

**INMATES IN THE DEPARTMENTAL  
SEGREGATION UNIT**

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## ABSTRACT

Over the years, the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) has concentrated increasing attention and resources on ways to deal with inmates who present serious disciplinary problems to the system. While making up less than 5% of the total DOC population, these inmates affect DOC staff, other inmates and the running of the institutions in various ways. The DOC Administration is interested in finding ways to prevent segregation for inmates in the first place and to break the cycle of segregation/disciplinary problems that continues for others.

This report is the first in a series of three that focuses on these inmates and their resultant classification to the Departmental Segregation Unit (DSU). It deals specifically with the 165 inmates classified to and residing in DSU during 1983. The main purpose of this report is to outline the circumstances that resulted in their DSU classification and describe their placement in segregation. The report also provides a profile of these DSU inmates and describes where they were in terms of their incarceration in order to put their disciplinary problems into perspective. The profile and incarceration experiences are included in this study to serve as a backdrop for understanding DSU classification. A subsequent study will compare the profiles and incarceration experiences of DSU inmates with the total DOC population.

Almost all of the inmates in this study encountered their disciplinary problems at MCI-Cedar Junction. The majority were referred for DSU classification as a result of being found guilty of a very serious disciplinary report. The two most frequent single offenses for which inmates ended up being classified

DSU were staff assaults and participation in a riot. When broken into four categories, the frequency of DSU offenses were as follows: offenses against other inmates (35%), offenses against staff (30%), participation in a riot (23%) and all other offenses (12%).

Inmates with prior disciplinary reports (D-reports) for assault on staff were highly likely to have their DSU offense be an assault on staff. Similarly inmates with prior riot D-reports were most likely classified DSU for the same offense. This relationship did not hold true though for inmates with prior inmate assaults. There was also a statistical relationship between last housing unit and type of DSU offense. Essex inmates were more often involved in riots, Bristol inmates in offenses against fellow inmates and inmates housed in other units were more often involved in offenses against staff.

Sixty-seven percent of the DSU inmates studied in this research had been released from DSU status by the end of the data collection. The average time spent in segregation was 8.6 months. These inmates were most often released to Cedar Junction's Essex units, DSU II at Norfolk or one of the other Cedar Junction units. Twelve inmates were released from DSU status to the street -- one by parole and one by court. Of the inmates still classified DSU by the end of this study (33%), twenty-one were relatively recent arrivals. The remaining inmates were either serving long DSU sentences for serious offenses or were being retained in DSU as a result of disruption and discipline problems in segregation.

It is believed that the inmates in this study are similar to those who are presently segregated for disciplinary reasons. Hopefully this report will begin to shed some light on these inmates, their experiences and the process by which they find themselves in segregation.

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### INMATES IN THE DEPARTMENTAL SEGREGATION UNIT

The Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) utilizes segregation cells for a number of reasons including protective custody, the arrival of new inmates, administrative segregation, disciplinary action and inmates awaiting disciplinary action. An administrative study of the utilization of DOC segregation beds was completed in December, 1983.<sup>1</sup> A main focus of the study was the Departmental Segregation Unit (DSU) located at MCI-Cedar Junction. This unit consists of sixty secure cells and had been used for those inmates who pose a substantial threat to the safety of others or to the institution itself. The study singled out the DSU as a cause of the backlogging of other segregation beds.

One of the recommendations of the study was to establish a DSU Phase II Unit (DSU II) at MCI-Norfolk where inmates would be involved in various programming including work assignments, education, recreation and counseling. Opened in March, 1984, the main goals of DSU II are to reverse the trend of increased need for disciplinary segregation space for DSU use and to immediately reduce the backlog of inmates awaiting placement in DSU.

Another result of the administrative study and the planning of DSU II was the request for research surrounding disciplinary segregation. The administration wanted to know more about inmates who are classified to the Departmental

Segregation Unit and also wanted an evaluation of the new DSU II. This report is the first of three designed to address that request for research. The main purpose of this report is to provide some background information on the 1983 DSU population and the circumstances surrounding their DSU placements. A description of all three reports is included in the "Research Methods" section of this report.

This report is divided into a number of sections. The first section is a description of the DSU, including its location and the process whereby an inmate is classified to that type of segregation. The next section reviews the research methods used in this study. Section IV provides a short description of the DSU population studied. In addition to learning the social backgrounds and criminal histories of those studied, it was considered important to learn more about the experiences they have been through since the beginning of their incarceration. Section V discusses some of those experiences and relates them to the subsequent DSU classification. Section VI is a discussion of why and how the inmates studied were classified DSU. It also describes their length of stay in segregation and their receipt of further disciplinary reports. The final section of the report presents a summary of the findings.

## II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE DEPARTMENTAL SEGREGATION UNIT

The Departmental Segregation Unit (DSU) is the Massachusetts DOC equivalent of what other states call administrative segregation. Specifically it is defined in the DOC regulations as an "area or areas in a state correctional facility designated by the commissioner for the confinement of any resident whose continued retention in the general population of a state correctional facility is detrimental to the program of that facility."<sup>2</sup> Paraphrasing the regulations, an inmate can be transferred to the DSU under the following conditions:

- 1) The Commissioner finds that the record of the resident or other reliable information indicates that the resident poses a substantial threat to the safety of others or to the facility through damage of property or interruption of the operation of that facility.
- 2) An inmate commits a specific punishable offense, a disciplinary board finds him guilty of that offense, imposes a sanction(s), refers the resident for consideration of DSU classification and the Commissioner finds that the resident fits one of the categories in #1 above.
- 3) A superintendent has made a request to the Commissioner to transfer a resident to the DSU and the Commissioner finds that the resident fits one of the categories in # 1 above.

Most of the inmates in this study ended up in the DSU as a result of the second condition, committing an offense, being found guilty of that offense and being referred for possible DSU classification as part of their sanctions. Nine inmates in this study were transferred to DSU as a result of a request from a superintendent to the Commissioner. Once DSU classification is recommended, the inmate will have a hearing before a Department Review Board, referred to in this



study as the DSU Board. The DSU Board must decide if the inmate poses a substantial threat to the safety of others or the facility and whether or not his behavior warrants placement in a segregation unit. If the Board believes placement in segregation is warranted, they will recommend that the inmate be classified DSU. Once a decision is made by this DSU Board, it must be approved first by the superintendent and then by the Commissioner. If an inmate is classified DSU, his status is reviewed by the DSU Board and the Commissioner ninety days after his transfer to segregation and at ninety day intervals thereafter.

At the beginning of this study, 60 beds were allocated to inmates classified DSU and were located at MCI-Cedar Junction in Walpole (hereafter referred to as Walpole). However, due to the backlog already mentioned, inmates who were classified DSU were not necessarily placed in the DSU itself. Some were placed in the segregation units of medium security institutions, in Walpole's Institutional Disciplinary Unit (IDU) or in other Walpole units. Space for inmates classified DSU has since been expanded to 100 beds - 70 at Walpole and 30 in the DSU II Unit at MCI-Norfolk (hereafter referred to as Norfolk). The beds at Walpole include 40 in the East Wing of DSU (formerly known as Block Nine or IDU) and 30 beds in the West Wing (formerly known as Block Ten or the DSU Unit). Inmates classified DSU are initially placed in one of Walpole's DSU units. They are either released into voluntary participation in DSU II at Norfolk or are eventually released to Walpole's general population.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

The goals of the research on segregation were twofold. The first was to develop a data-base on DSU inmates and DSU II in order to be able to provide feedback to the administration upon request. The second goal was to answer some of the specific questions the DOC administration had about the DSU population and the impact of the new unit. The research was designed at the end of 1983. The data collection and analysis began shortly after and continue to the present. Three reports will result from this research effort and are described below:

- 1) The present report focuses on the 1983 DSU population. The main purpose is to outline the circumstances that resulted in their DSU classification and describe their placement in segregation. The report also provides a profile of these DSU inmates and describes some of their incarceration experiences.
- 2) The second report will contain three sections, the first of which is a literature review of other studies of prison violence and disciplinary problems. There will also be a comparison of the DSU inmates with a sample of inmates at Walpole and the total DOC population. They will be compared along a number of background, criminal history, present offense, institutional behavior and other institutional variables. A third section will determine how heterogeneous the DSU population is.
- 3) The final report will be an explanation and evaluation of the DSU II unit at Norfolk.

