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SPOTLIGHT: LEAP SCHOLAR SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY IN BULGARIA

by SSgt Kalinka Caisido, PACAF



During the 2021 Air University Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (AU LREC) Symposium, I had the pleasure of presenting a report on the use of economic tools in the power competition between the United States (US), Russia, and China. A primary focus of the report was Russia's economic interference in Eastern Europe. The report highlighted Russia's use of economic interference, political pressure, and military aggression toward countries including Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. Russian aggression toward Bulgaria, my country of birth, was of special interest to me. As a multi-capable and multi-lingual Airman with regional and cultural expertise in Eastern Europe, I yearned for the opportunity to serve in that area of responsibility. The Russian invasion of Ukraine only amplified my desire to put my skillsets to good use.

SSgt Caisido providing language support during a Public Affairs engagement with local news reporters for the 73rd anniversary of NATO alliance

In fall of 2021, I was selected to the US Air Force Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP). My first assignment with LEAP was to attend a language school in the country Moldova starting 28 February 2022. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February would have a lasting impact on my service with LEAP.

SPOTLIGHT: LEAP SCHOLAR SUPPORTS INTEROPERABILITY IN BULGARIA *(cont.)*




My assignment to Moldova was canceled and I was diverted to Bulgaria where I completed an Advanced Language Intensive Training Event (LITE) with Task Force Cougar (TFC) from the Second Calvary Regiment at Novo Selo Training Area (NSTA) in support of the war crisis in Ukraine. My role with the TFC was to provide linguist support for US forces located in Eastern Europe during a training exercise with the Bulgarian Army. As a LEAP scholar, my objective was to eliminate any language or cultural barriers, support training interoperability, and keep the focus on successful mission execution: strengthening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) eastern flank.

Serving alongside the Second Calvary Regiment proved to be a unique and unforgettable experience. The Second "Dragons" are the oldest mounted regiment, on continuous active service, in the US Army. The Second Calvary provides early entry forces that can operate jointly, without access to fixed forward bases, to deter the enemy and win decisively. The Dragons have served on numerous deployments in the Middle East, and their members have been awarded over twenty Medals of Honor.

TFC is an infantry-centered organization that delivers mass through robust anti-armor capabilities and dynamic intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, integrates into joint forcible entry, and can self-sustain for seventy-two hours. Their capabilities are supported by Stryker vehicles like Javelin Infantry Carriers, Dragon Infantry Carriers, 120 millimeter Mortar Carrier, Anti-Tank Guided Missile, Fire Support Variants, and more.

TFC directly supports NATO's mission by strengthening the interoperability between allied partners. Russia's attack on Ukraine triggered the biggest security threat in the region in decades. TFC and the Bulgarian forces from the 42nd Tank Brigade executed the successful formation and integration of a multinational joint battle group. The battle group's main objective is to ensure the deterrence of Russian aggression toward Bulgaria or any other country of the Eastern Europe alliance.

As a LEAP scholar, I provided language support to the Task Force Commanding Officers, "the Cougar," during multiple government, NATO, and Distinguished Visitor engagements. I had the honor to welcome the US Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III, during his visit to Bulgaria. As part of the support team for TFC, I translated commander's mission briefs, training schedules, and provided direct translations during weekly command updates. My role was to ensure effective communication between squad commanders, squad leaders, and their Bulgarian counterparts during training exercises with the Bulgarian Army. I helped our troops' cultural and language skills by encouraging them to engage in conversations, exchange professional knowledge and skills, and helped them build positive intercultural relationships.

Being a part of this LEAP event allowed me to gain invaluable language and cultural experience through direct skillset application, all while supporting US forces and mission partners during a pivotal time in history. I know the magnitude of the Russian attack on Ukraine is still unfolding, but I am forever grateful to have been able to support the defense of Ukraine and our allies, from Bulgaria, my country of birth. 



