

November 2015

1



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	2-3
LUNCHEON RECAPS	4-7
COMMUNITY SERVICE	8
UPCOMING EVENTS	9-11
NATIONAL NEWS	12
IN THE NEWS	13
TRAINING & EDUCATION	13-15
FEATURED CORPORATE SPONSOR	16
CORPORATE SPONSORS	17
2015-2016 WASHINGTON	18-19
CHAPTER EXEC BOARD	

American Society of Military Comptrollers

Washington Chapter Newsletter

TO PROMOTE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN ALL ASPECTS OF MILITARY
COMPTROLLERSHIP



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PO Box 16237 Arlington, VA 22215-1237

President's Message

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Military comptrollers all over the continent and indeed all over the world are fully engaged in the whole spectrum of our responsibilities, building the FY 2017 budget, answering leadership and congressional questions, preparing financial statements and management discussions and analyses, analyzing the impact of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, supporting operations during the period of the continuing resolution, determining the cost of operations and recommending efficiencies to sustain operations with limited resources, answering "what if" drills, and, not least, attaining and maintaining their personal professional accreditations. In case no one else has told you recently, military comptrollers like you are vital to accomplishing the Department's national security mission and are rightfully proud of the excellence with which you perform!



Your ASMC-Washington Chapter is working to assist you in meeting your professional goals. It's a pleasure to reflect, as President, on the success of the Chapter's Training and Education initiative that provided, at no cost to you the Chapter members, the opportunity to take classes that meet the requirements for your DoD Financial Management certification. If this is news to you, please get in touch with your Service vice-president to get more information about the next set of free courses, which are scheduled for February 2016. In addition, we are well on our way to making sure folks who attend our monthly luncheons receive a CPE credit each time.

Speaking of luncheons, we've had four outstanding "Improving Stewardship for a Stronger Defense" presentations so far this year, including reflections and perspectives from the Office of Management and Budget, insights on the Navy's challenges with achieving auditability, a lively discussion of hiking the Grand Canyon as an analog for comptrollership careers, and, most recently, the big picture perspective on how the future federal budget is affecting readiness, modernization, and taking care of the Department's most valuable resource, its people. I highly encourage you to mark your calendar for the January luncheon as the invited speaker, the Honorable David L. Norquist, has insights to share that range from his experience as the first Senate confirmed Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Homeland Security and as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Financial Management) to his observations from the commercial sector as a Partner at Kearney and Company. In fact, check out our Chapter website where the entire year's speaker schedule is now posted and plan to join us at every luncheon!

President's Message- continued

More immediately, let's have a party! We're looking forward to seeing you at our biggest social event of the year, the annual Holiday Party at the Army-Navy Country Club, December 15 from 5:30 until 8:30 p.m. Details for this event are also on the web. Come, bring a friend, enjoy the company of scores of your comptroller friends and colleagues with good food and cheer and maybe win a raffle prize into the bargain! And please bring a toy to support the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys for Tots drive and canned food for the Food Pantry.

On that note, Happy Holidays to all and we look forward to seeing you and working on your behalf in the New Year!

Upcoming Luncheon Schedule

Date	Guest speaker
January 6, 2016	The Honorable David Norquist, former CFO of DHS/DUSD – FM; Partner, Kearney & Company
February 18, 2016	Mr. Mark A. Rose, SES, U.S. Coast Guard Comptroller
April 21, 2016	Mr. Terry Halvorsen, Department of Defense Chief Information Officer
May 19, 2016	Mr. Joe Marshall, Defense Health Agency
June 16, 2016	N/A Scholarships

Luncheon Recaps

4

July 2015

Annual Golf Tournament

The Washington Chapter of ASMC & the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Washington Chapter hosted a fun filled golf tournament at the Ft. Belvoir Golf Club on July 22, 2015!

Host: ASMC Washington Chapter Corporate Members



August 2015

Speaker: Josh Glazer –

Office of Management and Budget

Topic: “Resourcing in an Age of Uncertainty”

Host: ASMC Washington Chapter United States MARINE CORPS



September 2015

Speaker: Karen Fenstermacher

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Operations)

Topic: Financial Management and Stewardship

Host: Washington Chapter Navy Members



Luncheon Recap

5

ASMC Washington Chapter September 2015 Luncheon – Remarks by Karen Fenstermacher, DASN(FO)

The Washington Chapter was pleased to have Karen Fenstermacher, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Operations) as our guest speaker at the September luncheon. As the DASN (FO), Ms. Fenstermacher is the point person for Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness across the Department of the Navy enterprise. Ms. Fenstermacher addressed the topic of Financial Management and Stewardship, the Washington Chapter's theme for this year.

