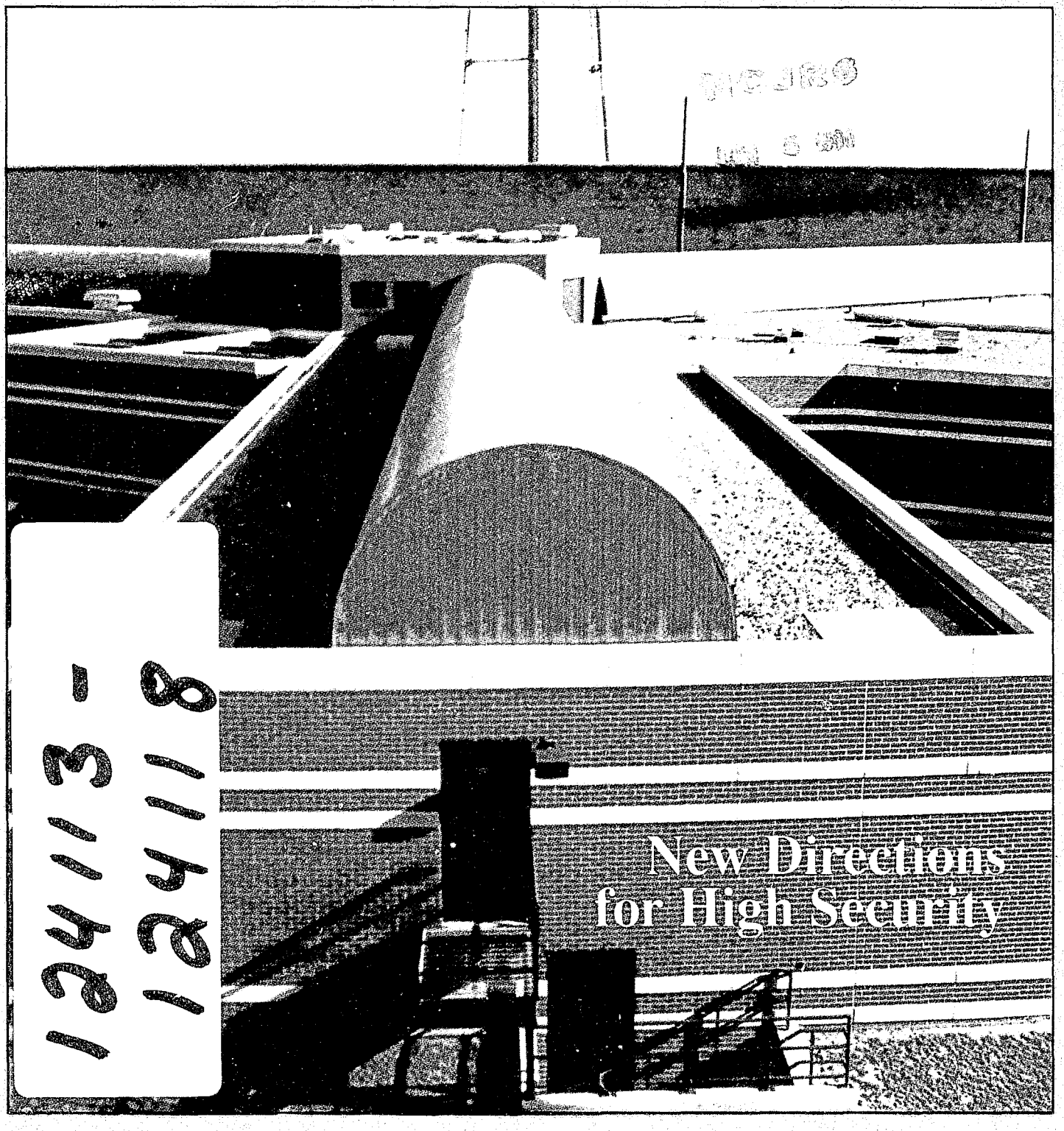
If you have issues viewing or accessing this file contact us at NCJRS.gov.

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

Federal Prisons

JOURNAL

VOL. 1, NO. 3 SPRING 1990



New Directions for High Security

12113-12118

124113-
124118

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this [redacted] material has been granted by

Public Domain/Federal Prisons
U.S. Department of Justice

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the [redacted] owner.

Contents

VOL. 1, NO. 3 ■ SPRING 1990

"State of the

Enhancing security plann

Connie Gardner

The time had come to seriously discuss building a new Segregation Unit at the U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas. The national prison population crunch was beginning to adversely affect the Segregation Unit as well. Integrating function and practicality in the design of the facility would ensure that it would receive the best possible use, and be safe for staff and inmates alike.

Who could best design such a facility? At USP Leavenworth, it was assumed from the start that staff could be instrumental in the design of a Segregation Unit, from the "think tank" stage through actual construction. After all, staff members were the ones working in the old unit. They knew what kind of improvements would be beneficial; they knew which policies should be integrated into the design of the new unit.