Battle group commanders from the Task Force "Cougar" and the 42nd Tank Brigade welcome the US Secretary of Defense, Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III, with a formal display of capabilities and mission brief at NSTA

About the Author

SSgt Kalinka Caisido is Budget Analyst for the 36th Comptroller Squadron at Andersen AFB, Guam.

Taking a Break from the Family Business

by TSgt Deaven Randolph, ACC



Air Force Financial Management is the family business in the Randolph household.

Discussion around the Thanksgiving dinner table often includes talk of funding floors, financial systems, and changes to the Financial Management (FM) career field over the last 30 years.

However, my career path has been anything but traditional. I joined the military in 2006, but my total federal service only reflects 10 full years. Up until a couple of years ago, I had never been to Lackland, Air Force Base (AFB), Texas. I did not get a proper paycheck for my first 11 months in service. And, I have never received official Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery scores.

I am TSgt Deaven Randolph. Today I am going to share a story about my non-traditional career path. I hope you will come away inspired by the possibilities the Air Force affords us.

My dad, retired SMSgt Barton Randolph, joined the Air Force a few years after I was born, just in time to be sent to the Middle East for Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. He was a radio operator during the Gulf War but transitioned to the FM career field shortly thereafter. As a result, I grew up hearing about the daily travails and triumphs of the FM profession. When I was very young, I remember asking him if he “bought fighter planes” because “that would be pretty cool.” Inspired by his service, I decided in middle school that I wanted to go to the United States Air Force Academy. But I wanted to fly planes, not manage budgets.

Somehow, I succeeded and was admitted into the Class of 2010. However, after finding out that I would never fly, I left three years into the program to take care of a family instead. The Air Force did not like that. They had invested too much time and money in me, and I had already passed my commitment date. They gave me a choice: pay back the money or serve two years as an enlisted member. I chose to enlist and here I am two reenlistments later.

During this time, my dad was a master sergeant at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and, knowing what I needed to hear, he tricked me into becoming a 6F by simply saying that the work would “suit me.” Today I am glad he did. After showing up for technical school without any uniforms or clue what I had signed up for, I went to Pope Field, North Carolina, for my first assignment, followed by Yokota Air Base, Japan, and Cannon AFB, New Mexico. During that time, my dad made senior master sergeant, moved to Vandenberg AFB, California, retired, and became a civil servant working on the same base. I called upon him regularly with difficult questions and was always pleased on rare occasions when I could answer one for him.

I worked with incredible leadership and subordinates at Cannon AFB, but unfortunately—and for several reasons—I found myself getting burnt out. The primary reason was that I wanted to finish my bachelor’s degree, but there was no end in sight. Every time I moved, I had to change schools and start a new program. I was demoralized: going to school at night, working long hours during the day, and trying to take care of my family in-between. I needed stability, and time to take a full course-load.



TSgt Deaven Randolph, SMSgt(r) Barton Randolph, and 2d Lt Noah Randolph just after 2d Lt Randolph's ROTC graduation in June 2022 (Photo Credit: Ms. Tonisha Randolph)




After a few years searching for a solution, I heard about the **Career Intermission Program**. It was a new Air Force initiative that allowed Airmen up to three sabbatical years to pursue personal goals. They even move you to the location of your choice and let you keep some military benefits while out in exchange for a service commitment upon return. I was selected for the program and happily moved out to California to be near my family.

Those three years were a major blessing. I finished my degree and worked as a general schedule resource advisor in the same office as my dad. Upon returning to active duty, I came to Shaw AFB, South Carolina, while my dad moved back to Germany. Meanwhile, my brother, 2d Lt Noah Randolph, just graduated from Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) this summer. Dad also convinced him to join FM, so our clan is slowly taking over the career field! Keep an eye out for him at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, this fall.

