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Inside

GovTravels Symposium Goes Virtual! 3

Excellence In Practice Award Winners Celebrated At GovTravels 2021 5

Learn What's New With The Integrated Lodging Program 9

Travel Managers In Action 11

Take A Peek At Our New Look 15

Know Before You Go: Travel During The Pandemic 16

The Defense Travel Management Office serves as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense; to establish strategic direction, set policy, and centrally manage commercial travel programs.

Director's Message

Bill Mansell | Director

Spring has arrived and I write my message today feeling many emotions—gratitude for things accomplished and optimism for a brighter future. Spring offers new beginnings and I'm excited for the things to come in our travel enterprise. We just wrapped up a successful GovTravels symposium—our first fully virtual stakeholder event. This year's theme was "Respond, Adapt, Innovate – The Changing World of Government Travel." We all responded to the impact of the global pandemic, we are adapting to this new environment, and innovating. Year after year, I have experienced the value GovTravels brings – the relationships we build and strengthen, the ideas that are exchanged and integrated. We gain a clearer view and better understanding of the travel landscape. We could have cancelled this year's event, but I felt it especially important to persevere this year as we battled the realities of COVID-19. Kudos and thanks go to my staff, the leadership of the National Defense Transportation Association, our industry partners, and all 600 of you who attended. Together we demonstrated our resiliency and exceeded my expectations for this virtual event.

The world of government travel is changing, and change seems to be the recurring theme in my messages to you. Change continues. As you know, DTMO is part of the greater Defense Human Resources Activity. Under the leadership of our Director, Mr. Bill Booth, we have been on a multi-year journey to optimize the DHRA enterprise. To maximize efficiency and effectiveness, Mr. Booth directed the establishment of the Defense Support Services Center (DSSC). This new center will integrate the family of services currently provided by DTMO, the Defense Language & National Security Education Office (DLNSEO), the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), and the Defense Personnel & Family Support Center (DPFSC). Effective April 5, I assumed the responsibilities of the DSSC Director. Mr. Phil Benjamin, is the next DTMO Director. The work of the Defense travel enterprise will continue unimpeded under Phil's leadership. The establishment of the new Defense Support Services Center and resulting changes will largely be transparent to you, our stakeholders, and I will continue to engage with you as travel management is part of my portfolio.

Leading DTMO has been my most rewarding professional experience.

Leading DTMO has been my most rewarding professional experience. I have learned and continued to grow as its Director. It is an amazing organization and was amazing before I got here and it will continue to be so. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue leading DTMO as a part of the larger Defense Services Support Center. Let me add one more to the list of emotions I'm feeling today—joy. Oh, joy, joy in my soul. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do in the service of our Nation.

GovTravels 2021

GovTravels Symposium Goes Virtual!

In February, the Defense Travel Management Office marked its fifth year as co-sponsor of the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA)'s GovTravels symposium. Due to the pandemic, this year's event was held virtually, which allowed both guest speakers and attendees alike to participate from all around the globe.

Each year, the GovTravels planning team selects a theme relevant to the times. It should come as no surprise that this year's theme was "Respond, Adapt, Innovate – The Changing World of Government Travel," which perfectly captures where travel is at this very movement. Relatively all sessions touched upon this theme with a focus on the response to the global pandemic and the long-term impact on commercial passenger travel industry.

"Year after year we experience firsthand the value that this event brings – the relationships we build and strengthen, ideas that are exchanged and integrated, and we walk away with a better understanding of what is happening across the travel landscape,"

– Bill Mansell, Director of the Defense Travel Management Office.

Mr. Robert Salesses, performing the duties of assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and global security - photo credit Department of Defense

Going into the virtual event, travel volume across the Department had increased slightly, but was still down over 40% of what it was the same time last year. Despite those statistics and the significant impact to the travel industry, the tone of the event was hopeful. Even as a new round of country travel restrictions were being implemented around the globe, vaccination efforts were beginning in earnest, which is a sign that the pandemic may soon come to an end. This sentiment was echoed in almost every session hosted by government and industry alike.

(Clockwise) Bill Mansell, SES, Director, Defense Travel Management Office; Phillip Benjamin, Deputy Director, Defense Travel Management Office; Tim Burke, SES, Executive Director, Office of Travel, Employee Relocation and Transportation, Federal Acquisition Service, General Services Administration and the Government-Wide Category Manager for Travel; VADM William A. Brown, USN (Ret.), NDTA President and CEO; Rick Marsh, SES, Director, Defense Personal Property Program, U.S. Transportation Command

The event kicked off with a keynote address from Mr. Robert Salesses, performing the duties of assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and global security, who has been integral to DoD's pandemic response. He provided insight into DoD's initial response and restrictions on movement, and outlined his expectations and predictions for the future response. The keynote address was followed by a panel discussion with key leaders from across the government travel landscape both with DoD and GSA. Panelists dove into government travel, talking about how the DTMO and industry alike, are unable to predict exactly what is to come, when travel will resume, or when business will get back to normal. But the panel did offer some insights and predictions into what the future of government travel will look like.

