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BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Report To The Attorney General

The Bureau Of Prisons Can Improve Its Annual Firearms Refresher Training And Armory Operations

In reviewing the Bureau of Prisons' annual firearms training program and its armory operations, GAO found that:

- Each of the four institutions it visited to observe annual firearms training judges the qualifications of employees differently. These procedures should be standardized.
- All incidents involving the discharge of a firearm were not being reported, although required by Bureau policy.
- The Bureau has allowed institution officials to determine weapons needs without providing them with formal guidance for making such determinations. GAO found that the Bureau's institutions had large differences in the number and type of weapons in inventory and that many of the weapons needed maintenance or a thorough cleaning.

Although the Department of Justice believed that the Bureau's firearms training program adequately met the Bureau's needs, it agreed that GAO made several valid and worthwhile observations. The Department informed GAO of corrective actions that would be taken and expressed the belief that these actions would prove beneficial.



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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

GENERAL GOVERNMENT
DIVISION

B-206574

The Honorable William French Smith
The Attorney General

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

This letter addresses the Bureau of Prisons' annual firearms refresher training and armory operations. It follows our September 1982 review of the Bureau's introductory firearms training program.

With respect to firearms refresher training, we have identified opportunities for improvement. Each of the four institutions we visited to observe annual firearms training judged the qualifications of its employees differently. These procedures should be standardized. Additionally, the Bureau's institutions were not reporting all duty-related or accidental incidents where a firearm was discharged, as required by Bureau policy. These reports would provide the Bureau with a good source to use to identify firearms training needs.

Concerning armory operations, we found that the Bureau's institutions have large differences in the number and type of weapons in inventory and that many of the weapons needed maintenance or a thorough cleaning. The Bureau has allowed institution officials to determine weapons needs without providing them with formal guidance for making such determinations.

Our findings, which are discussed in detail below, are the results of work performed at the Bureau of Prisons' Headquarters, its 5 regional offices, and 11 Federal correctional institutions. Eight of the institutions were visited during our prior work on introductory firearms training, and at one of these institutions, annual firearms training was being conducted at the time of our visit. The remaining three were selected because they were conducting annual firearms refresher training at the time of this review. We requested information on weapons inventories and incidents involving firearms from all of the Bureau's institutions.

We have excluded the items covered in our prior report ^{1/} because it was our view that any changes the Bureau made to its introductory firearms training program would also affect annual refresher training. This review was made in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards.

The Department of Justice commented on a draft of this report by letter dated January 19, 1983. (See app. II.) The Department's response stated that we had made several valid and worthwhile observations and identified ways in which the Bureau intended to address these matters in order to reach a higher level of consistency in training and armory operations at all of its institutions.

THE BUREAU OF PRISONS
CAN IMPROVE ITS ANNUAL
FIREARMS TRAINING

The Bureau of Prisons' policy requires virtually all of its employees to be familiar with and able to use a revolver, carbine, and shotgun. As a means of accomplishing this, the Bureau requires its employees to participate in annual firearms refresher training at their respective institutions.

Annual refresher training is intended to refamiliarize the employees with firearms and have them demonstrate their ability to use them safely and effectively. Differences existed, however, among the institutions visited on how the qualifications of persons firing weapons were judged. Also, institutions did not report all incidents of firearms discharges as required by Bureau policy. This information should be provided to the Bureau because it provides a good source for identifying firearms training needs.

The procedures for determining
which employees are qualified to
use weapons need to be standardized

According to Bureau policy, employees are expected to be able to use weapons safely and effectively. The Bureau requires that employees demonstrate their proficiency by

^{1/}"The Bureau of Prisons Can Take Certain Actions To Make Sure Its Correctional Training Is Both Relevant and Cost Effective," (GGD-82-75, Sept. 30, 1982).

scoring at least 20 hits on a silhouette target out of 30 shots with both the revolver and the carbine. The criteria for the shotgun are five hits on the target out of five shots.

