

# AFMC/AFGE Council 214 Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

26-27 June 2012

## Eglin AFB FL

The HQ AFMC/AFGE Council 214 Partnership Council (PC) conducted its 36<sup>th</sup> meeting on 26-27 June 2012. The meeting was hosted at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Copies of the action items, agenda, and list of attendees are attached.

### 1. Opening Remarks/Acknowledgements

Dr. Butler opened the meeting and provided opening remarks. Mr. Blanch also provided opening remarks. Dr. Butler then asked Gen Harris to make a statement. Gen Harris thanked the members for coming and said the Eglin team was there to support the members with whatever was needed. Ms. Tavernier provided administrative comments. Mr. Wallace and Ms. Tasse also thanked the members for coming and said they were happy to host the meeting.

Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch recognized new members of the Council including Dr. Belk, AFTC/CA, Mr. Gill, ASC/CA, and Mr. Allen, President, AFGE Local 1406. The new members were presented with certificates signed by Gen Wolfenbarger and Mr. Blanch.

### 2. Mission Brief – Lt Jessica Pitts, AAC/FMA

Lt Pitts provided the AAC mission brief. She spoke of AAC's four core missions: development and transition of technology, professional acquisition management, exacting test and evaluation, and world-class sustainment of all Air Force weapon systems. Lt Pitts said AAC's scope of operations extends far beyond the borders of Eglin AFB or even Florida. They conduct testing and operations in 18 various locations around the United States. Lt Pitts expanded on AAC's mission areas and talked about the primary mission areas: acquisition, test and evaluation, and installation management. She also spoke about the more than 40 associate units that call Eglin home.

### 3. Local Labor Relations Update – Ms. Darcie Tavernier, AAC/DPPE, Mr. Thad Wallace, President, AFGE 1897 Local & Mr. Rocky Tasse, AFGE Local 1942

Ms. Tavernier, Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Tasse provided an update on the status of local labor-management relationships. Ms. Tavernier gave the history of Eglin's partnership efforts including the withdrawal from partnership by the local unions. She also spoke about success stories including 28 recent arbitration requests that have been resolved, joint training on the Master Labor Agreement (MLA), joint furlough project, and various Improvement Process Teams (IPTs). Mr. Allen asked what the arbitrations were about and Ms. Tavernier said alleged wrong notification of bargaining and timeliness. Mr. Allen asked if Eglin had re-engaged in partnership. Ms. Tavernier said they are taking steps towards re-engaging. She stated management proposed starting with a charter while the union proposed starting with joint training on Labor-Management Forums (LMFs). The parties were deadlocked on a way ahead, but recently management agreed to schedule joint training.

In his part of the briefing, Mr. Wallace spoke about some of the challenges labor and management have at Eglin. He said there is no pre-decisional involvement (PDI) and that management believes PDI only needs to occur at the Command level. Mr. Tingey said Mr. Wallace should ask the co-chairs if PDI only applies to the Command. Mr. Blanch said it depends. If the issue involves a local instruction, there should be local PDI. Mr. Allen said we need AFMC to say in a single voice that PDI is our policy. Mr. Blanch said labor and management don't always have to agree and that disagreements are healthy. He said the important part is to discuss. Mr. Marshall asked how prevalent is the position that PDI is not appropriate below the level of recognition. Mr. Blanch said we do a lot of PDI at the Command level. Mr. Tingey said they have PDI at Hill AFB as well. Dr. Butler said we still struggle with union relations at the Air Force level. He said, "We still see many AFIs issued without any union involvement." Dr. Butler said, "We see more union issues coming out of the flying operations where management tends to be less aware of union concerns." He said this happens more at Eglin and possibly Edwards. Mr. Allen said he felt the union is solid behind the warfighter and the military at Edwards generally respects the premise of unions. Dr. Belk said the flying operations culture can be antagonistic to

unions. Mr. Allen said he thought military folks were more willing to partner with the union. Mr. Wallace then continued his portion of the briefing talking about the joint labor-management training to be held on 24 July. He said we need to get the right people from management to attend.

Mr. Tasse talked about the good things that have occurred at Eglin under the leadership of Gen Merchant. He said he is less optimistic about the future of partnership and hopes Gen Harris will be willing to engage with the union the way Gen Merchant has. Mr. Tasse said he was proud of what had been accomplished during the past year – especially the suicide prevention IPT team.

