

# THE PHOENIX

HARRISBURG, PA., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1989

## Prison rampage subdued again

The drama continues at dawn

"I was shocked. I couldn't believe that this could happen again in 24 hours."

—A staffer

Description of Incident, in Detail: (use other side if necessary)

On October 26, 1989, I worked the South Tower (16 hours) overtime. I worked the 2-10 shift + the 10-6 shift. At approximately 1915 hours the riot began. I observed the fire being set and the institution burning at different places. The fires were all night long. I was relieved at 0600 hours on October 27, 1989.

Staff believed it was over, a witness says

'Last night was a riot . . . tonight a war'

## *Forward*

The Communications Committee brings this special edition of the Phoenix to you in observance of the 25th anniversary of the riots that took place here at SCI Camp Hill between October 25 and 27, 1989.


From the institution's beginning as the Industrial School at White Hill for Young Offenders in 1941, to its designation as a State Correctional Institution in 1959, to its conversion to the Central Diagnostic and Classification Center in 1977, through the catastrophe in 1989, to the present day, SCI Camp Hill stands as one of Pennsylvania's keystones in corrections that has withstood the tests of time.

While buildings burned and physical structures collapsed in 1989, many acts of courage and heroism emerged from our staff. Through the devastation, the institution and the Department as a whole reemerged with a new focus on avoiding such an event in the future.

In this issue, we hope to share with you the memories of the institution's beginnings, memories of the event that has forever changed us and look at the lessons learned from the event. We hope that through this issue you may be inspired to remember the unsung heroes of this event, be inspired to take pride in the institution where you work and further understand your role in ensuring an event of this scale never happens again.



---



*“Success is not built on success. It’s built on failure. It’s built on frustration. Sometimes it’s built on catastrophe.”*

*-Sumner Redstone*

---

## Superintendent's Message

By: Laurel Harry

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Camp Hill riots is on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. There are only approximately 35 employees still working in the DOC who were employed at Camp Hill during 1989.....approximately 20 of those staff are still working here at Camp Hill.

Many of these individuals were just starting off their correctional careers. For those of us who were not here during that time, we can't even imagine what that experience would've been like, especially as a relatively new employee. These remaining staff and those who came after the riots have seen significant changes in Corrections over these past 25 years but will always be reminded of the memories and experiences from the riots.

Our institution looks quite different than it did 25 years ago.....new buildings.....new fences.....new technology.....new faces. The 1989 riots undoubtedly were an indelible mark on the history of the institution and the Department of Corrections. As Lt. Williams pointed out, our first priority is to keep the public safe...and despite the dangers and challenges of those three days, "The security staff held the perimeter and the public remained safe."

Governor Robert P. Casey stated on October 28, 1989, "I have always had great respect for police officers, volunteer firemen and other emergency volunteers. But my respect and admiration was only increased by the unselfish dedication of the men and women who, sometimes at the risk of their own lives, contributed so much to bringing the Camp Hill emergency to an end. Without much professionalism and teamwork, that conclusion could easily have been very different."

Let us remember that those individuals who served in 1989 and continue to serve as corrections professionals in the DOC, have helped to shape our institution into what it is today. It is still to this day, the professionalism and teamwork of the employees at this great facility, who contribute to making Camp Hill the best institution in the Department of Corrections. Thank you all for your service.

## Special thanks....

The Communications Committee would like to offer a special thank you to the following individuals who have contributed photographs, memories, time and information in support of this issue:

Superintendent Laurel Harry

Lt. Steve Klinedinst

Phil Baker, Corrections Counselor

Lt. Robert Williams

Susan McNaughton, Press Secretary

Terry Gouse, Corrections Facility Maintenance Manager

Robin Rommel, Probation & Parole (retired)

Bernard Comiskey, D&A Treatment Manager

---

*We hope that you enjoy this special edition of The Phoenix as we observe the 25th anniversary of the 1989 riots. Due to the personal and sensitive nature of the contents within and the ability of inmates to come into possession of any hard copy, we respectfully request that you do not print this publication or the images from the linked slideshow.*

