

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

G. ROBERT COTTON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY AND CAMP WATERLOO

INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in March 2000, contains the results of our performance audit* of the G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility (GRCCF) and Camp Waterloo (CW), Department of Corrections (DOC).

AUDIT PURPOSE

This performance audit was conducted as part of the constitutional responsibility of the Office of the Auditor General. Performance audits are conducted on a priority basis related to the potential for improving effectiveness* and efficiency*.

BACKGROUND

GRCCF, located in Jackson County, and CW, located in Washtenaw County, are under the jurisdiction of DOC. The warden, who is the chief administrative officer for both facilities, is a classified State employee under the State's civil service system. The warden is appointed by the DOC director.

The mission of GRCCF and CW is to protect society by providing a safe, secure, and humane environment for staff and prisoners. GRCCF, which opened in December 1985, is a multi-level facility that houses minimum security (level I)* , low medium security (level II)*, high medium security (level III)*, and close custody security (level IV)*

male prisoners, with a capacity of 1,728 prisoners. Prisoners are housed in individual cells within a secured, fenced perimeter. CW, which was placed under the jurisdiction of GRCCF in September 1997, houses 150 minimum security (level I)* male prisoners within a fenced perimeter.

For fiscal year 1997-98, GRCCF and CW operating expenditures were approximately \$27.7 million and \$2.6 million, respectively. As of May 31, 1999, GRCCF and CW had 433 and 42 employees, respectively.

**AUDIT OBJECTIVES,
CONCLUSIONS, AND
NOTEWORTHY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of GRCCF's and CW's safety and security operations.

Conclusion: We concluded that GRCCF's and CW's safety and security operations were generally effective in preventing escapes and protecting employees and prisoners from serious injury. However, we noted reportable conditions* related to gate manifests*, prisoner shakedowns* and cell searches, firearms recertification, tool control, and security monitoring exercises (Findings 1 through 5).

Noteworthy Accomplishments: In 1959, the Braille Program began at the State Prison of Southern Michigan, which at that time had four prisoners working for the Program learning Braille. In the years that followed, the Program grew and prisoner workers increased. Because of the rapid growth of the Program, it was restructured in 1972 through a three-way contract between the Jackson Intermediate School District (fiscal agent), DOC (landlord and labor pool), and the Lions Clubs International, Multiple

District 11-B-1 (financial sponsor). At that time, a full-time civilian director began administering the Program.

In 1983, a computerized Braille production section was added to the operation. In 1998, over 2 million pages of Braille text was produced. Textbooks were sent throughout the United States as well as to other countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Bermuda, and Canada. On April 14, 1999, the Michigan Braille Transcribing Fund donated to DOC a building valued at \$500,000 housing the Program. This 4,000 square foot building is located at GRCCF. The cost of the building, equipment, and furniture was paid for by money earned from the sale of Braille merchandise and without cost to taxpayers.

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of GRCCF's and CW's prisoner care and maintenance operations.

Conclusion: We concluded that GRCCF's and CW's prisoner care and maintenance operations were generally effective. However, we noted reportable conditions related to emergency generator tests, physical plant inspections, and a written preventive maintenance plan (Findings 6 through 8).

**AUDIT SCOPE AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility and Camp Waterloo. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Our audit procedures included examination of GRCCF and CW records and activities principally for the period October 1997 through May 1999. Our audit methodology included a preliminary review of GRCCF and CW operations. This included discussions with various GRCCF and CW staff regarding their functions and responsibilities and a review of program records, DOC policy directives, and GRCCF and CW operating procedures. To gain an understanding of GRCCF and CW activities and to form a basis for selecting certain operations for audit, we conducted tests of records related to safety and security, prison operations, prisoner care, and maintenance activities for compliance with applicable policies and procedures and for program effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, we developed a survey (see supplemental information) requesting input from certain individuals and businesses regarding their association with GRCCF.

AGENCY RESPONSES

Our audit report includes 8 findings and 8 corresponding recommendations. GRCCF agrees with all of the findings and informed us that it either has complied or will comply with the recommendations.