#### 4. Action Item Review – Ms. Jamie Schoening, HQ AFMC/A1KL

Ms. Schoening reviewed the list of open action items. The parties agreed to close some of the older action items that had been open since previous meetings. Ms. Schoening said most of the action items would be briefed later in the day. However, there was discussion on the action item regarding the Controlled Spend Account (CSA) card and also on the status of local labor-management relationships.

On the CSA card, Dr. Butler said the reality was that the card would be going away. Mr. Blanch said SAF/FM project officer Mr. Jim Sisson's reasons for doing away with the CSA are the same problems cited when the AF switched from the Government Travel Card (GTC). Dr. Butler said AF has new lawyers who are saying personal use of the CSA is illegal. Mr. Robinson said we asked for substantiation of the legal basis and received none. Dr. Butler said we would leave that item open.

Ms. Schoening talked about how obtaining a coordinated labor and management response on the status of local labor-management relations had been difficult. She said it is a work in progress. Mr. Allen gave an update about Edwards and said there is a long history of antagonism that he wanted to transcend. He said PDI is happening at some levels, but continues to be a work in progress. Mr. Tingey spoke about his relationship with management at Hill. He said he has a good relationship with management at all levels and does not see the need right now for a partnership council. Dr. Butler asked what would happen if Mr. Tingey is no longer there and Mr. Blanch said with the 5 center construct, we may need to reinforce partnerships. Ms. Schoening said she did not receive a response from Kirtland. Mr. Shaw asked Mr. Tripis to speak to the relationship at Robins. Mr. Tripis said it seems like they've taken many steps backwards. He suggested bringing in a TIGER team to address some of the issues. A "tiger team" would be joint AFMC/C214 compliance assessment team. Ms. Schoening said responses from Tinker and Wright-Patterson were positive. Ms. Schoening said she would continue to work this issue and hoped to have better coordinated responses for the next meeting.

#### 5. Good News Story – KC-135 Overhaul – Mr. Ross Marshall, OC-ALC/CA

Mr. Marshall provided a good news story on the KC-135 Programmed Depot Maintenance (PDM) Program. Mr. Marshall said this was a good partnership story between management, labor, VPP, and lean methodology. He said in FY10, AF asked Tinker to cut flow days and they succeeded one year ahead of their target. He said it was all about communication. Management and the union teamed up for shop walks, talks, meetings – everything. He said the success of this program resulted in the KC-135 team winning the DoD Mason Award at the DoD Maintenance Symposium. He said the team still has a long way to go, but it is a great start. Dr. Butler said this story captures the whole element of partnership and resulted in the government taking work back from contractors. He said government was now competing with industry and this was a great business model. Mr. Tingey asked Mr. Marshall how much of the problem was a parts issue and Mr. Marshall said a lot of it was parts, but they worked with AFGLSC and implemented new parts processes.

#### 6. Labor-Management Forums – Ms. Jamie Schoening, HQ AFMC/A1KL

Ms. Schoening gave an update on the Labor-Management Forum (LMF) team that was formed at the last PC meeting at Robins. At the Robins meeting, Ms. Schoening and Mr. Robinson provided a briefing on the characteristics of a LMF, the differences between a LMF and PC, and the role of pre-decisional involvement (PDI) in LMF's. A team was formed to review the PC charter, CONOPS, and metrics. Ms. Schoening said the team has been updating the charter and CONOPS and will send them to the PC members for comments. Ms. Schoening said the team also had all of the ER/LR folks across the Command complete training on Executive Order 13522. With the five center reorganization, a lot of leadership changes are underway. Once the leaders are in place, the team will draft a joint letter to be signed by the co-chairs (Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch) encouraging PCs and PDI at the local level. Mr. Marshall said the challenge is still PDI at the local level, but the AFSC ESOH team was a good example of PDI. Mr. Marshall said they learned some great lessons and made mistakes as well, but it is a work in progress. Mr. Wallace asked Mr. Marshall if he met with the local

union himself. Mr. Marshall said yes. Mr. Allen said it is rare at Edwards for the Executive Director to meet directly with the union. Mr. Tasse agreed and said at Eglin they send letters out telling management not to talk to the union. Mr. Blanch said it boils down to doing the right thing versus enforcing union rights. He reminded the members that Council 214 had made huge progress in the past and said maybe folks have forgotten some of the lessons from the “bad, old days”.

7. Air Force Sustainment Center (AFSC) Environmental, Safety & Occupational Health (ESOH) – Mr. Ross Marshall, OC-ALC/CA

Mr. Marshall gave a briefing on AFSC ESOH. He said as the team is looking to build the AFSC, they are looking at “big rocks” and safety is one of those issues. As a result, an ESOH team was put together to build a framework that would standardize the programs at Tinker, Robins, and Hill. Mr. Marshall said labor and management met at the HQ the week prior to the PC meeting to discuss the ESOH framework. He provided an update on that meeting.

