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FROM BURDEN TO BREAKTHROUGH: How TRACE is Transforming GTCC Oversight

DAF FM Strategic Plan Connections
Goal 2 & 3 | Obj. 2.2 & 3.1

by SSgt Jozelle Browne, AFRC

It's the 23rd of the month—the start of a new Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) cycle. I'm a traditional reservist temporarily backfilling for deployed members from the 60th Comptroller Squadron. I've just been appointed as the Agency Program Coordinator (APC). I open the account activity report for the first time: thousands of names, dates, merchants, and dollar amounts fill the screen. My task? Review 10% of these transactions. How am I supposed to find a misuse needle in this spreadsheet haystack? Dread and futility hit fast—but so does something else. The range of experience I'd picked up on previous reserve tours kicks in. Because while I'm staring at a wall of data, there is more: a way through.

On my first financial management temporary duty assignment at the 89th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Andrews (JBA), I was introduced to the Air Force Accounting Operations Center (AFAOC) Analytics—the Air Force-wide Microsoft Power BI platform—and used it to track the status of funds. It was my first glimpse into how large-scale data tools could
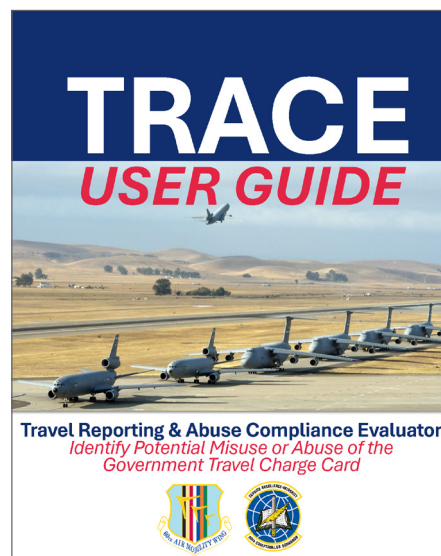
The TRACE User Guide provides step-by-step instructions and visual walkthroughs, making the tool accessible for both new and experienced APCs.

bring visibility and efficiency to financial operations. On my next tour at HQ USAFE A5/8, Ramstein Air Base, I took it further: building custom dashboards to support senior staff decision-making. That experience showed me dashboards aren't just for monitoring—they can be designed to solve problems. ➤

Photo, left: Built in Power BI, TRACE gives APCs like Airman Marquii Powell, 60 CPTS, actionable insights by surfacing high-risk transactions across key categories.
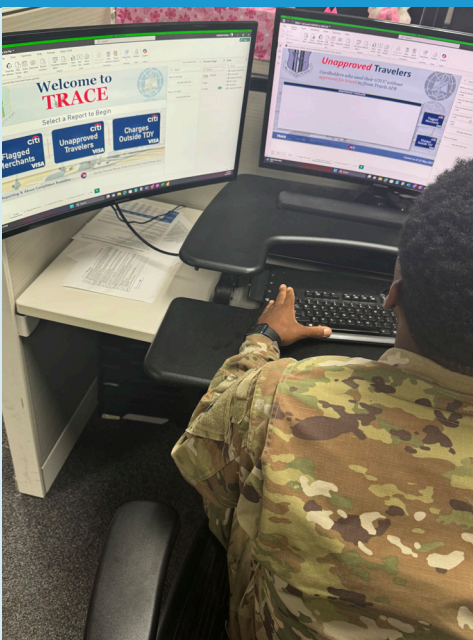
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So, when I arrived at the 60th Comptroller Squadron and saw the inefficient GTCC review process, those earlier exposures helped me to recognize the problem, understand the tools available, and how to connect them. With veteran insights from Master Sergeant Eric-Bailey Olivero, the Financial Operations Flight Chief, and technical support from Senior Airman Jacob Moore, I began developing the Travel Reporting & Abuse Compliance Evaluator (TRACE).

TRACE

Welcome to TRACE!

In accordance with the Department of Defense Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Regulations, Agency Program Coordinators (APCs) are required to regularly review cardholder transaction activity to identify travel card personal use, misuse, abuse, or fraud. This is accomplished by using the Account Activity Text Report, which displays all transaction activity for a specified billing cycle. APCs must review at least 10% of all transactions per cycle.