Over the next few days of the symposium, keynote speakers from across industry explained the impacts to their respective industries and how they are leaning forward and innovating to adapt to the new environment. DoD attendees joined DTMO Director, Mr. Mansell, for his annual State of the Defense Travel Enterprise where he provided a deeper look into the impact of COVID-19 on DoD the travel programs. He also provided a status update on DTMO key initiatives, outlined his vision for the future, and took questions from the over 300 people in attendance. New this year, GovTravels introduced a more formal Travel Academy, offering free CPU credits for attendance at educational sessions that were aligned to five tracks that covered a variety of government and travel industry interests.

"In FY19, DoD averaged 11,000 daily TDY travelers; in FY20, which included a full quarter plus of pre-pandemic travel, we averaged 6,000 daily travelers – a 46 percent drop year-over-year."

– Bill Mansell, Director of the Defense Travel Management Office

Scott Kirby, CEO United Airlines

The tradition of celebrating outstanding achievement in the government sector continued with the presentation of the 2020 Excellence in Practice Awards; senior leadership recognized winners during the opening ceremony.

We look forward to co-sponsoring this event again next year. The 2022 GovTravels Symposium is slated to return to the Mark Center Hilton in Alexandria, VA next spring. The planning team already started planning for next year and is exploring hybrid sessions to further increase global participation. Look for more information and dates for early registration in late summer.

Excellence In Practice Award Winners Celebrated At GovTravels 2021

Each spring, the Defense Travel Management Office recognizes the top performers from across the Department who have excelled in travel program management within their organizations through the Excellence in Practice Awards. Awards are given to those who successfully addressed issues with professional skill, creativity, and resourcefulness and demonstrated a remarkable level of customer service. Congratulations to this year's winners!

The Champion

Ms. Jennifer Riggs

Headquarters, United States Marine Corps

The Champion is awarded to a Lead Defense Travel Administrator (LDTA) whose wisdom, guidance, and commitment to their Organization Defense Travel Administrators (ODTAs) made a fundamental and long-term positive impact on their travel program.

This year's recipient is Ms. Jennifer Riggs, from the Headquarters of the United States Marine Corps Combat Development & Integration travel program who provides support for command ODTAs aboard Quantico, Marine Barracks 8th & I and subordinate commands located worldwide. The program consists of over 600 DTS organizations containing over 23,000 travelers utilizing over 1,100 routing lists and over 14,000 lines of accounting. During FY 2020, the program processed 68,077 authorizations, local vouchers, and vouchers.

Ms. Riggs learns about her ODTA's abilities and their duties in an effort to focus her guidance and mentorship toward the end-goal of making them fully successful in accomplishing their required tasks. Ms. Riggs provides all new and existing ODTAs the opportunity for desk-side training. Ms. Riggs consistently reviews the Complete Traveler List Report as well as other reports to monitor how the ODTAs are performing. She uses that to initiate a conversation and guide them to any needed corrective action. She is very intentional about providing positive feedback for those ODTAs performing well. The overall attitude toward the program has drastically improved thanks to Ms. Riggs' investment in those at the unit level.

She was assigned the task of updating the annual training (a complete overhaul) for ODTAs as part of the overall LDTA / Tier II Help Desk training effort. She addressed the problems ODTAs often run into and identified where they need assistance. She is consistently following up with ODTAs to identify any new training needs and then ensuring that is incorporated into the training materials. That material became the gold standard and the model for other classes. There have been 174 ODTAs trained through the new training during FY 2020.

In response to COVID-19, Ms. Riggs was instrumental in shifting from in-person classroom training to using Defense Collaboration Services (DCS), then later Microsoft Teams. That transition actually increased training capacity through the virtual capabilities. Since then, the program has been conducting a hybrid of in-person and virtual training to ensure all the ODTAs receive the best training possible regardless of their location or circumstance. The result: fewer calls from ODTAs to the help desk and better support at the unit level for end users.

Ms. Riggs took the initiative to improve the website for ODTAs and their personnel in DTS as well. Ms. Riggs redesigned the website to include many FAQs and training sign up forms. Since launch, there has been a major increase in website traffic.

She always follows-up with her ODTAs regarding any notifications through Customer Service Notifications or any other information or policy changes. She strives

to make sure they truly understand what has been sent to them as well as the impact to their program. She believes that lack of information is not the issue most ODTAs face, it's how to understand and apply the information they already have available to them, and Ms. Riggs is diligent in ensuring her ODTAs can do just that. She identifies changes that should be made in ODTA training and materials, so they are understandable and they can use that information to teach and guide the traveler's within their organization.

The Elite

Quantico Travel Support Branch

DTS Tier2 Help Desk, United States Marine Corps

The Elite is awarded to a local help desk team whose superior efforts resulted in continuous improvement and outstanding customer care. This year's award goes to the Quantico DTS Tier 2 Help Desk of the U.S. Marine Corps.

