

AGREEMENT BETWEEN

DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE- DEFENSE
ACCOUNTING OFFICE-FORT BLISS, TEXAS

AND

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES LOCAL R14-89

EFFECTIVE DATE:

July 16, 1996

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PREAMBLE

This agreement is made and entered into by and between the Defense Accounting Office, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Fort Bliss, Texas, hereinafter referred to as the "Employer," and the National Association of Government Employees, Local R14-89 hereinafter referred to as the "Union." This agreement and such supplementary agreements as may be agreed to hereunder from time to time, together constitute a collective agreement between the Employer and the union.

ARTICLE 1 RECOGNITION AND UNIT DESCRIPTION

The Employer recognizes the Union as the exclusive bargaining representative for all nonprofessional employees of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Fort Bliss, Texas, excluding management officials, supervisors, professional employees, and employees described in 5 USC 7112(b) (2), (3), (4), (6) and (7).

ARTICLE 2 PROVISIONS OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS

SECTION 1. It is agreed and understood by the Employer and the Union that in the administration of all matters covered by this agreement, officials and employees are governed by existing or future laws, Executive Orders and regulations of appropriate authorities; by published agency policies and regulations *in* existence at the time this agreement is approved and subsequently published agency policies and regulations required by law or by the regulations of appropriate authorities.

SECTION 2. The fact that the Union agrees to published agency policies and regulations *in* existence at the time the agreement is approved does not preclude the Union from requesting to meet and negotiate on impact and implementation or substantive bargaining of any agency policy and regulation.

ARTICLE 3 EMPLOYER RIGHTS

SECTION 1. Subject to Section 2 of this Article, nothing in this Article shall affect the authority of any management official of the agency -

a. To determine the mission, budget, organization, number of employees, and internal security practices of the agency; and

b. In accordance with applicable laws -

(1) to hire, assign, direct, layoff, and retain employees in the agency, or to suspend, remove, reduce in grade or pay, or take other disciplinary action against such employees;

(2) to assign work, to make determinations with respect to contracting out, and to determine the personnel by which agency operations shall be conducted;

(3) with respect to filling positions, to make selections for appointments from -

(A) among properly ranked and certified candidates for promotions; or

(B) any other appropriate source; and

(4) to take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the agency mission during emergencies.

SECTION 2. Nothing in this Article shall preclude the Employer and the Union from negotiating -

a. on the numbers; types and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project, or tour of duty, or on the technology, methods, and means of performing work;

b. procedures which management officials of the agency will observe in exercising any authority under this Article; or

c. appropriate arrangements for employees adversely affected by the exercise of any authority under this Article by such management officials.

ARTICLE 4 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

SECTION 1. Each employee has the right to join, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal to form, join, and assist the Union or to refrain from such activity. The freedom of such employees to assist the Union shall be recognized as extending to participation in the management of the Union and acting for the Union in the capacity of a Union officer or steward.

SECTION 2. The Employer agrees that employees in the exercise of these rights shall be protected from interference, restraint, coercion, or discrimination by any representative of the Employer.

SECTION 3. Nothing in this agreement shall require an employee to become or to remain a member of a labor organization or to pay money to the organization except pursuant to a voluntary written authorization by a member for the payment of dues through payroll deduction.

SECTION 4. Nothing in this agreement precludes any employee of the bargaining unit, regardless of union membership, from bringing matters of personal concern to the attention of appropriate officials under applicable law, rule, regulation, or established agency policy or from choosing his/her own representative in a grievance or appellate action except when the grievance is covered under the negotiated procedure contained in this Agreement.

SECTION 5. The Union shall be given the opportunity to be represented at any examination of a unit employee by a representative of the Employer in connection with an investigation if:

a. the employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee; and

b. the employee requests representation.

SECTION 6. Prior to the commencement of an investigatory examination, the employee will be informed of the purpose of the examination. .

SECTION 7. In the administration of this Agreement and working conditions, all employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner.

