



NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson, Jr.

Presented by Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations

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Michael Merson promoted to Deputy Warden of Special Operations

Dover, DE – The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) announced today that Major Michael Merson, Security Superintendent of DOC’s Special Operation Group, has been promoted to Deputy Warden of the Special Operations Group (SOG) effective July 3. The Special Operations Group within the Bureau of Prisons is a specialized unit that is responsible for DOC's central intelligence operations, the Steven R. Floyd Training Academy, Correctional Emergency Response Teams, Escapee Recovery Teams, K-9 Units, the Mobile Command Post and Court and Transportation Units.

“The Special Operations Group serves an essential function supporting DOC operations and our safety and security mission,” **Chief of Prisons Shane Troxler said.** “Deputy Warden Merson is a highly skilled and experienced leader who has proven himself capable of building resources and administering dynamic programs to meet those critical needs.”

Deputy Warden Merson is a 31-year DOC veteran who completed his Academy training and joined the DOC as a Correctional Officer in 1991 after serving in the United States Army. He has served assignments in the Bureau of Prison’s at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center where he earned the rank of Corporal in 1994 working in several capacities later transferring to SOG in 1998 to work on the Court & Transportation Unit earning the rank of Lieutenant in 2004 and Captain in 2009. Merson later was named Central Intelligence Group (CIG) Commander where he helped develop the Gang/Security Treat Group program and developed the current Gangs 101 training provided to Cadets at the Steven R. Floyd Training Academy. During this time Deputy Warden Merson secured his clearance with the FBI and served as a Task Force Officer with the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). Merson was promoted to Major of SOG in 2017 and was responsible for the daily operations of the Court & Transportation Unit, Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT), CIG, K9 Training Division, and assisted SOG Warden Metzger in establishing DOC’s statewide Intelligence Operations Center (IOC). During this time Deputy Warden Merson has represented the DOC as a member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC), Statewide Interoperability Committee and subcommittee and has worked to upgrade the radio system currently deployed by the DOC. Merson has participated in numerous specialized trainings to include Certified Gang Investigator, Delaware State Police Interviewing and Interrogation and Fire Arms Instructor.

“Congratulations to Deputy Warden Merson for earning the respect of correctional staff and leadership across all levels of the Department through hard work and dedication. We will rely on his continued leadership to build and support a highly-trained workforce and to develop and deploy the latest intelligence and technology to keep our facilities and people safe and secure,” **said Deputy Chief of Prisons Paul Shavack.**

Merson fills the vacancy created by the retirement of SOG Deputy Warden Louise Layton who is retiring after 35 years of dedicated service to the DOC. Deputy Warden Layton started her career as a Correctional Officer in 1987 before transferring in 1989 to the then Staff Training Academy as a Field Instructor. Deputy Warden Layton also worked at various facilities throughout the state as a Staff Training Relief Officer before moving into the Administration ranks of the Academy and achieved her current and final rank of Deputy Warden of the Special Operations Group in 2018. Throughout her 35-year career, Deputy Warden Layton played an instrumental role in the Academy’s decades’ long expansion and modernization as it transitioned from the staff Training Academy to Employee Development Center and finally to the Steven R. Floyd Sr. Training Academy. Among her positions at the Academy was the first female Rangemaster in charge of DOC’s firearm training facility where she distinguished herself while teaching firearms fundamentals to every new Correctional Officer and Probation Officer who came through the Academy as well as existing staff completing refresher and specialized training certification. Her knowledge of firearms and skilled marksmanship enabled her to successfully coach officers across all skill levels, earning her an unparalleled reputation within the Department of Correction and throughout Delaware’s law enforcement community.

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