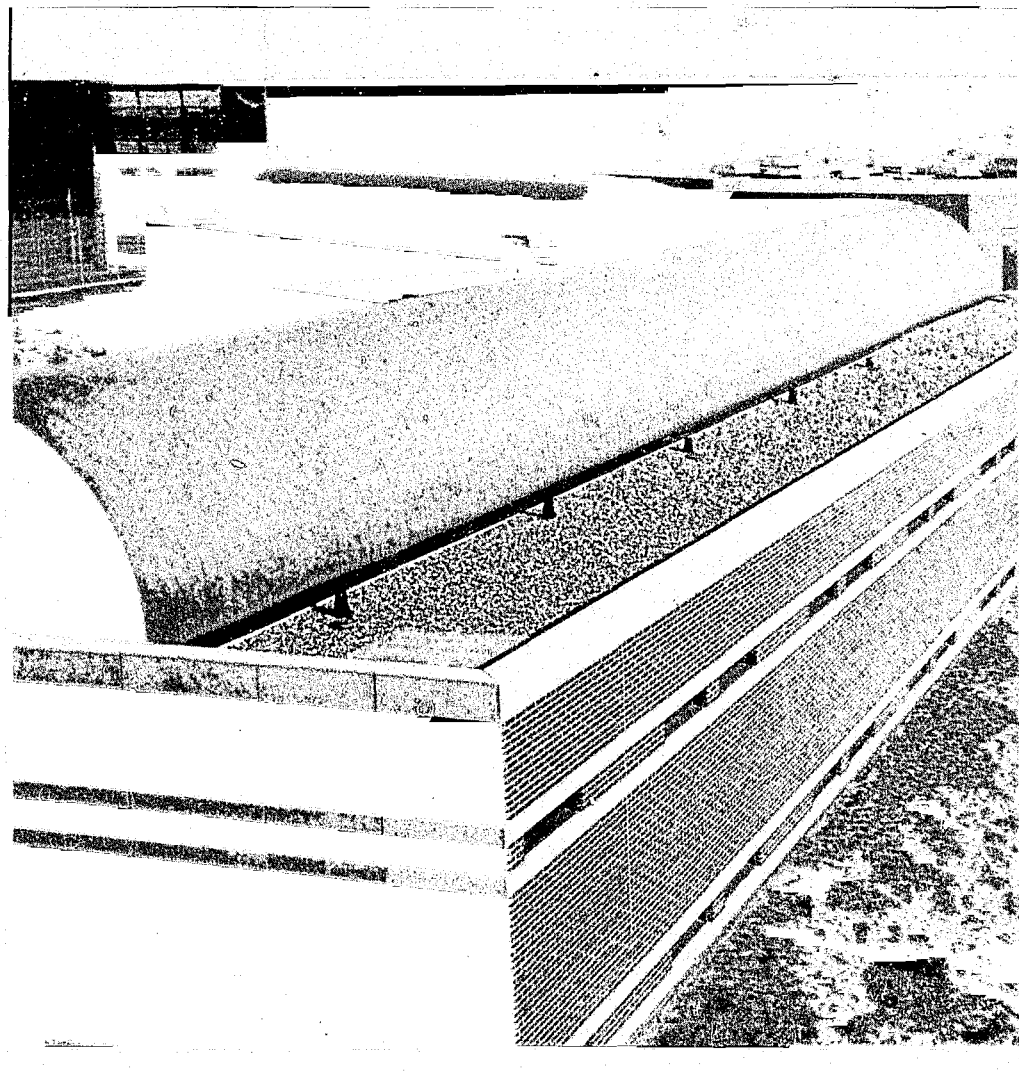
In sharp contrast to the "old line" method of prison construction, the warden asked the personnel at the institution what they needed for proper design to manage a troublesome population. This team approach resulted in a Segregation Unit at Leavenworth that all involved believe can be a prototype for other institutions.

Planning for the new unit began in 1983, with construction commencing in August 1987. The structure was finished and the first inmate received in March 1989. Former Warden Jerry O'Brien maintained a meticulous watch over the initial stages of the building's design—refusing to allow architects to incorporate design changes merely for aesthetic reasons, but instead making the safety of staff and security of inmates the two most important design criteria. The unit, completed under the continued close supervision of Warden R. L. Matthews, has emerged as the state of the art for prison segregation units.

The old unit had many elements that the design committee felt could be improved. Some problems with the old unit stemmed from the allegations of inmates, who claimed to have been physically assaulted; there were also incidents of staff members sustaining injuries while removing weapons or quelling disturbances. The need for keeping certain inmates separated from each other reduced the already limited capacity of the old unit, while the overflow went to the second floor of the hospital—a less than ideal situation.

An average of 10 percent of any inmate population is assigned to segregation at any given time; based on the population of Leavenworth at the time, the new Segregation Unit was designed to hold 120 inmates. Construction costs, security needs, and bedspace shortages dictated that the unit be built as quickly and as economically as possible.