SECTION 8. The employee has the right to confer with the Union during duty hours concerning grievances, complaints, appeals or other appropriate matters. An employee desiring to confer with a Union representative will make the request for time to his/her immediate supervisor prior to leaving his/her work area. Such absences from the work area will be limited to reasonable amount(s) sufficient in duration to conduct discussions and/or actions deemed necessary.

ARTICLE 5 UNION RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

SECTION 1. The Union shall accept employees of the bargaining unit as members without discrimination based on color, race, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, and physical or mental handicap.

SECTION 2. The Union shall act for and negotiate agreements covering all employees in the unit and shall be obligated to represent the interests of all such employees without discrimination and without regard to Union membership in matters covered by the Agreement.

SECTION 3. The Union shall be given the opportunity to be represented at any formal discussion between one or more representatives of the agency and one or more employees in the unit or their representatives concerning any grievance or any personnel policy or practices or other general condition of employment.

SECTION 4. A Union representative may be present during new employee orientations. The Employer will advise the Union of orientation sessions.

ARTICLE 6
UNION REPRESENTATION

SECTION 1. The Employer shall recognize the officers and stewards of the Union. The Union will keep the Employer advised in writing of the names of its officers and stewards.

SECTION 2. Union representatives will be granted reasonable time off without charge to leave to perform representational functions. Representational functions include:

- a. investigate, prepare and/or present grievances, appeals, claims, and unfair labor practice charges;
- b. consult and/or negotiate with representatives of the Employer concerning personnel policies, practices, and conditions of employment;
- c. research and prepare recommendations and/or proposals in connection with the above consultations, negotiations, or meetings;
- d. administration of the negotiated agreement; and
- e. third party proceedings where the Union is authorized to represent the employee.

SECTION 3. Representatives will provide reasonable advance notice to their immediate supervisors whenever they wish to leave their official duties to perform any of their representational responsibilities and will report to their supervisors when they return.

Permission will be granted upon request except when workload precludes such release. Official time will not be unreasonably denied. The Union will cooperate with the Employer in maintaining a record of time spent for Union representational activities.

SECTION 4. The Employer agrees that there shall be no restraint, interference, coercion, or discrimination against Union officials and stewards in the performance of duties related to their responsibilities as the exclusive representative for unit members.

SECTION 5. Representatives of the national office for NAGE will be allowed to visit the facilities on appropriate Union business.

SECTION 6. The representatives of the Union for administration and implementation of this Agreement will be the duly-elected or appointed President of the local or the person-whom he/she designates in writing to act in his/her place.

SECTION 7. The Union will be provided a listing of all committees established by the Employer. The Union may appoint a member to each of those committees.

SECTION 8. The Union is authorized use of Employer office support items (e.g. telephone, copier, fax, typewriter, computer).

SECTION 9. Union representatives are authorized official time for Union training.

ARTICLE 7
NEGOTIATION
S

SECTION 1. It is agreed that the Employer shall negotiate with the Union on all proposed changes in conditions of employment. It is understood that the Employer in this context means a representative with delegated authority to speak for the Defense Accounting Officer.

SECTION 2. Negotiation is defined as collective bargaining between the Employer and the Union with the objective of reaching formal written agreement with respect to personnel policies and practices and matters affecting working conditions, so far as may be appropriate under applicable laws, regulations and published policies.

SECTION 3. Procedures for Bargaining. The following procedures for bargaining will be followed unless otherwise agreed to by the parties.

a. The employer agrees to notify the Union President in writing prior to the planned implementation of a proposed change in conditions of employment. The notification will indicate the general nature of the proposed change and the planned implementation date.

b. The Union shall have the (10) calendar days from the date of notification to request bargaining and to forward written proposals to the Employer.

c. If the Union does not request bargaining within the time limit, the Employer may implement the proposed change(s).

d. Upon timely request by the Union, bargaining will commence within ten (10) calendar days, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Parties.

e. The Employer shall have ten (10) calendar days from date of ~~employment of the Union~~ ~~and~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~event~~ ~~of~~ ~~proposed~~ ~~change~~ ~~Union~~ ~~con~~ ~~bar~~ ~~gaining~~ will commence within (10) calendar days, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Parties.

