

March 2016

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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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<http://www.washington-asmc.org>

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President's Message

Gretchen V. Anderson

At last it's Spring! Well, meteorologically speaking, at least, it's that season we all anticipate after the cold harsh winds of winter. And with the spring flowers, up pop all the best activities of the ASMC Washington Chapter year.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you—about 1,400, at latest count!—at the Regional PDI on March 10. This year, we're honored to have two keynote speakers, the Honorable Mike McCord, Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), and the Honorable Peter Levine, Deputy Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense.

The PDI committee has created something new this year that I think you'll find intriguing: the first set of breakout sessions, right after the keynote morning awards ceremony, will offer you the opportunity to get some "Innovation Insights" from industry leaders on a range of topics such as "the Silver Lining of the Cloud" and "Rapid Alternatives for Shared Services." Breakout sessions will continue after lunch and we'll end the day with Service Updates sessions. One of those sessions in particular might catch your eye as, for the first time, we'll have a Department of Homeland Security Service Update session, presented by the DHS Chief Financial Officer, the Honorable Chip Fulghum.



In addition, please take a look at the upcoming events highlighted in this issue of the Washington Chapter newsletter, such as our scheduled April 21st luncheon with Mr. Terry Halvorsen, the DoD's Chief Information Officer, and opportunities for community service that are coming soon. And take a look at the happy faces from our February 25 Early Careerist Event at Sine. By the way, someone asked me what "early careerist" meant (maybe wondering why an old face like mine showed up in the picture). The answer is, "early careerist" is intentionally open to interpretation. It includes our newest employees of any age—and anyone else who's interested in the future of DoD financial management and the Washington Chapter. When you see an upcoming event, I hope YOU will make plans to join us, and bring a colleague!

Upcoming Luncheon Schedule

Date	Guest speaker
March 10, 2016	N/A PDI
April 21, 2016	Mr. Terry Halvorsen, Department of Defense Chief Information Officer
May 19, 2016	Mr. Joe Marshall, Defense Health Agency
June 16, 2016	New Officer Elections/Scholarship Awards Luncheon

ASMC Washington Chapter January 2016 Luncheon –

Remarks by the Honorable David Norquist

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was formed in 2003. It brought together 22 components, each with different cultures, missions, and business processes. In financial management, this meant different types of funds (i.e., appropriated funds, mandatory spending, fees, insurance, pensions, grants, and loans) as well as multiple legacy financial systems. In addition, DHS inherited 30 Significant Deficiencies and 18 Material Weaknesses. DHS implemented a series of initiatives to improve their financial practices, which reduced these conditions and, in 2013, led to DHS attaining an unmodified opinion on its financial statements. The following are 10 lessons from DHS's experience:

1. **Don't fight the audit:** The audit was a significant source of information for DHS's remediation process, and the detailed findings were helpful in designing effective Corrective Action Plans (CAP). The CAPs were published as "Track One" in DHS's Internal Control Playbook
2. **Look for the problems you don't know exist:** DHS knew there were more problems to be found, so "Track Two" of the Internal Control Playbook was developed as a plan to evaluate all controls not covered in "Track One," using the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) A-123 process in order to discover hidden issues
3. **Not everything is material:** Not every problem actually affects the audit opinion, so the DHS saved time by confirming a problem was Material before spending the time and energy on a CAP
4. **Take time to identify the root cause:** By taking extra time to distinguish between a symptom (e.g., bad data fields) and root cause (e.g., poor data entry process), DHS could focus on fixing the root cause to prevent the problem from reoccurring, rather than re-fixing the symptom each year
5. **Don't wait for the perfect plan:** The more effective CAP efforts started early and then alternated between fixing a problem and re-evaluating the next steps. A great deal was discovered along the way that couldn't have been anticipated by more planning
6. **Leadership commitment counts:** Until the component leadership was engaged, it was very difficult for any organization to make progress
7. **Have enough people with the right experience:** Audit readiness required staff with accounting and auditing experience and the ability to surge when required
8. **Expect more from your audit:** Rather than just receiving the audit, when necessary, DHS pushed the auditors for more detailed information on their findings to facilitate the development of CAPs. The auditors also produced tables and reports that were easy for DHS to use in tracking the progress of remediation efforts
9. **Find a way to measure progress:** Getting to a clean opinion is a long and slow process, so it is important to effectively measure progress in a way that is consistent and can easily be explained. DHS developed tables that the auditors populated and included as part of their report



10. **Promote constant, open communication:** Don't hide problems from your leadership or the auditor. Hiding problems is poison. The flip side is that the leadership must be open to bad news and, in fact, must actively encourage teams to highlight obstacles and setbacks to allow a prompt and effective response.

