



ROLL CALL BRIEFING:

January 2009

This months Briefing includes:

- **Prison Guard: Policy change enabled attack**
- **Another Guard attacked at Pendleton Prison**
- **CT Prison Task Force addresses Guard Safety Concerns**
- **NJ Prisons use Dogs to find Cell Phones**

Prison guard: Policy change enabled attack

By Shawn McGrath, Herald Bulletin Staff **Writer**

December 24, 2008
07:17 pm

— PENDLETON — A Pendleton Correctional Facility guard beaten by an inmate Sunday night says she is exploring the possibility of suing state officials, claiming recent procedure changes have made working at the prison unsafe.

Guard Brandi Gilland says she was attacked by inmate Rico Comer at about 11 p.m. while securing cells for the night in one of the maximum-security prison's units by herself.

She said Comer was likely still upset that she took away the 29-year-old's MP3 player two weeks ago. Inmates aren't allowed to have the devices. Comer was written up and was not allowed to have visitors for six months as

(Continued on page 2)





part of his punishment. The night of the attack, Gilland thought he wanted to speak to her, but instead he began striking her.

Gilland, 30, said a procedure change enacted about three weeks ago meant she was the only guard in the locked unit at the time of the attack.

When she first began working at the prison about seven years ago, she said, there would have been two guards and a supervisor in the unit. Several years ago, that was changed to one guard per unit, but the guard stayed in a locked control room. A few weeks ago, she said, the policy changed again, calling for the lone guard to perform security checks and locking down inmates at night. "We'll be out of sight of (surveillance) cameras and everything else (while doing security checks)," the guard said Monday. "The reason (for the policy change) was since searches weren't being done. It was due to staff shortages. It was all due to (the) staff and saving money."

Prison Superintendent Brett A. Mize has disputed that. He said Wednesday offender-on-staff assaults were down greatly from last year. There were 82 such attacks in 2007, and 20 this year, said Mize, who became superintendent in April.

"(The attack) wasn't because of any reduction in staffing," he said.

The superintendent said staffing levels were at about the same level as a year ago. There were 355 employees at the prison in 2007. Of those, 308 were correctional officers. There are 347 employees working at the prison now, with 298 of those guards. Mize said he had received permission to hire 11 more officers and two additional sergeants, who are expected to start in mid-January. "Staff are a lot safer here," he said. "Offenders are a lot safer here."

Mize described the attack on Gilland as an isolated incident, saying there had been only one other assault on a guard in that unit this year. He said the procedure was changed — from a guard locked in a control room to a guard walking around the unit — so the inmates would be better supervised. Surveillance cameras, he said, can't see into cells.

Mize said the prison had never had a policy of having two guards and a supervisor working in each unit. Because of the nature of the work, the possibility of a guard being attacked exists. "We do work in a maximum-security prison, and that's going to happen," he said. "There's always the possibility of staff assault."

Comer is serving a 20-year prison term out of Tippecanoe County for dealing cocaine. He is scheduled to be released in 2015. Mize said Comer admitted to attacking Gilland and was placed in disciplinary segregation, where he'll remain for a year. Formal charges are likely.

Gilland, of Daleville, said she was able to fend off Comer's attack with pepper spray, and he backed off. But, she said, officers coming to her aid were unable to get into her 48-cell, locked unit because they forgot to retrieve keys from a supervisor's office. She had another set of keys on her and was ultimately able to escape.

Gilland, who was working a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift, said she went to Community Hospital North in Indianapolis for treatment and was released a short while later. The guard's next scheduled shift is today, but she said she didn't believe she would be well enough to work.

Gilland said she had not yet filed a grievance with prison officials, but she said she planned to con-



sult with a lawyer about possibly filing suit against the DOC. She said she was not afraid of losing her job by speaking to the media.

"Nothing's going to change," she said. "They're going to keep doing what they're doing until somebody steps up."