SECTION 4. It is recognized that this Agreement is not all inclusive, and the fact that certain working conditions have not been specifically covered in this Agreement does not lessen the responsibility of either party to maintain an effective communication and exchange of ideas and solutions to matters related to policies, practices, procedures and conditions of employment not covered by this Agreement.

SECTION 5. Issues regarding negotiability of an item under discussion will be resolved in accordance with applicable provisions of Title V of USC and the rules and regulations of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

ARTICLE 8 PARTNERSHIP

SECTION 1. The parties shall have a Partnership Council (hereinafter the Council) composed of two (2) representatives appointed by the Union and two (2) representatives appointed by the Employer. Except as described below, the Council will decide its protocols and operating procedures, including whether to utilize subgroups or task forces. Any issue which affects employees' conditions of employment, except grievances and matters which would infringe on an individual's privacy, will be open for discussion. Council members will be on official time when they would otherwise be in a duty status.

SECTION 2. The council will make decisions based on a consensus approach. Those decisions will be enforceable under this agreement except for those specific matters which would be rejected in an Agency Head review under 5 USC 7114 (c). In those instances, the Union may refer the issue to the FLRA for a negotiability determination.

SECTION 3. When the Council cannot reach a consensus decision, either party may refer the matter to traditional negotiations beginning at mediation.

SECTION 4. The Employer shall provide written notice to the Union of studies and/or proposed changes to conditions of employment that may adversely affect the bargaining unit. Written notice will include those matters initiated locally and/or at a higher Agency level.

ARTICLE 9
PAYROLL WITHOLDING

SECTION 1. An employee who is a member in good standing of the Union may voluntarily authorize an allotment from his pay to cover regular dues for such membership provided that all the following requirements are met:

a. The employee receives an established amount of pay that is sufficient after legal deductions and other authorized allotments to cover the full amount of the allotment for the established dues.

b. The employee has voluntarily completed a request for such allotment from his/her pay with full knowledge of the limitations on revocation of the authorization.

c. The employee is included in the unit for which exclusive recognition has been granted.

SECTION 2.

a. The Union agrees to provide to its members in good standing the prescribed authorization form, SF-1187, and to receive completed forms from members who want to request allotment. The President or Secretary of the Union is designated to receive completed forms, to enter the current amount of the regular dues to be deducted for the member each pay period, and to determine whether the member is in good standing in the Union. He will then complete the required request for certification and submit the forms for processing.

b. Allotments authorized on properly completed and certified forms which are received by the Employer will be processed in an expeditious manner.

SECTION 3. The Employer will withhold the amount of regular dues set by the Union from the pay of each employee for whom it has a properly executed current allotment authorization. If the amount of regular dues is changed, the Union will notify the Employer in writing of the change. Only one (1) such change will be made in any period of 12 consecutive months.

SECTION 4. The Employer will terminate an allotment:

a. At the end of the pay period following notification of loss of exclusive recognition by the Union.

b. At the end of the pay period during which an employee separates from the unit or moves to a position not included within the unit of recognition.

c. At the first complete pay period after written notification is received from the Union that an employee is no longer a member in good standing in the Union.

d. Upon receipt of a properly completed SF-1188, at the beginning of the first pay period one calendar year after the employee's dues have been withheld, or if the allotment is not revoked at the end of the first year it has been in effect, any revocation will be effective on the first year it has been in effect, any revocation will be effective on the first pay period beginning on or after September 1 provided the revocation is received by the Employer prior to September 1. Employees desiring to submit a revocation form (SF-1188) must submit the completed form during the 6 weeks prior to the revocation period to the Employer. A copy of these forms will be provided to the local Union.

