

Defense Travel Dispatch

VOLUME XIII, ISSUE 1



Spring 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO, TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS AND GUIDANCE

Stay abreast of rapidly changing travel orders, health notices, and more travel impacts, so you can stay safe even when you can't stay home.

more on page 2

WHAT YOU MISSED AT GOVTRAVELS

A recap of the 2020 government travel symposium.

This year was the largest and best yet!

more on page 3

DEFENSE TRAVEL MODERNIZATION: THE FUTURE TRAVELER EXPERIENCE IS NOW

Read more about the live showcase by the DTM team of mobile capabilities available with the DTM prototype.

more on page 5

OUR EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE (EiP) AWARD WINNERS

Celebrate the Excellence in Practice award winners with us in this spotlight article.

more on page 7

TRAVEL MANAGERS IN ACTION

A selection of tips and best practices from this year's Excellence in Practice Award Nominees.

more on page 12

MODERNIZING PCS TRAVEL: THE AF PILOT PROGRAM LEADING THE WAY

An interview with Chelsea Weber, the woman to know when it comes to exciting changes in Air Force PCS processing.

more on page 15

About the Publishing Entity:

DTMO serves as the focal point for commercial travel within DoD, providing central oversight for commercial travel management, travel policy and implementation, travel card program management, customer support and training, and functional oversight of DoD travel systems.

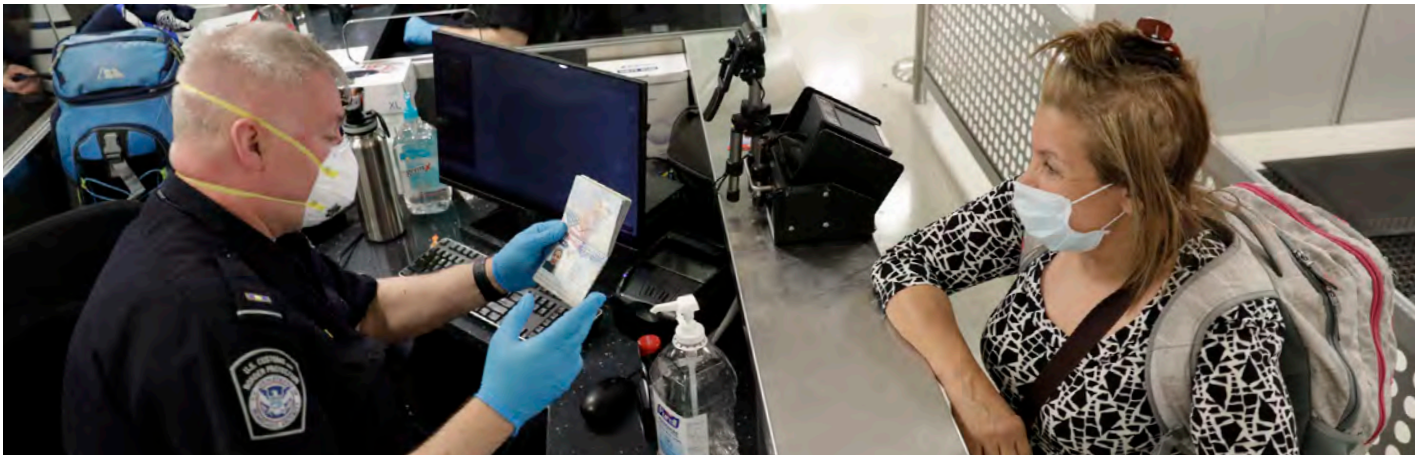
A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In my last message I wrote of the many changes underway in the Defense Travel Enterprise and how “the only constant is change.” I could not have imagined the magnitude of change we have witnessed over these past few weeks as a novel Coronavirus, a silent enemy, has spread across the globe. With the threat of COVID-19 we have learned new terms like “social distancing” and “self-quarantine”, our normally congested streets and highways are nearly devoid of traffic, and only essential businesses remain open. The Secretary of Defense has issued a stop-movement order so travel across the Department has come to a near standstill. I write this message from my home as I (and all of the DTMO staff) have been directed to work remotely. Fortunately, DTMO is a “telework ready” organization and the transition to 100 percent telework has been relatively seamless. I expect our support of your mission to be equally as seamless as we maintain continuity of operations during the pandemic.

Just a few short weeks ago, we wrapped up a very successful GovTravels 2020. This is the fourth year DTMO has co-sponsored this symposium with the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA), bringing together travel managers from across government and industry. Attendance increased by 30 percent this year, with 790 attendees. This year we had the distinct honor and privilege to have DoD's Chief Management Officer, the Honorable Lisa W. Hershman, as a keynote speaker. The relationships we developed at GovTravels have served us well during this current crisis. Our travel industry partners have been, and will continue to be, severely impacted economically as stay-at-home orders and travel bans become the order of the day. Some economists have predicted the economic impact to the travel industry to be more than six times that of 9/11. We have leveraged our NDTA channels of communication to keep industry informed of DoD's COVID-19 crisis response. We will continue to do so.

As the COVID-19 pandemic occupies our thoughts, keeping informed is the best way to combat the fear of uncertainty that it provokes. We have our own web page dedicated to Coronavirus information at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Coronavirus>. We will keep it updated with the latest information available. In these unprecedented times it is critical that we work together to combat the spread of the Coronavirus. Stay informed. Take care of yourselves, one another, and your families. As Secretary Esper wrote in his recent Message to the Force, “We will get through this together, and we will emerge stronger and more resilient than ever before.”