By the end of the three years I was refreshed, had gleaned a massive amount of FM knowledge from my dad, and felt accomplished having completed my bachelor's degree. I know there are many others across the profession that may feel as burnt out as I did, so that's why I wanted to share the opportunity the Air Force afforded me. Plus, they just reduced the service commitment for the program, so now is an excellent time to apply if interested.

The sheer number of programs available for military members and civilians to personalize their service is staggering. The Air Force provides options letting you work at civilian companies, go to school full-time, change career field, commission, transfer to the guard/reserves, compete on a professional sports team, attend culinary school, transfer to another service entirely, or simply take a break from active duty. Visit the **myPers** website for more information on these programs.

My time in the Air Force has taught me that there is no 'cookie-cutter' career—mine sure isn't!
As leaders we should have knowledge of both the programs available and the goals of our people so that we can help get them to where they need to be. 

About the Author

TSgt Deaven Randolph is a Financial Analyst for 9th Air Force, US Air Forces Central at Shaw AFB, SC.

DFM&CS... Ready and Relevant!

The **Defense Financial Management and Comptroller School (DFM&CS)**, located at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, delivers timely and relevant advanced and intermediate-level education to the Department of Defense and Department of the Air Force financial management communities. Below is the Fiscal Year 2023 schedule for the Defense Financial Management Course (DFMC), the and the Air and Space Force Professional Financial Management Course (PFMC).

DFM&CS UPCOMING CLASS SCHEDULE

DFMC 23A	31 Oct - 18 Nov 2022	PFMC 23A	29 Nov - 16 Dec 2022
DFMC 23B	09 Jan - 27 Jan 2023	PFMC 23B	06 Feb - 24 Feb 2023
DFMC 23C	24 Apr - 11 May 2023	PFMC 23C	28 Mar - 14 Apr 2023
DFMC 23D	08 Aug - 25 Aug 2023	PFMC 23D	05 Jun - 23 Jun 2023
		PFMC 23E	18 Jul - 04 Aug 2023
		PFMC 23F	12 Sep - 29 Sep 2023
		PFMC 23V1*	TBD



* Virtual

Officer Development Team Outbrief



by Capt Anthony Muscarella and Maj Emily DeAnda, AFPC/DP2LA

During 10-11 May, the 2022 Financial Management (FM) spring/summer Development Team (DT) convened to discuss the deliberate development of our FM officer corps. Over two long days, attendees candidly discussed each individual slated to receive vectoring or consideration for various career opportunities. The discussion at this DT focused on a variety of topics, including Intermediate Development Education/Senior Development Education school and fellowship vectoring, building a squadron command candidate list with projected bids, identifying key position fills, developmental vectoring for outplacements with feedback memos for the 2004- and 2016-year groups, and other strategic level discussions necessary to appropriately vector the force.

Generally meeting twice a year, the FM DT serves as a deliberative body made up of a diverse slate of senior military and civilian leaders from across the Department of the Air Force FM team. The DT is co-chaired by the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget (SAF/FMB). Membership on the




Group photo from the spring/summer FM Development Team

DT includes Major Command (MAJCOM) and Field Command (FLDCOM) Comptrollers, Air Staff Senior Executive Service Leaders/General Officers, National Guard and Reserve Command Comptrollers, and a joint FM representative (currently the TRANSCOM J8). Additionally, the officer DT is advised by a slate of other senior officers, the Executive for Enlisted Matters to Assistant Secretary Air Force for Financial Management, enlisted MAJCOM and FLDCOM FM Chief Enlisted Managers, and the Officer Assignments Team.

Although the DT is made up of many senior FM leaders, an incredible amount of time and effort is placed on each record and story of the individual, both prior to arrival to the DT and at the event itself. FM senior leaders truly care and want to make sure they are developing the total force in a way that will secure our relevancy, both now and in the future. Time is spent reviewing and discussing each record, focusing on the best interests of the career field, the member, and the member's family. If you are slated to be discussed at a DT, it is vital that you make your interests known to your DT representative, as they will be your voice and advocate to the other members.