To optimize this process, the **T**ravel **R**eporting & **A**buse **C**ompliance **E**valuator (**TRACE**) was developed. TRACE enhances efficiency by cross-referencing the Account Activity Text Report with a DTS Approved Status report and a list of newly assigned members at Travis AFB from Military Personnel Flight (MPF). While TRACE **does not** independently determine misuse or abuse, it significantly reduces the data volume and flags activity that may warrant closer review through three targeted reports: **Flagged Merchants, Unapproved Travelers,** and **Charges Outside TDY**. This guide will help you understand how to use the reports to meet this requirement as the unit APC.

The TRACE guide introduces the tool's mission: to support fiscal accountability through smarter, data-driven GTCC oversight.

What is TRACE?

TRACE is a Power BI tool that streamlines GTCC oversight by surfacing high-risk activity through an integrated review model. I designed both the visual interface and user guide to make TRACE intuitive for APCs—whether they are new to Power BI or are seasoned users.

The tool pulls from four standard data sources:

1. Citibank Account Activity Report – Posted GTCC transactions by all cardholders including the merchant, merchant category code (MCC), amount, and date.

2. Defense Travel System Approved Status Report – Indicates members officially authorized for temporary duty (TDY) travel.

3. MilPDS Station Gain Report – Identifies newly gained members.

4. Custom MCC Risk Index – A scoring model I developed to assign risk levels to MCCs based on misuse potential.

Rather than leaving APCs to sift through raw data, TRACE distills it into three focused reports:

1. Flagged Merchants – Highlights transactions at medium/high-risk merchants. Helps pinpoint questionable spending quickly.

2. Unapproved Travelers – Flags cardholders with charges but no approved Permanent Change of Station (PCS) or TDY orders. Especially useful for identifying members who PCS'd but weren't properly attached to a gaining unit.

3. Charges Outside TDY – Identifies transactions made before or after official TDY dates. Catches local expenses like gas or groceries that wouldn't raise red flags.

Together, these reports make it easier to detect potential misuse with speed and precision.

The Impact at Travis AFB

TRACE enables APCs to review 100% of transactions more efficiently and accurately than manually sampling 10%. At Travis AFB, it significantly reduced workload and made fraud detection more actionable. In its first week, TRACE surfaced three high-risk cases that likely would have been missed through traditional methods—including one member with 30+ off-base purchases in surrounding cities, and another who spent over $300 at a high-end outdoor retailer. These instances, easy to overlook in a spreadsheet, were made immediately visible—transforming a box-checking task into a focused, intelligence-driven process.

Where Insight Meets Initiative

TRACE reflects something deeper: the value of perspectives outside the expected lane. As a member of the 911th Airlift Wing, my reserve tours exposed me to systems and challenges I wouldn't have encountered by simply meeting minimum requirements. Those experiences—spanning enterprise-level fund tracking to custom dashboard design—helped me recognize this problem and build a scalable solution.

Bringing that solution to life, however, required someone with the time and drive to build it. That's where SrA Moore came in—a tubist in the U.S. Air Force Band of the Golden West who had been contributing to process ➤

improvement projects while recovering from an injury. His Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) isn't in finance, but his eagerness to learn made all the difference. After I introduced the TRACE concept and designed the dashboard framework, he spent weekends teaching himself Excel, Macros, and Power BI to build the report logic to spec. His curiosity, commitment, and generosity were instrumental in turning my vision into reality.

Active Duty units benefit when Reservists are brought in—not just to fill vacancies, but to offer fresh eyes, new energy, and experience that challenges the status quo. This blend of non-traditional insight and cross-functional creativity proves that transformation often comes from the outside in.

Looking Ahead

TRACE has now been approved by the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center (AFIMSC) for Air Force-wide implementation. The long-term vision is a centralized tool that pulls GTCC data across the force with filter options tailored to each base, giving every unit access to the same intelligence-driven framework without having to build locally. Future enhancements may include automated alerts, commander dashboards, and expanded data points to sharpen risk targeting. But even now, TRACE improves oversight, strengthens audit readiness, and reinforces fiscal accountability.

It's a shift in how we manage compliance—driven by finance, strengthened by collaboration. TRACE turns policy into action and shows what's possible when we convert burdens into breakthroughs.

About the Author

SSgt Jozelle Browne is the 911 AW Finance Technician located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

HAPPY birthday AIR FORCE

CELEBRATING 78 YEARS ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2025!

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Torres. A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft assigned to the 97th Air Mobility Wing takes off at the Abbotsford International Airport, Abbotsford, Canada, Aug. 10, 2025.