SECTION 5. A supply of SF-1188's will be maintained in the servicing personnel office. An employee may request one of these forms personally or in writing from the personnel office. The form will be released only upon proper request of an employee. These forms will not be stocked except in the personnel office.

SECTION 6. Remitting the amounts withheld. Upon disbursement for each pay period, the Payroll Office will certify for payment the net amount withheld. The check will be made out and sent to: Comptroller, Fiscal Office, National Association of Government Employees, 159 Burgin Parkway, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-4213. The check will be accompanied by a list of the employee members designated by their Union local number, who have current allotments authorizations on file; the amount withheld from each person's pay; and a statement showing the total amounts withheld; and the net balance remitted. Also, identified will be those employees whose pay was not sufficient to cover the full amount of the deductions and those whose allotments are being terminated at the beginning of the next pay period. A copy of this listing will also be provided the Local.

ARTICLE 10 GRIEVANCE
PROCEDURES

SECTION 1. The employer and the Union recognize and endorse the importance of bringing to light and resolving grievances in a prompt manner. The parties agree that the expeditious settlement of grievances at the lowest possible level is in the best interest of the government service. This procedure is designed to provide an ethical, orderly, and equitable means for resolving grievances.

SECTION 2. Unit employees covered by this agreement may present a grievance which may be processed with or without Union representation at the grievant's discretion. However, the Union shall have the right to have it's representative present at the grievance meetings. This right to individual representation does not include the right to take the matter to arbitration, unless the Union agrees to do so.

SECTION 3. This article provides procedures for the processing of grievances relating to the interpretation and/or application of this Agreement, and to matters relating to personnel policies, practices, and working conditions which fall within the discretionary authority of the employer. This shall be the sole procedure available for processing covered grievances. A grievance is defined as any complaint:

a. By any unit employee concerning any matter relating to the employment of the employee;

b. By the Union concerning any matter relating to employment of unit employees;

c. By any unit employee, the Union, or the employer concerning;

(1) The effect or interpretation, or a claim of breach of this Agreement; or

(2) Any claimed violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of any law, rule, or regulation affecting conditions of employment.

SECTION 4. The following are excluded from coverage of this grievance procedure:

a. A claimed violation of prohibited political activities.

b. Retirement, life insurance, health benefits, and matters under the auspices of the Office of Worker's Compensation Program, U.S. Department of Labor.

c. A suspension or removal under 5 USC 7532 (national security).

d. Any examination, certification, or appointment of candidates for federal employment.

e. The classification of any position which does not result in the reduction in grade or pay of an employee.

f. Nonselection for promotion from a group of properly ranked and certified candidates.

g. Termination of probationary employees.

h. Matters appealable to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

i. Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints.

SECTION 5. Grievances may be initiated by: (a) employees (either individually or jointly), (b) the Union, or (c) the Employer. Regardless of Union membership, employees shall not be precluded from bringing matters of personal concern to the attention of appropriate officials in accordance with applicable law, rule, regulation, or established agency policy. An employee or group of employees in the unit may be represented by themselves or only by the exclusive Union, in filing a grievance under the negotiated procedure.

SECTION 6. If two or more employees initiate identical grievances, where the basis for the grievance and corrective action being sought are identical, the Union, if it has been designated as the representative, will call the employees together and have them select one of the grievances for processing. The decision made on the grievance selected for processing will be equally applicable to all of the other identical grievances.

SECTION 7. Reasonable official time will be granted to aggrieved unit employees, and to the appropriate Union representatives, to investigate and prepare grievances. Official time will be granted to present a grievance through this Negotiated Grievance Procedure.

SECTION 8. Once a grievance has been accepted for processing under this Grievance Procedure, failure of the aggrieved employee or the Union to comply with any applicable time limit will terminate further consideration of the grievance, except as otherwise provided herein. Failure of the Employer to comply with any applicable processing time limit will constitute a valid basis for the grievance being advanced to the next higher step of this Grievance Procedure. However, any time limits stated in this Article may be extended by mutual written agreement between the employer and the Union.

