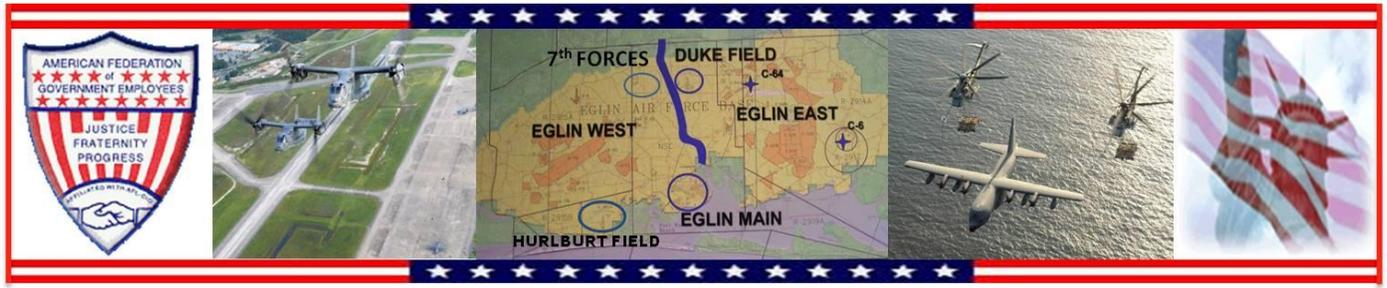


AFGE Local 1897 Special Edition Newsletter



Special Edition Newsletter

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TOGETHER WE STAND

Lee Paggeot
EDITOR 850-882-5714

AFGE Local 1897
P.O Box 1918 Eglin AFB, FL 32542
Office: 850-882-5714 Fax: 850-678-7683
E-mail: afge.local1897@eglin.af.mil

LATEST TRENDS !

AFGE Local President

******* Reduction-In-Force (RIF) Notices *******

******* Massive Reclassification of Positions & Downgrades *******

Its so important for us all to be informed! Your union has been busy fighting issues for our employees at Eglin, Hurlburt and Duke. This issue of your "members only" Newsletter will get you up to date on your Union's activities and inform you of the threats and challenges federal employee are faced with each day.

Hurlburt Field: Your Local Union successfully defended off a vicious attack by Hurlburt Field management to do away with the AFGE union, effectively leaving all of the nearly 1000 employees without any union representation. Our Local along with assistance from the National and Council offices fought off the agencies petition to take away the collective bargaining rights and representation of the entire group of employee's at Hurlburt. We fought this this ridiculous petition and Won! The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) ruled in our favor and has forced Hurlburt management to recognize our local as the exclusive representative for the employees at Hurlburt. The decision is posted on the FLRA's Web site for all to see! Check it out at: www.flra.gov/system/files/decision/v66_65_0.pdf.

Eglin AFB: The issues and challenges at Eglin are much too numerous to cover in a newsletter. Our Local has filed numerous charges against the inept personnel staff at this base. Some of the Sr. Leaders at Eglin appear on the surface to want to do what's right as it pertains to employees we represent; however, the guidance they receive from the Personnel staff lacks any regard for treating employees fairly. The issues we face at Eglin makes it clear why employees need Collective Bargaining Rights and a strong Union to combat the "Circle the wagon approach" employed here. We almost exclusively must deal with these folks via a third party coming into the base to render decisions. You can read more information about other issues we have been battling against this group in the next section.

Duke Field: Duke has issues as well! We have been actively supported by attorneys at the AFGE National office fighting for the ART'S rights not to be forced to wear a uniform at work while in their civilian status. We are still in the courts on this issue but so far we are receiving favorable decisions.