Nearly all of the employees we observed undergoing annual firearms training were certified by their respective institutions as being qualified. However, each of the 4 institutions visited used a different standard for making this determination, and 3 did not adhere to the Bureau's policy of 20 hits on the silhouette portion of the target as the criteria for proficiency. One of the three, however, used a scoring standard more stringent than the Bureau's standard.

--At one institution all hits on the target paper, even the border, counted toward the employee's score.

--At another institution, no attempt was made to determine proficiency by scoring the targets. Rather, the firearms instructors judged each person's ability to use a particular weapon (revolver, carbine, and shotgun) by watching the individual fire.

--At the third institution, the Bureau's proficiency criteria were used.

--At the fourth institution, a scoring standard which exceeded the Bureau's standard was used. At this institution, point values were awarded for hits within certain areas on the target silhouette.

Bureau headquarters officials agreed that procedures for determining whether Bureau employees are qualified to use weapons should be standardized and said that corrective action would be initiated.

Firearms discharge reports
should be used to identify
additional training needs

Since July 1979, the Bureau has required its institutions to report all weapons discharges to the regional director and the assistant directors of the Bureau's Correctional Programs Division and the Medical and Services Division. According to a Bureau official involved in writing the requirement, the intent was to ensure that all duty-related and accidental weapons discharges were reported and investigated for possible legal implications and training purposes. Most institutions, however, have not complied with this requirement.

During our fieldwork, we were informed by some officials that weapons at their institutions and at other institutions had been discharged accidentally. Because of this information, we wanted to determine whether firearms discharge reports could be analyzed to indicate a need for better firearms training in a particular area or on a specific weapon. However, when we asked officials of the Bureau's five regional offices to provide us with information on accidental and duty-related firearms discharges in their regions, they were unable to do so for several reasons.

Most regional officials said that accidental weapons discharges are not reported and that those that are reported are filed in voluminous "incident" files with other reports, such as those filed on assaults and contraband. One official said that his region requires that reports be filed on all incidents where firearms are discharged in the line of duty but requires reports on the accidental discharge of firearms only if institution officials plan to take disciplinary action. Officials from two other regions said that their regions' interpretation of the reporting requirement was that it pertained only to shots fired in the line of duty. Officials in the Bureau's other two regions said both duty-related and accidental weapons discharges are supposed to be reported but that only duty-related incidents were being reported.

To respond to our request for information on all firearms discharges, each region contacted its respective correctional institutions. In several instances, we also contacted the institutions to obtain clarification of the information that was reported. We learned that some institutions had no records of accidental firearms discharges and had to rely on the memory of employees to compile the requested information. Officials at three institutions contacted confirmed that accidental discharges are seldom reported when no one is injured.

Although we were provided only limited details on the circumstances involved in weapons discharge situations, we believe this information could be very helpful in identifying additional training needs for Bureau employees. For example, nearly half of the 101 firearms discharges reported to us were accidental, and almost 80 percent of the accidental discharges involved the shotgun--the weapon for which employees received the least amount of practice. Additional training for this weapon is obviously needed.

Bureau officials agreed that analyzing firearms discharge reports could assist them in identifying possible training needs. They said that institutions were apparently not following reporting requirements and that all firing incidents, whether accidental or intentional, should be reported. They said they would initiate corrective action.

Conclusions

Actions should be taken to improve firearms refresher training. First, the Bureau's institutions should standardize the methods used to determine whether employees are qualified to use weapons. The Bureau should also enforce its requirement that all firearms discharges--both duty-related and accidental--be reported. These reports would provide a source for identifying firearms training needs.

Recommendations

We recommend that you require the Director, Bureau of Prisons, to (1) standardize the procedures that correctional institutions use to determine whether employees are qualified to fire weapons, (2) emphasize the need for institutions to comply with Bureau policy by reporting all incidents involving the discharge of weapons, and (3) require that firearms discharge reports be analyzed to identify firearms training needs.

Agency comments

The Department of Justice agreed that there were some inconsistencies among institutions with respect to firearms qualification standards and stated that the Bureau began taking steps to correct the problem through staff training in November 1982.