*-The Communications Committee*

---



Oct. 25-26, 1989

*"I think that the reason why the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill rioted that evening is because the opportunity was there. I think it would have happened at any time the opportunity arose. That was the opportunity, and the inmates grabbed it."*



## The Philadelphia Inquirer

### Riot Sweeps Camp Hill Prison 42 Injured; Crisis Ends As Hostages Are Freed

OCTOBER 26, 1989

---

# THEN AND NOW

---

By: Danielle McBeth

Since 1989, the Department has undergone numerous security changes to control many of the contributing factors that laid the framework for the 1989 riot to take place. To many of you, it may seem unimaginable for many of the practices of yesterday to be considered sound principles of corrections; however, at the time, these were the reality of day to day life in this institution.

- Prior to 1989, women could enter the institution with any purse. While purses are still permitted within the facility, they must be clear and are limited in size. This change has helped to reduce the flow of contraband into the facility.
  - Prior to 1989, inmates worked more closely with staff and held more significant roles in the facility's operations, such as conducting staff physicals. Today, we continue to have inmate work crews working closely with staff; however, the barriers against fraternization have improved, there is less isolation of staff working with inmates and there are fewer opportunities for manipulation of staff.
  - Prior to 1989, inmates could wear civilian clothing after 1600 hours. Today, inmates must remain in DOC-issued attire at all times.
  - During the riots of 1989, inmates changed clothes with officers just so some officers could make it to the main gate without being assaulted by inmates. Once these officers made it to the gate, they were then accosted by other staff because they were unrecognizable to some without their uniforms. Today, all staff must carry their DOC-issued identification cards at all times. Biometric scans provide a secondary means of confirming staff identity.
  - Prior to 1989, the institution hosted family day where families of the inmates could bring food for the offender they were visiting. There were no regulations as to how much food could be brought into the institutions nor were there any restriction on the containers. Families could bring in gallon buckets of food just to hide contraband on the bottom. The contraband smuggled into the facility through this practice is considered to be one of the most significant contributing factors to the riot.
  - Prior to 1989, the inmate phone system was virtually unregulated. Inmates could call whomever they wanted, with no pin numbers and no authorized phone lists. These same inmates could, and many times did, contact their victims. Today, each inmate is required to submit detailed information regarding each number on their phone list and calls are monitored to prevent ongoing illegal or inappropriate activities.
  - Prior to 1989 officers could chose to be a trainee for a year, but if they petitioned it with the union they could become a CO1 after 3 months. Most officers followed this practice since it led to higher pay. Today, the level of training provided to new corrections officers has vastly increased. As highlighted in a 2005 issue of Correc-tional Newsfront, there are now 4 phases of training for each new officer during
-



their first year. This training includes several weeks at the Elizabethtown Training Academy as pre-employment training. This is then followed by a mandatory one-year trainee period of "on-the-job" training. This "on-the-job" training is further divided into several phases that each new officer must demonstrate competency in to advance through the trainee program. After becoming a full-fledged Corrections Officer, there is a continuing education requirement of 40 hours of annual in-service training.

- Prior to 1989, there were few emergency preparedness policies in place to highlight staff responsibilities in the event of an emergency. Today, regular drills are run to ensure that specialized units can practice their trained skills, line staff are reminded of their alternate responsibilities in an emergency and we don't forget the reality of what we must be prepared to face should an event like 1989 ever happen again.
- Prior to 1989, the institution did not have many of the interior fences you see today. In 1989, inmates were able to overrun the institution, as there were no fences, gates or checkpoints to impede their movement. Today, each housing unit is surrounded by its own fence so that any disturbance can be compartmentalized and contained. The institution is further segmented by several more robust fence lines that divide it into "zones." Movement from one zone to another requires the opening of a gate from a security tower.
- Prior to 1989, housing units were linear in design and had limited lines of sight for staff to observe what may be taking place. Those housing units built after the riot were built in the shape of an "X" to enhance lines of sight, making most of the unit visible from the center control area.