The team credits extensive use of the Complete Travel Information List Report along with other reports to help provide excellent customer service. They review the traveler profiles and reach out to the ODTAs when they discover errors and educate the ODTAs on the importance of the fields; for example, why the time zone field needs to be accurate; and why the Government Travel Charge Card Data fields must be correct. They also review the reports ODTAs are required to run weekly to determine if the ODTAs are performing their duties and to identify opportunities for training or guidance. This type of preventive maintenance results in fewer problems when travelers are creating their authorizations or settling their vouchers.

The team is co-located with the Quantico Finance Office's DTS Certifying Officials so that cross-pollination occurs daily. Any issue identified by the voucher from Authorizing Officials (AOs) is immediately reviewed by the help desk to determine if there is a trend. If so, they reach out to the organization to explain the error, provide the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) reference, show them where information may be found on the DTMO website, and provide assistance correcting the vouchers.

Additionally, all supported units have been assigned to a specific analyst within the Quantico DTS Tier 2 helpdesk for permissions assignment, management, and tracking. This ensures the unit ODTAs know who to contact regarding permissions for their users. Each of the help desk analysts have established procedures for submitting DD 577s based on their supported unit's unique needs.

As the consolidated Debt Management Monitor, the team follows each debt from Due US to Debt Satisfied. They are able to identify any system issues that may prevent a positive acknowledgement, ensure that Due Process is properly served and profiles are correct so there is not a Pay Collection Reject. The Debt Management Report is retrieved and worked every week. The Travel Support Branch cleared $592,584 in debt during fiscal year 2020.

The Quantico DTS Tier 2 Help Desk Analysts serve as subject matter experts for the Command Inspector General (CIG) team and perform inspections. During FY 2020, the CIG conducted eight inspections. The help desk not only inspected, but also provided desk-side training to the ODTAs in an effort to assist in not correcting the errors identified and improving their programs for the future.

The Quantico DTS Tier 2 Helpdesk is constantly communicating with customers and receiving feedback. ODTA communications via e-mail, phone calls, and the help desk website are conducted routinely regarding DTS system status, policy changes/updates, system issues that have been identified, and training opportunities. Often when information is received, it must be relayed to the ODTAs in a way that they can directly apply it to their program, ensuring their program remains fully functional moving forward.

Quantico DTS Tier 2 Help Desk responded to 21,337 requests for assistance through phone, email, and walk-ins.

The Tier 2 Help Desk also provides classroom/virtual and desk-side training for users at all levels. Due to COVID-19, the help desk quickly adapted and began hosting classes virtually. Initially classes were held

via Defense Collaboration Services (DCS), then transitioned to Microsoft Teams. Now, classes are being conducted using a hybrid of classroom and Microsoft Teams, which allows the help desk to reach a larger audience. The team completely rebuilt their website to ensure it's a true resource for the traveler, including how travelers register for training. The team receives the form and sends a calendar invite to the traveler with all the relevant information on how to attend to include instructions on how to download and use Microsoft Teams. This process has improved the way users register for classes dramatically.

In addition to training, the Tier 2 Help Desk created "how to" guides on more common issues that they provide to travelers and administrators. An example is the Constructed Travel Worksheet, which has been incorporated into all of the training classes provided by the Help Desk. Another example that assists and reaffirms training, is the "Requirements for Voucher Processing" which is a tool for AOs to use in reviewing vouchers prior to submission to the Finance Office for approval. Use of this guide greatly reduces errors and increases the likelihood the voucher will be processed without issue.

The Icon

Washington Headquarters Services Financial Management Directorate, Travel Team Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon

The Icon is awarded to a military service major command or Defense Agency team that has, with exemplary professional skill, successfully communicated and provided guidance for travel related updates. The team that receives this award must have facilitated a visible enhancement in travel program capabilities for its subordinate sites. The Icon acknowledges the very highest level of achievement and is considered to signify the "best of the best." This year's recipient is Washington Headquarters Services, Financial Management Directorate, Travel Team Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon.

This team serves as a guiding force behind the execution, information, dissemination, training and on-hand approach to supporting customers daily and emergency situational travel needs. The team provides knowledgeable, academically-referenced information with exemplary customer service to military, government civilians, and contractors. Through their wisdom, expertise and patience, they have helped develop those who may not have been as knowledgeable or comfortable with processing DTS functions. Today WHS travelers are now more confident due to the team's amazing support.

Throughout FY 2020, the team trained 676 personnel on issues and information they need day-to-day.

This team diligently communicates normal processes to extreme OCONUS DTS voucher processes, going above and beyond the realm of general support. This includes situations such as overpayment, currency exchange rate misunderstanding, dispute resolution, GTCC training, and GTCC account setup. Some agencies were without an Agency Program Coordinator (APC); until the position was fulfilled, the travel team willingly stepped in and supported as acting APC until support arrived.

The team's strong work ethic is evident through their amazing level of effort that is put forth to go above and beyond to provide excellent customer support. This team is recognized as an invaluable touchstone for what is the right thing to do in finding inadvertent actions and "leaning in" to find the right approach and resolution.

