

Prison Assault Leader

Henry Francis Williams

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By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

At 9:46 A.M. yesterday, the voice of a tall, blue-eyed, crewcut state police captain crackled over a short wave radio to the army of state troopers, sheriff's deputies and prison guards massed for the final assault on the rebels of the Attica Correctional Facility. "Move in," he

Man
in the
News

shouted. "Move in." All through the morning, the voice of Henry F. Williams counseled the tactics of

the bloody campaign to wrest control of the institution from its inmates.

And, as a working investigator, he supervised the gathering of evidence—statements, photographs, fingerprints—that will play a part in subsequent legal action.

The strapping officer, who has been assigned to Troop A of the state police in Batavia since he enlisted in the force at the age of 21 on April 16, 1952, has been a captain in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation since 1966.

54 Under Captain

In that post, he is the immediate commander of 54 men in Troop A who are, broadly speaking, the counterparts of a detective squad in a New York City precinct. Their immediate domain is an eight-county area of western New York State, and all members of the unit are appointed by the Superintendent of state police, currently William E. Kirwan.

Described by colleagues as jovial or stern, as conditions warrant, Captain Williams spent his early years with the state police as a uniformed trooper. Slightly more than a year after he enlisted, he entered the Army to serve two years in counterintelligence, mainly in Washington.

Leaving the Army with the rank of corporal, he returned to the state police in 1955 and served six more years in the uniformed ranks before he was assigned to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, as an investigator.

A year later, in 1962, he became a senior investigator. Four years later he passed the lieutenants' examination and also was promoted to the rank of captain.

His personnel file in Albany is filled with commendations from state police superintendents and encomiums from law enforcement agencies—the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Secret Service, sheriffs' offices, the post office and local police chiefs—with whom his work has brought him in contact.

Henry Francis Williams Jr., the eldest of eight children of the former Bernice Zobrest and the late Henry Williams, was born in Buffalo on May 8, 1930.

A graduate of Annunciation High School in Buffalo, he studied business administration for a time at Canisius College. Before joining the state police, he worked as a stock clerk in Buffalo department store and for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in Lackawanna, N. Y.

Married Since 1955

He has been married since 1955 to the former Lavonne Zilliox, whom he had known since they were teen-agers. Yesterday, discussing her husband's choice of career, Mrs. Williams, a short woman with blue eyes and grayish brown hair, said, "From the time we were young, we had friends who were with the New York state police who we admired, and I think he chose it through his admiration for the state police itself."

The Williams family lives in a three-bedroom colonial-style home in a Buffalo suburb. Besides the captain and Mrs. Williams, there are six children who range in age from 15 to 2, five kittens and a rabbit named Daisy.

In less hectic moments, Captain Williams enjoys a round of golf or a day of fishing. When he called home on Sunday, though, all he wanted was a fresh set of clothes. "He didn't have too much chance to talk," said Mrs. Williams.



The New York Times/Ron Schifferle
Captain Williams briefing newsmen outside prison