The Department said that the primary firearms instructors at all of the Bureau's institutions will be brought to the Bureau's staff training academy to participate in a 40-hour course for firearms instructors. The first class of 24 instructors is scheduled to attend training during the last week of January 1983 and classes to train the remaining instructors will be offered in 1983 as soon as space becomes available. Also, Bureau policy will be amended to highlight the need for consistency in the firearms training that is provided.

Regarding the filing of firearms discharge reports, the Department stated that the Bureau agreed that reports were not being prepared in a consistent manner by every facility. It said that firearms discharge reporting will be among the topics discussed at an upcoming conference of correctional services administrators and that reporting requirements will be discussed at the courses to be offered to firearms instructors at the staff training academy. Also, the Department informed us that the Bureau is devising a standardized form to facilitate the reporting of weapons discharges and to standardize the information that the reports contain.

The Department did not comment on whether the firearms discharge reports would be analyzed to identify firearms training needs. We continue to believe they would be a useful tool for that purpose.

ARMORY OPERATIONS
NEED TO BE IMPROVED

The Bureau requires most of its institutions to have an arsenal of revolvers, carbines, and shotguns. However, because criteria for determining the number of weapons required have not been developed, inventory levels vary substantially among institutions. Also, many of the Bureau's weapons are not very well maintained.

The inventories at the Bureau's institutions consist of different makes and models of weapons having different features and operating characteristics. Because this diversity can hinder training efforts, the Bureau should work toward achieving more consistency in weapons inventories. As a first step, the Bureau should determine the number of weapons that are needed at each of its institutions. This would enable a realistic estimate of the cost of developing such an effort.

Institutions need to better
determine the number of
weapons needed

According to Bureau policy, most correctional institutions can have revolvers, carbines, and shotguns in their arsenal of weapons for use in preventing escapes, grievous bodily harm in life-threatening situations, and destruction of Government property that could facilitate an escape. However, there are no criteria for determining the number and type of weapons an institution should have to meet its security requirements, and some institutions have accumulated inventories

of various makes and models of weapons that are substantially larger than the inventories of other institutions with the same security level designations. For example:

- 4 institutions with a level 1 security designation ^{2/} did not have weapons while 6 with the same security designation had from 16 to 76 weapons.
- An institution with a level 2 security designation and 260 employees had 23 weapons and another with 192 employees had 127.
- A level 3 institution with 180 employees had 47 weapons and another with 165 employees had 71.
- A level 4 institution with 201 employees had 54 weapons and another with 205 employees had 107.

At some institutions, inventories were larger than those at institutions having higher security level designations. Information gathered during our previous review on the number of weapons at each institution is included in appendix I.

Officials at three institutions visited said that most of their weapons were already at the institutions before they began to work there, that there were no criteria for determining the number of weapons that an institution should have, and that they did not know the rationale used to justify the quantity on hand at their facilities. A Bureau regional office official said that when he was the chief correctional officer at an institution that had just opened, he and the warden determined the number of weapons needed based on the number of guard posts, plus an estimated number of spare weapons and some weapons for training. He said that he was able to obtain the weapons that were needed to satisfy his institution's needs from other organizations' surpluses and could have obtained many more than necessary because surplus weapons cost very little. He said that some officials may have obtained more weapons than their institutions needed because they could be obtained so cheaply from surpluses.

^{2/}Level 1 institutions are minimum security institutions. From that point, the higher the level, the tighter the security.

If criteria were established for determining the number and type of weapons needed at institutions, the large differences in inventory levels between the various institutions--particularly those with the same security level designation--could probably be reduced. Officials at a level 2 institution with 34 revolvers, 8 shotguns, and 10 carbines--substantially fewer weapons than 3 other institutions with the same security level--said that their institution needed only about 15 or 20 good revolvers and only a few shotguns and carbines. The institution's security officer stated that he would issue shotguns to only about four of the institution's staff, one being himself, because he was not confident that other employees could safely use one. He also said that the only reason the institution has 10 carbines is because 10 was the minimum number the Army's arsenal would ship. An official at a level 4 institution that has 26 carbines stated that the institution used them only for training. Additionally, 4 of the Bureau's minimum security institutions and 2 Metropolitan Correctional Centers have a total of 59 carbines that are used only for training.