One of my roles – certainly my primary role – as DASN (Financial Ops) is to continue to make progress toward full financial statement auditability and eventually bring home a favorable audit opinion. I know a lot of you are helping the Navy-Marine Corps team out in that endeavor – I see some nods out there.

So, the auditability effort has got us all scrambling – we've never faced these particular challenges collectively as a Department. I like to pause once and a while from the helter-skelter pace and reflect on why we're doing what we're doing.

It's easy to say – we're doing it because Congress told us to do it, and indeed...they continue giving us direction each year in the authorization bills. They have frequent hearings that Dr. Rabern or I get to attend... to report to our elected reps on our audit progress. Sometimes we get a concerned lecture along with their pledge of support and help...

So, I tell myself, there has to be higher calling in this auditability stuff than merely "compliance." Sometimes, that's the only justification you'll get when you're a program manager. But luckily for my self-esteem, there's more to the auditability deal. So in addition to Congressional compliance – there's a second, equally as powerful, motivation.

And that's promoting a greater degree of stewardship in the way we do business as a Navy-Marine Corps team – which is also a nice fit with the theme of your gathering today.

So, how does getting ready for audit and then going thru yearly financial statement audits promote stewardship and better business practices? Those of you who are working audit-related issues now may have a pretty good understanding.

At the macro level, on the day that the department receives a favorable opinion on its financial statements, we'll be able to say we've achieved what public corporations and most other federal agencies have already accomplished – getting a gold star from independent auditors that our statements conform to accepted accounting standards and are fairly stated.

The auditors will issue that favorable opinion after thoroughly assessing our business processes and systems to see if their internal controls are strong and effective. That "clean" opinion means we're "in the club" and that we meet conventional standards.

But a colleague – or maybe your significant other – might not be quite as impressed... and challenge you with "a clean opinion – so what?"

At that point you could pay your bar bill and leave – or you could offer your companion a glimpse behind the audit curtain – a better perspective on what that clean opinion entails. And maybe you can give them a better understanding of other aspects – in addition to compliance – which are part of the audit value proposition...that stewardship factor, if you will.

The first aspect that I'll talk a little about is – reducing the risk of misusing funds – either inadvertently or overtly as fraud. Getting ready for a financial statement audit means taking a look at the internal controls you have in place governing your

business processes and business systems – as you conduct your business ops – spending government funds for goods and services to support the warfighters.

Luncheon Recap Continued

Audit standards require controls which reduce this risk of funds misuse – controls which increase accountability in our business activity. Some examples – civilian pay: does a supervisor approve employee time before it's paid? In the contract payment process: does a 3-way match of contract, invoice, and receipt occur prior to any payment? Does this receipt and acceptance process also apply to reimbursable orders? Does a designated "approver" authorize your travel...and approve subsequent payments for travel?

These examples – of internal controls which conform to audit standards – are safeguards – which reduce the risk that funds are misused.

Similarly – on the IT business systems side – financial audit standards call for strong internal controls which prevent improper access to or use of business and financial information.

Here, the emphasis is on access controls – do your controls minimize the risk of unauthorized access to a business system? Are user access rolls properly policed to ensure they include only current employees? Are these controls adequately documented – meaning that you can prove to an auditor that these access controls are functioning properly?

Staying with IT system controls...there are also controls which call for separating the roles system users can assume when they operate in the system. Ideally, users should not be able to perform multiple roles in a system which would increase the risk of impropriety. To use a simple example, in DTS, subordinates should not be assigned as approving officials for their supervisor's travel, as has sometimes occurred. Not compliant...not good! So that's the concept of segregation of duties...which we should all embrace as stewards of the public trust...and of the public's funds.

In addition to minimizing the risk that funds could be misused – there another dimension to funds use that I'd also like to point out. And that's inefficient use, or under-utilization of funds, because of weak internal controls. The best example of this is – having an obligation on the books for a requirement that's no longer valid.