The DSU population for this study consists of all inmates classified DSU and residing in the DSU on January 1, 1983, in addition to those inmates who were classified for DSU placement between January 1, 1983 and December 31, 1983. Inmates were included even if they were classified DSU but were placed in other

segregation units due to overcrowding in DSU. Inmates placed in segregation while awaiting a disciplinary hearing or a DSU classification hearing were not included, unless they were subsequently classified DSU within the stated time frame. This sampling method yielded a DSU population of 165 inmates or 2.6% of the total DOC population.

Discussions with key DOC administrators and with DSU staff prior to the design of the research helped to identify what variables might be important to collect on the DSU population. The information presented in this paper includes personal background data, criminal history, present offense, incarceration information, the DSU offense and the various types of information surrounding DSU classification and the resultant segregation placement. One source of data was the Departmental computerized data-base. A number of variables was retrieved from the inmate master cards which list all movements of individual inmates. Information on the present DSU offense and classification was extracted from the DOC Central Office inmate folders. Other information was extracted from the classification and movement files at Walpole. All information was analyzed using the Regents Computer Network (RCN).

#### IV. THE DSU POPULATION

This section presents a description of the 165 inmates who were either already classified DSU on 1/1/83 or who were subsequently classified DSU between that date and 12/31/83. The description, which includes demographic data, criminal history and information surrounding the present offense, will serve as a backdrop for understanding DSU classification. No comparisons will be made with the DOC population in this study. While some of the tables generated for this information will be contained in the text, tables with additional information can be found in the appendix.

##### A. Demographic Data

The majority (68%) of inmates classified DSU during 1983 were white. Twenty-eight percent were black and the remaining 4% were Hispanic. Most were single (77%) with less than one-fourth being either married or separated/divorced. Twenty-nine of these inmates (19%) had served in the military. While their ages ranged from 19 to 42 on the day they received the disciplinary report (D-report) that resulted in their DSU placement, their median age on that day was 24 years old. Only 16% of these inmates received their DSU D-report at age 21 or younger.

Prior to their incarceration, all but ten DSU inmates had lived in Massachusetts, with most (64%) living in the Greater Boston Area or in the city itself. Others came from the Springfield or Worcester areas. Of the 83% who had been previously employed, the majority had worked in either manual or service positions. However, employment for these inmates was not steady - 64% spent a year or less at both their most skilled position and job of longest duration.

Education-wise, the average grade completed was the ninth grade.

Twenty-seven percent had either completed high school or earned their General Equivalency Diploma (GED), while 37% had not proceeded beyond the 8th grade.

## **B. Criminal History**

Almost all of the 165 DSU inmates began their criminal history before age twenty. The median age at first court appearance was fourteen years old. Fifty-six percent of these inmates were fourteen years or younger at their first court appearance, while another 33% were between fifteen and seventeen years of age. Just under half (48%) had been committed to the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) as a juvenile delinquent.

The total number of prior court appearances ranged from the present offense being their first (2%) to twenty-one or more court appearances (30%). The average number was seventeen court appearances. All but four of the inmates (98%) had prior charges for person offenses, the average number being eight. Only a small percentage (10%) had been charged with prior sex offenses. Property offenses made up the largest number of prior charges, with fourteen being the average number per inmate. Fifty-seven percent had over eight prior property offenses. Over half of the inmates had no prior drug charges (54%) and almost three-fourths had no prior alcohol-related charges (73%).

Most of the DSU inmates (73%) had been previously incarcerated as adults in either a county house of correction or state prison. The average number of prior adult incarcerations was two and more than one-fourth of these inmates had been incarcerated three or more times. Almost a full third of the DSU inmates (31%) had prior escape offenses. While only sixty (37%) DSU inmates had been released one or more times on parole, forty-two of these had had one or more parole violations.

Taken all together, DSU inmates had extensive criminal histories. Most began these histories in their early teens and have appeared in court many times. A good number have been previously incarcerated and some (26%) have been imprisoned three or more times. Finally there have been a lot of failures relating to incarceration with 31% of the total DSU inmates being charged with at least one prior escape offense and 25% violating a prior parole.

### C. Present Offense and Incarceration

The number of offenses for which the DSU inmates are presently incarcerated ranged from one to more than nine and the average number was two offenses. Forty-eight percent had only one present offense, but 28% had three or more. For each inmate, the most serious offense was selected and the results are presented below in Table 1. As can be seen, the majority (85%) were incarcerated for offenses against the person. These include: first degree murder (11), second degree murder (12), manslaughter (9), armed and unarmed assault (19), armed (68) and unarmed robbery (13), rape (6) and kidnapping (1). The remaining 15% included property crimes (armed and unarmed burglary), drug, weapons and escape offenses.

**Table 1**  
**Most Serious Present Offense<sup>3</sup>**

	Number	Percent
Person	133	(81)
Sex	8	( 5)
Property	17	(10)
Other	7	( 4)

Most inmates either received a simple (41%) or concurrent sentence (35%). Others received (in descending order of occurrence) a forthwith, aggregate, from and after or split sentence. Eighty-five percent were given Walpole sentences. Of these, eleven individuals received life sentences without the possibility of parole, while thirteen received life sentences with possible parole. For those with a Walpole sentence, 50% received minimum sentences of eight years or less and the average minimum sentence was nine years. For the 25 DSU inmates receiving the less serious Concord or reformatory sentence, the average maximum sentence was ten years. Almost one-fourth (24%) of these had a maximum sentence of five years or less. Therefore while DSU inmates' sentences ranged from as little as a two year maximum sentence to life, 68% had at least a five year minimum sentence and 25% had at least a fifteen year minimum sentence.

**Table 2**  
**Minimum Sentence**

	Number	Percent
Concord Sentence	25	(15)
2-5 Years	26	(16)
6-10 Years	58	(35)
11-15 Years	18	(11)
16 Years or More	12	( 7)
Life Sentence	24	(14)
Out-of-State Sentence	2	( 1)

The median age at incarceration for these offenders was 22. At each end of the scale, 10% were age 30 or older and 19% were still in their teenage years at incarceration.

The time served up until the receipt of the DSU D-report is presented below

in Table 3. As can be seen, it was not possible to calculate time served for those inmates with a complex sentence (33%)<sup>4</sup>. However for the other two-thirds of the inmates, average time served was four years and 50% had served three and a half years or more.

**Table 3**  
**Time Served Up Until Receipt Of DSU D-Report**

	Number	Percent
Complex Sentence	54	(33)
Less Than 1 Year	2	( 1)
1-2 Years	18	(11)
2-3 Years	25	(15)
3-5 Years	32	(19)
5-10 Years	32	(19)
10-15 Years	2	( 1)

A similar piece of information is the amount of time between commitment to DOC on the present offense and the date on which the DSU D-report was received. This time span tends to minimize time incarcerated since it does not include time incarcerated for a prior sentence which might have run into the present one. Given that, the average amount of time between date of commitment and receipt of DSU D-report was three years and 57% of the inmates had been incarcerated for the present offense for two or more years. Both this variable and the time served variable reveal that inmates had been incarcerated for some time before they received this DSU D-report.

As for parole eligibility, 8% were ineligible for parole due to their life sentence and for 26% of the inmates, their parole eligibility date (P.E. date) had already passed by the time they were committed to DSU (Table 4). For those still



awaiting their P.E. date, the average waiting time would be four years with half waiting three years or less. Ten inmates had already been paroled during the incarceration and had been returned on parole violations. Of these, the average time on the street was one year.

**Table 4**  
**Time Between DSU D-Report And Parole Eligibility Date**  
 (N = 164)\*

	Number	Percent
Less Than 1 Year Away	23	(14)
1-3 Years Away	31	(19)
3-5 Years Away	22	(13)
5 or More Years Away	32	(20)
P.E. Already Passed	42	(26)
N/A - Lifers	14	( 8)

\*The N in this table and in table 17 is 164 because one inmate received his DSU D-Report for attempted escape at a House of Correction, while waiting to be committed to the DOC.

In summary, most DSU inmates were incarcerated for offenses against the person. Fourteen percent received life sentences and 15% received Concord sentences. The remaining 71% received an average minimum sentence of nine years. The average DSU inmate had served four years of his sentence and had four more years to go before his parole eligibility. The exception to this either had a complex sentence, had passed his P.E. date, or was a lifer. It seems therefore that most DSU inmates were not at the beginning of their sentence but had already spent a few years in prison prior to receiving this DSU D-Report.

