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NEWS RELEASE

FIREFIGHTERS AT PAX RIVER SETTLE ISSUES WITH NAVY

When the revisions to the GS-081 classification standards were released in March, 2004, the firefighters employed at Patuxent River Naval Air Station who had been required to be certified as HazMat Techs and who were performing HazMat Tech duties, looked forward to moving to the GS/7 level. When that didn't happen, 21 of the firefighters filed classification appeals with OPM.

Both the Navy and the appellants spent almost a year filing additional information requested by OPM. Then, after extensive discussions and negotiations between counsel for the Navy and Sandra Adams-Choate, counsel for the appellants, the parties reached an accord.

The bottom line is that all 21 of the appellants either have been or will be moved to GS/7 firefighter/HazMat Tech positions and therefore, their classification appeals have been withdrawn from further consideration by OPMK and the appellants will not pursue any other action for back pay, interest and attorneys fees.

At the time the classification appeals were filed, the firefighters were all members of AFGE Local 1603 and long-time supporters of the AFGE Federal Firefighters Steering Committee. They were instrumental in the publicity necessary to get the pay bill passed and it was their Senator, Paul Sarbanes, and Congressman, Steny Hoyer, who were the original sponsors of the pay reform legislation. Unfortunately, when the Navy regionalized the Naval District of Washington to include PaxRiver, the Federal Labor Relations Authority directed a representational election to be held. The majority of the firefighters in the newly configured region had been represented by IAFF and so, as could be expected but to the disappointment of AFGE, AFGE Local 1603, the PaxRiver firefighters and the Steering Committee, they carried the election. We wish our brothers well and thank them for their many, many years of support.

Prepared by AFGE Federal Firefighters Steering Committee