The Premier

Staff Sergeant Vanessa Lei E. Abid Space & Missile Systems Center Special Programs Directorate, United States Air Force

The Premier award recognizes the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Agency Program

Coordinator (APC) who demonstrates an extraordinary and exemplary commitment to cardholders and stakeholders through proactive education, effective communication, responsive customer service, and outstanding Program Coordination. This year's recipient is Staff Sergeant Vanessa Lei E. Abid.

SSgt Abid accomplished a lot this year – she created a new unit APC/ODTA multi-tasking tracker; became a one-stop shop for six administrative duties; spotted 150 invalid accounts; performed 150 account adjustments, managed PCS/MC/25k limit increases upon members return/arrival; prevented 75 delinquencies leading to zero card suspensions; reviewed 7,000 activities with effective filters in lieu of Visa IntelliLink; caught 100 misuse/potentially concerned transactions; and encouraged the use of electronic transfer.

SSgt Abid sees the value in sharing information, offering training, and providing hands on customer support. She regularly sends DTMO quarterly newsletters that highlight good-to-know information to her organization, emails visual aids, and conducts necessary phone calls or Skypes with travelers to provide assistance. This level of support was crucial during the pandemic. She provided refresher training to travelers, directing them to the correct point of contact specifically when they needed to travel using a CBA.

SSgt Abid makes it a point to provide solutions within 24-hours. She implemented efficient work processes including contacting Citibank on behalf of customers to prevent travel disruptions and cut-off unnecessary chain of communication. She sends monthly emails to travelers with credit balances which averts overpaid vouchers. She performs thorough reconciliation between DTS and GTCC; exporting statements to easily identify unpaid or overpaid GTCC transactions. She proactively informs cardholders of issues on their accounts before they receive emails from the Finance Office, sending reminders for those expiring card accounts to review their mailing addresses to prevent lost cards.

SSgt Abid is also credited with converting the unit's program from paper to soft copy, eliminating manual filing of required documents. She utilized Citibank as the primary focal point for any GTCC related documentations to ensure that all forms were in a centralized and secured location. She coordinated with the business operations office to include GTCC/DTS requirements in their in-processing email notification instead of contacting APCs and ODTAs directly to ask for requirements. This eliminated redundant coordination, especially with the virtual processes implemented during the pandemic. Lastly, SSgt Abid initiated an innovative project called "The Pacifico" that envisioned a data-feed tracking system where Travel Card 101 and Statement of Understanding dates would be part of Citibank reporting system. The result would be an accurate and proper shut-off of accounts with unmet requirements.

Know someone who has excelled in DoD travel program management support? Nominate them for next year's Excellence in Practice awards. Nomination forms will be available this summer on the Excellence in Practice Awards page, www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/award.cfm

Learn What's New With The Integrated Lodging Program

Pilot to Program

The Integrated Lodging Program, introduced as a pilot in 2015, was codified in law with the passage of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Section 642 of the Act makes the program permanent and provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to direct Department of Defense personnel to stay in "adequate" lodging when on official business. The policy also limits traveler reimbursement and allows for exceptions with pre-approval when directed travel is not used.

When on official travel to Integrated Lodging Program sites, travelers are first directed to on-base Government or Public-Private Venture Lodging. If that is not available, they are directed to DoD Preferred commercial lodging. If travelers do not stay in the directed lodging, the program limits traveler reimbursement to what the government would have paid for the directed lodging.

DoD Lodging Standards

In a collaborative effort involving Military Departments, the OSD Morale, Welfare, Recreation, and Retail Office, and the Defense Travel Management Office, new Lodging Adequacy Standards were approved in December 2020 for government-owned lodging properties. These standards reflect the standards established for the Integrated Lodging Program and will apply to all construction, renovations, and room updates at DoD Lodging brands. This standardizes the approach across all DoD brands and will ensure consistency in both property and in-room amenities. Rooms that do not meet 100% of these new standards are not considered "adequate," and are therefore ineligible for the Integrated Lodging Program, and are not bookable in the defense travel systems.

The program requires that commercial hotels offer rates at least 10 percent below per diem and provide certain traveler amenities and financial protections, such as free Internet and same-day cancellation, in order to qualify. Hotels must meet strict standards, and commercial hotels that apply for participation are subject to site visits by DoD personnel to verify amenities and services.

Customer Satisfaction Increases!

Traveler satisfaction with the DoD Preferred commercial lodging hotels is at an all-time high, with hotels scoring an average of 87 percent customer satisfaction ratings for the calendar year 2020, up from 82 percent just four years ago. A customer satisfaction questionnaire is sent to all travelers who have completed a DTS voucher that indicates they stayed at a DoD Preferred hotel, and we pay close attention to the results. We send the customer satisfaction scores to the hotels several times a year, and the scores help them improve and help us identify traveler favorites. Most important, the questionnaire provides DoD travelers the ability to impact the success of DoD Preferred because we use these scores as factors when deciding which hotels to choose for the following year. This traveler insight allows us to improve the program year over year. Many thanks to our program hotels for maintaining such high standards and to DoD travelers for completing the questionnaire!