After much deliberation over the various standard types of construction, precast



Since 1987, staff efforts in monitoring inmates with obligations, as well as the responsibility inmates have demonstrated in satisfying their financial obligations, have resulted in a steady increase in collections. From April through December 1987, more than 17,000 inmates participated in the program, accounting for approximately $5,778,043 in collections. During 1988, this figure virtually doubled, with inmates contributing more than $10,300,000 toward their obligations.

With the exception of direct restitution payments to victims, most funds collected were deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and subsequently distributed to the States for victim assistance and compensation programs. Thus, inmates are held accountable not only for their crimes against an individual, but to society as a whole.

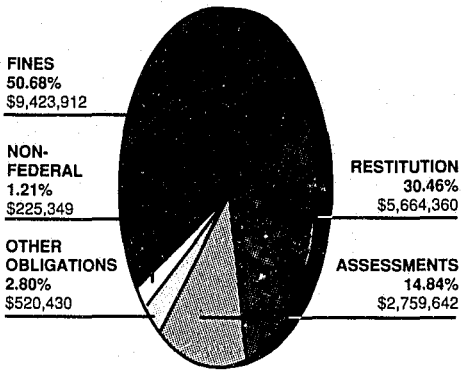
This "accountability factor" is significant throughout an inmate's incarceration. The inmate is first held *physically* accountable to society through loss of his/her freedom. Secondly, the inmate is held *financially* accountable by ensuring that all financial obligations he/she may have are closely monitored and satisfied. Finally, the victim's needs and rights are manifested within the provisions of the Victim/Witness Notification Program, providing for *psychological* accountability by the inmate. Criminal behavior thus has consequences that become meaningful both to the inmate and to the victim.

The challenges ahead

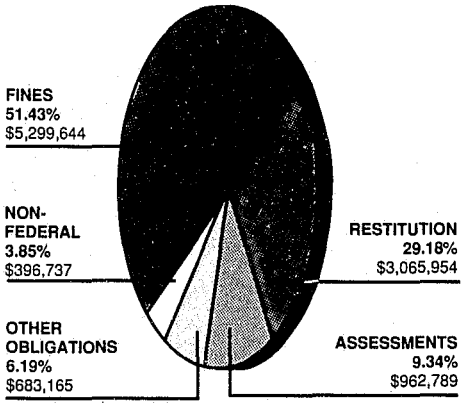
Despite the decade's extraordinary achievements in the sphere of victim assistance, the victims' movement continues to be a relatively new concept for most persons associated with the criminal justice system. Until recently, the movement has interacted primarily with the courts, police, prosecutors, and probation. Thus, it isn't surprising that the concept of providing assistance to victims and witnesses from within the correctional setting is in its developmental stages. In 1986, the American Correctional Association (ACA) created a Task Force on Victims of Crime to examine and define the role and responsibilities of correctional practitioners to victims. Included in the 16 recommendations submitted to the ACA was the conclusion that "America's victims' rights movement is one of the most important external forces affecting corrections today. Yet few agencies have responded to crime victims by developing policies and programs to address their concerns."

Inmate Financial Responsibility

1989 obligation analysis



1988 obligation analysis



The Bureau of Prisons has attempted to be proactive in the development of victim-oriented programs and policies, as illustrated by several recent developments:

■ *Office for Victim Assistance.* In October 1988, the Office for Victim Assistance was established to implement and manage the Notification and Financial Responsibility programs on a nationwide basis. In addition, the Bureau centralized the position of Victim/Witness Coordinator (VWC), dedicated specifically to providing technical assistance to staff and to serving as a liaison with the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys and other law enforcement agencies.

■ *Hotline for victims and witnesses.* In August 1989, the Bureau installed a hotline to facilitate direct communication with victims and witnesses. This toll-free number permits citizens to contact the VWC, at no expense, regarding questions or concerns they may have.

■ *Staff notification.* The Bureau recognizes that the victimization of staff in the correctional setting—assaults, hostage situations, and so on—can be no longer be viewed simply as another occupational hazard. In November 1989, the Victim/Witness Notification Program, in a coordinated effort with the Bureau's Employee Assistance Program, was expanded to include notification procedures for staff who are victims or witnesses.

Continued on page 42

" Segregation
through staff involvement

concrete was selected. The Federal Correctional Institution in Butner, North Carolina, was built using the precast method, which is particularly flexible in adapting to changing populations. (At Butner, the facility has been able to house twice the number of prisoners for which it was originally built.) Using this method in a high security unit required some modifications, yet the design itself was well proven.

In laying out the facility, the design committee determined that safety could be enhanced by reducing direct physical inmate contact with staff and other inmates. The committee decided that the best means for reducing contact would be the use of single cells. Thus, the cells in the Leavenworth Segregation Unit were built as single cells, but the capacity to convert them to two-person cells exists. Installation of additional bunks using metal plates and bolts built into the walls would be a simple procedure.