If that obligation lingers and the funds expire, well, you've just left money on the table. Those expiring funds could very well have been re-purposed for another requirement... and were the stale obligation detected in time, you could have extended your command's buying power. The best weapon to reduce this risk is a rigorous triannual review of obligations. (Not sure we've gotten max results from every triannual review conducted out there...)

I'd like to cite two instances where better management of obligations has yielded better buying power...by tightening controls and scrutiny.

RESFOR has found that better management of requisitions they have outstanding...monitoring supply status better and validating the requirements on order...has yielded millions in savings over a several year period.

BUMED has changed its contract close-out procedures. They're now focusing on aggressively closing out recently-let contracts...and recouping outstanding obligations before those funds expire...and then re-purposing the funds. The first year they waged this campaign, they saved \$35 million...or rather, stretched their budget an extra \$35 million.

Efficiencies in managing obligations – and increasing buying power – are available to every command! And that's the essence of public stewardship, isn't it? Stretching the taxpayer's dollar...

So, thanks for inviting me today...and allowing me to share with you some aspects of the Department's journey toward financial statement auditability. And, now, when your bar conversation turns to auditability...which I'm sure it will...you'll be able to explain to your drinking buddy...the value proposition for these audit efforts!

Community Service

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

10:15 AM – 1:15 PM

SOME Dining Room

71 O Street, NW

Washington D.C. 20001

Please join your fellow ASMC Washington Chapter members as we volunteer at SOME (So Others Might Eat). SOME is a community-based organization that exists to help the poor and homeless of our nation's capital. Volunteers are needed to help prepare meals and serve them to hungry guests at SOME's Dining Rooms for the homeless. With the help of volunteers, SOME provides a nourishing hot breakfast and lunch every day of the year. Please visit <http://www.SOME.org/> for more information about SOME.

The ASMC Washington Chapter is looking for 15 volunteers to assist with preparing and serving lunch on Tuesday, December 8th. Volunteers **need to arrive by 10:15am**. Upon your arrival at SOME you will be given a brief orientation and be issued a nametag and SOME apron. Staff will be available to help you throughout your volunteer shift.

This event is metro accessible via the New York Avenue (NoMa) station on the red line or the Mt. Vernon Square/7th Street/Convention Center station on the green line. There is also limited parking available in an adjacent lot for volunteers. More details on logistics will be provided to volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions please contact Marion Buchite at mbuchite@kpmg.com. Space is limited to the first 15 volunteers. Do not miss this chance to give back to the homeless!

Upcoming Events

ASMC Washington Chapter Annual Holiday Social

The ASMC 2015 Annual Holiday Social will be held on **Tuesday, December 15th** at the Army-Navy Country Club.

Location:
Army-Navy Country Club
1700 Army Navy Drive
Arlington, VA 22202

TICKETS: \$25.00

Time: 5:30 - 8:30pm

Food, Fun, Fellowship and Cash Bar
See you there...

Please bring your
toy and food donations
to the Holiday reception
on December 15, 2015.

Important Note: No refunds or cancellations will be processed after December 1, 2015. However, replacement of personnel (substitutions) will be allowed. Please contact Cynthia Curry, 703-697-4542, email cynthia.l.curry.civ@mail.mil or Hannah Francis, 703-693-1102, email hannah.l.francis.civ@mail.mil if you need to substitute your registration or if you have any questions.

Upcoming Events

ASMC Washington Chapter Awards Program

This year the Washington Chapter will sponsor an awards program that recognizes Chapter members who have made outstanding contributions during Fiscal Year 2015 (1 Oct 2015 - 30 Sep 2015). The 2015 award categories are as follows: Accounting and Finance; Acquisition/Cost Analysis; Auditing; Budgeting; Comptroller/Deputy Comptroller; Contractor Support; Intern/Trainee; Financial Systems; Resource Management; Small and Large Team. The tentative deadline for award submission will be around mid- January. Contest rules, applications form, instructions, and submission deadline will be provided at a future date. Washington Chapter Awards POC: Ms. Wendy Pouliot (wendy.pouliot.civ@mail.mil).

ASMC Chapter Essay Contest

The current topic for 2016 Essay Competition is “Identifying and adopting best practices can improve performance. Describe best practices from your career that may improve DOD financial management.” Essays must be original and must not exceed 1,500 words. Dual- or group-authored essays will not be accepted. No member will be permitted to be a repeat winner for more than 2 consecutive years.