The parties discussed a 12-step ESOH way ahead which included the following:

1. Partnership between union and management
2. Collaborative relationship with ESOH, community, three bases, and HQ AFMC
3. Effective ESOH Councils at each base
4. ESOH Program Management Review (PMR) at the AFSC
5. SOH cross-functional working group at each base
6. SOH cross-functional working group at AFSC
7. VPP Steering Committee at each base
8. VPP Executive Steering Committee at the AFSC
9. Implementation of an Occupational Health & Safety Management System
10. Standardization of ESOH metrics across all three bases
11. Standardized reporting of the health of environmental at each base
12. SOH stakeholder team made up of each base and AFGE

Mr. Marshall said this was just a framework and there are still discussions on how to structure everything. Dr. Butler said this is a good pilot to watch, but was concerned about the duality of ESOH and VPP. Mr. Marshall agreed and said he was concerned about that as well. Mr. Marshall said the ESOH framework began with PDI. He envisions co-chairing the Center level ESOH council with the C214 President. The parties then discussed VPP, threats by union and management to pull out of VPP, lack of funding, and lack of active VPP programs at Test Center bases.

Dr. Belk acknowledged the greater need for VPP in the depot community where injury compensation costs are highest. Dr. Butler suggested Council 214 may need to delegate Center-level representation. Mr. Blanch praised the AFSC ESOH structure for getting everybody into everybody else's business. In safety, this is a good thing. Mr. Tasse asked if Eglin would ultimately have to adopt VPP. Mr. Blanch said no, but will have to implement a safety management system.

8. Master Labor Agreement (MLA) Implementation – Mr. Tom Robinson, Executive Assistant, AFGE Council 214

Mr. Robinson gave a briefing on issues with the new MLA. He said there was some good news to report regarding grievance procedures. First, Mr. Steenbock put out language defining what a designated management official (DMO) is. Second, the new requirement by A1 requiring activities to send in weekly timeliness reports has been very positive and has resulted in zero untimely responses. Mr. Robinson then spoke about some of the issues with the MLA including union emails, controlled spend account, midterm bargaining, and on-call. He said we still have some hurdles to overcome on union emails – mainly getting the directories uploaded and created. Doing it manually would be an overwhelming job which would require tons of union official time. AFMC/A6 agrees it could be automated, but would require funding and priority. There is no way ahead right now. On the Controlled Spend Account (CSA) card, Mr. Robinson said the union really likes the CSA. Dr. Butler said frequent travelers have a lot of issues with the CSA. Mr. Robinson said the CSA is hard to abuse. On midterm bargaining, Mr. Robinson said there have been some conflicting interpretations at Hill AFB, which impacts how AFMC and Council 214 review current MOAs. Mr. Robinson said the parties are currently reviewing almost 400 MOAs that were in place at the time the MLA was signed. He said local supplement agreements (LSA) negotiations are also underway.

Mr. Tasse said he needed clarification on having one or two local supplements since Eglin has two separate local unions. Dr. Butler said he would like to see one document; however, he could understand each local having something that addresses different issues (where they exist). Ms. McGehee said she believed the MLA supports one single LSA because the MLA says one per "activity". Mr. Robinson said the MLA supports both one per "activity" and one per "local."

Mr. Tripis spoke about the DMO issue at Robins and said the union opposes not having a Step 2 DMO list. Mr. Blanch said the intent is for management to serve as DMO at both Step 1 and Step 2. Mr. Tripis asked if anyone else was having issues with DMOs and there were no other issues. Mr. Steenbock said he would look into the DMO issue at Robins, again.

Mr. Tripis said another dispute at Robins had to do with arbitration scheduling. Mr. Blanch asked if there had been any arbitrations at Robins since the new MLA. Mr. Tripis said no. Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch said they had received several emails on this issue. Mr. Tingey said the arbitrations are two-years old and suggested the PC intervene. Dr. Butler said he was willing to let A1 supersede management if the local union agreed to allow Council 214 to also supersede. Dr. Butler said he would take an action item for Mr. Steenbock and Mr. Marshall to go to Robins to examine the arbitrations, review bottlenecks and look for a way ahead. Mr. Blanch said he would also have someone from Council 214 participate.

Mr. Blanch told the members the MLA implementation has mostly been a success. He said we've hit a few bumps, but overall, the MLA implementation is going well. Dr. Butler agreed and said he thought the MLA effort has been great.