# LOOKING BACK

By: Terry Gouse

Twenty-five years ago on October 25, 26, and 27<sup>th</sup> of the year 1989, SCI Camp Hill experienced major rioting that ranked third in the nation in comparison to the riots at Attica, and New Mexico. The following is a compiled listing of the differences from **Then to Now**.....

- ⇒ **Then:** The head of Department of Corrections title was Commissioner, and a Deputy Commissioner served under the Commissioner.
- ⇒ **Now:** The head of the Department of Corrections title is Secretary, and an Executive Deputy Secretary serves under the Secretary, along with four Regional Deputy Secretaries.
- ⇒ **Then:** The average inmate population was around 2,500 inmates.
- ⇒ **Now:** The average inmate population is around 3,500 inmates.
- ⇒ **Then:** The total complement was 599 employees for SCIC, and 24 employees for Correctional Industries.
- ⇒ **Now:** The total complement for SCIC is 1,012 employees.
- ⇒ **Then:** There were four regional diagnostic and classification institutions, SCI Camp Hill, SCI Graterford, SCI Pittsburgh, and SCI Rockview.
- ⇒ **Now:** SCI Camp Hill is the main diagnostic and classification institution for the entire department.
- ⇒ **Then:** C block was the classification center for new commitments. B block basement was utilized to cover the overflow for the classification center. Counselor offices were located in the basement of C block.
- ⇒ **Now:** R block is the classification center.
- ⇒ **Then:** Inmates with the proper classification could go home on a weekend furlough and return to the facility on Monday.
- ⇒ **Now:** This program doesn't exist.
- ⇒ **Then:** Inmates with the appropriate classification could have a "Family Day" picnic visit with members of his family, and they were permitted to bring food into the facility for the visit.
- ⇒ **Now:** This doesn't exist and was one of the contributing factors for the riots.
- ⇒ **Then:** Inmates weren't charged for medical services provided to them. The policy to charge them for their medical care was being implemented and was another contributing factor to the rioting.
- ⇒ **Now:** Inmates are charged for medical services provided to them.
- ⇒ **Then:** Inmates farmed the fields and grew fruits and vegetables that were used to supplement meals and food costs.
- ⇒ **Now:** All food sources are bought from vendors.
- ⇒ **Then:** Correctional Industries produced coffee, tea, and furniture inside the institution. The majority of their operation was burned down and destroyed.
- ⇒ **Now:** The damaged areas were demolished and the remaining part of the building was turned into dormitory housing that is now M block.
- ⇒ **Then:** Inmates watched reel to reel movies in the movie house that was beside Kitchen #2.
- ⇒ **Now:** The movie house was converted into a sports complex.
- ⇒ **Then:** Inmates participated in sporting events like boxing, football, baseball, and weight lifting, and traveled to other institutions to compete. Also, civilian softball teams came inside the institution to play against inmates in softball games.
- ⇒ **Now:** These programs are no longer permitted.
- ⇒ **Then:** An inmate assigned to an outside work detail could leave his housing unit unescorted on the weekend, walk to the rear gate and draw keys from the Sergeant, and proceed to an outside shop and work unsupervised.
- ⇒ **Now:** There are no policies or procedures that would even come close to permitting this to happen.