## V. THE INCARCERATION EXPERIENCE

This section describes various aspects of the incarceration experience including classification and parole decisions, protective custody and mental health placements, movements through the DOC and disciplinary histories.

### A. Initial Classification

When inmates are initially committed to the DOC, the majority are sent to the Reception and Diagnostic Center at MCI-Concord (Concord RDC). The exceptions to this are inmates serving long sentences for serious offenses who will most likely serve a number of years at Walpole before being transferred elsewhere. Inmates serving from and after or forthwith sentences will usually not be reclassified but instead will remain at their current institution at the time of their new sentence. Of the 165 inmates in this study, 49 (30%) were not classified at the beginning of their present commitment for one of the above two reasons.

The remaining 116 inmates were sent from the committing institution to the Concord RDC for classification. After a period of testing and evaluation, the RDC's Classification Board recommends a placement. This recommendation must be approved by both Concord's Superintendent and the Commissioner or his designee. Once approved, the inmate will be transferred to the institution unless a disciplinary or bed space problem develops. Table 5 presents the institutions that were recommended by the RDC and the actual placements of these 116 DSU inmates.

**Table 5**  
**Institution Initially Classified To And Actually Placed At**  
(N = 116)

	Initially Classified To:		Actually Placed At:	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Walpole	53	(46)	65	(56)
Gardner	1	( 1)	0	( 0)
Concord	21	(18)	21	(18)
Norfolk	34	(29)	26	(22)
SECC	5	( 4)	4	( 3)
Other	2	( 2)	0	( 0)

Slightly more than half (56%) of the DSU inmates were placed in the maximum security facility at Walpole, while the remainder were put in medium security institutions at Norfolk (22%), Concord (18%), and SECC (3%). A comparison of the institution initially classified to with the institution actually placed at reveals that 85% of the inmates were placed in the security level recommended. Fourteen percent were placed in a higher level of security than recommended and 2% were placed in a lower level of security. The average time between initial classification and receipt of this DSU D-report was 2.9 years.

#### **B. Movements Within DOC**

The DOC policy of reintegration dictates that inmates should move from higher security to lower security placements as they proceed through their incarceration. While this means several moves for inmates, movement back and forth between high and low security facilities is indicative of instability and problems. A look at the total number of movements from the time of commitment

to receipt of the DSU D-report reveals that half of the inmates had two or fewer moves.<sup>5</sup> However the other half ranged from three to fourteen moves. The median number of total moves was 2.5 and the median number of moves per year was only one.

Breaking movements down by security level, 42% of the inmates had been placed in Walpole once, 41% had been placed there twice and the remaining 17% had been there three or more times. Almost half of the DSU inmates (47%) had never been in a medium security facility. Of the 30% who had been in medium security once and the 23% who had been there two or more times, they remained there a median number of 4.6 months. While six inmates did receive their DSU D-report in a medium security facility, over half (51%) had been back at Walpole for over a year before receipt of that D-report. Out of the 165 inmates, sixteen had failed in minimum security facilities and nine had failed in pre-release. Seven inmates had been transferred to out of state facilities through the Interstate Compact. Of these, one received his DSU D-report in the other state's facility and two inmates were deemed risks to security the day they returned from out-of-state placements.

Overall, half of the DSU inmates had only experienced incarceration at Walpole, the maximum security facility. Another quarter had been to a medium security facility, most likely Norfolk, before being returned to Walpole. The remaining quarter had experienced multiple movements throughout the DOC. While most of these had transferred back and forth from medium to maximum, some had transferred all the way down to pre-release and parole before being returned to Walpole.

### C. Protective Custody Status

Another facet of incarceration for some inmates is the presence of enemies in the system and possibly the need for placement in protective custody (P.C.). Some DOC staff members working with DSU inmates expressed a concern that a small number of these inmates are in fact protective custody inmates who ended up in DSU as a result of protecting themselves, yet instigate trouble to remain in DSU since it is viewed by them as more safe and secure than open population.

Although inmates most often keep their enemy situations secret, attempts were made to identify some of these inmates by reviewing the number of enemies identified in each DSU inmate's last classification report and by pulling from the folder any indication of a placement in protective custody. The results of this attempt (Table 6) show that 87% reported no enemies in their most recent classification report and 89% had no history of a protective custody placement. Eleven inmates reported recent enemy situations and fourteen had experienced at least one P.C. placement but had not recently reported enemies. Only four inmates had both reported recent enemy situations and had prior P.C. placements. The 29 inmates with either enemy situations or prior P.C. placements had higher percentages of DSU D-reports for inmate assaults and possession of weapons and lower percentages for staff assaults and riot offenses than the remaining DSU inmates. However the differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 6**  
**Existence of Protective Custody / Enemy Situation**

	<b><u>Enemies Reported in Last Classification Report?</u></b>		<b><u>Any Prior Protective Custody Placement?</u></b>	
	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
Yes	15	(10)	18	(11)
No	144	(87)	147	(89)
Unknown	6	( 4)	0	( 0)

Of the 18 inmates who had been placed in protective custody status, the average length of time spent in that status was nine months. Some had experienced more than one such placement. The majority of all P.C. placements (69%) occurred at Walpole.

Overall, less than one-fifth of the DSU inmates in this study (17%) had some prior instance of recorded conflicts with other inmates. However one must be cautious in concluding that the remaining four-fifths have no enemy problems since inmates may be under pressure by their peers to keep such information to themselves.

#### **D. Mental Health Background**

In discussing DSU inmates with DOC staff, several noted that some inmates have serious mental health problems and/or backgrounds. Several variables were collected as indicators of present or prior mental health interventions. They include transfers to Bridgewater State Hospital (BSH) either prior to or during

this incarceration, prior mental health placements in other facilities and prescribed use of psychiatric medication. Below are tables which outline each of these variables.

**Table 7**  
**Percentage of DSU Inmates Who Received**  
**Individual Mental Health Interventions**

	Number	Yes Percent	Number	No Percent
BSH - This Commitment	24	(14)	141	(86)
BSH - Prior Commitment	15	( 9)	150	(91)
Prior Mental Health Placements in Other Facilities	6	( 4)	159	(96)
On Medication	2	( 1)	163	(99)

**Table 8**  
**History of Mental Health Placements**  
**in Either BSH or Other Facilities**

	Number	Percent
None	127	(77)
Prior To This Incarceration	14	( 8)
Present Incarceration Only	19	(12)
Present & Prior	5	( 3)

While the variables presented in the tables are good indicators of mental health intervention, they alone are not sufficient in judging the mental health stability of DSU inmates. Therefore the results most likely underestimate the

number of inmates with mental health problems. Given that, 14% of the DSU inmates had been transferred to BSH at least once during their present DOC commitment. Of these 24 inmates, nine had been transferred to BSH once and fifteen had had multiple transfers there. Six of these inmates had not been transferred to BSH during the present commitment until they were classified DSU. While one might speculate that the stay in segregation led to the transfer to BSH for these six, it should be noted that four had some type of mental health intervention prior to this commitment. The median number of months spent in BSH was three.

Overall, 23% of the inmates had experienced some type of mental health placements, either during the present commitment (12%), in the past (8%), or both (3%). These inmates were diagnosed as either suicidal, paranoid, schizophrenic, antisocial, sociopathic, drug-involved or sexually dangerous. The DSU D-reports of these inmates were similar to the other DSU inmates, except for a slightly higher incidence of staff assaults among inmates with histories of mental health problems.

#### **E. Recent Decisions and Transfers**

One theory of why some inmates commit serious disciplinary infractions is that a recent transfer or decision had been made which upset, frustrated or angered them, causing them "to go off". In an attempt to check out this theory, the researcher looked at several types of transfers/moves and decisions that were made within six months prior to receiving the DSU D-report.

Within that time frame, only four inmates had been transferred from either protective custody or BSH to an open population. A more substantial number of inmates (27) had been transferred from DSU status to open population prior to being re-classified DSU. Looking at institutional moves, 46 inmates (28%) had been



transferred to another institution within the six months prior to receiving their DSU D-report. Twenty-four of these inmates had been transferred within the three months prior to the disciplinary action. Within Walpole, 55 DSU inmates (33%) had been transferred to a new unit within that time frame.<sup>6</sup> Taken together 132 moves were made by the DSU inmates within the six months before the issuance of their DSU D-report.