Thaddeus Wallace, President

Federal Employees Under Attack

AFGE Executive Vice President

**** Mass Reclassification ****

The Union was made aware in May 2011 that all Lead Pharmacy Tech at the Eglin Hospital would be downgraded from GS-7s to GS-5. Three employees at 96 CPTS were notified that they too would also be downgraded from GS-7 to GS-6. The common theme presented by management as justification for this action was their assertion that the employees did not perform all the duties contained in their position description/core document. Could it be that by conducting massive reclassifications, Eglin AFB is working to save money? Employees who have done the same job for years (some case 25 years) are now finding out that they are easy targets and their position is now being downgraded. Unfortunately, some of these employees did not contact the Union early and trusted their leadership to do the right thing. I have been told by the classifier that is conducting these position reviews that "we are reviewing all positions!" In the event this has happened to you or anyone you know please contact the Union office and let us work for you!

**** RIF ****

We have just completed working a Reduction-in-Force (RIF) notice that originally impacted nearly 60 employees, unfortunately of the nearly 60 employees two were served with RIF notices. In this era of austere budgets RIF actions could be more frequent. There are proposals floating around to cut 200,000 federal employees jobs. Also, many federal employees could be furloughed for countless days with no back pay assured. Now is the time to learn what is important for you to do to protect your job and career.

**** Direct Conversions Laws Not Being Followed by Eglin AFB ****

The following was briefed by AFGE National Legislative Representative, John Threlkeld, to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Man and the Deputy Assistant Secretary Force management Integration in September describing violations of Federal law (41 U.S.C. §439(a)) that prohibits work last performed by federal employees from being given to contractors without first conducting a formal cost comparison. In addition, federal law (10 U.S.C. §2461) prohibits DoD from converting work currently performed, or designated for performance, by civilian personnel to private sector contract performance without first conducting a public-private competition.

Eglin AFB is contracting out multimedia functions (still photographers, videographers, visual installation and maintenance, graphics and center presentations), and had planned to contract out hospital maintenance functions (including utilities, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems and carpentry) at the Eglin Hospital campus and is considering contracting out the installation's Arts and Crafts Center. As of now because of our efforts here and at the Pentagon with help from our national office Eglin AFB has decided against contracting out the facility maintenance at the hospital! Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the other areas at this time. AFGE Local 1897 is still engaged with management in an effort to mitigate the impact of these actions.

Alan Cooper, Executive Vice President

Stewards Corner

Our Union has handled hundreds & hundreds of issues over this year. Here is an overview of only a few:

- A new Master Labor Agreement for DeCA is currently at our local headquarters for ratification. This new contract once or if ratified will impact federal employees at the commissary for years to come.
- Thousands of AFGE employees have been affected on environmental differential pay. This issue is awaiting arbitration.
- Two Employees' received a 5-day suspension alleging a violation of an AFI; Both cases will end up going to going to arbitration for a third party to clearly determine if there was a violation of the any AFI.
- One employee has alleged discrimination based on medical disabilities. We provided this employee guidance and connected him via conference with our attorneys directly thereby providing him many options and assistance to resolve his issues.
- Employee's supervisors refused overtime pay after the employee was demanded to work on a Saturday. The employee has now received overtime pay.
- We have & are working cases involving discrimination, worker compensation, position downgrades, unacceptable appraisals, unfair labor practices, direct conversions etc..
- In this time of federal deficit cutting; your federal pay could be frozen for 5 years, major cuts in retire benefits, increased insurance costs, 200,000 federal jobs cut and the rolling back to 2006 spending (a 40% funding cut for many agencies).

Non Appropriated Funded Activities (NAF)

To all NAF Bargaining Unit Employees

As many of you have discovered, the dollar amount of the awards for Performance (bonus) for 2011 has been greatly reduced. This is a result of the decisions in Washington to limit the amount of the performance awards for all DoD personnel. Additional guidance was released in July 2011 extended the limitations to all NAF white collar and Crafts and Trade personnel. The maximum amount of the money available for distribution to all NAF personnel is 1% of the total 2010 NAF payroll. As you have seen this is a significant decrease. AFGE Local 1897 was notified of the awards limitation in September 2011. We took immediate action to bargain the limitations and the implementation process. Through a mutual decision between the Union and Management, the decision was made to allow the awards process to be completed as per the guidance from DoD so that the employees could get a portion of award money rather than interrupt the process and delay bonuses for everyone until after litigation was completed. Rest assured we are in the process of challenging DoD's position on the limitations due to the nature\source of NAF funding. The money that is normally available at the end of the evaluation period is derived from funds generated from providing services for military and retired personnel and are not appropriated by congress. Therefore, we believe the limitations should not apply to NAF employees. We are working with our attorneys and with other locals to challenge the decision and in the process, make more money available for the 2011 Performance Award program and do away with any planned limitations for 2012. If you have any questions concerning this process or about your Bonus, please contact me at 882-0321.