- ⇒ Then: Vehicles were routinely brought into the institution. During the riots they were hotwired by inmates and were used to crash into doors, gates and through the interior fence.
- ⇒ **Now:** Vehicles used inside the facility are strictly monitored.
- ⇒ Then: One Sergeant was assigned to cover two blocks, and they worked 0900-1700 Monday thru Friday.
- ⇒ **Now:** One Sergeant is assigned to each block, with the exception of M block.
- ⇒ Then: An employee directly out of the Training Academy could supervise inmates outside the secure perimeter.
- ⇒ **Now:** Staff must have 39 weeks of job experience, or receive training on supervision of inmates outside the facility before they can supervise inmates outside the secure perimeter.
- ⇒ Then: Lifers were given outside clearance to work outside the secure perimeter.
- ⇒ **Now:** Lifers are not given outside clearances.
- ⇒ Then: There were ten blocks and eight modular trailers for inmate housing.
- ⇒ **Now:** There are four blocks, 11 modular housing units, one dorm, one Diagnostic and Classification unit, and one SOU/SAU Unit.
- ⇒ Then: Block Officers and counselors addressed the issues and problems for inmates on the housing units.
- ⇒ **Now:** 11 Unit Managers address these issues in conjunction with the officers and counselors. They report to the Major of Unit Management.
- ⇒ Then: Cell doors were controlled mechanically by switch boxes in the front of the blocks; the officer was on the floor at a desk beside the switch boxes, and carried the key for the switch box areas on him.
- ⇒ **Now:** Cell doors are controlled electronically by officers in a secure bubble on the housing units.
- ⇒ Then: The only interior isolation fencing that existed was fencing to separate three zones.
- ⇒ **Now:** Isolation fencing is installed around all buildings, housing units, and zones. Vehicle gates and man gates are electronically controlled from towers and the control center.
- ⇒ Then: There were two large yard areas that were referred to as Stockade Fields used for inmate exercise.
- ⇒ **Now:** All housing units have their own yard areas.
- ⇒ Then: There was one Perimeter Detection System in place with no camera coverage.
- ⇒ **Now:** There are four Perimeter Detection Systems in place along with a camera network consisting of 64 cameras.
- ⇒ Then: The maintenance complement consisted of 45 staff.
- ⇒ **Now:** The maintenance complement consists of 56 staff.
- ⇒ Then: The head of maintenance was called an Institution Maintenance Superintendent IV.
- ⇒ **Now:** Today that position is a Corrections Facility Maintenance Manager 3.
- ⇒ Then: There were no Fire Safety positions in place. A position for a full time Fire Safety Specialist was created.
- ⇒ **Now:** A position was created for a Safety Manager, and a Fire Safety Specialist is assigned to him.
- ⇒ Then: A group of staff started a Fire Emergency Response Team here at SCI Camp Hill.
- ⇒ **Now:** FERT Teams are statewide throughout the department.
- ⇒ Then: The only difference between Culinary staff and inmate uniforms was a Bureau of Corrections patch on staff uniforms.
- ⇒ **Now:** After the 1989 riots Culinary staff uniforms were changed to clearly differentiate staff from inmates.
- ⇒ Then: The inmate dining rooms were wide open with no separation walls or bubbles to feed 600 inmates at a time.
- ⇒ **Now:** Inmate dining areas are separated by concrete block walls and have bubble units to improving security.

In view of the above, it is quite evident that the unfortunate events that occurred on October 25-27, 1989, brought everlasting change to this institution and all those who were present...forever changing

# CERT

*BY: LORI JENKINS*

In the early years of the prison system each prison had its own way of handling inmate disturbances. Prior to the building boom of the 1990's, when the bulk of our modern institutions were built, the various wardens developed plans using the officers assigned there to respond to each disturbance according to the need. Emergency plans existed in how to handle these situations, but not as detailed as the ones in use now. The officers who were members of these teams were referred to as ERT, emergency response team, or SRT, special response team, or any other type of name that would fit a squad of this nature.

There was really no formal training available other than that conducted at their home institutions which usually involved going to the range and maybe some limited formation training. Training with other institutions was to remain non-existent, and this would become a major factor in 1989. In 1989, the Pennsylvania State Police, PSP, were still responsible for restoring order in the event of a massive disturbance.

"We have gone from asking other state correctional agencies for help to now assisting them in training their special response teams."

After the Camp Hill riots in 1989, newly assigned Commissioner of Corrections, Joseph Lehman, who wanted all of our problems handled in house, saw the necessity for the formation of true response teams that were well organized, well equipped, and formally trained. This was not only for ensuring the safety of the staff, but also the inmates that did not want to participate in any type of disturbance. In the spring of 1991, the DOC ran the first official Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) training session. This training class consisted of officers from the various state facilities with a set program of specific standards that had to be achieved and maintained during the one week course.