AFOCCS AUTOMATES CERTIFICATION PROCESS

by Mr. C. Wesley Barnaby (SAF/FMC), Mr. Colin Williams (HQ AFMC/FMC), and Ms. Hailey Do (AFMC AFIMSC/FMC)

Congratulations! You just completed your first Comparative Analysis and are excited to present the results to your Wing leadership to inform a critical trade-off decision. Now what? You do a quick search in Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 65-501 and realize that your Comparative Analysis falls into the category requiring a certification. No problem, right? But then it strikes you… who do I send this to… and after I send it, will they sign and route it to someone else? How do I figure out the status? If this sounds all too familiar, keep reading for an update on how the Air Force Operational Cost Community Space (AFOCCS) has solved this problem, improved coordination transparency, and is automating certifications.

Since its May 2024 launch at the National Professional Development Institute, AFOCCS has built a robust set of collaborative tools to improve analytically-informed operational excellence across the workforce. AFOCCS hosts a monthly Community Sync providing an open forum for hot topic issues and relevant training to its 200+ (and growing) member group. Over 45 training courses, videos, and guides that are regularly updated are available on SharePoint.

Now, this September, AFOCCS is proud to launch a fully automated Comparative Analysis Certification tool. We developed and internally produced this application through a collaborative effort between the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cost and Economics (SAF/FMC), Air Force Materiel Command/FMC (AFMC/FMC), and the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center/FMC (AFIMSC/FMC) to provide a seamless interface that leverages Power Apps and Power Automate. Where vendors might charge substantial fees to build and maintain similar solutions with limited accessibility, we want to ensure this product remains accessible to the widest number of staff and is organically operated.

Figure 1: Main Screen and Resource List
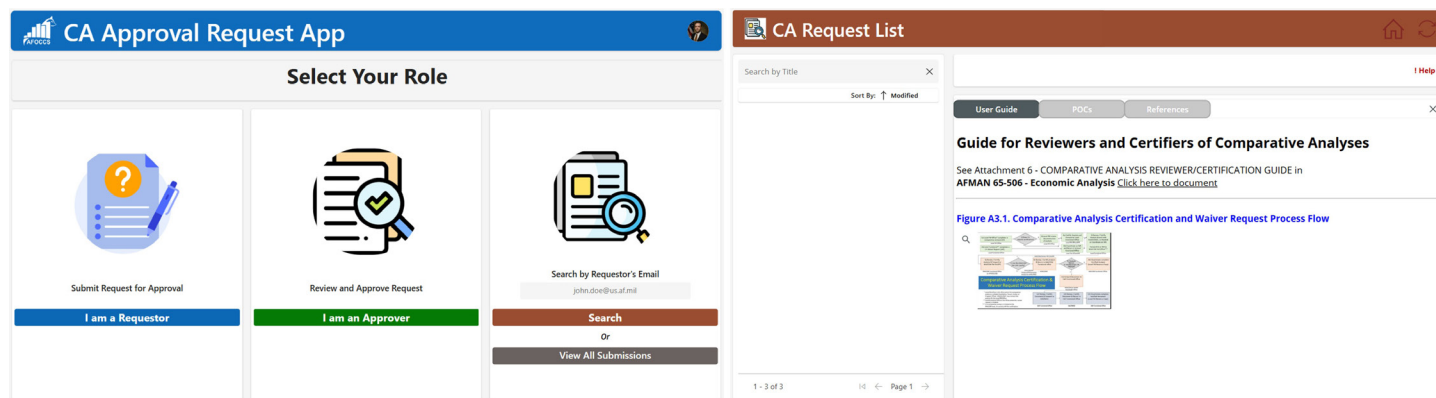
The application allows flexibility and transparency for both requestors and approvers. On the left side of Figure 1, you can see the welcome screen allowing users to select the most appropriate role for their situation. On the right is a view of resources embedded directly into the application to help navigate both review and certification requirements. Additionally, requestors and approvers can view all assigned projects and statuses in one place. No more guessing is needed to determine where your outstanding analysis is in the coordination cycle for certification. ➤