Mize, the superintendent, actually praised Gilland's quick actions dealing with Comer. He said she has a good work history and won't be terminated. The worse punishment she faces is a letter of reprimand for not getting permission before talking with the media. The case was still being reviewed, he said.

Gilland admitted her physical injuries were minor: a blackened left eye and a pair of split lips. But the attack's psychological impact on her has been more damaging.

"I don't feel safe," she said. "I'm psychologically messed up. I'm scared. I'm nervous. I'm shaky. I'm weak.

"But the facility probably expects me to come back."

Another guard attacked at Pendleton prison

Updated: Dec 29, 2008 09:26 PM EST

Pendleton - An employee at the Pendleton Correctional Facility was assaulted Monday morning. Joseph Neill, a maintenance supervisor at the prison, was assaulted by an offender with a weapon around 10 a.m., according to superintendent Brett Mize. Neill sustained approximately ten puncture wounds to his leg and lower body, though none of the injuries were life-threatening or serious. He was treated and released from St. John's Hospital in Anderson before returning to the facility following treatment.



Jeffrey Treadway was convicted in a 2005 murder.

The alleged attacker was identified as Jeffrey Treadway, 49, who is serving a life sentence without parole on a murder charge out of Marion County. He is also serving sentences for other charges for robbery and battery. He was found guilty of the assault on Neill by the Facility Disciplinary Hearing Body and is being transferred to another facility.

Treadway was convicted of attacking and killing 82-year-old Donald Carroll in 2005. Prosecutors say Treadway beat Carroll with a brick in his east side home. They say he also stole money from the World War II veteran and attacked his wife, who survived.

Officials say the prison will be working with the Indiana State Police and the Madison County Prosecutor's Office to pursue criminal charges against Treadway for a prisoner in possession of a dangerous device or material and battery with bodily injury - both felonies.

The motive for the attack appears to have been retaliation against Neill, who had recently filed a disciplinary report on Treadway.

Prison guard Brandi Gilland was also attacked and beaten by an inmate at the prison on December 17.



Conneticut Prison Task Force Addresses Guard Safety Concerns

By DANIELA ALTIMARI | The Hartford Courant
12:29 PM EST, December 16, 2008

A legislative task force on correctional staff safety is recommending that the state's highest security prison house only inmates with chronic disciplinary problems.

The task force, formed last summer amid concern over a spike in inmate assaults on guards, issued its draft report this morning. One of the most controversial recommendations involves Northern Correctional Institution in Somers. The maximum-security prison currently houses a variety of high-risk inmates, from gang members to residents of the state's death row. However it was built in the mid-1990s as a place to house prisoners with disciplinary problems, including those who assault guards. Several legislators and correctional officers believe the facility to return to its original mission.

"It's gotten away from its purpose and that's really compromising the safety of the staff and the inmates," said Rep. Karen Jarmoc, D-Enfield, who chairs the task force.

The state Department of Corrections opposes such a move, said Wayne Choinski, a district administrator for the department. "We are adamantly opposed to removing gang members from Northern," he told the panel. Such prisoners can have a negative impact on the general prison population and need to be housed in a separate facility, he added. "You absolutely would not want to integrate [them]."

The task force is also recommending establishing a subcommittee within the state office of policy and management to oversee health and safety policies pertaining to corrections officers. It is also proposing requiring the Department of Corrections to include information on prison crowding.



N.J. prisons use dogs to find cell phones

NEWARK (AP) -- New Jersey prison officials are trying a new approach to detect illegal cell phones among the inmate population: cell phone-sniffing dogs.

New Jersey Department of Corrections Spokesman Matt Schuman tells The Press of Atlantic City that other methods prisons use to detect illegal cell phones, such as metal detectors or machines that track usage, require the phones to be turned on.

He says the dogs are trained to detect the scent of the phone itself.

Prison officials say cell phones are sought-after contraband because they can transmit pictures or sensitive information about a facility's layout.

Inmates also use them to conduct drug deals or other illicit activities.

Schuman says 217 cell phones were confiscated in New Jersey prisons since October of last year.