Security requirements at a prison have a major impact on the institution's design—indeed, must be integral to the choice of the building material itself. Precast concrete is excellent in this regard, with a compression strength of 5,000

Photos by Ray Clinton

Beyond the "Specialists"

Prisons have always been about walls and doors. Going back to the earliest penitentiaries in the 1700's, the arrangement—first of bricks and mortar and later of concrete and steel—has always said a great deal about the correctional philosophy of the time.

The new Leavenworth Segregation Unit, whose design and construction are so ably chronicled here by Connie Gardner, certainly reflects the latest thinking of the Bureau of Prisons when it comes to facility design. But it does more than that. It points the way to deeper staff involvement in areas that have traditionally been left to "specialists"—recognizing that, when it comes to issues of custody and security, Bureau of Prisons staff *are* the specialists.

As our agency continues to grow, and strategic planning continues to be implemented throughout the Bureau, such staff involvement will increasingly become the norm. The benefits to the Bureau are obvious, but so should be the benefits to staff members; study after study has shown that the degree of staff involvement in decisionmaking is one of the major indicators of job satisfaction.

The 1990's will be a period of taking our resources to the limit. In such a rapid-growth environment, it will no longer be "good enough" for a few decisionmakers at the top to control where this agency will go. The women and men who rise to the top of the agency in the next decade will be tested decisionmakers in their own right.

Larry DuBois
Regional Director, North Central Region

pounds per square inch, high enough to provide the necessary resistance and strength. The floors are 5 inches thick and are reinforced, the walls are 6 inches, and the ceiling is 5.5 inches.

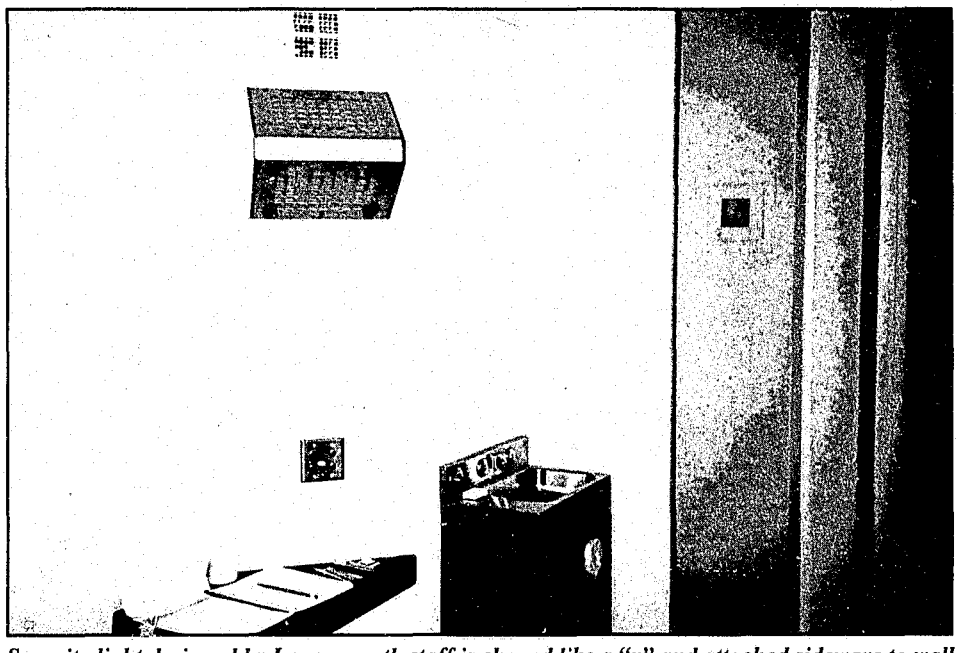
The cells, floors, walls, and ceilings of the unit were constructed complete at the factory—that is, the cells included all specialty hardware and mechanical and electrical blockouts ready to be wired on the building site. The security furnishings built into each precast cell include a precast concrete bunk with an open storage shelf, a hard-welded steel writing desk, and a security light. The desk is situated so that one can sit on the bunk for a chair. The cells were prefabricated in sets of two with an adjoining pipe chase—for access to plumbing, hot and cold air ducts, and electrical systems—shared between two cells.

Each cell contains a stainless steel toilet and lavatory fixture attached to the walls. Also included in each cell is a shower, which is located at the inside wall and has a security look-through. The security light is unique in that it was designed by the staff at Leavenworth, who believe it to be virtually indestructible. The light fixture is shaped like a "v" attached sideways to the wall. The "shade" is a metal grill with welded seams. The bulb is changed through the pipe chase, behind the cell wall. Each cell door is sliding rather than hinged. Windows that meet security and program requirements are precast during the modular construction phase. The cell design incorporates headphone jacks to four radio stations, eliminating the need for portable radios in the cells.