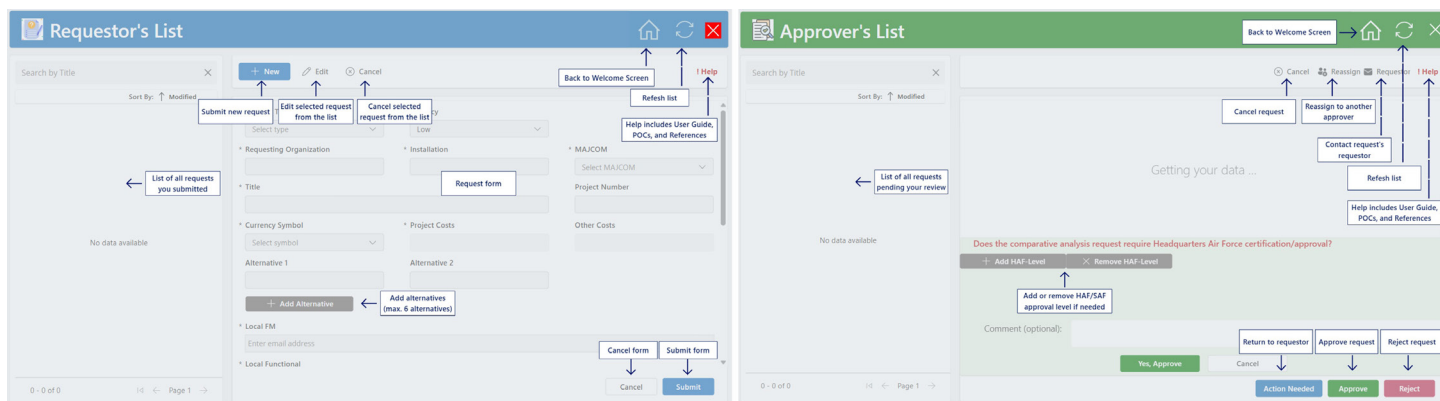## Figure 2: Requestor and Approver Screens

Figure 2 displays the respective requestor and approver screens. We included an information toggle to help users with the various buttons in the application. Once an analysis is submitted for approval, several automations are triggered. First, approvers are pinged via Workflow on Microsoft Teams, then they receive an email notifying them to review your freshly written Comparative Analysis. The application sends regular reminder notifications via Teams and email until coordination is complete.

Upon successful coordination and approval, a cloud automation flow generates a Certificate of Satisfactory Comparative Analysis and appends the signatures to your submission, resulting in a final document. If approvers have questions, they can use the application to provide feedback to the requestor. This significantly enhances the traceability of changes and updates throughout the review and approval process.

This application also supports FM's vision for the future by addressing the FM Strategic Plan initiative to "align Economic Analyses (EAs) earlier in the decision process with trusted data in a standardized format." Further, it delivers in response to AFMC/FM's FY25 Strategic Initiative focused on automation and continuous improvement. Finally, it meets the intent of our Secretary of Defense to build capabilities organically and maximize the use of limited resources in support of our National Defense.

On 4 September 2025, we hosted the first demo of the application. The meeting recording can be found on the AFOCCS SharePoint here.

About the Author

Mr. C. Wesley Barnaby is an Operations Research Analyst for SAF/FMC in the Economics Branch located at the Pentagon, Washington D.C., and Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

Mr. Colin Williams is a Lead Cost Analyst for HQ AFMC/FMC located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Ms. Hailey Do is an Operations Research Analyst for AFIMSC/FMC located at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE IN A FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FLIGHT

DAF FM Strategic Plan Connections
Goal 1

Capt Tyler K. Sullivan, AFDW

Leadership in a Financial Management Flight (FMF) isn't just about ensuring financial transactions, budgets balance, or reports are submitted on time; it's about guiding people through the day-to-day challenges of supporting the mission. In my time working within an FMF, I've found that the most essential part of leadership is creating an environment where every Airman, civilian, and contractor understands their value and sees how their work contributes to something bigger than themselves.

The success of an FMF team doesn't come from spreadsheets or systems; it comes from the people operating them. One of the lessons I've learned is that technical expertise matters, but it cannot replace trust, communication, accountability, and encouragement. A leader's role is to set clear standards while also being approachable enough that team members feel comfortable raising ideas or asking for help. An FMF team that feels supported will almost always outperform a team that feels overlooked or ignored.

The Financial Management (FM) community is unique because deadlines are constant and expectations are higher, whether it's the end-of-year closeout, an unannounced inspection, or a last-minute task. It can be tempting to focus solely on output, but effective leadership means ensuring that people are learning and growing while accomplishing the mission. Giving a junior enlisted Airman the chance to brief leadership on a funding status builds both technical depth and professional confidence. These small opportunities, over time, prepare Airmen for greater responsibilities down the road. These interactions cannot be ignored or neglected.