In addition to transfers/moves, information was gathered on the DSU inmates' most recent classification and parole decisions.<sup>7</sup> Sixty-two inmates (38%) had been before the Classification Board prior to the receipt of their DSU D-report. Of those, over four-fifths of the inmates received decisions unfavorable to them. These included: transfer or reclassification to Walpole, denial of a transfer to medium security and denial of transfer to minimum security. Only 10 inmates received recommendations favorable to them (Table 9).

**Table 9**  
**Last Classification And Parole Decisions**

	Classification		Parole	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Unfavorable To Inmate	52	(32)	36	(22)
Favorable To Inmate	10	(6)	4	(2)
N/A - No Recent Decision	103	(62)	125	(76)

As for parole decisions, 40 inmates (24%) received parole decisions prior to receipt of the DSU D-report. Of these, almost all were unfavorable to the inmate. These included being denied parole, having the hearing postponed, or having their paroles revoked or rescinded.

If one concentrates on the six months just prior to their DSU D-report, 20 inmates received parole decisions, 34 received classification decisions and 11 were initially classified at the RDC. Overall, a large number of transfers of and decisions about DSU inmates were made prior to their disciplinary problems. However no conclusions can be drawn until this information is compared to a sample of non-DSU inmates.

#### **F. Disciplinary Histories**

Information concerning prior disciplinary reports (D-reports) and DSU classifications during the present commitment was collected for each of the DSU inmates. They received a total of 1791 D-reports between 1981 and 1983 before their DSU offense. Out of these, 444 (25%) were offenses for which one could receive a DSU referral. Eighty-six percent of these D-reports were issued at Walpole and 13% at medium security facilities. Since inmates were committed to the DOC at varying times, looking at the number of D-reports each received per month is more accurate than looking at the total number of each. The results presented below show that 28% received one per month, 29% two per month, and 19% five or more D-reports per month. The median number of D-reports per inmate per month was 2.2 but inmates ranged from receiving 1 to 35 D-reports per month. Seventy percent of the inmates received prior D-reports for assaults, 34% for participating in a riot, 40% for possession of weapons, 46% for a drug/alcohol violation and 31% for stealing. Thirteen inmates had previously received D-reports for murder or its attempt and fourteen for escape violations.

**Table 10**  
**Number D-Reports Per Month Prior**  
**To DSU Classification**  
(N = 163)\*

	Number	Percent
One	46	(28)
Two	48	(29)
Three	25	(15)
Four	13	( 8)
Five To Ten	24	(15)
Eleven Or More	7	( 4)

\*Two inmates were not included in these figures. One inmate had been placed in an out-of-state facility and his D-reports in that facility were unknown. The other inmate, mentioned previously, got his DSU D-report at an HOC and therefore had no prior D-reports.

Over one-third (36%) of the inmates in this study had been previously classified DSU and placed in segregation either during this commitment or a previous one (Table 11). Of these 60 inmates, 43 had been classified DSU once, and 17 inmates two or more times.

The D-reports that triggered the prior DSU classifications were similar to the ones that resulted in the DSU classifications in this study. The three most frequent ones were assaults on staff, assaults on inmates, and participation in a riot/disruptive conduct. The time spent in segregation due to these prior DSU classifications ranged from 14 days to 4.2 years. The median was 6.8 months.

**Table 11**  
**Prior DSU Classifications**

	Number	Percent
None	105	(64)
One	43	(26)
Two	9	( 6)
Three Or More	8	( 5)

Several types of information were collected on the last DSU classification. Out of the 60 inmates with prior DSU placements, information was available for 58 inmates. Table 12 presents a breakdown of the D-reports that resulted in the last DSU placements. Again, staff assaults, inmate assaults and riot/disruption offenses were the most frequent. A comparison of the 60 inmates' present DSU D-report with the prior DSU D-report reveals that two-thirds (41 inmates) had present DSU D-reports that were either less serious or similarly serious as those in the past. Seven inmates' present D-reports were more serious than their past ones and nine inmates got D-reports for the same offenses as their prior ones.

**Table 12**  
**D-Reports Resulting in Last DSU Classification**  
(N = 58)

	Number	Percent
Staff Assault	17	(29)
Inmate Assault	15	(26)
Riot/Disruption	10	(17)
Murder/Attempt	5	( 9)
Weapons	5	( 9)
Escape	3	( 5)
Threats	2	( 3)
Extortion	1	( 2)

The length of time spent in segregation as a result of the last DSU classification ranged from 14 days to 2 years. The 58 inmates averaged 7.1 months in their previous DSU classification. Table 13 presents a breakdown of the length of segregation time for the five most frequent offenses. As expected, inmates with murder or attempted murder offenses averaged the most lengthy placements in segregation (9.1 months). Inmates who assaulted staff averaged 7.4 months, while inmates who assaulted other inmates averaged 6.5 months in segregation.

**Table 13**  
**Breakdown of Length of Time in Last**  
**DSU Classification by Selected DSU D-Report Offenses**

	Number	Average # Months
Murder/Attempt	5	9.1
Riot	7	8.6
Staff Assault	16	7.4
Inmate Assault	15	6.5
Weapons	5	4.3

The final piece of information extracted on the DSU placement prior to the one in this study is the length of time between the two. For 27 inmates (46%), less than six months passed between leaving the last DSU placement and receiving the present DSU D-report. The average time between the dates was 8.9 months, and the median 6.8 months.

**Table 14**  
**Time Between Leaving Last DSU Placement**  
**And Receipt of Present DSU D-Report**  
(N = 58)

	Number	Percent
Less Than 3 Months	15	(26)
3 - 6 Months	12	(21)
6 Months - 1 Year	18	(31)
1 - 2 Years	10	(17)
2 or More Years	3	( 5)

In addition to the DSU referrals which resulted in DSU classifications and thus placement in segregation, 28% of the DSU inmates received at least one DSU referral that did not end up in their being classified DSU. Eight inmates had two or more of these types of referrals.

**Table 15**  
**Prior DSU Referral / Classification History**

	Number	Percent
None	81	(49)
DSU Referrals Only	24	(14)
DSU Classifications Only	37	(22)
Both Referrals And Classification	23	(14)

Overall, over half (51%) of the DSU inmates in this study had some history of prior contact with the DSU Board. Fourteen percent never went beyond the referral stage. Twenty-two percent had been previously classified DSU but hadn't received other DSU referrals. Fourteen percent of the inmates had been previously classified DSU and had received other DSU referrals. Taken together with the

lengthy disciplinary histories of some of these inmates, it appears that the present DSU classification is but another event in the long histories of disciplinary problems for at least half the inmates in this study.

## VI. DSU OFFENSE, CLASSIFICATION AND PLACEMENT

This section presents information on the actual DSU offense, the inmate's placement at time of offense and the resultant classification and placement. In addition to listing actual DSU offenses, other information such as involvement of other inmates, referral to District Attorney and subsequent DSU referrals are included. The occurrence of the DSU offense is placed in context in terms of where the inmate was placed and how long he had been there prior to the offense. The resultant classification procedures are discussed as are the various segregation placements and new D-reports incurred. Finally the placement released to and the time of release are examined and compared to projected releases.

### A. Placement at Time of DSU Offense

Just as it was important to examine the circumstances of inmates prior to the commission of the DSU offense, it is also important to examine the placement of the inmates at the time of offense. This section examines those placements, including institution, unit and time in placement.

As was estimated prior to the research, most of the inmates (93%) were at Walpole when they committed their DSU offense (Table 16). Eight were at Norfolk, and one each was at Concord RDC for classification, at a house of correction and in an interstate placement. Most inmates had not been in the present institution for very long before the receipt of their D-report for the DSU offense (Table 17). Almost half (49%) had been there less than a year and 28% had been there less than six months. The average DSU inmate had been in his present institution for 19 months. The median time spent was 13 months which means that 50% of the inmates received their DSU D-report within 13 months of arriving at



the present institution and the other 50% received them after 13 months of arriving. The time span ranged from 2 days to 9.6 years.

**Table 16**  
**Resident Institution At Time of DSU Offense**

	Number	Percent
Walpole	154	(93)
Norfolk	8	( 5)
Concord RDC	1	( 1)
House of Correction	1	( 1)
Interstate Placement	1	( 1)

**Table 17**  
**Time Between Arrival**  
**At Institution And Receipt Of DSU D-Report**  
(N = 164)\*

	Number	Percent
Less Than 6 Months	46	(28)
6 Months - 1 Year	35	(21)
1 - 2 Years	40	(24)
2 or More Years	43	(26)

\*See Table 4.