However, as stated by Gen George Patton more than 70 years ago, "You are always on parade." A substantial portion of DT discussion involves candid talk about experiences members have had with the officer. With this in mind, here are five vital things to consider in your daily life to best represent yourself, both to the DT and in general: **1) Focus on performance in the job you are currently in; 2) Challenge yourself and stretch your capabilities to learn and lead; 3) Strive to make a positive impact on others; 4) Remember and put into practice your core values; and 5) Always take care of people.**

Finally, this DT was the last one for Maj Gen James Peccia. He will be greatly missed but his legacy will live on as he is replaced by Maj Gen Michael Greiner as the new DT co-chair from SAF/FMB alongside Mr. Stephen Herrera. 

About the Authors

Capt Anthony Muscarella and Maj Emily de Anda are the Comptroller Officer Assignments Team at Air Forces Personnel Center located at Randolph AFB, Texas.



DEAMS Development Updates

by Mr. Todd M. Baker, DEAMS FMO

TREASURY DIRECT DISBURSING IS PAYING OFF!

The Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System (DEAMS) Development Team installed the first phase of its Treasury Direct Disbursing (TDD) initiative, Vendor Pay, in DEAMS in August 2021, with the first payment to US Bank successfully processed soon after. The payment was disbursed directly through Treasury systems, bypassing the Central Disbursing System (CDS) and reconciling daily, directly with Treasury. At the end of May 2022, almost \$920M in Government Purchase Card (GPC) payments have been successfully disbursed via TDD.



The latest phase of the vendor rollout, installed on 19 June 2022, enabled household freight payments via PowerTrack/Syncada system applications.

These types of payments have a similar billing cycle to the GPC process with a single vendor Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) format, but unlike GPC, PowerTrack requires individual signatures for certification. Building on the GPC similarities, this latest phase of the process was developed to add the Digital Signature capability for these payments. Since implementation, PowerTrack payment batches are also bypassing CDS and flowing direct to the US Treasury. We predict approximately \$74M in PowerTrack payments to be disbursed via TDD through the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. This is a major milestone towards reaching full Domestic Vendor Pay capability (Estimated Completion Date: FY 2023 1st Quarter).

CIVILIAN PAY ACCOUNTING REDESIGN

Improving processing time for civilian payroll accounting has been a priority for the DEAMS Functional Management Office (FMO) as volume and system load continued to increase leading to bottlenecks and delayed reporting times. The major bottlenecks have now been bypassed with the implementation of a new process on 19 June. We are already seeing a significant improvement in processing times, which not only opens the door for more timely obligation reporting, but also provides DEAMS with an increased capacity for additional civilian payroll accounting.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

DEAMS developers remain hard at work to ensure the integrity of our financial data remains intact. Over the weekend of 25-26 June, several large server patches were installed to reduce vulnerability risks and provide for continued operational effectiveness and cyber survivability. While these installs are not as noticeable to DEAMS users as the TDD upgrades and Civ Pay redesign, they are no less significant.

MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENTS

August is your last chance to take advantage of both Basic and Experienced Users Miscellaneous Payments Training before the end of the FY. Visit the [FM Systems Training Page](#) for class details.

For more information on this article, please contact the DEAMS Strategic Communications Team at SAF.DEAMS.StratComms@us.af.mil.



AFAOC Hot Topics

by Ms. Jeannette "Jenny" Beer, AFAOC

Looking for ways to beat the heat as we charge into the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022? The Air Force Accounting Operations Center (AFAOC) has a vast catalog of videos and guidance to help everyone stay cool, calm, and collected this Fiscal Year End (FYE). Listed below are some excerpts from the **June 2022 Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System (DEAMS) Top Ten** to help customers with some of our favorite hot topics: Overspent Conditions, Government Purchase Card (GPC) Purchase Orders, and Reimbursements!