Defense Travel Modernization Resumes Rollout Across Fourth Estate

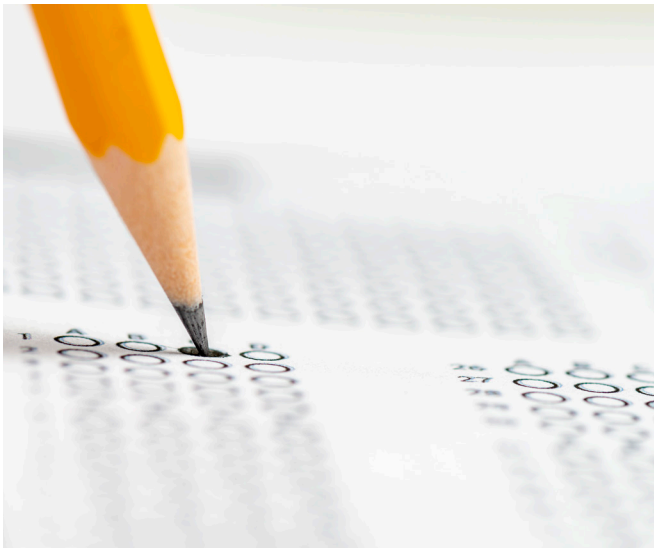
The Defense Travel Modernization (DTM) prototype is now operational for the existing 2,000+ users in the new Concur Cloud Public Sector (CCPS), an Amazon Web Services GovCloud environment. DTMO resumed rollout of the prototype to the remaining Fourth Estate organizations that use the Defense Agencies Initiative (DAI) financial accounting system beginning with the Go-Live for the Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness on April 5. The Fourth Estate rollout will continue throughout the spring and summer, then conclude with the Office of the Secretary of Defense in August 2021.

Here's Your Chance — Tell Us What You Think About Your Trip

Just 10 minutes can help improve travel programs!

Last year, we launched a Defense Travel Enterprise Customer Satisfaction Survey to collect customer feedback on an array of DoD commercial travel programs and services including travel management company (TMC) services, contract commercial airlines, rental cars, and the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC).

Watch your inbox for an email from us with a link to participate in the survey. Emails are sent on a biweekly basis to a random sample of DoD travelers with qualifying DTS travel vouchers. Participation in the survey is voluntary, anonymous, and takes 10-minutes or less. Information gathered through the survey will help us improve Defense travel enterprise products and services to ensure they continue to meet the needs of DoD travelers.



Travel Managers In Action

Each year, the DTMO receives many nominations for its Excellence in Practice Awards from all across the Department. While the awards honor top performers in DoD travel for the value and services they provide to their travel programs, we also learn of some additional best practices and noteworthy successes from the runners up. Below are a few from this year's submissions, many in response to the challenges and impacts of COVID-19.

Champion

Tips for Lead Defense Travel Administrators

Jennifer VanHorn from U. S. Army Medical Research Development Command (USAMRDC) in Fort Detrick, Maryland demonstrates leadership and mentoring skills by assisting her subordinate unit DTAs to ensure they have established travel programs in compliance with DTS rules and regulations. This is achieved through audits and taskers set up by Ms. VanHorn and her team that provide not only compliance with rules and regulations, but also suggestions and guidance on how to improve each unit's travel program. Audits and taskers are seen as learning opportunities and she is always available to answer questions and to assist each ODTA in establishing and maintaining their travel programs.

Debbie Whittaker from 514th AMW/FM-DTS, JB MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, NJ, provided performance feedback and virtual training to unit ODTA's on a monthly basis as well as refresher training for current and active ODTA's during the COVID pandemic. Her efforts reduced the DTS voucher turnaround process time of 24-48 hours and minimized the number of returned vouchers. Ms. Whittaker created a DTS video clip tutorial for personnel that is accessible through the organization's share point folder as well as the Freedom Wing web page for Reservists to access from outside the organization.

Denise Acon from Army Futures Command assisted in the transition of organizations from 14 different Commands or Army Elements residing in five different DTS organizations. Ms. Acon exhibited tenacity, determination, and extraordinary patience in ensuring that the new organizations were operational with minimal disruption to travel. She was an invaluable resource to subordinate DTAs during AFC's first permission level review. DFAS commented that AFC's submission "raised the bar for other MACOMs to follow." Her mentoring, guidance, and direction to subordinate DTAs ensured AFC addressed separation of duty conflicts and significantly reduced organization and group access to only those who need it.