As mentioned in an earlier section, 26 inmates (16%) were in their first DOC institution upon commission of their DSU offense. Another 13 inmates (8%) had been on parole prior to entering Walpole this time. This means that the majority of inmates (76%) had been in other institutions prior to the one in which they committed their DSU offense. Most had been in medium security institutions including Norfolk (22%), Concord (19%), and Concord RDC (20%).<sup>8</sup> Inmates had

spent very little time in those institutions. Fifty percent had spent less than three months before being transferred and the average DSU inmate was transferred after only 6 months.

Since the majority of inmates committed their DSU offense while at Walpole, information was also collected on the unit placed in at the time of the DSU offense and how long the inmate had been there. It should be explained here that Walpole uses the Quay system of classification<sup>9</sup> to place inmates in its various units. As a result, inmates are classified to one of the following three units: 1) Essex -- for inmates considered to be aggressive, 2) Suffolk -- for inmates who might be victimized and 3) Bristol -- for "normal" or average inmates. At the time of this study placement in a Middlesex Unit was a result of a subsequent request for protective custody. The results, summarized below in Tables 18 and 19, show that 42% of the inmates were in the Essex units, over a quarter were in Bristol units and the rest were scattered about the institution.

Most inmates committed their DSU offense not long after being transferred into a new unit. Only 19% had been in their present unit for more than six months. Thirty percent received their DSU D-report within thirty days of transfer to the unit. Broken down by unit, inmates had spent their longest average amount of time before their DSU offense in Bristol units (5 months), followed by Suffolk (4.8 months), Essex (3.7 months), Orientation (45 days), Middlesex (30 days), the Health Services Unit (HSU) (28 days) and DSU Units (11 days).

**Table 18**  
**Walpole Unit In When**  
**DSU Offense Occurred**

	Number	Percent
Essex	69	(42)
Bristol	46	(28)
Suffolk	10	( 6)
HSU	9	( 6)
Orientation	9	( 6)
Middlesex	7	( 4)
DSU Units	4	( 2)
Not in Walpole	11	( 7)

**Table 19**  
**Time Between Transfer To**  
**Last Unit And Receipt of DSU D-Report**  
**(N = 162)\***

	Number	Percent
Less Than 30 Days	48	(29)
1-3 Months	52	(32)
3-6 Months	31	(19)
6 Months-1 Year	23	(14)
1 Year or More	8	( 5)

\*The N for this table is 162 because of the one inmate who received his DSU D-report prior to DOC commitment and two for whom the date they entered the last unit was missing.

### **B. DSU Offense**

Most DSU inmates (94%) were referred to DSU as a result of one D-report that listed one or more offenses. The researcher selected the most serious offense for which the inmate was found guilty. The other nine inmates (6%) were referred

to the DSU Board by either the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent at Walpole. These referrals were the result of a succession of D-reports about which the administration was concerned for reasons of safety or discipline. For research purposes, the most serious offense listed on the D-report just prior to the DSU referral was selected as the DSU offense for these nine inmates.

The type of offenses for which inmates were classified DSU are presented in Table 20 below in descending order of frequency. As can be seen, the two most frequent offenses were assaults on staff and riots<sup>10</sup>. These make up almost half of the DSU offenses. Except for assaults on inmates (13%) and possession of weapons (11%) most of the remaining offenses are distributed in various categories.

**Table 20**  
**Offense Precipitating DSU Referral**

	Number	Percent
Staff Assault	41	(25)
Riot	38	(23)
Inmate Assault	22	(13)
Possession of Weapon	18	(11)
Murder/Attempted Murder	11	( 7)
Threats	8	( 5)
Escape	6	( 4)
Extortion	6	( 4)
Disobey	4	( 2)
Disruptive Conduct	4	( 2)
Setting Fire	2	( 1)
Failure to Keep to Rules	1	( 1)
Drugs	1	( 1)
Breaking Mass. Law	1	( 1)
Hostage-taking	1	( 1)
No Specific Offense	1	( 1)

In order to make the information on DSU offenses more manageable, the researcher collapsed the various offenses into four categories. They are: 1) offenses against staff, 2) offenses against inmates, 3) riots and 4) all others. Riot was kept separate since it is unique in that it can be directed against staff or inmates or both. The collapsed offense variable is presented below.

**Table 21**  
**DSU Offense Categories**  
**(N = 164)\***

	Number	Percent
Staff	50	(30)
Inmate	57	(35)
Riot	38	(23)
Other	19	(12)

\*The N is 164, because for one inmate no specific DSU offense could be identified.

Two pieces of information that were also collected include involvement of other inmates in the offense and whether or not the offense was reported to the District Attorney's (D.A.) office for formal prosecution. In sixty of the cases (36%), other inmates were involved in the offense. As would be expected, 57% of these were riots and 35% were offenses against inmates. When one examines offenses against inmates, 37% of those offenses involved more than one inmate and 63% involved a one-on-one conflict. For offenses against staff, only in five cases were more than one inmate involved.

As to the involvement of the D.A.'s office, 44% of the cases were referred for formal prosecution. When these were broken down by the four offense categories, the only outstanding difference was that few people in the "Other"

category were referred to the D.A. Even when the individual offenses were examined, there were no distinguishable differences between those offenses that were referred to the D.A. and those that were not.

In an effort to find distinctions among inmates who committed offenses in the four categories, a comparison was made with several variables. The Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistic was applied to determine whether or not any differences found between the various type of DSU offenders were statistically significant. No differences were found for the following variables: prior DSU placement, age, time to P.E. date, and time already served.

Regarding race, blacks were slightly more likely to be involved in riots and offenses against staff, while white inmates were a little more likely to commit offenses against fellow inmates. However the differences were not statistically significant.

Type of DSU offense was also broken down by whether or not inmates had prior D-reports for inmate assaults, staff assaults or riots. Looking at prior inmate assaults, those with one or more were slightly more likely to commit another offense against an inmate (42%) than those without such prior assaults (28%). Inmates with prior inmate assaults were slightly less likely to assault staff (25%) than those without prior inmate assaults (35%), though these differences were not statistically significant.

There was however a statistical relationship between having prior staff assault D-reports and present DSU offense and also between past riot D-reports and present DSU offense. Inmates who had previously assaulted staff were six times more likely to be classified DSU for staff assaults than those with no prior staff assaults. However prior staff assaults were less likely to be part of the record of those involved in riots, offenses against inmates, or other offenses.

Similarly inmates with prior D-reports for riots were most often involved in a riot for their present offense. In fact only two inmates who received a DSU classification for participating in a riot did not have prior D-reports for the same offense. However of the 126 inmates in the remaining three DSU offense categories, only 18 (14%) had prior riot D-reports.

The last factor that statistically distinguishes inmates among the DSU offense categories is last unit in at time of DSU offense. For this, last unit was broken down into Essex, Bristol and all others since a majority of inmates were in the first two. Essex inmates were more likely to be involved in riots (37%) than were Bristol inmates (11%) or inmates in other units (16%). Bristol inmates were more likely to commit offenses against other inmates (49%) than were Essex (26%) or inmates in other units (34%). Finally inmates in other units such as Suffolk, Middlesex, HSU and Orientation were more likely to assault staff (38%) than Essex (29%) or Bristol (24%) inmates.

Thirty-one inmates in this study (19%) received a subsequent DSU referral before they were classified DSU for the original offense. Most often these subsequent offenses were for staff or inmate assaults. Some were for disruptive conduct, participating in a riot and escape attempts. Inmates whose original DSU offense fell in the "other" category were much more likely to get subsequent DSU referrals than those with riot or staff/inmate assaultive offenses. Inmates with offenses such as disobeying an order, violating an instructional rule, using drugs or damaging property are less likely to be classified DSU for that offense alone. More often it is the cumulation of D-reports that results in a DSU classification.

The final pieces of information gathered surrounding the actual DSU offense are the intervals between committing the offense and receiving the D-report and being classified DSU. Sixty-five percent of the inmates received the D-report on

the same day they committed the alleged offense. Thirty-one percent received it within one month of the offense and seven inmates received it after one month. For these, an investigation most likely took place before a D-report was issued. While time between receipt of the D-report and the Disciplinary Hearing (D-Board) ranged from two days to over four months, the average inmate had his D-Board in 28 days. Once the D-Board referred the offense for a DSU hearing, it took an average of two months before the inmate went before the DSU Board. Overall an inmate spent an average of three months either in his cell awaiting action or in some segregation unit before he was classified as a Departmental Segregation Unit inmate.

