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3 PRISON AIDES GET PROMOTIONS

Mrs. Murph Named to Head
Women's Unit at Rikers

By RUDY JOHNSON

George F. McGrath, the City Commissioner of Correction, announced yesterday the appointment of Mrs. Essie O. Murph as commanding officer of the New York City Correctional Institution for Women at Rikers Island.

Commissioner McGrath also announced the promotions of Gloria Lee and Margaret Wiegandt from captains to deputy superintendents.

Mr. McGrath stressed Mrs. Murph's qualifications as a college graduate and "a career person who had come up through the ranks." He said he was looking forward to "vigorous, sensitive" leadership.

He said that efforts to develop a quality staff for the six-month-old facility were "consistent with the philosophy that went into it architecturally when it was built."

The prison, he said, "is increasingly more of a rehabilitative institution."

Mrs. Murph, a soft-spoken woman, who is 43 years old, said that she would stress rehabilitation in the \$19,000-a-year post. Although commanding officer of the women's prison, her title has been deputy superintendent. She replaced the former superintendent, Jessie Behagan, who retired two months ago.

Mrs. Murph will be named superintendent later.

The announcement of the appointments was made at a news conference in the office of the Department of Corrections, at 100 Centre Street, where Mrs. Murph appeared with Captains Lee and Wiegandt.

Mr. McGrath and Mrs. Murph termed as "utterly false" reports that a woman inmate had been killed and another seriously injured in beatings.

A number of groups, including the Women's Bail Fund, which had helped provide bail money for indigent women defendants, made the charge about the killings at a news conference in the Criminal Courts Building at 100 Centre Street. They did not identify the alleged victims in the incident that they said had occurred last Tuesday at the Rikers Island prison.

Mr. McGrath noted that when the 55-acre institution was opened in June, approximately 420 inmates were transferred from the Women's House of Detention in Manhattan.

He said the present population was 676, or 169 per cent of capacity. He added that the Rikers Island facility required more staff personnel than the Women's House of Detention.