Michael Hughes, Vice President NAF

Secretary Treasure Corner



The BondRewards Federation®



When you join the Union, you have access to the benefits, which are backed by the collective strength of over 10-million members of AFL-CIO unions. By using one or two of the programs, members save as much as their annual dues.

The BondRewards Federation® was formed in 2000 when a negative trend to savings in America was noticed. For the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930s Americans had a negative savings rate, spending more than they earned.

To make it easier for Americans to save the BondRewards Federation® realized that a rewards programs offering U.S. Savings Bonds as a signature reward was the perfect solution. So they developed a program that was good for AFGE members and America.

Now you can save while you spend. Each corporate sponsor will contribute a percentage of all purchases with them into your BondRewards® account. You can then redeem your earnings for U.S. Savings Bonds.

Enrollment is completely free and there is never any cost associated to you as an Account Holder for being a part of the BondRewards Federation®.

Just a few reminders for all of our members as it pertain to your union account. When you change your name, address, email or phone number please let the union secretary know. If our office has the updated information, you can rest assured that you will receive up-to-date information from the national office concerning issues that can affect your jobs and rights as federal employees.

Also when you are recruiting members, please review the 1187 before submitting to the union office to make sure that all the information on the form is ledge-able and that the new members home email listed as well.

Voncile Ashley, Secretary Treasure

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS



General membership meeting every second Tuesday @ bldg 220 Eglin AFB 1700 hours.

Door prizes! Food! Fun! Attend a meeting because there is Strength in Numbers!

Join your members for a Holiday dinner at Ramada on the Island. If you plan on attending please RSVP with at the Local office NLT: 27 Dec 2011 if you want to attend (850) 882-5714

Union Benefits and Additional Legal Assistance & Protection AFGE Members Only

When you join the union, you have access to these AFGE benefits. These benefits are backed by the collective strength of over 10-million members of AFL-CIO unions. By using one or two of the programs, many members save as much as their annual dues.

AFGE Local 1897 provides additional legal assistance and protection for our dues paying members: Our union does not have to provide legal assistance and protection to non members in cases before the Merit System Protection Board (14-day and longer suspensions and removals), the Department of Labor for Workers' Compensation, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for discrimination and the Office of Personnel Management in position classification issues. We also support our members in receiving legal counsel when needed.

Money: Bond Rewards, AFGE Credit Card, AFGE's FICO Discount, Free Credit Report , How To Manage Your Debt , Secured Credit Card, Credit Builder Program, Credit Counseling Program, Online Tax Preparation Service, Union Member's Financial Safety Net, Identity Theft

House and Home: Save My Home, Mortgage & Real Estate Program, Moving Van Discounts, Pet Care Program, Home Heating Oil Discounts

Education: 2008 Union Plus Scholarship Application, College Financing, JNS Scholarship, Grantham University's Online Education & Degree Program, MINDsprinting Tutoring Program, Union Leaders of the Future Scholarship, AFGE's Online Training Program, Powell's, A Union Book Store

Computers: Apple Computer Discount, Dell Computer Discounts, Easy Computer Purchase Program
Unions-America Internet Service Provider , Union Plus Voice: VoIP

Legal: Legal Services Program, Application for Union Plus Legal Service Attorney Panel, Your Legal Health, Small Claims Court, Warranties

Health: Health Club Discounts, Health Savings Program, Discount Dental Services, Hearing Aids Discount Program, Discount Pharmacy Program, Vision Program

Many other benefits are also offered from automotive insurance to discounts. To review all benefits please go to www.afge.org and www.unionplus.org websites.