If there's one constant in FM, it's change. Continuing resolutions, funding realignments, or new mission requirements can (and in many cases will) alter priorities in an instant. When that happens, people naturally look to leadership for reassurance. Remaining calm, flexible, and solutions-focused sets the tone for the entire team. Even celebrating minor victories, such as closing out backlogs, can remind everyone that progress is happening, regardless of the turbulence, and their quality efforts matter.

Some of the best results I've seen came when team members were given freedom to improve a process or try something new. Whether it's designing a new tracker, refining a workflow, or taking charge of a high-priority task, encouraging Airmen, civilians, and contractors to take ownership creates energy and pride in the team. Often, those small initiatives lead to lasting improvements across the organization. Empowerment transforms a group of individuals into a cohesive team that seeks ways to deliver more efficiently and accurately.

At the end of the day, leadership in FM is about multiplying impact strategically. Our mission is to make sure every dollar is accounted for so commanders can focus on their mission. That mission is better served when our people are resilient, skilled, and motivated. By valuing their development, encouraging adaptability, and promoting ownership, we build teams that aren't just capable; they are an outstanding family.

Numbers may tell the story of what we accomplished, but leadership determines how our teams flourish here, and as they develop into leaders themselves.

About the Author

Capt Tyler Sullivan is the Director of Operations at the 11 CPTS located at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington D.C.

DEAMS Functional Management Office Update

by DEAMS Functional Manager

DEAMS Achieves Top Marks in SOC 1 Audit

On 12 August 2025, the Defense Enterprise Accounting & Management System (DEAMS) achieved a significant milestone, receiving a "clean" audit opinion, the best possible outcome, in a rigorous System and Organization Controls (SOC 1) audit conducted by an Independent Public Accountant (IPA).

A SOC 1 audit is like a comprehensive check-up for a financial system. It ensures the system's description of its controls is accurate and that the safeguards put in place are well-designed to protect financial data. Getting a "clean" opinion means the auditors found that DEAMS' financial description was correctly presented and that the controls in place are set up to provide reasonable assurance that the data is protected.

This is a major achievement for the DEAMS program, and it represents a first for any Air Force organization. DEAMS is the Department of the Air Force's core accounting system required to sustain the Department of Defense goal of an unmodified opinion by 31 December 2028 (as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2024).

This success is thanks to the dedication and hard work of our Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Working Groups. These teams tirelessly focused on improving the system, strengthening its defenses, and ensuring it met the high standards required for a successful audit. Their commitment to excellence has made this accomplishment possible. We now turn our attention to preparing for the more rigorous SOC 1 Type 2 audit in FY26 to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of internal controls.

Deployment Update

The DEAMS Deployment and Training Team has continued to collaborate with the United States Space Force Comptroller offices at Patrick and Vandenberg Space Force Bases, two program offices at the Space Systems Command, and four program offices at the Air Force Lifecycle Management Center, all working towards a 1 October 2025 go-live. Concurrently, the team is focusing on pre-deployment activities with five additional Space Systems Command and Space Operations Command program offices, scheduled for March 2026.

Legacy to DEAMS (L2D) conversions are ongoing at various locations and are projected to continue into FY31. This program involves a detailed review of all transactions remaining in General Accounting and Finance System (GAFS) to determine appropriate actions: de-obligation, migration to DEAMS, or retention in GAFS. In August, Air Force Global Strike Command's L2D efforts were declared complete, with a result of $25.5M deobligated in GAFS, and $2.1M transactions transferred to DEAMS. Also in August, $2.5M in grants were transferred to DEAMS at the United States Air Force Academy.

Training sessions for DEAMS users with G-Invoicing responsibilities were completed in August. More than 4K users took advantage of the three-hour sessions to prepare for Requesting Side go-live on 1 October 2025. Additional support for processing G-Invoicing transactions is being provided through a dedicated email address, SAF.FMFO.GINVSupport@us.af.mil. Users can also call into G-Invoicing Office Hours each Wednesday through the end of December, between 1400-1600 ET. This Teams call will be manned by Subject Matter Experts, ready to answer your questions. Dial-in information and the Teams link are provided on the G-Invoicing news page of the DEAMS Outreach Portal.