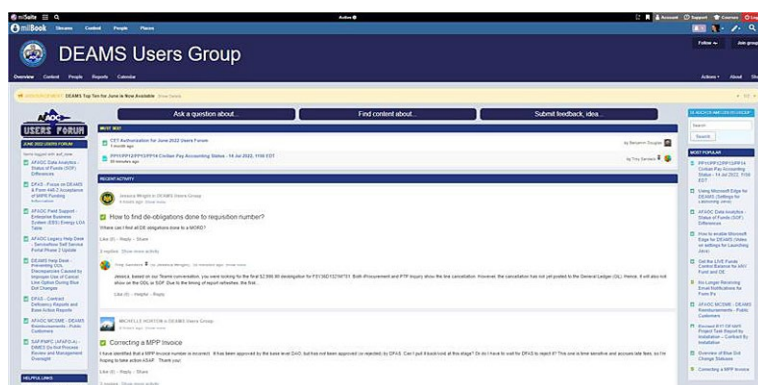


OVERSPENT FUNDS

Overspent Funds conditions result from executing more dollars than what was loaded to your targets. Since this condition can create several issues for your program, there is no better time than now to do research and make corrections. Get started by reviewing one of the several blog posts in the **DEAMS Users Group** on milBook to better understand overspent funds conditions. Just enter "overspent" in the search field, then begin conducting your research. DEAMS has several reports available from "R12 OVERSPENT_FUNDS" in DEAMS Discoverer Viewer, to the **"OVERSPENT and HISTORICAL OVERSPENT"** dashboard in the Financial Management (FM) MORNING PAPER-DEAMS Action Items on the AFAOC Analytics Power Business Intelligence (BI) app.

AVOID NEGATIVE COMMITMENT BALANCES ON YOUR OPEN DOCUMENTS LIST (ODL)

Did you know there are certain actions that may cause a negative commitment to appear on your ODL? One primary cause is not following defined processing steps when decreasing or cancelling current year and prior year GPCs. Check out the blog post titled **How to Decrease GPC Purchase Orders** in the DEAMS Users Group for steps and links to applicable job aids. Another cause can be from the General Ledger (GL) Date used when certifying documents in DEAMS iProcurement. Make sure the GL Date is a current date, and not a future date, when certifying documents.



Screenshot of the DEAMS User Group

REIMBURSEMENT BALANCING

Managing a reimbursement program can be challenging, but balancing it throughout the FY will alleviate some needless stress at FYE. Now is the time to ensure your Earned Reimbursements to Accrued Expenditures are in balance. This is where FCO/COL (Earned Reimbursements) are compared to R-Fund AEU/AEP (Accrued Expenditures) balances by Sales Code. Check out the **Reimbursement Balancing** section of the **AFAOC Analytics App in PowerBI** to see how your program looks and act now.

As always, AFAOC is here to provide you with up-to-date FM Systems support. Make sure to regularly access the **DEAMS Outreach Portal** and **DEAMS Users Group** for the latest guidance, tips, and training.



AFIPPS Update: Significant Achievement

by Mr. Eric Cuebas, SAF/FMF

The Air Force Integrated Personnel and Pay System (AFIPPS) program just completed another critical milestone, the Requirements Operability Testing (ROT) phase. While getting through this phase took much longer than initially expected, ensuring the system integrator fully validated the integrated system functions to meet specified requirements and approved designs was vital to moving the program forward and minimizing pay discrepancies in the end game. **Bottom Line: paying Airmen and Guardians accurately and timely is the top priority of program and we cannot sacrifice testing as we must get this right!** Though the program completed ROT, the system integrator will continue to work to automate Basic Allowance for Subsistence and new National Defense Authorization Act requirements which affect over 500K total force Airmen and Guardians' pay and leave.