As the prison building boom progressed and the need for newer officers increased, this was also an excellent opportunity for CERT in general as it gave the program the ability to progress. CERT teams became a tool of Central Office to execute institutional searches either at the request of the institution or upon direction from Central Office itself. In 1995, the largest prison search in US history was conducted at SCI-Graterford at the direction of Central Office; every facility in the Commonwealth participated to some degree in this with their CERT teams and security staff. This also laid the groundwork for future cooperation and training with other law enforcement agencies at both state and federal level. Shortly thereafter the concept of CERT being used for the "real deal" happened with the riot at SCI-Coal Township. This proved that the DOC CERT teams could deploy and conduct operations just as well as any Corrections/Law enforcement organization in the country.

At the present time, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections maintains some of the best-trained, best equipped, Tactical Emergency Response teams in the country. We have gone from asking other state correctional agencies for help to now assisting them in training their special response teams. The history of the CERT teams within the Commonwealth is relatively new, but constantly changing with newer forms of training and some of the best equipment within the Corrections/law-enforcement field. And we maintain the high standards expected for the staff who man them.



***“Smoke billows from rear of prison, inmates fill a yard, and state police stand by shortly after uprising began.” - Patriot-News October 1989***





---

## IMPROVING OUTCOMES AND HOPE THROUGH ENHANCEMENT OF CLASSIFICATION, HOUSING OPTIONS AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS

---

BY: DAVE RADZIEWICZ

Since the 1989 riots at SCI Camp Hill, there have been numerous improvements to safeguard against such an event occurring again. One significant area of improvement since that time has come in the area of classification. In fact, it was after the 1989 riots that SCI Camp Hill became the Central Diagnostic and Classification Center (CDCC) for males committed to the Department. Although SCI Camp Hill's most significant function is classification, the concept remains somewhat of a mystery to most of the staff who work here and the Department at large.

As with most processes within the institution, classification seems to be a simple process on the surface; however, it is an increasingly complex system of multiple disciplines coordinating efforts to fulfill the physical and mental health needs of offenders while simultaneously extracting relevant facts to fulfill the needs of assessment tools that objectively determine both security and treatment needs.

The process of classification begins at the time of reception where records staff ensure the offender is properly committed to the Department and issue the offender his DOC number/identity. A series of intake questions are asked and often repeated by many of the varying staff an offender will meet during his first few days at SCI Camp Hill. The process continues from the reception area at the Main Gate Complex to one of the more recent advancements in the classification process, R-Block.

R-Block was built with the intention of being a one-stop-shop for all the disciplines associated with the classification process; however, was outgrown before it first opened its doors. R-Block fulfills many functions within its assembly line process. First, it serves as a means of medically observing and quarantining new commits from the remainder of the institution's population. The unit contains a medical department to screen and treat all new commits, with a psychiatrist available on-site to those offenders in crisis or in need of specialized mental health services. Psychological staff are on-site to complete a preliminary assessment for most offenders within their first week at the institution. Educational staff travel to the building each day to administer an educational assessment (TABE) to each new commit. Drug and Alcohol staff (DATS) are on-site to administer SAIT testing to each new commit and complete more in-depth assessments of short-minimum offenders to help guide future programming decisions. An initial reception counselor is on-site to assign a temporary custody level and orient new commits to the facility.

Each offender will spend approximately five business days on R-block to complete the initial assessment process, before being released to the CDCC general population (more commonly known as "blues blocks"). Once on a "blues block," an offender awaits classification by one of the CDCC's classification counselors while sometimes maintaining contact with R-block psychological staff and/or meeting with DATS staff for further assessment.

What is commonly known as classification, consists of a counselor recording pertinent elements of an offender's criminal history and social history into a document known as the Integrated Case Summary Application (ICSA). The counselor will combine a review of pertinent documentation provided by the committing county with an interview of the offender and then document relevant facts within the ICSA. The counselor then combines the results of many of the R-Block initial assessments with the facts contained in the ICSA to arrive at an offender's custody level and treatment needs.

One of the advancements within the ICSA itself is the Counselor Evaluation section dedicated to highlighting those elements considered to be of concern or risk while the offender is in custody or under community supervision. Another advancement since 1989 is the Pennsylvania Additive Classification Tool (PACT) that utilizes objective factors within an offender's history to more consistently determine an inmate's initial and continuing custody level needs. This tool will place each offender into a minimum, medium or close supervision category. As with every tool, there are exceptions to the general rules and the system provides a means of adjusting the score and providing special alerts for known high risk behaviors.

