmate searches uncovered 262 items of contraband in Clinton during 1996 but that had dropped to 117 last year (down 55 percent). And while there were 141 inmate-on-inmate assaults at Clinton in 1996, there were 74 last year (down 48 percent). Overall, the number of all types of incidents at Clinton has declined from 496 in 1996 to 313 last year (down 37 percent).

Commissioner Goord said, "Clinton remains a safe and secure prison and I intend to keep it that way. My intention is to come down hard and early on inmates who engage in conduct that could endanger staff or inmates. Inmates who violate prison rules and their outside drug sources can be creative. For the protection of employees and other inmates, we intend to be more creative in our response. Any inmate testing positive for illegal drugs will be subject to the strongest Departmental or criminal charges possible - as will those found in possession of contraband, especially drugs or weapons. We will intensify both our inmate drug testing and cell searches at Clinton."

During a lock down, inmates are confined to their cells around-the-clock except for medical care or visits. Meanwhile, staff will conduct a search for contraband in all common areas of the prison as well as in all inmate cells. The lock down of the main complex is expected to continue through at least Monday. The last lock down at Clinton was from Dec. 23-27, 2001.

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Correction officers union sees safety problems at Southport

Prison administrator says most issues are being discussed at meetings.

By SALLE E. RICHARDS

Star-Gazette

The union representing correction officers at Southport Correctional Facility say workers' safety concerns aren't being addressed by prison administrators.

But Southport Superintendent Michael McGinnis said the issues are being addressed at labor-management meetings and safety is his No. 1 concern.

In a letter to the Star-Gazette, officials of the New York State Correctional Officers and Benevolent Association Inc. outlined several "serious safety conditions" at the maximum security prison, which has about 1,000 prisoners in 23-hour solitary lockup. Some conditions, they say, have been ignored by the administration for more than a year.

The union, with about 267 officers and 63 sergeants at Southport Correctional Facility, charges:

Some inmates in high-security risk solitary lockdown status have been put in cells formerly used by inmates with a lower security risk. The higher-risk inmates are ripping metal seats off their fittings and then using them to break through the wall of the adjoining cell.

Correction officers said they are worried that inmates might get into an adjoining cell if they are small enough to squeeze through holes in the walls.

Inmates are making weapons out of the plastic food trays that have replaced the foam trays. The administration says it's too expensive to return to foam trays.

The administration won't put plastic sheets over the front bars of the cells of inmates who throw urine and feces at staff, citing ventilation concerns.

The administration has done nothing about union contentions that inmates are receiving comic books soaked with a solution of heroin and officers handling the mail are becoming sick from the exposure.

McGinnis said the first three issues are being addressed in labor-management meetings. He denied that there is an imminent safety issue.

"No one is going to escape," McGinnis said of the contention that inmates may dig through walls to an adjoining cell.

McGinnis said state police have looked into the issue of drug-soaked comic books and have found nothing to substantiate the charge.

James Flateau, spokesman for the New York State Department of Correctional Services, refused to comment on the union's issues.

Joseph Green, business manager for the officers' union, said the administration's response to their repeated requests to increase safety at the facility doesn't go far enough and is typical of their lack of concern for correction officers' safety.

"I thought the facility would've done something about it from the beginning. They don't care about the officers. They want to react to things after they happen and don't want to take any preventive measures," Green said. "There are simple, reasonable things they should be doing."

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Union head wages battle to improve conditions

By TOM ERNST
News Staff Reporter
9/23/2002

ATTICA - The new president of the union representing guards at state prisons feels it necessary to point out "we're the good guys" - as opposed to the murderers and rapists on the other side of the bars.

Perhaps that situation illustrates how far he feels the union has to go to get the respect it deserves.

Richard Harcrow, who has been a corrections officer for 19 years, the last 15 at Attica Correctional Facility, recently took office as president of the 24,600-member New York State Corrections Officers & Police Benevolent Association. The officers watch over 67,000 inmates in 70 state prison facilities.

He said the prison administration "makes it very clear that there is more concern, consideration and rights given to inmates - the convicted felons that society saw fit to remove from our streets - than the loyal and dedicated men and women who patrol our prisons."

"That is no exaggeration," Harcrow said in a recent interview.

The administration "turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to our concerns," he said.

Harcrow feels he was elected to change that.

But a spokesman for the state Department of Correctional Services took issue with many of his statements.

"The best way to advance the cause of our employees is to tell the truth," James Flateau said. "And that is that New York provides more safety and security for its correctional employees than any other state in the nation."

Harcrow, 43, a resident of a Buffalo suburb (he would prefer the inmates didn't know which one), was elected to a three-year term, defeating Brian Shanagher in a run-off election.

The union was formed in 1999 and replaced the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees as the corrections officers' bargaining unit.

The original union was a "paper tiger" and "company union," Harcrow said, but the new organization is determined to win improved wages and working conditions for its members.

Corrections officers routinely are assaulted by inmates and subjected to AIDS and other diseases. "We risk our lives every day," said Harcrow, who said he has been fortunate and has only been assaulted once.

Beginning salaries are in the \$30,000 range, and young officers typically are assigned to the mid-Hudson region and live in "shanty towns" and even in cars for several years while supporting families living elsewhere until they have enough seniority to move back to their home area, Harcrow said.

It takes 20 years to get to the \$50,000 range, while officers in New Jersey and Massachusetts are making \$60,000 after 10 years, he said.

Corrections officers should be paid on a par with state troopers, he said. "They (troopers) do a great job, but our jobs are 10 times more stressful."

Flateau said that the issue of salaries is handled by the governor's office but that the union has its own contract to blame for the fact that some young officers live far from home.

The fact that jobs are determined by seniority under the contract dictates where the newest officers are assigned, Flateau said.

Some housing is provided, and that is more than most states do, he said.

Assaults on prison staff average three per day, or more than 1,000 a year, Harcrow said.

"That is simply not true," Flateau responded. In fact, he said, the number has been steadily declining and there were 686 assaults last year. The last time it was more than 1,000 was 1992, he added.

The average life expectancy of a corrections officer is 57, compared with 77 for the average American, Harcrow said.

He said the state should have more programs to deal with stress and health issues but also acknowledged officers could do more to take advantage of the programs that are offered.

The state also has been slow to issue protective equipment such as gloves and stabproof vests, he said.

Flateau said the state has spent millions of dollars in the past few years to provide such equipment and also has invested in machines that perform body searches so officers aren't required to do them.

The rate of AIDS and tuberculosis has been declining and the construction of disciplinary units also increases officer safety, Flateau said.

The union has achieved binding arbitration and officers are eligible for a 75 percent disability if they develop AIDS or hepatitis due to their jobs or serious heart disease, whether job-related or not, he said.

"I don't intend to belittle the risks. They have the toughest job of any employee in the state," Flateau said. "But the best way to solve problems is to work together and educate the public with facts."

Harcrow said the union is willing to work with the state but in the meantime wants to make the public aware of the conditions its members face.

He said the officers' unofficial motto is: "Hope you come out the same way you go in."



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