

AFMAO FINAL DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

[May 21, 2012]

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) investigated allegations of reprisal taken against whistleblowers at Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operation (AFMAO) Center, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, and found that Col. Robert Edmondson, Mr Trevor Dean, and Mr Quinton Keel engaged in reprisal. As a result the Air Force reviewed the findings, conducted supplemental investigation, and took the following disciplinary actions:

Col. Edmondson was offered non-judicial proceedings under Article 15 Uniform Code of Military Justice, which he accepted. After a hearing and appeal, the final punishment decision was a reprimand and forfeiture of \$7,000. Mr Dean received a 20 day suspension without pay, and Mr Keel resigned from his position before action could be initiated. The Air Force issued him a letter of censure after his resignation. The Secretary of the Air Force reviewed the final disciplinary actions and considers them appropriate.

All three had previously been found responsible for gross mismanagement, among other things, as a result of an Air Force Inspector General inquiry into operations at AFMAO. As a result of the IG's findings, Col. Edmondson received a letter of reprimand and was denied further command opportunity. Mr Keel received an involuntary downgrade to a nonsupervisory position outside AFMAO. Mr Dean voluntarily took a downgrade to a nonsupervisory position within AFMAO, but outside the Port Mortuary.

The individuals subject to these disciplinary actions were afforded due process, informed of the disposition of their cases, and provided explanations of their rights. The Air Force does not tolerate wrongdoing, especially prohibited personnel practices by employees.

Looking forward, Air Force leadership is reviewing instructional materials used to train supervisors and employees to ensure military members and civilian employees alike understand the rights of all employees to express important concerns in the workplace. We are committed to a workplace climate that makes individuals feel confident that they can raise any concerns they may have, that those concerns will be taken seriously, and that those raising the concerns will be treated with respect and appreciation. The individuals who reported the allegations in this matter performed an important service to the Air Force and the Nation, and for that we are grateful. These individuals continue in their positions at AFMAO; the Air Force has taken appropriate actions, including correcting their records to eliminate any negative information that resulted from any prohibited personnel practices committed.

We are confident that the process improvements and changes already made at Dover Port Mortuary, along with implementation of the recommendations of the Abizaid Panel, provide the solid foundation this sacred mission requires, and we will continue our emphasis on systemic improvements. There are no missions more sacred to all those who serve than caring for our Fallen with dignity, honor and respect and for caring for those families who have sacrificed so much. We remain proud of the people at the Dover Port Mortuary and their continued commitment to this sacred mission.