#### 9. Union's View on AFMC Restructure – Mr. Tom Robinson, Executive Assistant, AFGE Council 214

Mr. Robinson spoke about the union's view on the five center reorganization. He stated the union's interests were to minimize adverse impacts, make sure the local unions were involved, and to sustain labor/management relationships at the local level. To sustain labor/management relationships at the local level, Mr. Robinson said locals should continue to have partnership councils, keep bargaining at the local level, and make sure the right local management officials hear and decide grievances.

Mr. Blanch asked what the PC members wanted to do about partnership councils. Mr. Marshall said he preferred to have a Center-level partnership council. The members then had a lot of discussion about partnership councils and who should sit on them in addition to base level councils. Mr. Robinson said the union believes the "heaviest hitter" at the base should sit on the council. Dr. Butler said highest rank doesn't work because of tenant organizations. Mr. Robinson then said the union said the Complex Commander should sit on the council.

Mr. Robinson finished by saying the union's interests will be met if we continue partnership councils at the local level and include the Complex Commander. Mr. Steenbock said this topic would be discussed further in his briefing.

#### 10. Five Center & Labor Relations Update – Mr. John Steenbock, HQ AFMC/A1

Mr. Steenbock gave a briefing on the status of the five center reorganization and said the transition to five centers will be slow from July – September 2012. He reminded the members that personnel and financial management actions will not occur until 1 October.

Mr. Tasse asked when the union was notified about the restructure. Mr. Blanch said the union was notified in November. Mr. Tasse said the union was brought-in post-decisionally. Dr. Butler said yes and the reason was because management could not legally ask union representatives to sign non-disclosure agreements and because there were more complexities due to congressional involvement. Mr. Blanch said nobody was happy about it and that Mr. Tingey and he had a conversation with Senator Hatch, who also agreed the situation was not good.

Mr. Steenbock said after initial operating capability (IOC), we would need approximately a yearlong transition period until we reach full operational capability (FOC). Mr. Steenbock then provided an IOC site picture and reviewed organization charts with the members.

Mr. Steenbock also provided an update on how labor relations and bargaining will be handled in the new organization structure. He said that some "super Centers" want Center-level bargaining. Bargaining at the

Center-level creates an additional layer of bargaining that is not needed. Mr. Steenbock said if an issue arises to Command that impacts only the Center and the complexes under that Center, HQ AFMC could delegate bargaining to the Center. He then talked about a three stage strategy for the future. The short-term way ahead is to remain status-quo, the mid-term way ahead would be to request a clarification of unit from the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), and the long-term way ahead would be to address levels of bargaining in the new MLA. Mr. Tasse asked if an issue at Eglin could be delegated to the Air Force Test Center (AFTC). Mr. Steenbock said the issue could only be delegated if it impacts Edwards, Eglin, and Arnold. Dr. Belk said pre-decisional involvement (PDI) is the tough new issue and it will be important to get the right union representative involved on Center-wide issues. Dr. Butler said greater standardization is the goal of the reorganization. Mr. Marshall said he felt the Centers should have Center-level partnership councils in addition to the Command PC. Mr. Blanch gave an example of how AFI 21-101 was bargained at the Command with HQ AFMC/A4 and asked how that would be negotiated going forward. Mr. Marshall said the Air Force Sustainment Center (AFSC) would negotiate for all three complexes going forward. Mr. Robinson said PDI remains the issue and said local unions should be involved in base-level coordination. Further, he reminded Mr. Marshall that if AFSC skips base-level coordination, Council 214 will have no on-site representative for PDI in many situations.

#### 11. RMD-703 & VERA/VSIP Update – Mr. John Steenbock, HQ AFMC/A1

Mr. Steenbock provided an update on RMD-703 and VERA/VSIP. The overall reduction for AFMC was 3,301. To achieve this reduction, AFMC looked for efficiencies including the five center reorganization and Global Base Support structure. Mr. Steenbock said AFMC was quick to implement hiring controls – even implementing before AF. Mr. Steenbock said VERA/VSIP was a success and the hiring freeze has now been lifted. He said there will not be a reduction in force (RIF) in FY12. In AFMC, there are approximately 20 surplus employees that need to be placed and they will be carried as overhires until they can be placed. Mr. Marshall asked about using VERA/VSIP money for PCS to another base. Mr. Steenbock said VERA/VSIP money could be used for PCS to place a surplus employee at another base. Mr. Tingey asked why VERA/VSIP was irrevocable. Mr. Steenbock said AF said VERA/VSIP is irrevocable; however, he has personally allowed some revocations. Dr. Butler said there should be a waiver process for extenuating circumstances. Mr. Steenbock took action to develop standardized waiver guidance.