### **C. Placements While Classified DSU**

Once an inmate is classified to DSU, he is placed in one of the segregation units. As mentioned previously, inmates presently classified DSU are either housed in the West or East Wings of DSU at Walpole or in DSU II, the segregation unit at Norfolk which serves as a re-entry program to the general population. This latter unit opened in March, 1984. Housing options for inmates in this study included the East and West Wings of DSU the use of segregation beds in other institutions, the Health Services Unit, the inmate's own cell in population and cells in Orientation.

Inmates often moved around during their stay in segregation. Table 22 reveals the number of placements inmates had from the time they received the DSU D-report to the day they were released from DSU status.



Table 22  
Number of Segregation Placements

	Number	Percent
One To Three	59	(36)
Four To Six	59	(36)
Seven Or More	47	(28)

Thirty-six percent moved from one to three times, another 36% moved four to six times. Twenty-eight percent were moved seven times or more. The median number of placements was four.

Almost one-third of the inmates were segregated in their own cell in population directly following the receipt of their DSU D-report. Twenty-seven percent initially went to the West Wing and 17% to the East Wing. Fifteen percent were sent to the segregation units of other institutions at that time.

Many of the inmates (87%) spent some DSU time in the East Wing of DSU. This unit, formerly called IDU, had previously been the unit where Walpole inmates served their isolation time as sanction for specific offenses. Now inmates coming into DSU proceed from the West Wing to the East Wing where conditions are not as restrictive. Fifty-seven percent were moved there once and 36% had more than one move there. All but 23% of the inmates spent some time in the West Wing of DSU, the most restrictive of all the units. Forty-one percent had been placed there one or more times. During this time frame, movement to other institutional segregation units was commonplace. Fifty-five percent of the inmates had been moved to such units at least once. Half of the inmates spent at least some DSU time in their own cell in population. Five inmates spent their total time in their own cell. Another 14% were placed there two or more times.

While the placements just mentioned were the most common, inmates also spent DSU time elsewhere. Thirty-eight percent had at least one move to the Health Services Unit (HSU) at Walpole. Fourteen percent had been placed in Walpole's Orientation unit. Twelve inmates were sent to Bridgewater State Hospital (BSH) for either evaluation or breakdown in normal behavior. Five inmates went there more than once during their DSU time. Finally, five inmates were transferred to out-of-state placements and eight of the inmates sent to the DSU Phase II at Norfolk were returned.

Taken together, inmates classified DSU certainly did not stay in one place. Almost all of the inmates (94%) had multiple moves from the time they were issued their DSU D-report to the time they were released from DSU status. Inmates moved most often in and out of the East and West Wings of DSU and then other institution's segregation units and their own population cell. Movements went from more secure to less secure and vice versa and were the result of D-reports, enemy situations, and the need for bed space. Because of a backlog for bedspace in segregation, administrators were often forced to move DSU inmates around in order to meet the demand for various segregation beds.

#### **D. Disciplinary Reports Received During DSU Status**

The inmates in the study received a total of 1467 D-reports while on DSU status between January, 1981 and July 1, 1984. Out of these, 266 (18%) were offenses for which one could receive a DSU referral. Broken down individually, inmates averaged less than one D-report per month while on DSU status. Table 23 presents a breakdown of the type of D-Reports received while on DSU status.

**Table 23**  
**D-Reports Received During DSU Status**  
(N = 1467)

	Number	Percent
Damage Property	156	(11)
Assault (Staff + Inmate)	144	(10)
Drugs	57	(4)
Stealing/Unauthorized Possession	51	(4)
Weapons	50	(3)
Riots	42	(3)
Escapes	9	(1)
Attempted Murder	1	(0)
Other	957	(65)

Sixty-five percent of the D-reports fell in the "other" category and included such offenses as disobeying an order, abusive language and violating a rule. Of the more serious offenses, damage to property and assault were the most prevalent. Of those who committed assault while on DSU status, 80% had been classified DSU also for an assault charge. This relationship between assaults before and after is statistically significant.

More than half of the D-reports issued while on DSU status were received by inmates residing in the West Wing of the DSU unit. Another third were received while in the East Wing or while inmates were segregated in their own population cell (Table 24).

**Table 24**  
**Where D-Reports Were Issued**  
(N = 1467)

	Number	Percent
DSU - West Wing	864	(59)
DSU - East Wing	294	(20)
In Own Cell in Population	172	(12)
Segregation Units in Other Facilities	84	( 6)
Other	41	( 3)
Unknown	12	( 1)

**E. Release from DSU Status**

As of July 1, 1984, 110 of the DSU inmates studied (67%) had been released from DSU status. Most were released from either the West Wing (34%), the East Wing (30%), their own cell in population (14%) or the segregation units of other institutions (14%). For the released inmates, the average time spent classified DSU was 8.6 months and the median was 6.5 months. As can be seen by Table 25, 45% spent six months or less on DSU status.

**Table 25**  
**Time Classified DSU for those Released**  
(N = 110)

	Number	Percent
6 Months or Less	50	(45)
6 Months to 1 Year	38	(34)
Over 1 Year	22	(20)

Broken down by the four most prevalent DSU offenses, those who assaulted staff spent an average of 12.1 months in segregation, those with riot offenses 7.9

months, those with weapon offenses 7.6 months and those who assaulted/fought with inmates 6.9 months.

Blacks averaged 10.4 months in segregation while whites averaged 7.9 months. When DSU offense is controlled, no differences in length of DSU stay is found between blacks and whites for offenses against inmates, riot offenses or those in the "other" category. However for offenses against staff, 95% of the white inmates spent a year or less in segregation, while 70% of the black inmates spent more than one year. The relationship was statistically significant and did not change even when controlling for D-reports received while in DSU.

Information regarding the destination of those released is summed up in Table 26. The largest group of inmates was released to the Essex units (33%). Twenty-three inmates (21%) were transferred to DSU II at Norfolk, within the first three months of its existence. Most of the remaining DSU releases were placed in other units at Walpole. However a few were sent to either medium security institutions, out-of-state facilities or to the street. One DSU inmate was paroled to the street, and ten were given good conduct discharges. Including one inmate released by the court, twelve inmates (11%) went from living in segregation to living in the street. Four were transferred to out-of-state facilities.

Of the fifty-five inmates still on DSU status by the end of this study, twenty-one (38%) had been classified DSU between July and December, 1983. The remaining thirty-four inmates had either been classified DSU for serious offenses (such as attempted murder) or continued to be disciplinary problems while classified DSU. For the total group of 55 inmates not released, the average time spent so far in segregation was 17.4 months. Time spent ranged from 6.2 months to 3.1 years.

**Table 26**  
**Where Released to from DSU Status**  
(N = 110)

		Number	Percent
<u>Walpole</u>	Essex	36	(33)
	Bristol	17	(15)
	Suffolk	9	( 8)
	Orientation	2	( 2)
	Middlesex	1	( 1)
	Health Services	1	( 1)
<u>Street</u>	Good Conduct Discharge	10	( 9)
	Paroled	1	( 1)
	Released by Court	1	( 1)
<u>Other</u>	DSU II at Norfolk	23	(21)
	Medium Security	2	( 2)
	Interstate Transfer	4	( 4)
	Discharge to Another Sentence	2	( 2)
	Unknown	1	( 1)

**Table 27**  
**Time Already Served for Those Not Released**  
(N = 55)

	Number	Percent
6 Months to 1 Year	21	(38)
1 Year to 2 Years	22	(40)
Over 2 Years	12	(22)

Eight inmates whose DSU offense was murder or attempted murder had averaged 22 months so far on DSU status. The average number of months served so

far (up to 7/1/84) for other offenses were: assault on staff (20 months), weapons (17 months), riot (15 months) and inmate assaults (15 months). There was no difference between blacks and whites for time already served.

In 1983 the DSU Classification Board started giving contracts to DSU inmates outlining the expected conduct of inmates and the projected release dates from DSU status. Because the issuance of these contracts began in the middle of this study, only 65 inmates in the study were given projected release dates. The time between DSU Classification and projected release dates averaged 2.7 years and ranged from 6 months to 6.7 years. Thirty-nine of the 65 inmates received DSU sentences of over two years. Even though the numbers are small, a comparison of the projected release date to the actual release date shows that inmates were released earlier than projected. Of the twenty released inmates with projected release dates, only two were released after the projected date, one a day later and the other a month later. The other 18 were released prior to the projected date. Of these, 13 were transferred to DSU II at Norfolk a year earlier than projected. The remaining 5 inmates were released on average 2.3 years earlier than projected.