Any advancement in the classification process would not be complete without further advances in housing options for the special populations identified within classification. While most offenders adjust well to a general population setting, there are those offenders whose needs exceed the resources available in such a setting and/or who could encourage otherwise compliant inmates to participate in disruptive behavior if not housing in a specialized environment tailored to their needs.

Since 1989, the Department has developed numerous specialized programs for meeting the security and treatment needs of offenders committed to its care. At this facility, there is a Special Management Unit (SMU) dedicated to managing and encouraging the improvement of the behavior those individuals who have significant difficulty complying with institutional rules. This facility contains a Special Observation Unit (SOU) dedicated to treating the acute mental health needs of newly committed inmates. This facility also hosts a Special Assessment Unit (SAU) dedicated to accurately differentiating and diagnosing any mental health issues that may be manifesting through observed behavioral issues. There are two Special Needs Units (SNU) for those offenders who present with additional treatment needs and/or vulnerabilities.

(continued Page 10)

Department wide, there have been further developments in creating specialized housing for those offenders with known Security Threat Group (STG) affiliations, chronic mental health needs and chronic medical needs.

In addition to improving our ability to manage special needs populations, the Department has improved its ability to accurately assess and objectively offer specific treatment programs that help reduce the risk of recidivism. When an offender enters the correctional system, he must understand that there is hope that he can improve himself in the prison setting and improve his odds of achieving parole by complying with recommended programs. Without this hope, there is little incentive to follow the rules.

In recent years, the Department has focused much effort towards accurately assessing an offender for necessary treatment programs, while eliminating unnecessary or redundant programming. The process begins with an assessment of an offender's recidivism risk. Research has shown that placing low risk offenders in treatment programs with moderate and high risk offenders actually makes the low risk offender worse off than if nothing were done at all. Through the classification process, each offender who is identified to be low risk will not be assigned to any of the Department's standardized programs. Voluntary programs are still available to these offenders. Those offenders who are identified as moderate or high risk will be assigned standardized programming in the areas of Violence Prevention, Drug and Alcohol, Cognitive Thinking, Domestic Violence and Sex Offending.

Over the last five years, the Diagnostic Center has made critical efforts in reducing the amount of time each offender spends in the classification process. Although the average length of stay has improved for all offenders, the Short Minimum population has received the most significant attention and benefit from these efforts. While the connection may not be readily apparent, expediting the offender population through the CDCC is a key safety enhancement for the Department as a whole. When short minimum offenders are moved through the CDCC quickly, they reach their permanent institution with more time to complete programming necessary for parole. More completed programming translates into high probabilities of parole. More paroling of offenders reduces overcrowding in our facilities by reducing the amount of time each offender remains in the system past his minimum date. Higher parole rates translate into a more content and compliant inmate population.

While it is impossible to say that an event like the 1989 Riot will never happen again, it is possible to say that we are improving our odds of preventing such an event. We have and will continually strengthen our position through increased identification of potentially problematic inmates, increased housing options for our special populations, increased opportunity and hope for offenders and increased efforts to reduce overcrowding in our institutions.

---



# Camaraderie

By: Danielle McBeth

When the riots kicked off the second night, officers became aware that two of their fellow officers, who showed up for shift that night were unaccounted for. Most of the radios and other equipment were taken by the inmates on the first day and not all had been retrieved. Lt. Williams was able to find a radio and listen to the “chatter” from the inmates, most of which was not promising.

It was at this time that he heard an inmate calling for Control. Lt. Williams answered and was told by the inmate that they had an unconscious officer that they wanted to give up. The inmate related that he would take the officer to the barricade that was constructed and give him over there. Lt. Williams asked other officers to assist him and only one other would help. He and the other officer ran to the barricade, all the while being hit with various objects that were being thrown at them by the inmates. He stated that once there, the inmates tossed the officer off of the top of the barricade.