Bureau headquarters officials were aware of some differences in the number of weapons at institutions but were surprised at the extent of the variance. They agreed that no criteria exist to guide institution officials in determining the number of weapons needed. The officials also said that some institutions may have excess weapons but pointed out that some institutions' armories are used as storage centers. They said that regional officials could determine weapons needs for their respective institutions but they did not know how the regions could require institutions' wardens to reduce their arsenals or tell institutions not to obtain more weapons--particularly if the institutions wanted weapons appearing on a surplus list.

None of the examples cited in this report involved institutions that were used as weapons storage centers. Also, we believe that wardens should be expected to conform to directives related to firearms in the same manner as they are expected to adhere to all other Bureau policies and procedures.

Institutions need to better maintain their weapons

The Bureau's policy stipulates that weapons should be "inventoried" at least once a month to determine their

condition. However, determinations of the frequency for cleaning weapons and procedures for cleaning and maintaining weapons are left to the discretion of institution officials, who, for various reasons, do not always effectively perform these tasks.

Cleaning and maintenance are extremely important to the proper functioning of weapons and to an armory operation. If properly done, cleaning and maintenance can be time consuming and costly. To do less, however, invites probable serious malfunctioning of weapons, which affects training and could inhibit the capture of an escaping inmate or seriously harm the user.

One of the institutions we visited during our prior review on introductory firearms training was conducting annual firearms training while we were there. We inspected the weapons being used for training and "spotchecked" a number of weapons in the armory. All of the weapons used for training were worn and dirty and the majority of the weapons in the armory were not clean. The revolvers had powder and lead fragments in the barrel, around the forcing cone,^{3/} and on the top strap.^{4/} Some of the revolvers displayed signs of surface rusting. Many carbines and shotguns in the armory had rust spots on their exterior metal surfaces, in their chambers, and in their barrels. The deplorable condition of the weapons at this institution prompted a Bureau audit team to recommend replacing the person responsible for cleaning and maintaining the weapons. This was done shortly after the September 1981 audit.

At the three institutions we visited during this review, we inspected virtually all of the weapons. At one institution, the security officer had not had time to clean weapons used during training. The institution's 8 shotguns were new and in good shape; however, 2 of the 10 carbines had loose stocks, and 9 of the 34 revolvers could not be fired because they needed repair.

^{3/}The forcing cone is the part of the barrel on a revolver that the bullet first enters when fired.

^{4/}The top strap is the piece of steel frame that runs from the hammer area to the point where the barrel begins. The rear sight is mounted on the top strap.

At another institution, 4 of 21 new revolvers were dirty, 4 had lead buildup, and 3 malfunctioned during firing--1 so severely that the user had difficulty pulling the trigger because the cylinder was binding during rotation. Twenty-nine of the remaining 50 revolvers were worn, dirty, and/or had lead buildup around the forcing cone and top strap. The institution's 10 shotguns were new and clean. Its 26 carbines were old and worn but generally clean. The carbines used on the training range functioned properly, but one had a broken upper stock and one needed a minor repair.

The third institution had a large number of weapons--110 revolvers, 71 carbines, and 29 shotguns. Most of the weapons were old and worn, but only 16 of the revolvers were dirty and only 13 had lead buildup or experienced cylinder rotation problems. Most of the revolvers had quite a bit of oil on them to combat excessive humidity, a practice that can lead to malfunctioning as the oil congeals. Ten of the carbines were dirty and one carbine's barrel was nearly closed by deposits of lint and dirt. Five of the shotguns were dirty, one had an "out-of-round" barrel, and another was missing a butt plate.