DHS achieved a clean opinion due to the hard work and dedication of a large number of talented employees. The lessons described above, while directly related to audit readiness, are also useful as best practices in implementing any change in a large and complex organization.

Community Service News

All ASMC Members as well as family and friends!

Where?

**Great Falls Park
11710 MacArthur Blvd.
Potomac, MD 20852**

**Join us for our C&O Canal Clean-up Community Service Event
at Great Falls National Park and network with peers and fellow
ASMC members!**

Picnic to follow the event.

Volunteers should dress in comfortable casual clothing.

Please RSVP to:

Lisa Buhler- lbuhler@kpmg.com

or

Kyle Brown- kdbrown@kpmg.com



**Early Careerist
Community Service**

Who?
+ All ASMC Members as well as
+ family and friends!

Where?
Great Falls Park +
11710 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac, MD 20852 +

Join us for our C&O Canal Clean-up
Community Service Event at Great Falls
National Park and network with peers and
fellow ASMC members!

April 23rd
9am to 12pm
Please arrive no later than 8:30am

» Picnic to follow the event «

Additional Details

► Volunteers should dress in comfortable casual clothing

Please RSVP to:
Lisa Buhler- lbuhler@kpmg.com
or
Kyle Brown- kdbrown@kpmg.com

Events Corner: Update!!

The Washington Chapter Early Careerist met on February 25 at Sine in Pentagon Row. During this installment, friendships were renewed, new friendships established, and the group took advantage of senior chapter leadership to continue expanding their network and understand where a career in defense financial management can take them.



Upcoming Events

Important Update: 2016 ASMC Washington Chapter NCR PDI

Simplify FM for Mission & Audit

**Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004**

Due to overwhelming demand, last year's 2015 ASMC National Capital Region PDI Sold Out! We ask each registrant's (individual(s) currently signed up) cooperation with our campaign of "If You Sign Up, Please 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 at wayne.whiten@calibresys.com, phone 703-509-1544, if you find you are unable to attend and we will work to fill your spot!

Thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and your support of our premier training and learning 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](#)

From the National ASMC

The National Professional Development Institute is the premier training event of the American Society of Military Comptrollers (ASMC). Defense financial managers in the public and private sectors will converge for the three-day event to enhance their resource management knowledge and skills, as well as share best practices toward meeting the complex challenges of today's fiscal environment.

The PDI 2016 program will include general and Service Day sessions, mini-courses, and workshops focused upon defense financial management competency areas. Speakers will discuss current issues in DoD and US Coast Guard financial management operations. Most importantly, the Mini-courses will provide participants the opportunity to obtain direct credit toward meeting certain DoD FM Certification requirements at Levels 2 and 3 of the program.

Beyond the 21 CPE credits available to attendees, the PDI provides a valuable forum for participants from Service HQs, major commands, and installation levels to collaborate with leadership, peers, vendors, and clients. This event also showcases individuals and teams who have been recognized by ASMC for their excellent contributions to the field of defense financial management.

Begin countdown... prepare to launch! Join us this June in Orlando and certify your future!

For Registration, please follow the link below:

<http://www.pdi2016.org/registration/>

For more news and updates, visit

<http://www.asmconline.org>

SHORT ARTICLE: Early Professional Careerist

As we ignite a spark of our early professional career, we need to map the path toward our professional goals. But do we really know what we want? If you are anything like me, then Plan A might at times be deviated from its path. During a constant evolving fiscal environment that creates gray areas in our professional plans, we are continuously color shading our path. Pathways tend to fade away as new opportunities arise and meet the preparation of our hard work and achievements. Is it safe to have one plan but safer to create multiple alternatives. The financial management field is so broad that the path you have set for yourself is only a small piece of a bigger spectrum.