Development Team Update

The DEAMS Agile Development teams continuously address system fixes and updates, prioritizing tickets that impact Fiscal Year End closeout activities. These updates are implemented promptly to maximize efficiency gains. Over the past two months, the teams successfully delivered 27 system releases, incorporating over 109 stories and bug fixes. ➤

Many of these changes are behind-the-scenes system enhancements that improve performance or data integrity. Development updates included progress on Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition (OBIEE), Treasury Disbursing, Contract Writing Systems auto-posting metrics, G-Invoicing, and the Defense Departmental Reporting System (DDRS).

OBIEE: Release 23.1.7 installed six critical OBIEE enhancements necessary to validate the final 94 reports. These enhancements pave the way for the complete phase-out of Discoverer Viewer (DV) reports expected in Q1FY26.

G-Invoicing: Fifteen pilot organizations are in various stages of continuing support for 23 orders, consisting of 14 modifications at $71.3M and 39 performance transactions valued at $54.6M.

Treasury Direct Disbursing/Treasury Disbursing Office: In late July, DEAMS implemented system updates which enabled Treasury Direct Disbursing (TDD)/Treasury Disbursing Office (TDO) payments for Centrally Billed Accounts (CBA), Payment Authorization Manager (PAM) International ACH Transactions (IAT), and PRIME Pay Groups. For users who handle payments in these areas, you'll notice a change in the "Payment Method" and "Pay Group" fields within DEAMS. These expanded options build upon existing TDD/TDO capabilities already available for Government Purchase Cards, Household Freight, Commercial Airlift Payments, and Domestic Vendor Pay.

With the new functionality, the Pay Group field will now auto-populate based on the account type and the Payment Method field will show either "Electronic" or "Check" based on the supplier code. It is important for users to not alter the text in these fields unless processing a payment requiring manual pay groups (i.e., 1081, Local Manual). If the field is incorrectly changed, manual intervention by Defense Finance Accounting Service will be required to process the payment. Screenshots outlining these changes can be found on the Treasury Disbursing news page on the DEAMS Outreach Portal.

For detailed information on each of the releases, select the Release Notes tile on the DEAMS Outreach Portal home page.

Command Dashboards Go Live at USSF

by Ms. Jenny Beer, Director, SAF/FMFO Accounting Policy & Operations

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) has officially entered a new era of financial transparency and operational efficiency with the launch of the first Command Dashboard for the United States Space Force (USSF). This represents a significant milestone, a culmination of extensive collaboration between the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations (SAF/FMF) and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Business Systems and Technology/Chief Information Office (SAF/FMI), and promises to revolutionize how USSF manages and interprets financial data.

The Command Dashboard isn't just another reporting tool; it's a complete financial picture meticulously crafted for the unique needs of the Commands. It incorporates complete accounting transactions capability from both General Accounting and Finance System-Base Level Selective Transaction History and Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System (DEAMS) transactions for the entire user base, drawing on consistent data feeds from DEAMS, Enterprise Funds Distribution (EFD), and FASTR (the Air Force's Financial Management central repository). This comprehensive approach ensures a unified and reliable view of financial operations across the DAF.

Importantly, Command Dashboards are designed to work in conjunction with existing SAF/FMFO Analytics Apps, which continue to provide an enterprise-wide perspective. Think of the Command Dashboard as a powerful zoom lens that allows individual commands to delve deeper into the data relevant to their specific mission and priorities – while the enterprise-wide tools maintain the "big picture" view. ➤

## What Makes the Command Dashboard a Game Changer?

The Command Dashboard offers a multitude of benefits designed to empower decision-makers at all levels:

- **Standardized Data, Enterprise-Wide:** Say goodbye to data discrepancies. The dashboard provides consistent and reliable information across the entire enterprise, ensuring everyone is operating from the same factual foundation.

- **Organization-Centric View:** Commands can now focus on the data that matters most to their specific mission and objectives. This tailored approach includes definitions and metrics specifically designed beyond typical data dictionary limitations, ensuring relevant and actionable insights.

- **Unleash the Power of Transaction History:** Access a complete record of past activities and trends, providing a comprehensive understanding of your organization's financial performance over time. Identify patterns, anticipate challenges, and make data-informed decisions based on a solid historical foundation.

- **A Clearer Picture of Performance:** Get a straightforward, easily digestible view of your organization's performance, eliminating the complexities of traditional reporting.