The large number of weapons at certain institutions may be a factor contributing to the difficulty of maintaining them. For example, on the basis of information provided by the security officer, we estimated that about 120 hours would be needed to clean all of the weapons at the third institution discussed above. The security officer also said that the weapons should be cleaned every 2 months, but because of other urgent problems--mainly lock repair--he and his assistants found it extremely difficult to maintain such a schedule.

Bureau headquarters officials acknowledged that many of the weapons at institutions were old and worn and that maintaining a large number of excess weapons could be time consuming and costly. They were concerned about the lack of care given to the weapons at the institutions we visited but expressed doubt, on the basis of their experience at institutions where they had served, that most institutions would have dirty weapons. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that the Bureau's internal auditors had found similar situations at other institutions.

The Bureau should work toward
standardization of institution
arsenals

Inventories of weapons at the Bureau's institutions contain many different makes and models which have been accumulated from several different sources. Varieties of makes and models of weapons can create problems for people who have to use weapons, can adversely affect training, and can create maintenance problems.

Ten correctional institutions we visited during 1981 and 1982 had a total of 276 carbines, 607 revolvers, and 175 shotguns. The carbines were basically all standard military weapons, but the revolvers consisted of seven different Colt models and one Smith and Wesson model. There was an even larger variety of different makes of shotguns--Remington, Ithaca, Hi Standard, Smith and Wesson, and two different models of both Stevens and Winchesters.

The greater variety of weapons in inventory, the greater the problems with training staff and using and maintaining the weapons. Each make and model of weapon has different operating characteristics which makes using them safely and effectively more difficult. For example, the mechanism for opening the cylinder on a Colt revolver must be pulled toward the rear of the weapon, whereas on a Smith and Wesson, it must be pushed forward. Likewise, each type shotgun has different loading, unloading, and safety mechanisms. These different features can make training more difficult and time consuming because instruction and practice should be given on each model of a weapon.

One of the 10 institutions visited had 4 different makes of shotguns. An institution official said that training is not given on all makes because there is not enough time; training is given only for a Remington, and because all of these weapons are assigned to towers, they cannot be issued to employees during an escape attempt. He explained that the other makes of shotguns would be given out in an emergency but that the employees who received them may not be trained in their use. We were told of an escape attempt during which a guard could not fire a weapon because she did not know how to release the safety mechanism.

Additionally, the variety of weapons in inventory further complicates the already difficult maintenance task. Different

makes and models require replacement parts specifically designed for them and specific knowledge of their unique operating mechanisms and tolerances in order to properly replace malfunctioning or broken parts. Security officers at three institutions said that only a limited number of spare parts, many of which are taken from weapons being destroyed, are maintained. They stated that they can replace only revolver grips, screws, and certain minor springs and can make only minor adjustments because special training is required to do more. Correcting more serious problems, such as timing of cylinder rotation on revolvers, is done by local gunsmiths if a weapon is considered valuable enough to be repaired.

A potential solution to these problems is to standardize the weapons used throughout the system. Standardization would enhance training and employees' potential to use weapons more effectively and might also improve the maintenance situation. Employees would be trained on the same kind of weapons that they would use in emergency situations, and spare parts would be easier to stock.

According to Bureau officials, institutions have acquired weapons primarily from military surpluses, Federal agency confiscations (for example, Drug Enforcement Administration raids), and police departments, because the Bureau could not afford to equip its institutions with standard sets of new weapons. Although officials agreed that, in principle, standardizing their institutions' arsenals would be a good idea, they pointed to the cost savings they currently receive by obtaining weapons from surpluses.

Conclusions

The number and type of weapons on hand at the Bureau's institutions varies widely. Further, weapons are not always well maintained.

Maintaining an inventory of weapons is a labor intensive task and maintaining more weapons than is necessary exacerbates the problem. Therefore, the Bureau should establish criteria for assessing the number of weapons needed at its institutions. If weapons inventories can be reduced, maintenance problems could be alleviated.