Pathways/Goals! Find a niche and position yourself as an expert in a certain area that can help maximize opportunities early in your career, but avoid becoming content and seek new opportunities as they are presented. In the financial field positions, specialization should only be temporary so that the optimal level of performance can be reached. Always seek job rotations and new opportunities which encourage generalization that makes you more versatile. In your career you'll have a twine of decision and opportunities. Making the best decision for yourself is knowing when to pull the trigger. When an opportunity you never thought of presents itself, don't hesitate to deviate from your current norm if you truly believe that is what's best for you at the current time.

Involvement! As young professionals we should get more involved and create a support channel with your peers as you continued to grow in your career. Share your experiences and don't shy away from criticism while you are trying to figure it all out. When you get involved in your professional organization, you may feel grateful for the opportunity but others in your group will be even more grateful for your time, expertise and hard work. Participating in your organization's forums and events will not only keep you inform but will uncover new experiences that can only help you along the way. Leadership exposure in this realm is extremely rewarding.

Mentorship! Always seek out mentorship from someone who has a reputation for character and solid principles, someone you can admire and respect as well as emulate. The best mentors are the ones who gets to know you, your skills and strengths and weaknesses, your individual personality and your aspirations. A good mentor should not serve as a lecturer, but as a sounding board who will help you with your struggles and help you to clarify your principles and beliefs. We tend to think of a mentor or teacher as someone older with a lot of years in the field. Not necessarily! A mentor could be anyone who has something to teach you and could be the same age or even younger than you. A mentor could be someone of lower grade and social standing. A good mentor doesn't just encourage you, but will also tell you the blunt truth when you are moving in the wrong direction. It is also a good sign if your mentor is candid and open about his or her own life. Anyone who has accomplished great things has made mistakes along the way and will share those experiences freely so that you can learn from them.

Relationships! I can't emphasis enough on how important it is to build strong relationships in your career. As I mention before the financial field is very broad and somebody knows something you don't. Those relationships will allow you to reach out and become smarter by those who have experience in areas you are not familiar with. Broaden your perspective, have a three prong approach to building relationships: Other early professional careerists, more experienced professionals and an outsider looking in that can eradicate predisposition. Often building relationships is the groundwork that must be laid before any decision making impacting your career. The broader the paths, the more relationships you should seek to strengthen your foundation. This will help reinforce your decision making and your leadership skills.

Career Success! Success is a measure that only oneself can determine and yours is no less of importance than others as long as those are the goals you set for yourself. Seek other's advice but make it your decision; "the best decision". Sometimes your career will take you places you never imagined, but don't let that imagination drive your career or you'll lose sight of other important aspect in your life: family, friends, relationships, etc... Your job satisfaction should be the engine of your accomplishments and preparation, and they should be more than just checks in the blocks.

CDFM Corner

THE ASMC OFFERS THE CERTIFIED DEFENSE FINANCIAL MANAGER (CDFM) EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND CERTIFICATION DESIGNATION TO THOSE PERSONS DESIRING TO DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY IN THE CORE ASPECTS OF DEFENSE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [HTTP://WWW.ASMCONLINE.ORG/CERTIFICATION/CDFM-INFORMATION](http://www.asmonline.org/certification/cdfm-information)

Congratulations to the Washington Chapter's new CDFMs!

Marlo Obcemea
Hoa Pham
Sandy Weegmann
David Anderson
Pauline Achu-Bibum



Femi Esoimeme
John Ferry, CDFM-A
Heather Kuzio

U.S. Marine Corp CDFMs

Last Name	First Name	Last Name	First Name
BlairJohnson	Robin	Jones	Mark
Capuno	Lee	Joson	Mark
Chadwick	John	Lee	Jay
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Conner	Andreka	Morgan	Lisa
De Leon	Diseree	Oconnor	Cheryl
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Gilcreast	Michael	Sweeney	Patrick
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Chair: Wayne Whiten and Jeff Norris

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Chair: vacant

Nominating

Chair: vacant

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