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For Immediate Release

Two Large Inmate Fights Occur at Elmira Correctional Facility

Make Shift Weapons Recovered in the Investigation

Elmira, NY - Two inmate fights occurred within days of each other that involved make-shift weapons and each needed pepper spray deployed to quell the fights.

The first incident occurred on Saturday, July 8, at 2:20PM in the gym recreation yard. An officer assigned to the yard witnessed two inmates exchanging punches and one of the combatants using a slashing type motion. Before the officer could order the inmates to stop, two other inmates joined in the fight.

Additional officers responded to the yard. Several orders were given to the inmates to stop fighting and separate, which they ignored.

Pepper spray was deployed, which caused the inmates to stop fighting. Officers recovered a ceramic scalpel with a taped handle near the fight scene.

Moments later another fight broke out between inmates. Officers again gave orders to stop the fight and they were ignored. Pepper spray was deployed and the inmates ceased fighting.

Two additional fights started in the yard and pepper spray had to be deployed a third time to quell one of them.

In all, 10 inmates were involved in the fights. Several sustained minor injuries and abrasions. At least one inmate sustained a head laceration consistent with a cutting instrument. One inmate sustained a laceration to his lip that needed sutures at Arnot Ogden Medical Center.

Officers located a black plastic ice pick type weapon from the sleeve of one of the inmates. It was sharpened on one side and was approximately four inches long.

During the search of the yard a third weapon was located. Officers found a white plastic ice pick type weapon sharpened on one end measuring approximately five inches long. It was located on the ground.

At the time of the incident numerous other inmates were present in the yard.

No officers were injured.

This past Tuesday at approximately 9:45 PM three inmates got into a fight inside the gym. An officer assigned to the gym observed one inmate make a slashing type motion towards another inmate.

An announcement was made over the loud speaker for all inmates to get on the floor. Two inmates continued to fight and refused to comply. Pepper spray was deployed but initially didn't have an effect. A second round of pepper spray was deployed and one inmate got on the floor. Officers had to physically restrain the second inmate and force him to the ground.

With several staff on the scene, 15 inmates got up off the gym floor and started to walk towards them. Another announcement was made to get back on the floor. All the inmates except one got on the floor. He continued towards staff. Additional staff responded to the gym and the inmate was physically restrained and forced to the floor.

The inmates were removed from the gym and returned to their cells.

The inmate who started to walk towards staff and refused to get on the floor was placed in a special housing unit. While being escorted he kicked an officer in the knee and head-butted another in the face.

A search of the gym did not recover any weapons.

One inmate was treated for a laceration consistent with a cutting instrument.

Two officers were injured in the incident. One sustained pain and swelling to his left knee. The second officer sustained swelling to his left eye, knee and a headache.

All staff remained on duty.

A large group of inmates were in the gym at the time of the incident.

All inmates involved will face internal disciplinary charges.

"We were extremely lucky in both incidents at Elmira that only two staff members sustained minor injuries. Both situations, with the number of inmates in the recreation yard at the time, could have been extremely worse. The officers did an excellent job at quickly quelling each fight as they occurred. It just is another indicator, particularly with the weapons confiscated, how dangerous these type of situations are and it's imperative to have enough staff to keep our members safe", said Joe Miano, Vice President of NYSCOPBA's Western Region.

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James Miller
Communications Director
(518) 469-0379
www.nyscopba.org