Ms. McGehee said HQ AFMC/A1 should consider asking for lessons learned from the VERA/VSIP rounds this past year. Mr. Steenbock agreed and said we will look at developing a standardized process for next time.

Mr. Steenbock finished his briefing and gave the members a heads-up that there is talk about imposing a 5% civilian reduction to bring down the civilian workforce to match military reductions. More information will be shared if anything materializes.

#### 12. AFGE National News – Mr. Tom Robinson, Executive Assistant, AFGE Council 214

Mr. Robinson gave an update on things happening at the national AFGE level. He spoke about downgrades at the Veteran's Administration (VA), contract talks at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), fitness standards for cops, and increasing salaries of government contractors compared to civilian employees. Mr. Robinson also talked about upcoming elections and announced that Mr. John Gage, President, AFGE was not running for office and also said Mr. Blanch, President, AFGE Council 214 would not be seeking re-election either. Dr. Butler said we were not prepared to officially recognize Mr. Blanch at the meeting, but the members would do something at the next meeting.

#### 13. Civilian Drug Testing Update – Mr. Randy Shaw, HQ AFMC/A1KL

Mr. Shaw provided an update on civilian drug testing. He gave a brief history and talked about how SAR 5 & 7's were all testing designated but then AF retracted and provided new guidance. Mr. Shaw said we're not sure if the retracted guidance is settled yet. Dr. Butler asked if the parties were in agreement on the definition of who should be testing designated. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Robinson said the parties are currently bargaining that. Dr. Butler said in hindsight, we have people who shouldn't have been tested, but were and unfortunately, tested positive. Mr. Shaw provided the statistics that showed 21 employees in the retracted group tested positive. Not all 21 are bargaining unit employees. Mr. Shaw said all pending actions are being held in abeyance while AF determines a way ahead. Dr. Butler asked what the union thought about that. Mr. Tingey said we needed to bring them back to work and make them whole. Mr. Blanch asked why this is taking so long. Mr. Shaw said it is because AF needs consistency and to issue more than a blanket statement. Mr. Steenbock said SAF/GC and AF/A1 were supposed to have a conference call to discuss. Mr. Tingey asked Mr. Blanch if the union put a data

request in to have the data. Mr. Blanch said no and Mr. Tingey said they should have one. Dr. Butler agreed to provide information to the union on the positive tests that were bargaining unit members.

#### 14. Day 2 – Recognition, Wrap-Up & Planning for Next Meeting – All Members

Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch started the second day of the meeting by recognizing members from the Eglin suicide prevention team. Dr. Butler talked about suicide awareness and how the AF is now paying attention to civilian suicides. Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch recognized the Eglin team with letters of appreciation.

Next, Dr. Butler and Mr. Blanch recognized the Eglin employees who played a role in hosting the partnership council.

The members discussed the action items and talked about scheduling the next meeting. The plan is to have a partnership council meeting in conjunction with a Joint National meeting in the November timeframe. Ms. Schoening will check with AFMC/CC's secretary about available dates and will provide those to the union. After the union elections take place in August, a firm date will be decided upon. Ms. Schoening will provide the dates to the PC members as soon as the dates are finalized. The meeting was then adjourned.

#### Minutes Approved By:



Steven F. Butler



Scott Blanch

**Action Items from Robins Meeting 28-29 Feb 12**

12-02-03	Provide coordinated management and labor responses on local PC chart	A1 & C-214		OPEN
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**Action Items from Eglin Meeting 26-27 Jun 12**

12-06-01	Dr. Butler will highly encourage senior-level management at Eglin to participate in Labor Management Forum training on 24 Jul	Dr. Butler		OPEN
12-06-02	Provide union legal view on CSA card	A1		OPEN
12-06-03	Send out information on Executive Order 13522 training to new PC members	A1		OPEN
12-06-04	Send out revised PC CONOPS and charter to members for comment	A1		OPEN
12-06-05	DMO issue at Robins to be looked at by A1	A1		OPEN
12-06-06	Members Steenbock and Marshall will review arbitration issues at Robins	A1		OPEN
12-06-07	Develop standard policy on waiver for rescinding VERA/VSIP	A1		OPEN
12-06-08	Provide union the number of SAR code 7 & 5 BUE's that tested positive out of the 21 reported	A1		OPEN