Essays will be judged on adherence to topic (how well does the essay meet the contest topic), clarity and readability (how well does the essay flow and is it understandable), content (is the essay original and does it contain substantial content) and general administration (length, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation). Winners will receive email notification by 1 May and results will be posted on the National ASMC website.

National winners of the Essay Award may have their essays published in the Armed Forces Comptroller magazine and/or the ASMC website. Up to three winners will be selected each year from qualified essays. The first place winner receives \$750; second place receives \$500; and third place receives \$250. In addition, all winners receive a plaque, which is presented at the ASMC Professional Development Institute (PDI). A completed W-9 will be required before disbursement of the award check(s) to the winners.

This year's submission deadline is February 26, 2016. Please submit completed essay to Washington Chapter Essay POC - Ms. Wendy Pouliot (wendy.pouliot.civ@mail.mil).

Upcoming Events

Important Update: 2016 ASMC Washington Chapter NCR PDI

On 1 December, our website for the 2016 ASMC Washington Chapter ASMC National Capital Region (NCR) PDI will open for registration and payment. NCR PDI is a partnership across key ASMC Washington metropolitan area chapters to optimize our DOD enterprise education and learning, dialogue, networking, as well as enhance our fund-raising for charities. Last year our event sold out, with over 1,500 government and industry professionals attending this worthwhile training to interact, share insights, and help advance critical business outcomes needed for our warfighters.

Our 2016 ASMC NCR PDI theme is: **Simplify FM for Mission & Audit**

PLEASE join us on **Thursday 10 March 2016** at the Ronald Reagan Center in Washington D.C. for a terrific day of learning, dialogue, collaboration, networking, and certification (7 CPEs). There is no cost for our government ASMC members to ensure attendance. Invited keynote speakers this year include the Honorable Michael McCord, Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and CFO, and the Honorable Peter Levine, Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO).

We ask each registrant's cooperation with our campaign of "**If Sign Up, Show Up!**" Please view your registration as a valuable commitment and personal obligation that you will keep, or responsibly relinquish for a fellow colleague to utilize. Please notify our Registration Chair Wayne Whiten if you find you are unable to attend and we will work to fill your spot!

wayne.whiten@calibresys.com or call 703 -797-8831 or 703-509-1544.

Also, please remember to be generous and contribute to our designated charities:

- **Capital Food Bank – bring canned meats/non-perishables** for needy neighbors
- **Pets for Vets**

Thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and your support of our premier training event!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns:

Debra Del Mar

2016 Chair, ASMC National Capital Region PDI

debra.delmar@vanguard-LLC.com

M: 703-593-6667

For more information on these **events** and **luncheons** please visit: [More information](#)

National News

From the National ASMC

OMB Mid-Session Review projects improvement in new-term budget deficit

Thursday, November 5th, 2015

Today the House passed by a wide margin (370-58) a revised FY2016 National Defense Authorization bill that meets the parameters set out in the [budget agreement](#).

The revised bill aligns FY2016 defense funding with the agreement by [adjusting the total DoD amount](#) downward by \$5 billion.

The new bill provides almost \$607 billion including about \$580 billion for total DoD, \$18.6 billion for the Department of Energy (DoE) nuclear weapons program and \$7.6 billion to meet the statutory requirements for DoD Concurrent Receipt payments.

The new bill cuts added amounts in the [original bill](#) by almost \$1 billion, including \$250 million for Army readiness, \$192.5 million for Army National Guard readiness, and \$150 million for the DDG-51, and \$100 million for PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancement. The bill also increase cuts made in the original by over \$700 million including \$455 million more for planned DoD headquarters streamlining.

Additional reductions of \$855 million include \$262.5 million for Army civilian hiring targets, \$100 million to classified programs, \$90.1 million for unjustified growth in the Defense Information System Network, and \$50 million for reduced THAAD purchases. The bill also increases cuts to fuel purchases by \$1.1 million due to lower fuel prices.

The revised bill also reduces Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding by \$782 million, including a \$250 million cut to the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund, \$100 million to coalition support, and \$125million to the Syria train and equip program.

No other changes were made to the original bill. It still includes a 1.3 percent military pay raise, reforms to military compensation and retirement, and significant reforms to defense acquisition.