We recognize that standardization of the weapons in the Bureau's inventory may be too expensive. However, until the Bureau determines the number and types of weapons it needs,

the cost of such an undertaking cannot be realistically assessed. Also, it might be possible for the Bureau to move toward standardization by choosing its weapons from surplus more selectively or by using weapons determined to be excess to one institution's needs to replace nonstandard weapons at other institutions.

Recommendations

We recommend that you require the Director, Bureau of Prisons, to develop criteria for determining weapons requirements at each of the Bureau's correctional institutions. These criteria could take into consideration such factors as the security level of the institution, its population, and any restrictions on using certain types of weapons, such as nearby housing, highways, or industrial buildings.

We also recommend that you require the Director to (1) improve the cleaning and maintenance of the weapons in institutions' armories and (2) explore the possibility of standardizing the weapons in the Bureau's inventory, either by procuring new weapons, selecting those available from surplus more carefully, or using weapons determined to be excess to one institution's needs to replace nonstandard models at others. Determining each institution's weapons needs would be the first necessary step.

Agency comments

The Department said that the Bureau's Administrator of Correctional Services and its regional correctional administrators will meet this month to discuss the number and types of weapons to be maintained at each institution. Consideration will be given to the security level of the institutions as well as the type of housing and terrain surrounding them.

The Department agreed that attention needs to be directed to the standardization of weapons in institutions' armories and stated that plans are underway to evaluate the extent to which a weapons standardization policy can be implemented.

Regarding the maintenance of weapons, the Department stated that the Bureau will offer instruction in the proper cleaning and maintenance of weapons at its firearms instructor course. The course will emphasize procedures for cleaning and maintaining weapons as well as the frequency and level of maintenance required. The Department also stated that chief correctional supervisors at the institutions have been

instructed to contract with local gunsmiths to perform maintenance that cannot be done by security officers at the institutions.

The Department expressed the view that we did not fully understand the reasons why surplus weapons were maintained at several institutions. The Department explained that the Bureau's weapons are obtained from military surplus and that an adequate supply must be retained to ensure that there are sufficient serviceable weapons at all times.

We understand the need to maintain some spare weapons. However, as we stated in the report, we could find no evidence that criteria existed to aid officials in determining how many weapons each institution should have. The need for spare weapons cannot be realistically determined without first determining basic weapons requirements. As previously noted, the Department stated that the Bureau was beginning to take action in this area. In addition, if weapons in the armories are better maintained, the number of serviceable weapons is likely to increase. The Department also stated that the Bureau was taking action in this area. Effective action would negate the need to keep some of the surplus weapons that are now in institutions' armories.

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We wish to thank you for the cooperation extended to us during our work. As you know, 31 U.S.C. §720 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of this report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of this report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen of the Committees mentioned above; to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and to the Director, Bureau of Prisons.

Sincerely yours,

W. J. Anderson

William J. Anderson
Director

BUREAU OF PRISONS
INSTITUTION STAFF
AND ARMAMENT,
JULY 1981

<u>Level 1 insti-</u> <u>tutions</u>	<u>Authorized</u> <u>institution</u> <u>staff</u>	<u>Revol-</u> <u>vers</u>	<u>Car-</u> <u>bines</u>	<u>Shot-</u> <u>guns</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>weapons</u>
1) Allenwood	83	0	0	0	0
2) Big Spring	62	9	12	6	27
3) Boron	60	0	0	0	0
4) Eglin	71	0	0	0	0
5) Fort Worth	212	17	5	4	26
6) Lexington	317	38	30	8	76
7) Maxwell	45	0	0	0	0
8) Morgantown	157	8	8	2	18
9) Safford	56	19	0	3	22
10) Seagoville	107	8	5	3	16
	<u>1,170</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>185</u>
 <u>Level 2 insti-</u> <u>tutions</u>					
1) Danbury	186	57	39	6	102
2) La Tuna	196	85	15	10	110
3) Sandstone	138	34	10	8	52
4) Tallahassee	192	72	37	18	127
5) Terminal Island	260	14	4	5	23
	<u>972</u>	<u>262</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>414</u>
 <u>Level 3 insti-</u> <u>tutions</u>					
1) Ashland	194	30	25	10	65
2) Englewood	180	12	11	24	47
3) Miami	165	30	35	6	71
4) Milan	232	65	21	16	102
5) Petersburg	223	99	22	18	139
6) Ray Brook	193	64	24	8	96
7) Texarkana	194	70	20	16	106
	<u>1,381</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>626</u>