ABH1 Michael Flosi from USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) employs a meticulous checklist process to ensure

that tasks are tracked, measured, and successfully achieved in a timely fashion. He has daily meetings with his DTAs to set the pace with tasks and goals and monitors each DTAs attention to detail. ABH1 Flosi seeks ways to improve processes, streamline operations, and relieve the burden of mistakes and re-work. His motivation and mentorship starts with his work ethic. Early riser and always the last to leave ensuring without a doubt that the day's work has been completed. His leadership has led to an increase in DTS users from 56 percent at the Command to 80 percent. ABH1 Flosi has led the charge to ensure that USS Nimitz' Travel Program is a process to model.

SSgt Aaron Bush from Tyndall Air Force Base, FL excelled at implementing organizational travel goals. One of the largest needs was rebuilding the Mortuary Affairs process. SSgt Bush identified a key routing discrepancy in the program. The 325th DTS Team partnered with the Force Support Squadron and the Transportation Squadron's DTAs and re-established the Mortuary Affairs process which allowed two civilian families to pay last respects to fallen Airmen. Next, SSgt Bush re-validated all DTAs by conducting a 100 percent audit of DD 577s and training certificates. He re-trained ODTAs on how to properly update 127 routing lists for Tyndall AFB. Lastly, SSgt Bush bridged a report gap between ODTAs and mandatory travel reports.

Elite

Best practices in customer service for local help desk teams

Marine Attack Squadron 231, Cherry Point, NC improved processes/procedures conducted by the VMA-231. Common practice for collecting information on the movement requests for DTS Authorizations was limited to using Excel and having one person as the central inbox for submitting updates. They created a SharePoint list library to allow all end users the ability to annotate the required data elements critical to ensuring the creation, accuracy, and approval of DTS Authorizations. This new SharePoint capability increased the timeliness on the creation and approval of DTS authorizations and vouchers by removing email traffic from over 216 personnel traveling on multiple unit size exercises. Additionally, logistics and operations can obtain, analyze, and have accessibility to live current information relevant to the movement of personnel in the unit.

USS Nimitz CVN 68 Travel Office. This travel team successfully identified the most efficient routes to use for commercial air flights and provided members with exception to policy letters to minimize the risk of being tested for COVID-19 and being sequestered during their travels. Due to deployment overseas and unavailability of GSA contract flights, they established a process to find cost-effective and safe routings that saved thousands in government funds and achieved command travel objectives. The result: 198 travelers back to CONUS successfully. In addition to routine emergency leave and MEDEVAC travel while deployed, USS Nimitz coordinated with USS Theodore Roosevelt, USS Carl Vinson, and USS Abraham Lincoln to get a total of 77 sailors back to their respective commands.

325th Comptroller Squadron DTS Team from Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida strongly believes effective and efficient communication is key to excellent customer service. They created an email distribution for widely distributing information and transitioned to implementing the Air Force Customer Service Portal (CSP). As a result of having the document repository and the discussion board, this bypassed VPN issues that plagued our service. The CSP only requires CAC access and can be used from any computer. Lastly, DTAs can submit requests on customer's behalf, which was an item that was heavily used by ODTAs. The CSP reduced lost emails, supporting documentation and messages by 100% and reduced a communication latency for submitting waivers to headquarters by three days, which is 60% faster.

Icon

Insights for Agency Program Coordinators and GTCC program management

Air Force Installation Mission Support Center Travel Pay Team from Joint Base, San Antonio, Texas quickly adapted and found innovative ways to accelerate and disseminate travel guidance efficiently and effectively during COVID. They ramped up the frequency of existing teleconferences from monthly to weekly to ensure critical information on the status of travel restrictions for DoD personnel was shared in an environment that also encouraged the crossflow of information between bases. They modified organizational business rules to ensure compliance with the most up to date guidance for those impacted. Examples include issuing Stop Movement guidance to over 78 bases in a timely manner, ensuring the safety of personnel; pushing the Hardship Duty Pay Restriction of Movement (HDP-ROM) Memo detailing entitlements for lodging reimbursement; providing updates to lodging, meals

and incidental expenses during quarantine; as well as PCS, TDY, and Deployment entitlements. The team was readily available and responsive on a daily basis to installations; providing formal responses to urgent questions in real-time. The team conducted 153 continual virtual evaluations of travel and GTCC programs across the Air Force. They identified areas for installation improvement and compliance; such as DTS appointed official oversight and APC actions identifying, tracking, and reporting delinquencies to travel cardholders. The health and performance of an installation's program is organized, packaged, and shared with base commanders, providing base recommendations, an overall score, and comments to the MAJCOM IG.

Premier

Ideas for Defense Agency travel teams

Justin D. Raphael from the Marine Attack Squadron 231, Cherry Point, North Carolina. If misuse/abuse is identified, the APC utilizes the unit SharePoint list library functionality to ensure creation, validation, historical inquires, and ability to attach any Microsoft application content to the SharePoint list item in question. Mr. Raphael digitized the monthly Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) checklist using Microsoft Access allowing all data from the checklist to be sent to an archived table in the back end of another Microsoft Access application. By having raw data in a back end database, Mr. Raphael could quickly identify repeat offenders and/or analyze GTCC stats in an extremely quick manner.