- **Informed Decision-Making:** With readily available, accurate, and relevant data at your fingertips, you'll be equipped to make more informed decisions that drive efficiency and optimize resource allocation.

- **Reclaim Your Time:** The Command Dashboard automates many reporting tasks, freeing up valuable time for analysis, strategic planning, and other critical activities.

The Future is Bright (and Data-Driven!)

The launch of the first Command Dashboard is just the beginning. Our customers can look forward to the release of their specific Command Dashboards in the coming months, with more scheduled to roll out in October 2025. The Department of the Air Force is committed to providing its commands with the tools they need to succeed in an increasingly data-motivated environment.

For more information on the Command Dashboard and its capabilities, please contact SAF.FMFO.CommandDashboard@us.af.mil. Get ready to embrace the future of financial management and unlock the full potential of your data with the new Command Dashboards!
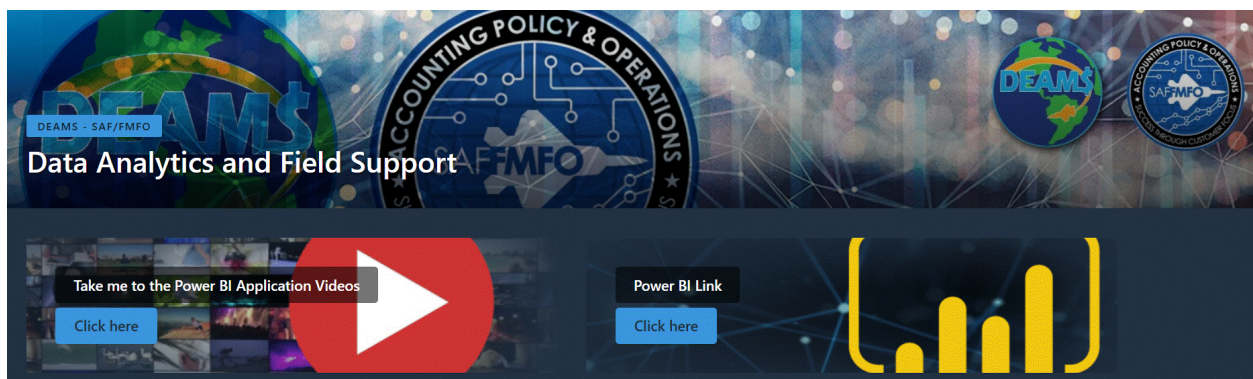
SAF/FMFO Data Analytics has an arsenal of financial execution reports to assist with monitoring and researching accounting balances.

SAF / FM

Our team has a lot to celebrate this season! From leadership updates (which can be found on myFMHub Leadership page and our social media pages) to our very own FMer, SrA Roman Bereguta, who was recently recognized as an Outstanding Airman of the Year - a distinction reserved for the DAF's top enlisted members!

As we conclude the Fiscal Year, remember that important updates have been made to the DoD Financial Management Certification Program (DFMCP) to make your path to certification simpler and more efficient including:

- **Streamlined Experience Requirements (Effective June 2025)**

  As of June 2025, the additional experience requirements – including Total FM years and 3-month developmental assignment – have been eliminated. Now, certification requires only 2 years of DoD FM experience at the applicable level. No extra steps or documentation, just relevant experience.

- **Simplified Leadership Competency Requirement (Effective August 2025)**

  Starting in August, the three separate leadership categories (Lead Self, Lead Teams/Projects, Lead People) have been consolidated into a single "Leadership" requirement. This gives you more flexibility; any leadership course, regardless of level, counts toward your certification at any level.

  Note: Previously entered leadership courses have already been populated to your scorecard. If you want to claim them for your current level, you still need to upload documentation and request achievement approval.

- **OUSD(C) Courses Transitioning to FM LMS – Act Now**

  The ability to complete OUSD(C) courses in myLearn is being phased out. These courses must now be taken in FM LMS, which requires an account. If you've already started a course in myLearn, complete it as soon as possible. Going forward, taking these courses in FM LMS will ensure your completion automatically populates your scorecard, reducing manual entry and common errors.

For additional details or questions, contact your local Component Administrator or visit DAF FM Certification SharePoint.

DoDFM CERTIFICATION
- ☐ Streamlined Experience Requirements
- ☐ Simplified Leadership Competency Requirement
- ☐ OUSD(C) Courses Transitioning to FM LMS – Act Now

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