The support systems, including ducts for heating, cooling, and distributing air throughout the facility, are not located in separate structures; instead, they are on the roof of the building in blue-domed Quonset-hut-type structures. Ducts distribute the air from the roof to the pipe chase between the cells. Maintenance can be performed on these systems in any weather, without entering the main building or moving any inmates.

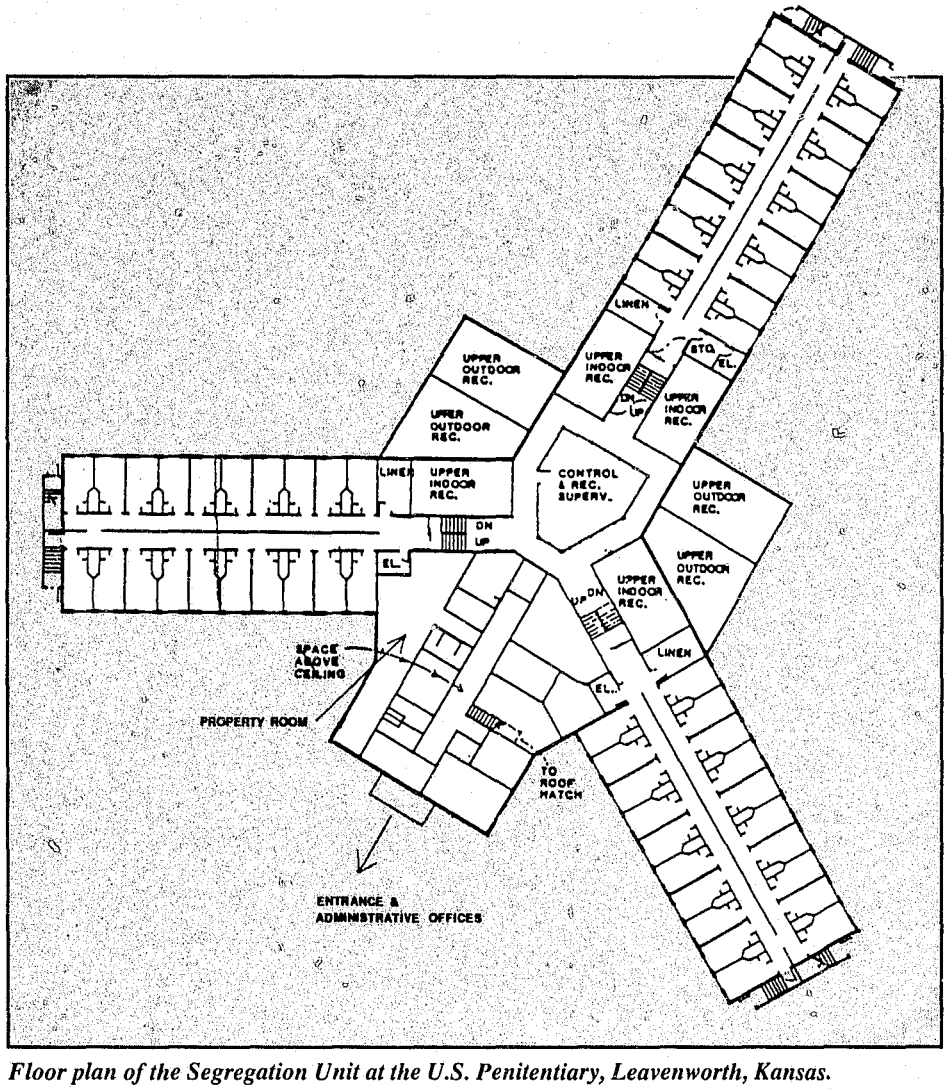
The exterior walls of the building are insulated and covered by brick and architectural precast coping. Interior walls are painted with a hard acrylic paint, claimed to be virtually indestructible.

From the exterior, the building is a two-level design, comprised of three wings, built in a "Y" shape, with the control room at the very center of the wings. The administration area houses the entrance to the Segregation Unit, with separate rooms built for holding and searching inmates. Staff offices, a secure storage area, a warming kitchen, a law library, and a staff bathroom with shower are also included in the administration wing. A "no contact" visiting room (in which inmates and visitors are not allowed to physically touch) and a disciplinary hearing room are also situated in the administrative wing.



Security light designed by Leavenworth staff is shaped like a "v" and attached sideways to wall.

Forty inmates are housed in each wing, 20 above and 20 below, in single cells. The 20 cells on a range have 10 cells on each side of the hallway, separated by a concrete wall erected in the middle of the hall. All walls and cell doors are solid; no grillwork exists on the cells. The use of the solid walls, doors, and separating hallway were in response to the requests of the staff design committee. These factors, particularly the wall in the center



Floor plan of the Segregation Unit at the U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas.

of the hall, severely limit inmate contact and the passing of contraband. Lack of an audience means that an inmate is much less likely to be combative when being escorted to or from his cell.