Antoinette Durden from Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division provided Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Refresher training to over 1,200 active account holders and recorded 95 percent completion rate. She facilitated 80 percent of the cardholder completion of GTCC Statements of Understanding to ensure the most recent form is acknowledged by the cardholder and their current supervisor. She has maintained a high level of customer service and has continued to work with various personnel throughout the command and NAVAIR to ensure external reporting requirements are completed accurately and on time. This includes the required notification for any suspected misuse, abuse, or fraud involving the GTCC as well as providing past due notices in a timely manner to cardholders. The GTCC program was reviewed by the NAVAIR Inspector General (IG) who gave the program a successful rating. She successfully supported the command while transitioning to the Next Gen CitiManager System in TSYS2. Ms. Durden assisted the NAVAIR's APC in testing, troubleshooting and provided excellent feedback that was passed along to the NAVSUP's Component Program Manager HL2. She also figured out a key element (the Billing Office Code) in the new GTCC application process.

Darrell Haraway from Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Accounting and Finance Office coordinated TYSYS 2 live training events at three locations with 490 personnel attending. The training provided APCs a key aspect of the migration from the old CitiManager Transaction Management System to the new CitiManager system. Mr. Haraway's advance notification of the training events enabled the Air Force to maximize participation and surpass all other services by a 2 to 1 margin. Mr. Haraway created a new GTCC hierarchy structure for the 11th Wing, which separated Andrews and Bolling AFB and allowed individual management of the GTCC program for each location and minimized potential delinquencies. He also held virtual training on the new online Citi application feature in CitiManager for approximately 180 APCs spanning over 140 Air Force installations. Updating the AF GTCC Guide, Mr. Haraway provided the tools for APCs to proactively manage their programs and maximize rebates. The result: a 0.56 percent delinquency rate which far exceeds the 1 percent standard!

Emel Thomas from Naval Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) is a respected team member and is recognized throughout the command as an expert in the GTCC program. She follows up with cardholders to resolve outstanding balances, coordinate requests for new and replacement GTCCs, and helps to resolve issues. As of October 7, 2020,

- Navy Split Disbursement rate was 92.04%, team NAVWAR's was 95.83%
- Navy delinquency rate for total number of GTCC cardholders was 0.41%, team NAVWAR's was 0.04%, well below the Navy's goal of 1% or less
- Navy delinquency rate for total dollars of GTCC was 6.83%, team NAVWAR's rate was 0.92%, well below the Navy's goal of 2% or less

Ms. Thomas also performs corrective actions in our accounting system to correct posting errors. She works with our subordinate commands to respond to all DTMO taskers and inquiries in a timely and thorough fashion. She has cultivated effective working relations throughout the SYSCOM and at our field activities.

Timmy Williams from Naval Supply Systems Command, Headquarters ensured his team was fully

prepared for the Citibank Total Systems 2 (TSYS2) migration by engaging with DTMO and Citibank early on and ensuring Navy senior leadership understood the huge undertaking that was about to take place. He and his team were involved in the multitudes of TSYS2 migration and work stream meetings, training, and user acceptance testing that took place prior to Go-Live. He and his team worked tirelessly with Citibank's Electronic Access System (EAS) to test the sandbox at every chance given, explore system functionality in the To Be platform at various EAS user levels, notify Citibank and DTMO of the multitude of issues they discovered that could cause major impacts if not corrected. They thoroughly documented each issue, worked with Citibank's technical teams, and pressed senior leaders involved with the migration until they had the level of understanding of these issues to assign the proper priority for a resolution. This level of detail and oversight comes with not just doing what is expected, but going above and beyond for the greater good and the personal dedication to the program.

Thomas Jackson from Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division uses a combination of reports to assist with searching for misuse or abuse. He reviews the Account Activity report, Declined Authorizations report, Cash Withdrawal report, DTS and other reports from Intellilink. Once potential misuse is identified, Mr. Jackson notifies the cardholder and the cardholder's supervisor of the suspected transaction and they are given an opportunity to justify any questionable transactions. Mr. Jackson oversees the process to ensure that instances of misuse or abuse are reviewed; necessary re-training is completed, and provides support to management if disciplinary action is needed.

LS2 Kanlaya Daniels from USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) conducted a two month GTCC fair to greatly increase command's proportion of personnel with active accounts. An earlier assessment placed the Command at a 39 percent of all personnel with "OPEN-ACTIVE" GTCC. By October 2020, the Command was at 76 percent; an overall 37 percent increase! All reports were processed on time to Commander, Naval Air Forces Pacific (CNAP) with superb communication and action. "Pre-Suspense" report individuals were immediately notified to prevent "CANCELLED-CLOSED" accounts resulting in less than 10 over FY-20. LS2 Daniels also trains 19 Departmental Yeoman in the correct processes in order for new Sailors to apply for a GTCC.