The House-passed bill still contains a provision that prevents the transfer of prisoners from Guantanamo. The White House had identified this provision as a reason for a veto threat of the earlier bill. In a [press conference White House Press Secretary John Earnest](#) did not rule out a possible veto of this bill because of the Guantanamo language, but did say that in any case the president was moving forward with a plan of action to close the prison.

For more news and updates, visit

<http://www.asmconline.org>

In The News

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 and its Implications

President Obama signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 into law on November 2, 2015. The legislation raises the federal debt limit and establishes the framework for a two-year budget deal.

Over the last 2 weeks, the Department's leadership and many analysts have been scrambling to assess the impacts of the legislation. There are many more steps involved in finalizing its impact and implementing the changes needed to achieve and executable budget but, to start, here are a few things you might want to know about what the act does and does not do.

The BBA15, as it is called, authorizes additional funds for national defense and non-defense equally. It adds \$25 billion to each in FY 2016 and \$15 billion each in FY 2017. Like the Murray-Ryan agreement before it, the BBA15 removes the threat of default to the sequestration levels of the federal budget for 2 years, thus providing the near-term topline predictability that the Department's senior leadership has requested. It also provides relief and establishes funding targets for the Department's Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) requirements in both years. There is an impact to the relationship between the Department's base funding and its OCO request that the Department is assessing at this time in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget.

It is equally important to recognize what the BBA15 does NOT do. The Act is not an appropriations bill so it does not provide any actual funding for either FY 2016 or FY 2017. Further, it does not prevent a government shutdown either in December 2015 or in the fall of 2016. As a 2-year agreement, it does not change the existing sequestration law for subsequent years and, in fact, sequestration will return in FY 2018 without subsequent legislation. Conversely, neither does it extend sequestration's spending cap limitations beyond FY 2021.

The BBA15 establishes the Department's FY 2016 funding at a level about \$5 billion below the President's Budget request. Senior leaders across the Department are now working out how to take the reduction, with an eye to both its immediate impacts and its implications for the FY 2017 (and outyears) budget request. Meantime, the congressional appropriations committees are working to make the final FY 2016 funding decisions.

Training and Education Corner

YOUR ASMC WASHINGTON CHAPTER NEEDS YOUR HELP

The ASMC Washington Chapter plans to provide training courses to assist our members meet the DoD FM Certification Program requirements. Here are the steps we must take:

- First, please complete information on your training gaps and needs by **Friday, February 5, 2016**. Go to http://assessment.managementconcepts.com/fm_connect/asmc and complete the assessment.
- Second, ASMC Washington Chapter Board members will analyze your data and determine your training needs.
- Third, working with Management Concepts your Training and Education Committee will identify 2.5 hour mini courses based on the assessment.

Our plan is to offer new “Free” courses to our members in 2016.

See Below!!

Training and Education

Attention Members!

Free Training for ASMC Washington Chapter members

Registration Open - Free Training for ASMC Washington Chapter members (Cost Benefit Analysis and Internal Control mini-courses). Registration closes on Friday, February 5, 2016...To register simply download the course application and return it via email to pilotcourses@managementconcepts.com. Upon receipt of your application you will be added to the roster. The tuition will be paid for by the Washington Chapter. The course will be taught at the Management Concepts Training Center in Washington, DC which is Metro accessible. Please contact Ms. Terry Placek, Training & Education Chair at terryplacek@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

February 18, 2016 - Cost Benefit Analysis – Mini Course (AM Session)

FM Certification# 5406-ASMC-1503

2.5 hours

DoD FM Certification Level 2

Time: 08:30 - 11:30 am

Location:

Washington D.C. Training Center
919 18th Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202.955.1008

February 18, 2016 - Internal Controls - Meeting Federal Accountability Class (PM Session)

FM Certification# 5412-ASMC-1503

2.5 hours

DoD FM Certification Level 2

Time: 12:30 - 3:30 pm

Location:

Washington D.C. Training Center
919 18th Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202.955.1008

The DC office is located directly across the street from the Farragut West Metro station on the Orange and Blue lines. When leaving Metro take the 18th Street exit. The Farragut North station, which is on the Red line, is only a short 3-block walk to our office.



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Washington Chapter

2015-2016 Executive Board

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Chair: Wayne Whiten and Jeff Norris

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Audit

Chair: vacant

Nominating

Chair: vacant

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