

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

**INMATE DISTURBANCES
STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
AT CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA
OCTOBER 25-27, 1989**

**OCTOBER 25, 1989
DAY 1**

- At approximately 2:50 pm on October 25, 1989 there was a large movement of inmates in the yard between housing groups II and III.
- During the mass movement, an altercation and assault on an officer at "E gate" occurred.
- Other officers attempted to detain the assaulting inmate and were overwhelmed by other inmates in the yard.
- Very quickly, inmates began to chase all officers within the yard and assault them. Other inmates simultaneously began to riot, set fires and loot the kitchen, commissary and auditorium that access the yard.
- An emergency alert was sounded throughout the institution and other parts of the institution were secured, other officers responded to "E gate".
- Inmates who were in the cell blocks were ordered in their cells but when the door to "E block" was opened, inmates overcame the officers in the block and took keys and opened the doors to the other blocks that access the yard where the rioting was ongoing.
- State Police are Notified
- Inmates take control of "E gate" before a contingent of correctional officers can arrive with weapons from the armory.
- Inmates also take control of the kitchen, dining room, gym and dispensary.
- A vehicle in the yard is "hot wired" and used to crash the gate to gain access to the correctional industries building where supplies were used to set fires to the gym, auditorium, dining hall and the correctional industries shops.
- Hostages are displayed in the yard and taken to the front of "H block".
- State Police arrive in sufficient force to establish a sweeping maneuver and clear inmates from the modular units and to rescue a correctional officer from the commissary. They also establish sufficient presence to regain control of "E gate".
- The Deputy for Treatment negotiated for return of the hostages in return for a meeting of inmate leaders and the Superintendent for 1:00 pm the next day.
- At approximately 9:00 pm PSP helicopter flies over yard where inmates are "camped" and instructs inmates to return to their cells.
- At approximately 10:00 pm a large contingent of correctional and State Police officers enter through "E gate" and begin a sweep of the yard and each of the cell blocks.
- By 11:00 pm the local news stations carry the Superintendent's remarks that the situation at Camp Hill is under control and the facility is secured.
- Sometime during the night a decision is made to release the large number of State Police officers with exception of a small contingent (approximately 25 troopers) to be housed outside the facility. About the same time, a decision is also made not to shakedown the cells and search cell blocks until the next day.

**OCTOBER 26, 1989
DAY 2**

- Throughout the morning hours a damage assessment of the facility was conducted and the inmates were served meals in their cells. As the videotaping and documentation of the damage to the support buildings was conducted, and repairs to the perimeter fence were begun.
- The Superintendent met with inmate leaders at 1:00 pm but the meeting was cut short at 2:00 pm so that the Superintendent and staff could return to the Central Office building to receive a phone call from the Governor.
- The 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm shift reported with only 15 of 24 officers present due to injuries from the night before. No officers from the previous shift were held over and no additional officers were called in.
- At 6:00 pm the Superintendent conducted a press conference that was covered by the local media. The inmates viewed the Superintendent's interview and were outraged by his remarks that inmate demands would not be satisfied.
- The Lieutenant who was the shift commander was uneasy. He had received several reports that the block officers could see inmates coming out of their cells by manipulating the uncovered cell locking mechanisms. He gave word that if inmates begin to come out of their cells officers are to flee.
- At approximately 7:00 pm the inmates angered by the Superintendent's television remarks begin to break out of their cells in mass. The Lieutenant calls the officers in the blocks by radio and instructs the officers to leave the blocks locked and report to "E gate". All but two officers left the blocks just ahead of rioting inmates. The officers either left the institution grounds via the main gate or ran for safety to the Control Center located with the institution perimeter.
- The inmates again capture "E gate" and proceed to the modular units and to the Group I housing units freeing other inmates while setting fire to the modular units.
- Rioting inmates proceed to the Group I area of the facility and charge the Control Center. They gain access to the control center by removing the air conditioning units in the windows. Inmates set fire to the Control Center forcing staff to evacuate to the roof of the building.
- The contingent of State Police formed outside the Main Gate and are denied quick access to the facility while there is a discussion about the type of shot gun pellet that is to be carried into the facility. The gate sergeant opens the gate for the State Police to enter.
- The State Police establish a skirmish line between the Main Gate and the Control Center. They use a ladder to rescue 50 staff and inmates from the roof of the burning Control Center.
- The State Police sent out a call for assistance and they begin to move inmates back to "E gate".

October 27, 1989

Day 3

- Throughout the night a massive number of State Police are assembled inside the facility and they begin to sweep the institution a section at a time forcing inmates back into the yard between Group II and III housing units. Local Police are utilized to secure the perimeter of the facility.
- At approximately 6:15 am after the balance of the facility is secured, a large water cannon is used to wash out the barricades at "E gate" and an assault on the inmates in the yard is made. At the same time State Police officers coordinate the assault on the yard by using tunnel under the kitchen area to take the dining facility and enter into the yard.
- By 7:00 am a large show of force by the State Police is in place in the yard between Groups II and III and inmates are instructed by megaphone to "crawl to the center of the yard".
- The inmates are returned to their cells from the open yards after the cells and cell blocks are emptied. The State Police are assigned to assist correctional staff to guard each cell block.
- All of the institution cell blocks are swept for contraband and cells secured with chains and padlocks.