## VII. SUMMARY

This report provides a description of the disciplinary problems and incarceration experiences that led to DSU classification for 165 inmates residing in DSU in 1983. Since the criteria for the classification to DSU have not changed and the characteristics of the DOC population have remained relatively stable, one can probably assume that inmates presently in DSU are similar to those described in this study. Similarly the circumstances surrounding their DSU offense and resultant classification are presumably comparable.

More than two-thirds of the inmates classified DSU during 1983 were white. Most were single and in their mid-twenties on the day they received their DSU D-report. For those that worked, employment appears to have been sporadic and in manual or service positions. One fourth of these inmates completed high school, the average grade completed being ninth grade.

The criminal histories of these inmates are extensive. The majority first appeared in court at age seventeen or younger and almost half of these inmates had been committed to the Department of Youth Services as a delinquent. Almost every DSU inmate had previously appeared in court on person and property charges and the average number of prior court appearances was seventeen. If one excludes the inmates who were incarcerated on this commitment during their teens, almost every other DSU inmate had at least one prior adult incarceration, the average being two.

Most DSU inmates were incarcerated for person offenses including murder, manslaughter, armed assault and robbery. Fifteen percent were serving Concord or indeterminate sentences. The rest were serving Walpole sentences. Of these, fourteen percent were serving life and the average minimum sentence was nine years. It appears from reviewing the time already served and the time to parole



eligibility, that many of the DSU inmates were at the midpoint of their sentence.

Because many events occur throughout an inmate's incarceration, information was collected on various occurrences prior to the DSU classification of each inmate. Half of the DSU inmates had only experienced incarceration at Walpole, the maximum security facility. One-fourth had moved to a medium security facility and returned. The fourth quarter had made a number of moves within the DOC, often down to pre-release and parole before being returned.

As for problems during incarceration, just over one-tenth had been placed in some type of protective custody prior to their DSU classification. One tenth also reported enemy situations in their last classification reports. Almost one-fourth of the inmates had been placed in some type of mental health setting either during this commitment or during a prior one.

Over half (51%) of the inmates in this study had previously appeared before the DSU Board. Of those, 71% had actually been classified DSU. Though the median number of D-reports received per month prior to DSU classification was two, over one-fourth had received an average of four or more D-reports per month. It appears that about a fourth to a third of the inmates had very extensive disciplinary records including prior DSU placements. However, about the same number of DSU inmates had minimal disciplinary records.

A large number of transfers of and decisions about DSU inmates was made during the six months just prior to their DSU classification. The 165 inmates made a total of 132 moves during this time frame, either from one institution to another or from one Walpole unit to another. Similarly 65 parole and classification decisions were made about them during this same time.

When the DSU offense occurred, almost all of the inmates were residing at Walpole and the average DSU inmate had been there nineteen months. Of those at Walpole, almost half were in the Essex units, over a quarter were in Bristol units

and the rest were scattered about the institution.

Most DSU inmates were referred to DSU as a result of one D-report of which they were found guilty. Nine inmates were referred by either the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent at Walpole. Staff assaults, participation in a riot, inmate assaults and possession of a weapon were the most prevalent DSU offenses. Broken into categories, the offenses included offenses against staff (30%), offenses against inmates (35%), participation in a riot (23%) and other (12%). Involvement of other offenders occurred in 36% of the DSU offenses, mostly in cases of riot or inmate assault. While 44% of the DSU inmates were referred to the District Attorney's Office for formal prosecution, no pattern emerged in this research between those who were or were not referred.

In an effort to find distinctions among inmates who committed offenses in the four categories, a comparison was made with several variables. No differences were found among inmates in terms of prior DSU placement, age, time to parole eligibility date and time already served. Regarding race, blacks were slightly more likely to be involved in riots and offenses against staff, while white inmates were a little more likely to commit offenses against fellow inmates. However the differences were not statistically significant. The relationship of other variables to offense type was found to be significant. Among them, inmates with prior D-reports for assault on staff were highly likely to have their DSU offense be an assault on staff. Similarly inmates with prior riot D-reports were most likely classified DSU also for a riot. This relationship did not hold true though for inmates with prior inmate assaults. There was also a significant relationship between last unit housed in and type of DSU offense. Essex inmates were more often involved in riots, Bristol inmates in offenses against fellow inmates and inmates housed elsewhere such as Suffolk, Middlesex and the Health Services Unit were more often involved in offenses against staff.

Once classified DSU, inmates were often moved among a number of segregation units at Walpole and in other institutions and in and out of their own cell in population. The median number of segregation placements was four. Disciplinary reports issued during classification to DSU averaged less than one D-report per inmate per month. The two most prevalent offenses were assault and damage to property. More than half of the D-reports were issued within the West Wing of DSU.

Two-thirds of the DSU inmates (67%) had been released from DSU status by July 1, 1984. The average time spent in segregation was 8.6 months. These inmates were most often released to Walpole's Essex units, DSU II at Norfolk or one of the other Walpole Units. Twelve inmates were released to the street -- one by parole, one by the court and ten through a good conduct discharge. Of the inmates still classified DSU by the end of this study, some had been classified in the third or fourth quarters of 1983. The remaining inmates were either serving long DSU sentences for serious offenses or were being retained due to disruption and disciplinary reports within segregation.

This report has presented a description of the characteristics and circumstances of inmates who were classified to the DSU during 1983. It is not meant as a definitive piece of research on what type of inmates cause disruption in prison. Instead it is an introduction to a larger exploratory study on these inmates. The second report will make a comparison among inmates classified DSU, inmates residing in Walpole and the total DOC population. It will also include an analysis of the heterogeneity of the DSU population and its implications for programming. Hopefully, until then, this report will provide an insight into this small yet significant population.

## FOOTNOTES

1. "Study of the Utilization of Department of Correction Segregation Beds" by Michael T. Maloney, Paul DiPaolo and Michael Walonis. December 16, 1983.
2. Department of Correction Regulations #103 CMR 421.00 Segregation Unit. Compiled as in full force and effective 1/7/78. Reprinted 5/23/83.
3. Unless otherwise specified, the total N for each table is 165.
4. Complex sentences are those in which an inmate either is a parole violator, is not directly committed from a court and/or is given a forthwith, from and after or split sentence.
5. For the purposes of this study, a movement for initial classification at Concord was not counted as a move. However if an inmate at Walpole went to Concord for classification and was classified back to Walpole, the return is counted as a move.
6. This does not include moves from cell to cell within a unit or sections of a unit (e.g. Bristol I to Bristol II).
7. The information on the most recent classification/parole decision was extracted for each inmate if there was one unless the decision was issued prior to another previous DSU placement.
8. For purposes of clarity, a distinction is being made between the movements of inmates to Concord for initial classification (Concord RDC) and other moves to Concord.
9. "Quay's Classification System for Adult Offenders" was created in the early 1970's and first used in the federal prison system (Quay, 1973). A more complete description of it will be presented in the next report.
10. In reading disciplinary chronologies, one finds that assaults on inmates and assaults on staff are lumped together in one category. The researcher therefore found the actual D-report of the DSU offense and separated the two for this study. Likewise incidents of taking a hostage, usually clustered with riot offenses, was also separated for this research.

## APPENDIX

Following are other tables generated in this study that were used in describing the DSU population and their placement. The tables appear in the same order that the data from them were presented in the report. Again the N for these tables is 165, unless noted. Some of the variables had missing information.