The temperature controls are monitored in the unit's control room. For purposes of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, the unit is divided into five zones. Each zone combines the chilled water, steam coils, heat exchange ductwork, and air-handling equipment necessary for that zone's air distribution, heating, and cooling. The wings, the special cell area, and the control room are separate zones. An air sensor mounted in each return air duct regulates each zone. The averaging temperature controller transmitter controls the operation of the heating/cooling valves, as well as specific dampers to maintain the temperature settings. Each cell is heated and cooled to maintain a designed setpoint. The temperature adjustment in these areas can be changed by a switch located in the unit's control room.

When an inmate is brought to the Segregation Unit, all of his personal property must be brought with him. The amount of personal property permitted in a cell is severely restricted. Any property not allowed is inventoried and stored in the property room of the Segregation Unit.

It is possible to check in property without physically contacting the inmate. The inmate's property and the inmate are locked in a room, visible to the officer in the adjoining property room. Restraints are removed from the inmate; he then goes through his property as the property room officer inventories it. Both inmate and officer agree on the inventory. (The property is searched later, at a convenient time.) The property and the signed list of property are maintained by the property room officer. Each inmate's property is assigned a place, as in a coat-check room. When the inmate leaves the Segregation Unit, both he and the property room officer check out the property using the signed property list. Records on property are maintained for 2 years. This method for controlling and recording personal property in the Segregation Unit has significantly reduced the number of tort claims made by inmates over lost or damaged property.

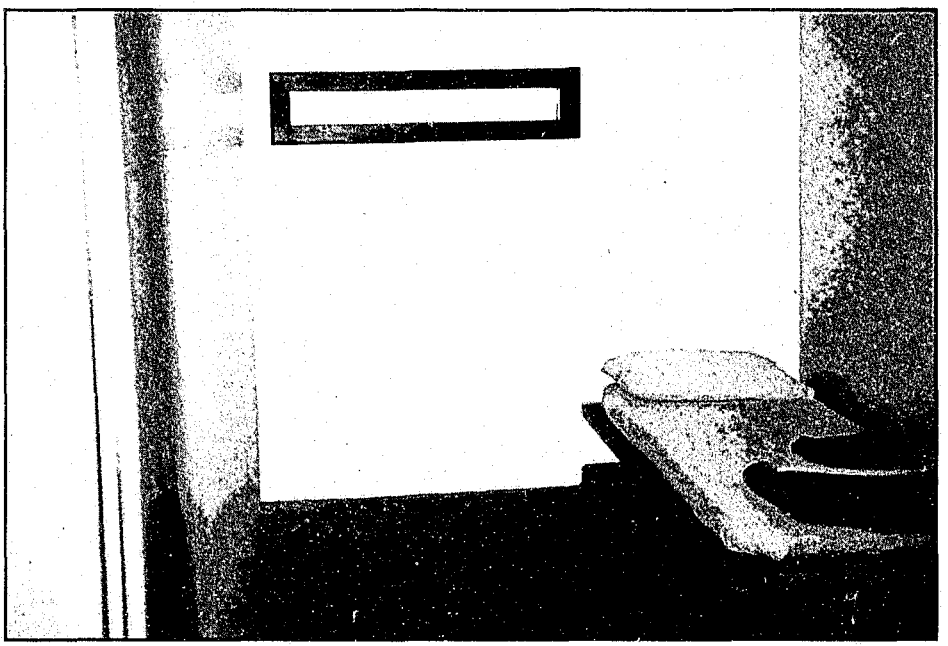
Control of the grills permitting movement from the administration wing to the cell area, the grills leading to the cell wings, and each cell door is handled by electronic remote control from the Segregation Unit control room. A cell door can only be opened or closed by the control room officer. It is possible for the officer to access the electronic panel for a

wing only when he is facing that wing. This enables a visual check of the wing before remote opening of the grill or any cell door. The control room floor is cantilevered for simultaneous viewing up and down the stairs of a wing. Additionally, strategically placed receivers in each wing transmit audibly from the wing to the control room. The control room officer can not only see what is going on, he can hear it as well. He can listen to an officer as he walks down a range of cells and takes count; he hears an officer as he talks to an inmate; he can hear the inmate's response.

The front entrance to the unit is controlled by a tower officer in an adjacent, overlooking tower. Contact between the Segregation Unit control room and the tower is constant—both visually and through closed-circuit TV (CCTV). The tower controls the opening and closing of the front door to the unit. A microphone in the center of the control room is continuously monitored by the tower. Ten CCTV cameras monitor the unit. Three cameras are controlled and monitored by the tower, the rest are controlled and monitored in the control room. By use of videocassette recorders, the control room officer may record events as needed. Still photos may subsequently be made off the VCR tape if necessary.

An elaborately interfaced fire and smoke detector system for each zone is incorporated in that zone's air distribution system. Should a detector set off the alarm, the signal is sent to an annunciator in the Segregation Unit's control room. The location of the alarm is determined by an illuminated pilot light in the control room. Activation of a manual alarm or a water flow will place the system in general alarm status; certain electrical and mechanical functions shut down or open the appropriate fans and dampers. Simultaneously, the automatic fire brigade notification system is contacted at the Master Control in the penitentiary's administration building.

