

# New Pontiac warden moves to end deadlock

By William Recktenwald

DON HARVEY, Pontiac Prison warden, has ordered the first major steps to end the 24-hour-a-day lockup of inmates that has existed since the July 22 riot in which three guards were killed.

Harvey, who was appointed warden last week, said in an interview Sunday that he has reinstated three monthly visits and telephone calls for each inmate, ordered showers for the men, and Wednesday will begin recreation in the prison yard.

The 41-year-old warden confirmed conditions detailed by this Tribune reporter, who worked as a prison guard in Pontiac earlier this month. He added that tensions resulting from the riot and subsequent lockup made conditions at Pontiac when he took over "about as drastic as things can be."

YET, HARVEY said he can't completely lift the lockup since Pontiac is still more than 60 corrections officers short, and many of the staff are fearful of the end of the restrictions.

"I know we've got three officers dead,

and nothing's going to change that," said Harvey, who from 1970 to 1976 was assistant warden at Pontiac. "But we have to keep going forward. We can't relive that issue forever.

"But the tone of this institution right now is that the staff is a lot more afraid of the inmates than the inmates are afraid of them. If I were ordered to completely open up the institution in the morning, I might be in trouble.

"We're a long way from being able to institute total control."

THE NEW WARDEN, a 19-year veter-

an of the Illinois Department of Corrections where he began as a counselor in the juvenile division, blamed many of the problems in Pontiac on the large number of capable veteran officers who quit after the riot. He said he would make a personal effort to coax these men back.

Harvey said a prison runs itself from "the inside out," and the warden has to be on the inside as much as possible. That suits his style fine, and he plans to move his 5 foot 8 inch, 200-pound frame

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Tribune Photo by Ernie Cox Jr.

Warden Don Harvey: "We're a long way from being able to institute total control." The eagle painting is a holdover from a previous warden's reign.

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around the prison as much as possible.

"I'm into participative management," he said. "I like to be out there whether it's jumping or not. That's the only way you know what's going on."

The warden plans to set an example for his high-ranking officers who he said haven't been walking the cell-house galleries as they should. If necessary, he said, he'll put in sign-in sheets to assure that his ranking officers get out there.

"AND IF THAT system doesn't work, I'll go down and ask the cons themselves if my men are out there working. I've been knowing some of these men 15 years, and they'll tell me."

Harvey said the current attitude of corrections officers at Pontiac has been "too punitive," and he has ordered guards to stop writing disciplinary citations against inmates for petty matters.

For example, he said a guard recently cited an inmate and took away his "good time" [good behavior time credited against his sentence] because he wouldn't transfer out of the segregation unit into a regular cell-house.

"If a guy doesn't want to come out of segregation for whatever reason, that's his choice," said Harvey, adding that he will review all disciplinary tickets written on inmates.

AT THE SAME time, the warden praised the corrections officers for displaying "amazing restraint" in the face of incredible provocations by inmates over the last several months.

"The day of the real 'goon squads' among guards has almost disappeared completely," he said.

Harvey described his approach as "preventive," adding, "I believe in taking care of the little problems before

they become big."

The warden said he's aware of a problem at Pontiac with prison personnel trafficking in drugs and said he plans to institute more frequent and thorough shakedowns.

However, Harvey said drug trafficking is the type of problem that is only solved by being out in the prison talking to guards and inmates to assure reliable information on which to operate.