SECTION 9. A grievance by the employee, Union, or the Employer shall be filed within fifteen (15) calendar days of the occurrence or awareness of the incident being grieved, except for extenuating circumstances, such as an unavoidable or an authorized absence of the aggrieved. Should extenuating circumstances preclude adherence to the above-stated time constraints, written reasons will be submitted with the grievance.

SECTION 10. Employee grievances shall be processed as follows:

Step 1. An employee shall first take up his grievance with his immediate supervisor. The employee may choose to have a Union representative. The following shall be specified in writing:

- a. The basis for the grievance;
- b. The date of the occurrence or awareness of the incident being grieved; and
- c. The corrective relief sought.

The immediate supervisor shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the grievance and will render his written decision or findings/conclusions to the employee within five (5) workdays of the date the employee submitted the grievance.

Step 2. Should resolution not occur at Step 1, the employee may submit the grievance for further consideration by filing his written grievance within five (5) workdays of receipt of the Step 1 decision to the Defense Accounting Officer. This grievance shall identify:

- a. The basis for the grievance;
- b. The date of the occurrence or awareness of the incident being grieved;
- c. The corrective relief sought; and
- d. The date of receipt of the Step 1 decision.

The Defense Accounting Officer will render a written decision within ten (10) workdays from the date he receives the grievance. Representatives of the employer will meet with the aggrieved employee and his Union representative(s) to discuss the grievance.

SECTION 11. Employer grievances shall be filed in writing with the President of the Union. The grievance shall specify the basis for the grievance and the corrective relief sought. A meeting shall be held to discuss the grievance. The President

shall issue a written decision within ten (10) workdays of receipt of the grievance.

SECTION 12. Union grievances shall be filed in writing with the Defense Accounting Officer by an elected officer of the Union. The grievance shall specify the basis for the grievance and the corrective relief sought. A meeting shall be held to discuss the grievance. The Defense Accounting Officer shall issue a written decision within ten (10) workdays of his receipt of the grievance.

SECTION 13. The parties agree to consider the use of Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) grievance mediation services. Grievance mediation must be requested in writing within ten (10) calendar days following the last step in the Grievance Procedure. Grievance mediation, if used, must be by mutual consent. Neither party is obligated to use this service; nor shall the voluntary, mutual consent to use the service limit a party's right to invoke arbitration at a later date. If the parties agree to use grievance mediation, they must submit a joint, signed request, asking for FMCS assistance. Such request will be made with the understanding that grievance mediation is an informal process intended as a supplement to and not a substitute for the arbitration process. The parties also agree that if grievance mediation is used, it shall be conducted at the discretion of the FMCS and that the parties agree to follow its guidelines, which entitle a grievant to be present at the mediation conference. The Mediator has no authority to compel resolution of the grievance. If the grievance is not settled during the mediation process, the matter may proceed on to arbitration. Nothing said or done by the parties or the Mediator during mediation can be entered as evidence or used against them during any subsequent arbitration proceedings. Furthermore, the parties agree to hold FMCS, and the Mediator appointed by the Service to conduct the mediation conference, harmless of any claim of damages arising from the mediation process.

SECTION 14. Grievances not resolved through the provisions of this Article may be referred to Arbitration by either the Union or Employer in keeping with Article 11, ARBITRATION PROCEDURES.

SECTION 15. Grievability or arbitrability issues must be raised in writing not later than the final grievance step decision.

ARTICLE 11 ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

SECTION 1. When a matter pursued through the negotiated grievance procedure, Article 10, is not satisfactorily resolved at the final step of the grievance procedure, the matter may be submitted to arbitration by the Employer or the Union. The request to invoke arbitration must be in writing and must be received by the Defense Accounting Officer or the Union President

within ten (10) workdays of the date of receipt of the final grievance decision or conclusion of grievance mediation. Only the parties to this agreement may invoke arbitration.