Inmates are taken out of their cells regularly to use the recreation yards. Each wing has its own indoor and outdoor locked recreation yards that will hold 4-5 men. Contact with the general population is not possible. Inmates who must be kept separated from each other are housed in separate wings, and are not brought into contact at recreation time. Inmates are escorted in restraints from their cells to go to the law library, for Disciplinary Hearing Office (DHO) hearings, for visitors, and to take legal calls. Regular calls are handled by plugging a phone into a jack outside the cell, and handing the phone to the inmate.



A typical precast cell with security look-through (top left).

Monitoring capabilities in the Segregation Unit's control room detect open circuits in each alarm loop, indicating failures of the auxiliary power or the automatic fire brigade notification. A backup power system can supply power for 24 hours, and a second power supply can operate the total system in alarm status for 15 minutes. The system can be reset from the Segregation Unit's control room to return a zone or zones to normal operation.

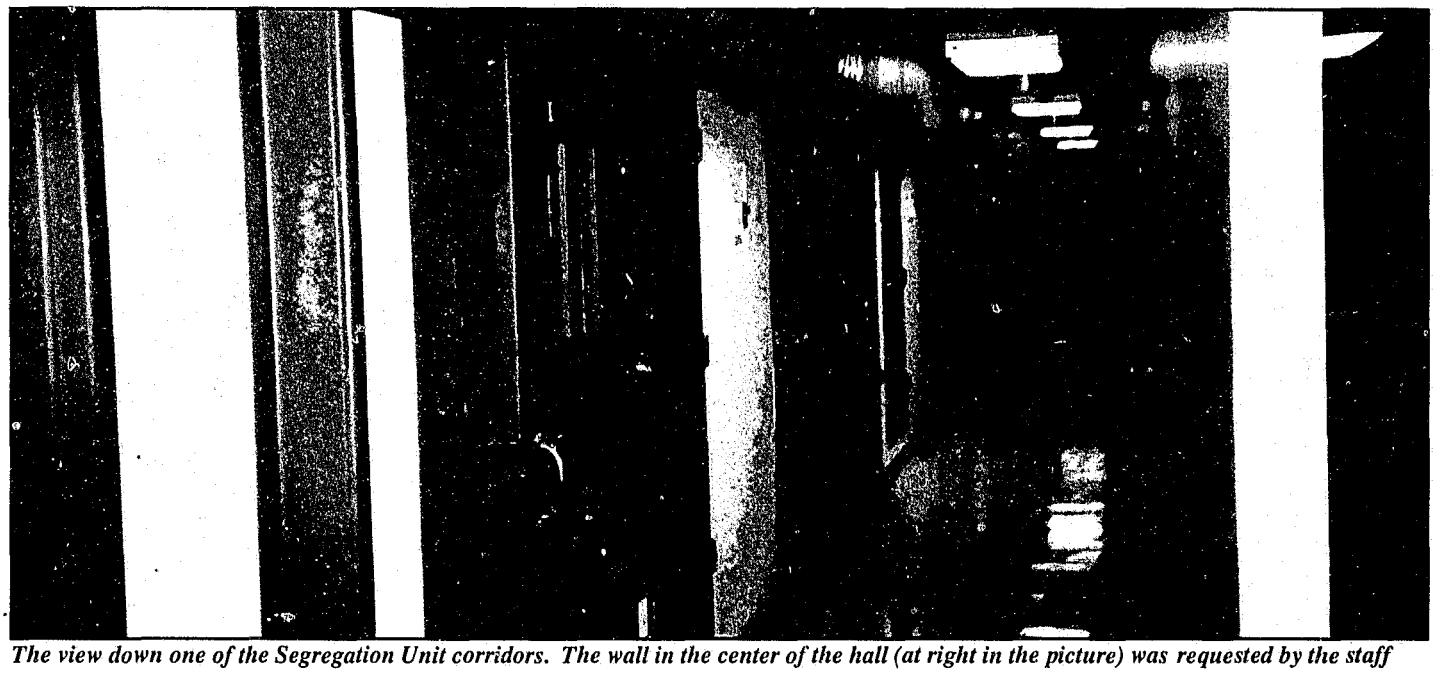
Any time an inmate is outside his cell, he is restrained. This is done by using the food pass-through in each cell door.

How well it works

What works? The security is outstanding; single-man cells eliminate many security problems. The wall down the center hall of each range works exceptionally well. Property room management is a smooth operation. A shower in each cell reduces inmate movement. Separation of inmates, surveillance, and the backup power supplies all receive excellent ratings. To date no forced cell movements have occurred in the Leavenworth Segregation Unit.