Lt. Williams realized that the unconscious officer was also one of his close friends. Lt. Williams and the other officer began carrying the unconscious officer towards e-gate, realizing half way that they could not keep carrying the weight of the unconscious officer. Lt. Williams began yelling at other officers for help, but none would move. Then, Lt. Williams described a big officer that he had never seen before came running from the group to assist them. Lt. Williams asked the officer who he was and it was trainee Rhodes, now known as Lt. Rhodes. Rhodes was able to carry the officer out.

This is more than just a “story.” This is one of many recollections of the men and women who were here during ‘89. These same men and women saw horrific things happen to people they considered close friends and started a bond of respect with others they never knew until those days in ‘89.

---

By: Bernie Comiskey

Strange as this may sound, thinking back to the riot also brought back some fond memories as well. When I started back in March of 1989 things may not have been much different than they are now. Treatment staff and veteran custody staff had different philosophies on how an institution should be run. New staff coming in were viewed with some skepticism by older, more experienced staff, immediate credibility was not given, it had to be earned.

I remember one “seasoned” staff person that I worked closely with telling me that it would take 5 to 10 years before you would truly be accepted by the veteran staff. Then along comes Oct. 25 and the “riots of 89”. Despite the “horrific” experiences of those few days, a camaraderie among staff emerged. Maintenance staff, food service staff, treatment staff and correctional officers all worked side by side, helping each other preform essential functions. There was a true sense of camaraderie... “we were all in this together” and we would work together to “get the job done.”

I don’t know if it was the common experience of the riot or something else, but staff were genuinely concerned for each other. I remember the first day of rioting when the state police eventually came in and were able to escort us out of the institution, once outside I was assigned to help secure the outside perimeter. As I was standing there watching the continued turmoil inside Sgt. Rhoades (who recently passed away) came up to me and said I am so glad to see that you got out. Prior to the riot, my only contact with Sgt. Rhoades was a casual greeting on the walks. From that point on your job title didn’t matter, it was like a “brotherhood”, if you were here during the riot you were accepted. Despite all the bad that came out of the riot there was some good as well. I don’t know that I will ever experience that type of camaraderie ever again.

---

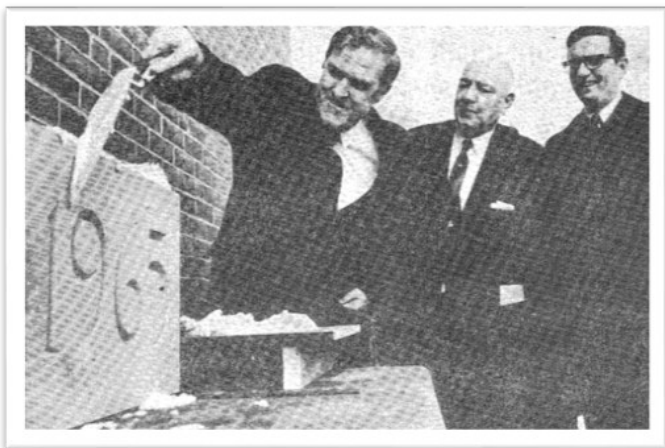
# UNTOUCHED

Through the fire, smoke and devastation of October 25-27, 1989, there was one building that stood untouched by the rioters. In an event that destroyed over half of the institution's buildings and damaged most, it is perhaps the one standing monument to attest to the facility's ability to weather any storm. That building is the Chapel.

The chapel at SCI Camp Hill was constructed in 1965 and dedicated in 1969. The chapel serves as a non-denominational site where the facility currently holds religious services for the major faiths of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Native Americans practiced within the institution's inmate population. The building also serves as a venue for other special observances and housing of sacred objects. There are a total of four full-time clergy staff and many volunteers who provide spiritual guidance to our inmate population on a daily basis.

Although there are perhaps many reasons why this building went unscathed during October 25-27, 1989, there are two popular theories. The first and most common theory is the reverence that even the most violent among us has for the home of his or her maker. The second theory lies in the fact that the building stood only yards away from a heavily armed perimeter of the institution.