### III. The DSU Population

Table 28  
Social Background Data

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	Number	Percent
<b>Race And Ethnic Origin</b>		
White	112	(68)
Black	46	(28)
Black or White	7	(4)
Hispanic		
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	21	(13)
Single	127	(77)
Divorced/Separated	17	(10)
<b>Military Discharge (N = 154)</b>		
No Service	125	(81)
Honorable or	15	(10)
Medical Discharge		
Bad Conduct	6	(4)
Discharge Unknown	8	(5)
<b>Prior Address - SMSA</b>		
Boston	106	(64)
Springfield	13	(8)
Other Mass.	36	(22)
Out of State	10	(6)

**Table 28 Continued**

	Number	Percent
<b>Occupation</b>		
Manual	95	(58)
Services	28	(17)
Other Occupation	13	( 8)
Unemployed/Student	13	( 8)
Unknown	16	(10)
<b>Time At Most Skilled Position</b>		
6 Months or Less	81	(49)
6 Mos. - 1 Year	25	(15)
1 - 2 Years	18	(11)
Over 2 Years	13	( 8)
Unknown	28	(17)
<b>Last Grade Completed</b>		
7th or Less	30	(18)
8th	31	(19)
9th	25	(15)
10th	18	(11)
11th	17	(10)
High School	11	( 7)
GED	29	(18)
Some College	3	( 2)
Unknown	1	( 1)
<b>Age On Date They Received DSU D-Report (N = 164)</b>		
20 And Younger	12	( 7)
21	15	( 9)
22	19	(12)
23	17	(10)
24	18	(11)
25 - 30	50	(30)
31 And Older	33	(20)

**Table 29**  
**Criminal History Data**

	Number	Percent
<b>Age At First Court Appearance</b>		
12 or Younger	37	(22)
13	27	(16)
14	29	(18)
15	21	(13)
16	12	( 7)
17	21	(13)
18	4	( 2)
19	4	( 2)
20 or Older	10	( 6)
<b>Department Of Youth Services Commitment</b>		
Yes	80	(48)
No	85	(52)
<b>Total Number Of Court Appearances</b>		
1st Offense	4	( 2)
2-5	13	( 8)
6-8	12	( 7)
9-11	21	(13)
12-15	26	(16)
16-20	39	(24)
21 or More	50	(30)
<b>Number Prior Person Offenses</b>		
None	4	( 2)
1-3	29	(18)
4-5	26	(16)
6-8	43	(26)
9 or More	63	(38)
<b>Number Prior Property Offenses</b>		
None	10	( 6)
1-5	31	(19)
6-8	30	(18)
9 or More	94	(57)

Table 29 Continued

	Number	Percent
<b>Number Prior Drug Offenses</b>		
None	89	(54)
1-3	55	(33)
4-5	9	( 5)
6 or More	12	( 7)
<b>Number Prior Alcohol Offenses</b>		
None	121	(73)
1	19	(12)
2 or More	25	(15)
<b>Number Prior Sex Offenses</b>		
None	149	(90)
1 or More	16	(10)
<b>Number Of Prior Escape Offenses</b>		
None	114	(69)
One	31	(19)
2 or More	20	(12)
<b>Total Number Prior Adult Incarcerations</b>		
None	44	(27)
One	45	(27)
Two	33	(20)
Three	16	(10)
Four or More	27	(16)
<b>Number Of Adult Paroles</b>		
None	105	(64)
One	34	(21)
Two or More	26	(16)
<b>Number Of Adult Parole Violations</b>		
Never Paroled	105	(64)
None	18	(11)
One	29	(18)
Two or More	13	( 8)



**Table 30**  
**Present Offense Data**

	Number	Percent
<b>Number of Offenses</b>		
One	80	(48)
Two	38	(23)
Three	22	(13)
Four or More	25	(15)
<b>Type Of Sentence</b>		
Simple	68	(41)
Concurrent	58	(35)
Aggregate	8	( 5)
Forthwith	27	(16)
From & After or Split	4	( 2)
<b>Age At Incarceration</b>		
Seventeen & Under	8	( 5)
Eighteen	12	( 7)
Nineteen	13	( 8)
Twenty	15	( 9)
21	31	(19)
22	16	(10)
23	18	(11)
24	6	( 4)
25-29	29	(18)
30 or Older	17	(10)

#### IV. The Incarceration Experience

Table 31  
Movement Variables

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	Number	Percent
<b>Total Number Of Institutions At</b>		
One	47	(28)
Two	37	(22)
Three	31	(19)
4-6	30	(18)
7 or More	20	(12)
<b>Pre-Release Failures</b>		
Yes	9	( 5)
No	156	(94)
<b>Minimum Security Failures</b>		
Yes	16	(10)
No	149	(90)
<b>Medium Security Failures</b>		
None	77	(47)
One	50	(30)
Two or More	38	(23)
<b>Placements At Walpole</b>		
One	70	(42)
Two	67	(41)
Three or More	28	(17)
<b>Transfers Out-of-State</b>		
Yes	7	( 4)
No	158	(96)

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**Table 32**  
**Number BSH Commitments**  
**This Incarceration**

	Number	Percent
0	141	(86)
1	9	( 6)
2	8	( 5)
3 or More	7	( 4)

**Table 33**  
**Last Classification Decision**

	Number	Percent
Transfer To Medium, Approved	10	( 6)
Transfer To Medium, Denied	3	( 2)
Remain Walpole	22	(13)
Transfer Or Reclass. Walpole	24	(14)
Remain Medium	3	( 2)
No Recent Classification Decision	103	(62)

**Table 34**  
**Last Parole Decision**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Denied	17	(10)
Revoked	12	( 7)
Rescinded	1	( 1)
Postponed	6	( 4)
Open Reserve	4	( 2)
No Recent Decision	125	(76)

**Table 35**  
**Number Of Inmates Receiving Selected**  
**Types Of D-Reports**  
(N = 164)

	<b><u>No Such</u></b> <b><u>D-Reports</u></b>		<b><u>Received One</u></b> <b><u>D-Report</u></b>		<b><u>Received Over</u></b> <b><u>One D-Report</u></b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Assault	50	(30)	55	(34)	59	(36)
Riots	109	(66)	45	(27)	10	( 6)
Murders	151	(92)	13	( 8)	0	( 0)
Escape	150	(92)	14	( 8)	0	( 0)
Weapons	99	(60)	53	(32)	12	( 7)
Drugs	89	(54)	34	(21)	41	(25)
Damage Property	119	(73)	27	(16)	18	(11)
Stealing	113	(69)	38	(23)	13	( 8)

## V. DSU OFFENSE, CLASSIFICATION AND PLACEMENT

**Table 36**  
**Institution At Prior To One Where**  
**Committed DSU Offense**

	Number	Percent
Walpole	8	( 5)
Norfolk	36	(22)
Concord	32	(19)
Concord RDC	33	(20)
SECC/NCCI	6	( 4)
NECC	2	( 1)
BSH	6	( 4)
Interstate/HOC	3	( 2)
On Parole	13	( 8)
No Prior Institution	26	(16)

**Table 37**  
**Length Of Time In Prior Institution**  
**(N = 126) \***

	Number	Percent
Less Than 3 Months	63	(50)
3-6 Months	29	(23)
6 Months To One Year	21	(17)
One Or More Years	13	(10)

\* Does not include those with no prior institutions.

**Table 38**  
**DSU Offense Variables**

	Number	Percent
<b>Other Inmates Involved?</b>		
Yes	60	(36)
No	105	(64)
<b>Referred To District Attorney</b>		
Yes	73	(44)
No	89	(54)
Unknown	3	( 2)
<b>Number Of Subsequent DSU Referrals</b>		
None	128	(78)
One	17	(10)
Two Or More	11	( 7)
Referred By Superintendent	9	( 6)

**Table 39**  
**DSU Time Frames**

	Number	Percent
<b><u>TIME BETWEEN:</u></b>		
<b>DSU Offense &amp; DSU D-Report (N = 164)</b>		
Same Day	106	(65)
Within One Month	51	(31)
More Than One Month	7	(4)
<b>DSU D-Report And D-Hearing (N = 161)</b>		
Within 2 Weeks	57	(35)
2 - 4 Weeks	59	(37)
4 or More Weeks	45	(28)
<b>D-Hearing And DSU Board (N = 162)</b>		
Less Than 1 Month	28	(17)
1 - 2 Months	66	(40)
2 - 3 Months	35	(22)
3 or More Months	33	(20)

**Table 40**  
**Where and How Often Spent DSU Time**

	Number	Percent
<b>In Own Cell?</b>		
Not at All	86	(52)
Once	56	(34)
Two or More Times	23	(14)
<b>In West Wing (DSU)?</b>		
Not at All	38	(23)
Once	60	(36)
Two or More Times	67	(41)
<b>In East Wing (IDU)?</b>		
Not at All	22	(13)
Once	83	(50)
Two or More Times	60	(36)
<b>In Health Services Unit?</b>		
Not at All	102	(62)
Once	43	(26)
Two or More Times	20	(12)
<b>In Other Segregation Units In Other Institutions</b>		
Not at All	74	(45)
Once	68	(41)
Two or More Times	23	(14)