Some things could be better. The control room design currently does not include a vestibule or sallyport entry. The shower location could be improved for better visibility by relocating it to the rear of the cell. The office space is somewhat inconvenient and more is needed. The food passes should be higher so that application of arm restraints could be easier. The use of electronic zone control for temperature would eliminate some hot and cold areas. Use of enthalopy temperature control would result in cost reductions. (Enthalopy temperature control compares indoor and outdoor temperature and humidity readings; outside air, if deemed satisfactory, is admitted as free cooling. If the readings are not satisfactory, air is mechanically cooled.) Another useful change would be stainless steel countertops in the kitchen rather than formica. The pipe chases need to be larger to allow for easier maintenance.

While the Segregation Unit was built economically and within the appropriate time frame, the safety and security of inmates and staff were not adversely affected. The features outlined here regarding the particular design characteristics of a special housing unit can be followed in many different types of facilities and different penal situations. In the view of all who were involved in its construction, the Leavenworth facility stands as a prototype for future facilities around the Nation, and underscores the Bureau of Prisons' intent to increasingly involve employees in decisions that affect them. Opening communication up and down the lines of authority and allowing staff voices to be heard has validated the theory of staff involvement in the decisionmaking process. ■



The view down one of the Segregation Unit corridors. The wall in the center of the hall (at right in the picture) was requested by the staff design committee to limit inmate contact.

Connie Gardner is Personnel Assistant for the Federal Bureau of Prisons' North Central Regional Office in Kansas City, Missouri.

How staff stayed involved

Leavenworth's warden; the chief of mechanical services; the associate wardens for custody and programs; the Special Housing Unit project manager—these staff members were the core of the design committee that met again and again as the Segregation Unit progressed. They had a common background in custody and segregation, and an obvious interest in the success of the unit. And the warden made it clear that their input was essential.

The committee hammered out many issues long before a tool was actually lifted. Each member brought a list of "wants" and "don't wants." They met frequently with the architects and engineers, and made trips to the architects' offices to view computer-aided enhancements of design concepts. The committee had to consider what problems to avoid and how to avoid them, as well as which of the many improvements possible with modern technology would work well in the new unit.

The final product was a Segregation Unit that is functional and safe for staff and inmates. There was no special magic involved. The ingredients were:

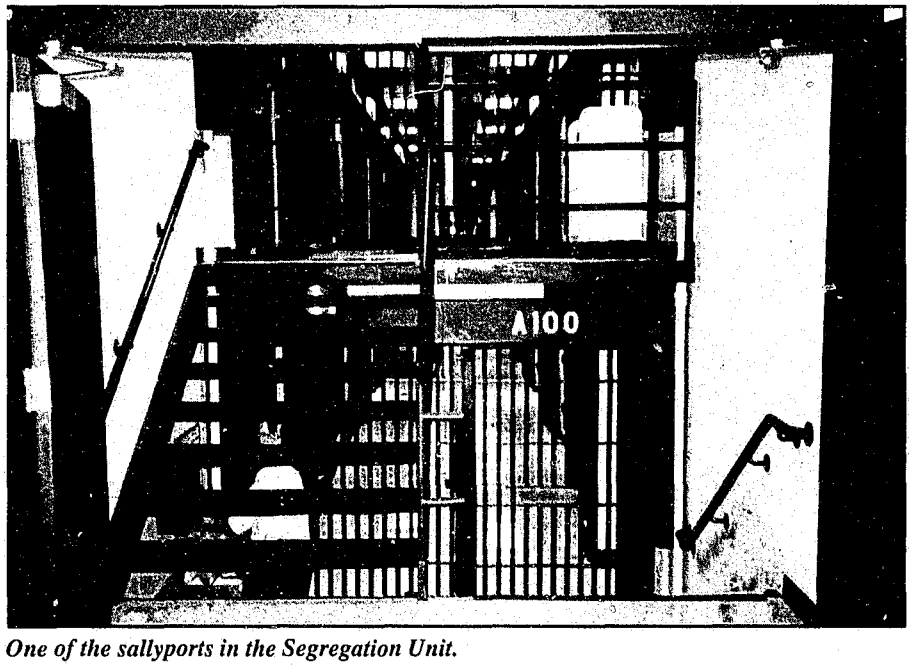
- The experience of staff members with regard to custody and policy issues, which was brought to bear on design issues.
- A customer-oriented architectural firm, willing to accept input from the design committee.
- A leader who kept the process on track—knowing when to allow time for the group to come to a consensus and when to make a decision.

Staff members were convinced that they were major stakeholders in the design process. Their ideas were not always accepted, but were always taken seriously. As preliminary proposals were implemented, committee members became more confident in submitting additional suggestions. In the end, everyone involved learned to trust the process by which decisions were made—giving them a great deal of confidence in the outcome as well. ■

Connie Gardner

Photo courtesy Jerry O'Brien

Jerry O'Brien, Leavenworth's warden when design of the Segregation Unit began.



One of the sallyports in the Segregation Unit.