While the truth of why this building stood untouched probably lies somewhere in the middle of the two theories, this structure should serve as a reminder to all of us. No matter how dark our present may seem, no matter what chaos may surround us, no matter how insurmountable the odds may seem...we will endure the challenges of today and stand tall for the challenges of tomorrow.





***“Camp Hill, like every other State prison, became overcrowded; the inmate population rose from 1,600 to 2,600 between 1982 and 1989. The addition of modular units after 1984 increased the prison’s capability by 400, but even with this, the prison was 45 percent over capacity on the eve of the riot.”***

**-Resolution of Prison Riots: Strategies and Policies**





*“Camp Hill taught us a valuable lesson—be prepared...with well-trained staff, with the right security measures, with effective emergency plans.”*

*-Jeffrey A. Beard (former Corrections Secretary)*

















# Moving Forward

A thorough look at the events of October 25-27, 1989 should remind each of us of what could happen if we become too complacent in our duties. While there have been numerous physical improvements, advancements in training, an increase in staffing and an overall decrease in overcrowding to prevent or limit the scope of such a disturbance taking place once again, the most valuable defense lies in the dedication and professionalism of our staff on duty.

Moving forward, we should take this time to remind ourselves that we all have an important role in keeping this facility safe. We should challenge ourselves to think outside the box. We should challenge ourselves to go beyond our comfort zone in making sure each of our duties are completed as thoroughly as possible. We should challenge ourselves to look past our individual differences and remember we are all one team with one united goal when we cross through that main gate each day.

More importantly, we should challenge ourselves to remember and emulate the heroes of October 1989 who bravely came together as one to fulfill the obligation each of us bears when we enter this facility.

“Yesterday morning I said our hearts go out in gratitude and compassion, to the hostages and their families who have endured this painful ordeal, as well as to those who have been injured. I repeat that again today.”

-Governor Robert Casey

**For additional photos, please view our commemorative slideshow on the H drive. Click on the [Camp Hill Common](#) folder and then the [Phoenix](#) folder.**

# SCI-CAM ADMINISTRATION



**Superintendent**  
**Deputy for Facilities Management**  
**Deputy for Centralized Services**  
**Business Manager**  
**Human Resources Director**  
**Major of the Guard**  
**Major of Unit Management**  
**Licensed Psychology Manager Corrections**  
**Licensed Psychology Manager Corrections**  
**Corrections Health Care Administrator**  
**D&A Treatment Manager**  
**Corrections Classification and Treatment Manager**  
**Corrections Classification and Treatment Manager**  
**Corrections Classification Program Manager**  
**Corrections Facility Maintenance Manager**  
**Corrections Activities Manager**  
**Facility Chaplaincy Program Director**  
**Facility Chaplaincy Program Director**  
**Corrections Superintendent's Assistant**  
**Corrections Food Services Manager**  
**Corrections Institutional Safety Manager**

**Laurel Harry**  
**James Meintel**  
**Kathy Zwierzyna**  
**Robert Gimble**  
**John Nwokeji**  
**Paul Leggore**  
**John Horner**  
**Fred Jenkins**  
**Gregory Plotica**  
**Edwin Shoop**  
**Bernard Comiskey**  
**George Clements**  
**Andrea Meintel**  
**Scott Moore**  
**Terry Gouse**  
**Charles Hooker**  
**Fatih Akdemir**  
**Orville Mills**  
**Deborah Alvord**  
**Eloise Magee**  
**Scott Fair**

## The PHOENIX

**Editor:** Terri Wade **Assistant Editor:** David Radziewicz

**Published by:** SCI-Camp Hill's Communications Committee:

◇ Pamela Barbaro ◇ Anthony Maxwell ◇

◇ Danielle McBeth ◇ Angellena Murry ◇ Lori Jenkins ◇

◇ David Radziewicz ◇ Terri Wade ◇ Miranda Wise ◇

*The Phoenix is published quarterly for the staff of SCIC. The Phoenix is written by staff and supported by the administration. Comments and suggestions for articles are always welcome. Feel free to contact us if you have any stories or information that you would like published.*

Call any member or email to CR, CAM Communication.