<u>Level 4 insti- tutions</u>	<u>Authorized institution staff</u>	<u>Revol- vers</u>	<u>Car- bines</u>	<u>Shot- guns</u>	<u>Total weapons</u>
1) El Reno	297	115	25	24	164
2) Memphis	201	32	6	16	54
3) Otisville	205	71	26	10	107
4) Oxford	216	46	31	26	103
5) Talladega	210	28	20	12	60
	<u>1,129</u>	<u>292</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>488</u>
 <u>Level 5 insti- tutions</u>					
1) Leavenworth	375	128	41	36	205
2) Lewisburg	343	130	158	51	339
3) Lompoc	363	136	128	55	319
4) Terre Haute	315	61	24	24	109
	<u>1,396</u>	<u>455</u>	<u>351</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>972</u>
 <u>Level 6 insti- tutions</u>					
1) Marion	282	124	57	41	222
 <u>Other Institutions</u>					
1) Alderson	206	12	15	8	35
2) Atlanta	272	121	86	37	244
3) Bastrop	204	18	15	17	50
4) Butner	200	62	34	13	109
5) Chicago	168	19	0	4	23
6) Florence	37	12	4	5	21
7) New York	184	32	2	10	44
8) Pleasanton	144	12	3	4	19
9) San Diego	155	20	5	5	30
10) Springfield	538	114	55	27	196
11) Tucson (note a)	<u>65</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>20</u>
	<u>2,173</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>225</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>791</u>
 Total	<u>8,503</u>	<u>2,032</u>	<u>1,064</u>	<u>602</u>	<u>3,698</u>

a/Tucson data as of September 1982.



U.S. Department of Justice

Washington, D.C. 20530

JAN 19 1983

Mr. William J. Anderson
Director
General Government Division
United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Anderson:

This letter is in response to your request to the Attorney General for the comments of the Department of Justice (Department) on your draft report entitled "The Bureau of Prisons Can Improve Its Annual Firearms Refresher Training and Armory Operations."

The report focuses on weapons qualification standards, firearms discharge reports, weapons inventory levels and weapons maintenance related to firearms training and armory operations. While it is the Department's conviction that the Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) present Firearms Refresher Training Program adequately meets the needs of its institutions, we do agree that several valid and worthwhile observations have been identified by the General Accounting Office (GAO) where improvements can be made. This response indicates how the Bureau intends to address those areas in order to reach a higher level of consistency in training and armory operations in all of its institutions.

Procedures Need to be Standardized for Determining Which Employees Are Qualified to Use Weapons

Although the majority of institutions conduct firearms refresher programs that meet the needs of the Bureau, we agree with GAO that there are some inconsistencies between institutions regarding firearms qualifications standards for employees undergoing such training. Recognizing that such inconsistencies existed, the Bureau began taking steps in November 1982 to correct the problem through staff training.

All institution primary firearms instructors will be brought to the Bureau's Staff Training Academy at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Glynco, Georgia, to participate in a 40-hour Firearms Instructor's Course. The course will require instructors to:

1. Use the same familiarization standards in annual refresher training that are used at the Staff Training Academy for students in the "Introduction to Correctional Techniques" program (see enclosure).

-2-

Those facilities with towers recently authorized to use the M-14 rifle will use the M-14 in annual refresher training. The same standards set for the carbine will be used for the M-14.

2. Use the same equipment, targets, and techniques used at the Academy when conducting local firearms training.
3. Maintain accurate records and refuse to certify any employee who does not meet the firearms standards. Local Chief Correctional Supervisors will be advised not to place any noncertified employee on an armed post or in any other situation requiring the use of firearms until that employee qualifies with firearms.
4. Bureau policy will be amended to make items 1 through 3 mandatory.