Next up is Mock Data Conversion, Cycle 3. Mock conversions will bring over the most recent data sets from the legacy system (Defense Joint Military Pay System [DJMS]) and allow the system integrator, Program Management Office, and the Functional Management Office to complete costing tests, regression tests against the Military Personnel Data System Human Resources (MilPDS HR) baseline, and payroll reconciliation tests to adjudicate any variances between DJMS and AFIPPS. These testing activities will identify any areas of remaining concern which must be corrected prior to government testing and the AFIPPS go-live date.

Do your part by making sure your processes are working and your metrics are clean today. Remember, “garbage in, garbage out” and we cannot afford to have flawed data causing our warfighters to be paid incorrectly today or in the future. So, as we work hard to ensure the system code is correct, we need you to “green-up” your metrics and pay our warfighters correctly!

For additional information, visit the [AFIPPS Portal Page](#) on the Air Force Portal or the [AFIPPS Program Hub](#) for the latest communications and updates.


The Latest from the Resource Training Center (RTC)

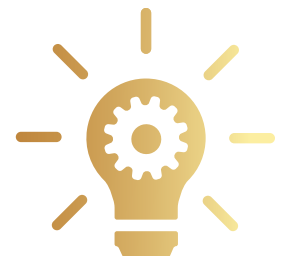
Miss the six-part Financial Management Excel Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) Course? The course, designed to teach VBA to an FMer with no programming experience, is available on the Financial Information Collaboration Space (FICS) Team—Innovation Channel. While you're there, check out the newest tools and bots:

FMF Critical Task List: This tool and process gives FMF Airmen an easy-to-use daily feed of information such as assignment mismatches, open payments, housing issues, and more.

Defense Travel System (DTS)/Forms and Account Management System (FAMS) Bot:

While Financial Managers will still need to validate proper appointments, this bot helps Lead Defense Travel Administrators manage DTS access and helps solve a long-standing audit deficiency.

Check out the latest and greatest training, tools, and updates from the RTC on [FICS](#) or join the [FICS MS Teams channel](#). Have a question? Drop it in their chat. 

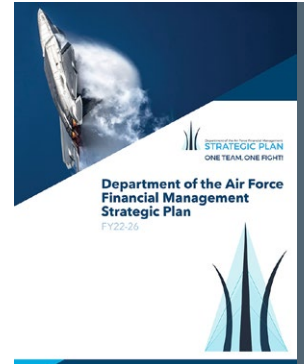


FM Incoming



Updated FM Strategic Plan

On 21 June 2022, we released the Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Department of the Air Force Financial Management (FM) Strategic Plan. Our new strategic plan defines FM's response to the new strategic environment. The plan is built on three goals that ensure we continue to accomplish the FM Mission as the threat evolves. **Read more here!**



The FMCFT milBook Page is Here!

Introducing the **Financial Management Career Field Team milBook** page!

The Financial Management Career Field Team (FMCFT) recently launched a new page milBook to serve as a central location to deliver information to the career field on tuition assistance, career broadening opportunities, mil-spouse support, job opportunities, and several other CFT-related topics. It also allows users to ask questions and exchange information with each other.



How do I get connected? Simply become a member of the **FMCFT milBook** page!

FOMO? We Got You!

SAF/FM Leadership Series #8: Fighting Bureaucracy

Miss the last installment of the SAF/FM Leadership Series? Click **here** to access a recording of "Fighting Bureaucracy" and find additional resources on the **FM Leadership Series SharePoint site**. For more information, contact **Ms. Abby Zofchak**.

Virtual A7 (VA7) - Enlisted Contingency Training

If you missed the recent 25 July VA7 Enlisted Contingency Training put 21 August on the calendar for the next one. This 1 hour, instructor-led course offered monthly provides AF enlisted 6F0X1 refresher training to personnel in the XFFA7 Budget Technician Unit Type Code (UTC). Check the **FM Silver Flag Training SharePoint** site for upcoming classes and registration information. For more information, contact your Senior Enlisted Leader or Unit Training Manager.