SECTION 2. Within five (5) workdays after receipt of the arbitration request, the Employer and the Union will jointly request that the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service submit a list of seven (7) impartial persons qualified to act as arbitrators. Representatives of the Union and the Employer will meet within seven (7) workdays after receipt of such a list. A representative of the Union and a representative of the Employer will each strike one arbitrator's name from the list of seven (7); they will then repeat this procedure. The remaining name will be the duly selected arbitrator. A flip of a coin will decide which party strikes first.

SECTION 3. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service shall be empowered to make a direct designation of an arbitrator to hear the case in the event:

a. either party refuses to participate in the selection of an Arbitrator, or;

b. upon inaction or undue delay on the part of either party.

SECTION 4. The parties will in good faith attempt to define the issue. If complete agreement cannot be reached on the issue prior to arbitration, the parties will present their respective issues to the Arbitrator at the hearing. The Arbitrator will then determine the issue to be heard.

SECTION 5. Grievability and arbitrability issues, if unresolved, will be handled as threshold issue at Arbitration.

SECTION 6. The Arbitrator's fees and expenses shall be borne by the losing party. The Arbitrator shall determine the losing party. If there is a split decision in which neither party can be designated as the losing party, the arbitrator shall determine the percentage of arbitration cost to be paid by each party. Where the Union and the Employer mutually request a transcript or the arbitrator requests a transcript, the expense will be shared; otherwise the party requesting the transcript shall bear the expense. The Employer and the Union shall share equally the expenses of any mutually agreed upon services.

SECTION 7. The arbitration hearing will be on the Employer's premises during the Employer's regular administrative working hours. Each person authorized to attend the arbitration hearing who is employed by the Employer and who is in an active duty status at the time the hearing is held will be excused from duty to participate in the arbitration proceeding without loss of pay or charge to annual leave.

SECTION 8. The Arbitrator will be requested to render his/her decision to the Union and the Employer as quickly as possible, but in any event not later than thirty (30) calendar days after conclusion of the hearing, unless the parties agree otherwise.

SECTION 9. The Arbitrator will not change, modify, alter, delete, or add to the provisions of this agreement; this right is the prerogative of the Union and the Employer only.

SECTION 10. Either the Union or the Employer may file exceptions to an Arbitrator's award in accordance with law and regulations.

ARTICLE 12 DISTRIBUTION OF AGREEMENT

The Agreement will be typed in final format by the Employer. After approval, copies of the Agreement will be reproduced. Cost of reproduction will be borne by the Employer. The Employer will distribute copies of the Agreement to all unit members and new employees as hired. The Union will be provided copies of the Agreement for internal use as needed.

ARTICLE 13 DURATION AND CHANGES

SECTION 1. This agreement shall become effective on the date of its approval by the Agency Head or the 31st day after execution, whichever is sooner. Thereafter, it will remain in full force and effect for a period of 3 years or upon consolidation of the Defense Accounting Office, whichever is sooner. This Agreement will automatically be renewed for 3-year periods thereafter unless written notice of a desire to renegotiate the Agreement is served by either party between the 105th and 60th day prior to expiration of the contract.

SECTION 2. This Agreement is subject to reopening:

- a. By mutual consent of the parties concerned;
- b. When new or revised laws or regulations of appropriate authority require changes to provisions of the Agreement.

SECTION 3. When the renegotiation of this Agreement is pending or in process, and the parties are unable to complete such renegotiation by the termination date of the Agreement, the terms and conditions of this agreement shall continue in effect until a new Agreement is effected.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the authorized representatives of the Parties
have entered into this Agreement on the

June 28, 1996

FOR THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES:

FOR THE DEFENSE ACCOUNTING
OFFICE, FORT BLISS,
TEXAS:

National Representative

Defense Accounting Officer