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HOMEMADE ARMS FOUND IN PRISONS

Turned Up by Detectors in
2 State Institutions

A spokesman for the State Department of Correctional Services said yesterday that recent searches of two state prisons had turned up "a formidable array of homemade weapons," but the superintendents of both institutions disputed his assessment of the quantity and character of the "weapons" found.

The spokesman, Gerald T. Houlihan, announced that searches with metal detectors "in the past few weeks" at the Clinton Correctional Facility, in Dannemora, and the Eastern New York Correctional Facility, in Napanoch, had uncovered "a couple or hundred" homemade weapons at each prison.

Mr. Houlihan said that among the "formidable array" were clubs spiked with nails, sticks with knives attached, stilettos fastened to broom handles and gardening implements attached to long sticks.

'Turned Up the Usual'

At Clinton, Superintendent J. Edwin La Vallee said in a telephone interview that "no great number of contraband items" had been found during the search, which he said took place at the time of the uprising at Attica Correctional Facility, in mid-September. He said the search, the first in about two years, turned up "the usual — maybe a little more than the usual amount of junk."

Mr. La Vallee said that because of the tense atmosphere, the searchers "picked up everything we could find" that could possibly be used as a weapon, "stuff we'd walked by 150 times a day," including weight-lifting equipment and garden rakes that were "not where they belonged." He said he did not recall either clubs with nails or long-handled knives.

Much of the buried material located by the metal detectors, he said, had apparently been buried for some time. "I don't think the inmates knew half the stuff was there," he said.

'Terminology' Criticize

Maurice M. Blow, the superintendent of the prison in Napanoch, which holds about 960 prisoners, all from New York City, said he thought the "terminology" of the department's statement was "very, very poor." The Nov. 4 search, he said, was part of the institution's continuing training program and was a demonstration by National Guard units of the use of metal detector.

"We found some weapons," Mr. Blow said. "Most of them of the type of pieces of pipe, pieces of metal."

"Many had been in the ground for many years, some for 50 years at least," he said, and were "rusty, pitted, deteriorated."

There were, he said, "a few" more recently fashioned weapons, including knives made by sharpening dining room cutlery. There was "really no big amount" found, he said, "not much more than on previous occasions."

Ban on Interviews Lifted

The department also announced yesterday the lifting of a two-month-old ban on interviews by newsmen of prisoners at the Attica prison that had been in effect since the Sept. 9 to 13 uprising in which 43 persons were killed.

Russell G. Oswald, the Commissioner, said in a statement that progress in restoration of the physical facility (at Attica) has reached the point where news media access can be resumed.

The required procedure for such interviews, outlined by the department, includes written requests to the superintendent for interviews; the signing of a consent form by the inmate and the right of the superintendent to limit the length of each interview and the number of interviews underway at any one time.

Mr. Houlihan said, in response to an inquiry, that the new policy applied also to Attica inmates transferred to other prisons, and so far as he knew, to inmates in the hospital.