The first class of 24 instructors has been scheduled for training during the last week of January 1983. Other classes to train all primary firearms instructors will be offered in 1983 as soon as space becomes available at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

As an integral part of the course, we are including a segment on time management to assist the instructors in making the best use of student training time at their respective institutions.

Armory Operations Need to be Improved

Since the three subtopics of Institutions need to better determine the number of weapons needed, Institutions need to better maintain their weapons, and The Bureau should work toward standardization of institutional arsenals are linked to armory operations, we have consolidated our response to address these issues under one heading.

We agree with the GAO auditors that attention needs to be directed to the standardization of weapons kept in institution armories. Plans are now underway to evaluate the extent to which a weapons standardization policy can be implemented. The evaluation will be conducted by Regional Correctional Administrators through onsite institutional armory visits. The Administrator of Correctional Services and the five Regional Correctional Administrators will meet this month to discuss the number and types of weapons to be maintained at each institution. Consideration will be given to the security level of the institution and the type of housing and terrain surrounding the institution. Wherever standardization problems are identified, they will be addressed.

With implementation of the Firearms Instructor's Course at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center this month, the Bureau will also offer instruction in the proper cleaning and maintenance of weapons. Although we believe the majority of weapons are maintained in proper fashion, the course will emphasize procedures for cleaning and maintaining weapons as well as the frequency and level of maintenance required. Institution Chief Correctional Supervisors have been instructed to contract with a local gunsmith to perform maintenance that cannot be done by the Security Officer of the institution.

-3-

Regarding surpluses of weapons at several institutions, we do not believe the GAO auditors fully understand that the Bureau's weapons are obtained from surplus military supplies. The Bureau must maintain an adequate supply of each weapon to ensure that there are sufficient serviceable weapons at all times. The Bureau has, and will continue, to transport weapons between institutions to ensure sufficient serviceable weapons at each location. The Bureau's recent decision to convert to the M-14 rifle was based in part upon the ready supply of this surplus weapon and the dwindling supply of .30 caliber carbines for service and spare parts use.

Firearms Discharge Reports Should be Used to Identify Additional Training Needs

As pointed out in the draft report, since 1979 the Bureau has required institutions to report all weapon discharges--other than those for training--through the Regional Director to both the Assistant Director, Correctional Programs Division, and Medical Director. The Bureau agrees that such reporting is not being completed in a consistent manner by every facility. At the Correctional Services Administrators' Conference scheduled this month, firearms discharge reports will be among the topics discussed. In addition, firearms discharge reports will be a subject for discussion at the Firearms Instructor's Course previously described.

The Bureau is also in the process of devising a standardized form to make the reporting of weapons discharges easier and the information reported more standardized.

* * * * *

We are pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the draft report. Overall, we believe the corrective actions being taken in those areas recommended for improvement by GAO will prove beneficial in further standardizing the Bureau's firearms refresher training and armory operations. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kevin D. Rooney
Assistant Attorney General
for Administration

Enclosure

Bureau of Prisons
Firearms Standards

At present, every new employee of the Bureau of Prisons is required to attend the Staff Training Academy program "Introduction to Correctional Techniques" within four to six months of hiring. As a part of that training, each student participates in firearms training involving the .38 caliber revolver, the .30 caliber carbine, and the twelve gauge shotgun. (These are standard weapons available for use at those institutions which maintain weapons on hand.)

In order to graduate from the Academy, each student is required to obtain the following minimum scores with each weapon:

- .38 caliber revolver.....21 out of 30 hits within the five ring of a transtar target (70%)
- .30 caliber carbine.....21 out of 30 hits within the five ring of and M-14 a transtar target (70%)
- .12 gauge shotgun.....5 hits out of 5 shots on a transtar target (100%)

If a student fails to meet these requirements, he/she does not graduate from the program and his/her evaluation letter advises the home institution not to place this employee on an armed post or in a situation where the use of firearms is required until the employee has received training at the local institution which allows meeting this standard.



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