



**New York State Correctional Officers  
& Police Benevolent Association, Inc.**

---

**"Keeping New York Safe"**

***Multiple Inmate Fights Occur at Elmira Correctional Facility***

*Several Inmates Cut by Make-Shift Weapons During Six Inmate on Inmate Fights*

**For Immediate Release**

**August 2, 2023**

**Elmira, NY** – Seven inmate fights, several large in nature, occurred over a five day period last week, leaving several inmates cut with make-shift weapons and two officers injured as they attempted to stop the fighting.

Between Monday, July 24, and Friday, July 28, staff had to respond to several large fights at the maximum security correctional facility, two of which occurred in the mess hall and involved over a dozen inmates fighting.

On Monday, July 24 an officer observed two inmates, who were proceeding into the mess hall for the morning meal, begin to fight. Several other inmates joined in and initially ignored orders to stop fighting. After staff issued a second order to stop fighting, all but three complied. The three inmates who continued to fight were administered OC spray, which initially was ineffective. A second application was administered and the inmates ceased fighting.

On Wednesday, July 26 an inmate approached an officer in the recreation yard and stated he had been cut on the right side of the face by an unknown inmate. The inmate, who had a laceration to the face consistent with a cutting type weapon, was escorted to the infirmary for treatment.

At this time, the assailant has not been identified and a weapon has not been recovered.

On Thursday, July 26, two large inmate fights occurred during the morning and afternoon meal. The first occurred during the morning meal. Eight inmates began fighting. A response was called. Initially, the inmates ignored orders to stop fighting. Several officers who responded to the fight administered OC spray, which had the desired effect.

Once the fighting stopped, several injured inmates were escorted to the infirmary and treated for lacerations consistent with cutting type weapons. A metal razor blade was recovered from the cell block floor near the fight.

The second fight occurred during the afternoon meal in the mess hall. Staff observed several inmates begin to fight. A response was called after the inmates ignored orders to stop fighting. When additional staff arrived, several inmates complied and stopped fighting. Two inmates continued to fight despite staff orders. One inmate was placed in a body hold and forced to the floor. Once on the floor, handcuffs were applied. The second inmate was initially forced to the wall. He turned off the wall and grabbed the officer by the waist and shirt. He was placed in a body hold and forced to the floor, where he continued to fight. Staff were able to force his arms behind his back and apply handcuffs. Once in handcuffs, he was escorted out of the mess hall. During the escort, he became combative again and kicked rearward, striking the escort officer in the groin. Body holds were applied and he was forced to the floor again.

Unrelated to the initial fight, an inmate stood up from the mess hall table and lunged at staff responding to the fight. He was placed in a body hold and forced to the floor and handcuffs were applied.

After the fight was contained, staff recovered a ceramic razor blade from the mess hall floor. A second weapon was recovered when an inmate voluntarily turned over a plastic shank while being treated in the infirmary. A third weapon was recovered when staff frisked inmates leaving the mess hall and an officer found an inmate with a metal shank hidden inside his pants.

Two officers were injured during the melee. One officer sustained hand, shoulder and back pain. He was treated by medical staff at the facility and remained on duty. The second officer sustained hand and shoulder injuries and was transported to Arnot Ogden Medical Center for treatment.

On the same day, two officers sustained minor injuries subduing two inmates who began to fight on the way to the mess hall for lunch. Initially, the inmates ignored orders to stop fighting. OC spray was administered several times and body holds were needed to separate the inmates. Once the fight was stopped the inmates were escorted to be decontaminated. During one of the escorts, one inmate spit in the face of the escort officer. The inmate was placed in a body hold and forced to the ground until he became compliant.

The last two fights occurred on Friday, July 28.

The first fight occurred between two inmates in the rear shower area of the kitchen. An officer assigned to the kitchen observed the two inmates exchanging punches. They ignored his orders to stop fighting. He administered an application of OC spray, which had the desired effect. Both inmates were escorted from the incident to be decontaminated.

A much larger fight evolved during the afternoon meal in the mess hall. An officer observed three inmates attack two other inmates who were sitting directly across from each other. The fight grew larger, as eight other inmates joined in, with several making slashing type motions. A response was called and additional staff arrived. After ignoring orders to stop fighting, staff deployed several applications of OC spray. Several inmates ceased fighting but the others

continued. With the imminent threat of serious injury present, one round of chemical agents was deployed. The desired effect was achieved and all fighting ceased.

Thirteen inmates were escorted to the infirmary. Several inmates had lacerations consistent with cutting type weapons.

No staff were injured in the incident.

Staff also located five hidden weapons during inmate cell searches. The weapons, which ranged from a sharpened tooth brush and ceramic razor blades, were hidden in various locations in the cells. The weapons were seized as evidence and all inmates were placed in a Special Housing Unit pending disciplinary charges.

“Last week was extremely dangerous for staff at Elmira with half a dozen inmate fights, several which included a dozen inmates fighting armed with make-shift weapons. Thankfully, the injuries to the two officers were minor, but it could easily have gotten out of hand if not for the quick alert actions of staff. I just wonder, if the amount of violence that exists in our state prisons were occurring in the streets and neighborhoods in the respective districts of the legislators who supported HALT, would they remain this silent as they are now? Their constituents would demand that they address the violence in their community, or they would vote them out of office. How is this any different? They changed the rules to make it better for the inmates and inmate on inmate attacks are on pace to increase thirty percent from last year. Inmate on staff assaults are on pace to equal last year’s record levels. Just because this violence is hidden behind the concrete walls of a prison doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist! Yet the legislators who voted for HALT remain eerily silent.” - stated Kenny Gold, NYSCOPBA Western Region Vice President.