Additional Special Recognition across all four awards to:

Michael Carlson, Connie Lucas, Michelle McMillen, Kathryn Welton, Jacqueline L. Crawford, Maryann Carter, Connie Pierre, DFCWE Help Desk 88 from 88th Comptroller Squadron Defense Travel System, Fleet Readiness Center Western Pacific, Newport Rhode Island Travel Team Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, U.S. Army Medical Research Development Command Travel Team, 3d Marine Division G-8, FDTA Team from Okinawa, Japan, Leticia Moreno, and CWO4 Everett Hemphill from Marine Air Control Group 48, Naval Station Great Lakes.

Take A Peek At Our New Look

If you looked at the DTMO website lately, you may have noticed that we have a new DTMO logo. While the website is slated for a more extensive redesign later this year, this is the first step to refreshing the look and feel of our products. The process started with establishing a brand positioning statement that accurately reflects who we are and where we want to go.

*"With its history of successfully serving as the **single focal point** for commercial travel within the Department and a reputation for **excellent customer service**, the Defense Travel Management Office strives to **exceed** Department of Defense travel community expectations by delivering **simple, innovative** travel solutions and **forward-thinking** programs that promote traveler **duty of care**. Our branding and online presence reflect these commitments."*

It is this statement and highlighted key words that translated into the selection of color palette, standard fonts, graphics and an overall look and feel of our products. It will take us some time to transition the documents posted to our site to the new templates, but keep your eyes peeled for our new, refreshed products.

What's in a logo?

DefenseTravel
Management Office

The DTMO logo was inspired by key factors from our Brand Positioning Statement, including our reputation for excellent customer service and our goals to provide innovative travel and expense solutions, develop forward-thinking programs, and our on-going focus on delivering duty of care to Defense travelers. The curved line/contrail below the Defense Travel text promotes a feeling of forward and upward progressing motion, connecting to our commitment to serve as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense. A blue gradient is used to support the feelings of motion and depth, taking a modern design approach.

Know Before You Go: Travel During The Pandemic

Countries around the world, including the United States, are instituting NEW entry and transit COVID-19 requirements, which may require testing, pre-registration, and/or mandatory quarantine upon arrival. As the global pandemic continues to evolve, travelers are strongly advised to check on travel requirements prior and during travel as requirements can change without notice.

RETURNING TO THE U.S.: Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires all air passengers arriving in the United States from a foreign country to be tested no more than 3 days before their flight departure and provide proof of the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 within the last 90 days. Airlines are required to check passenger documentation and will deny boarding to those who fail to provide required documentation clearing them for travel.

This means that travelers are required to get tested before travel and provide proof of a negative test, or show proof of a recent positive viral test and provide a letter from a healthcare provider or a public health official stating they are clear to travel. Exceptions apply for US service members on official orders, provided the authority ordering the travel requires precautions to prevent the possible transmission of infection during travel in accordance with CDC guidance. Check with your local travel office for guidance.

Also be aware that masks are now required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

It is strongly recommended that travelers review entry requirements for ALL LOCATIONS on their travel route, including any transit points, before and during travel. Rules may differ from place to place and may change while in transit. Also travelers should review the mask, test, and vaccination requirements for ALL AIRLINE CARRIERS listed on your travel schedule. Airlines may adopt their own specific policies, which are in addition to country entry requirements. It is advisable to monitor country and carrier requirements even while on travel, especially for international travel lasting more than three days, as requirements can quickly change.

Need more information? Check out these websites.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Department of State

Calling All GTCC Program Personnel

GSA SmartPay® Virtual Training Forum

July 20 – 22, 2021

All Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Program oversight personnel are highly encouraged to attend this year's General Services Administration SmartPay® Virtual Training Forum being held virtually from 20 – 22 July 2021.

This training forum is designed for Component Program Managers, Agency Program Coordinators, Inspector General staff, financial, and other officials who oversee the travel business lines of the GSA SmartPay card program. Learn about the latest innovations in the Smart Pay program and take training to earn CLP credits. Citibank and Visa will provide training sessions on the use of the use of CitiManager© and IntelliLink© as well as information sessions on general products and services. DTMO will host sessions on compliance and misuse detection and provide updates on the DoD GTCC program and policy.

Registration open in April 2021. For more information, visit the GSA SmartPay ®Training Forum website at https://smartpay.gsa.gov/content/2021-gsa-smartpay-training-forum

Mark Your Calendar for TAC Outreach

The Travel Assistance Center offers outreach calls that are designed to inform and educate the DoD travel community on issues and topics related to Defense travel and DTS. All calls include a question and answer period for the subject presented and an open forum for general DTS questions.

Calls are conducted on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 8am and 1pm (EDT).

Each call is conducted in a Defense Collaboration Services (DCS), an interactive environment, using a combination of PowerPoint presentations and live demonstrations.

How to Participate

1) Follow along with the slides at: https://conference.apps.mil/webconf/Outreach

2) Dial: 703-679-6200; enter conference code: 821 051 8109; enter participant code: 435 7146 (HELP1GO). We highly recommend utilizing phone audio over DCS Audio.

Subscribe to the TAC RSS Feed or visit the TAC outreach announcement in TraX for each week's topic or to view past call slides.

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