-Bill Mansell, Director, DTMO



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS AND GUIDANCE

DoD travelers have plenty of risk to manage even on a typical trip between travel delays, adverse weather, and missed connections. The recent spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) compounds these common travel stressors. If you are approved for mission essential travel, under the [Secretary of Defense](#) and [Deputy Secretary of Defense](#) travel restrictions, take stock of the programs and resources currently available through the Federal government to assist travelers with managing risks and ensuring personal safety during travel.

1. **Department of State Travel Advisories.** Before booking travel abroad, visit the Department of State (DoS) [“Travel Advisories” web page](#) for detailed travel advisories on foreign countries. DoS categorizes these advisories using four levels: “Level 1–Exercise normal precautions,” “Level 2–Exercise increased caution,” “Level 3–Reconsider travel,” and “Level 4–Do not travel.” For Levels 2 through 4, the page will identify the relevant risk indicators. You can also track up-to-date DoS advisory information on social media by following “TravelGov” on Twitter or Facebook.
2. **Department of State STEP Program.** To receive an alert if a travel advisory for a destination changes and to make it easier for the Department of State to reach you in an emergency abroad, consider enrolling in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#).
3. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travel Health Notices.** Similar to DoS guidelines, the CDC also publishes “Travel Health

Notices” with information about current health issues that could impact travelers’ health, like disease outbreaks, special events or gatherings, and natural disasters.

Be aware that many areas throughout the world experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks are taking action that may limit traveler mobility, including quarantines and border restrictions. Even countries, jurisdictions, or areas with few cases may restrict travel without notice. If approved for OCONUS travel, you are strongly advised to review the Department of State COVID-19 Country-Specific information, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information> to learn more about applicable restrictions. Please note that meeting DoD [Foreign Clearance Guide](#) requirements is mandatory for all OCONUS official travel.

For reference, DTMO has aggregated all of these official resources on the [DTMO website](#), or you can visit [DoD Response: Coronavirus](#).



GOVTRAVELS 2020: SHAPING THE FUTURE TRAVELER EXPERIENCE

In late February, DTMO and the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA) hosted another successful GovTravels symposium at the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria, VA. GovTravels is a forum for travel professionals from across the government and commercial industry to gather for networking, learning, and collaborating on regulations, technology, and challenges related to government travel. This is the fourth year DTMO has co-sponsored the event. Attendance has more than doubled since that inaugural event in 2017, increasing by thirty percent in just the last year. With the growing crowd, DTMO and NDTA worked to expand the agenda to three full days. Monday's agenda focused on government-industry meetings, providing an opportunity for DTMO and GSA travel program managers to share the latest developments in their programs with industry. The number of Monday sessions increased



from nine in 2019 to twenty-three this year. GovTravels 2020 was honored to have as keynote speaker the Honorable Lisa W. Hershman, DoD's Chief Management Officer. The CMO addressed



"We experience firsthand the value that this event brings—relationships are built and strengthened, ideas are exchanged and integrated, and we walk away with a better understanding of everything happening across the travel landscape."

—Mr. Bill Mansell
Director, DTMO

the need to reform DoD Business Operations and highlighted a few current efforts, including Defense Travel Modernization, a reform effort the CMO is tracking closely. Ms. Hershman touched on the power of acknowledging broken processes and focusing on improving the user experience of Defense business systems, directly reflecting this year's theme, "Shaping the Future Traveler Experience." Other keynote speakers included Mr. Don Moore, Senior Vice President, Business Rental Sales and International Tour at Enterprise Holdings and Ms. Chelsea Bright, Global Industry Leader, Public Sector at Qualtrics. Mr. Tony D'Astolfo, a familiar GovTravels favorite, was back again this year to moderate a panel discussion on innovation in government travel. Mr. Jeff Register, Deputy Director, Defense Human Resources Activity was among the notable panelists. Another highlight was a live demonstration of the mobile capabilities of the Defense Travel Modernization prototype travel system. Read more about it on page 5.

(Continued on page 4)

The tradition of celebrating outstanding achievement across the Defense Travel Enterprise continued with the presentation of the 2020 Excellence in Practice Awards. Winners were recognized by Ms. Hershman, Mr. Bill Booth, Director of the Defense Human Resources Activity, and senior DTMO leadership in the beautiful plaza ballroom. Read more about these talented travel managers on page 7.



The newly revamped and renamed GovTravels “Travel Academy” breakout sessions provided valuable insights directly from subject matter experts across government and industry. These breakout sessions, many in a panel format, provided the opportunity for attendees to hear directly from industry leaders, ask questions, and participate in these discussions. The Academy covered hot topics like change management when adopting new tools, utilizing analytics to provide the best possible program management, and more.

Integral to GovTravels is DoD Connect. DoD Connect includes DoD stakeholder-only events aimed at providing leadership, governance board members, and senior-level travel representatives from across the Department an opportunity to network, collaborate and learn more about initiatives impacting the Defense Travel Enterprise. During the DoD Connect Main Meeting, Mr. Bill Mansell, DTMO Director, gave his traditional “State of the Defense Travel



Enterprise,” highlighting some of DTMO's key initiatives. Andrea Carlock, the Director's Senior Functional Advisor, provided an update on Travel Management Company services. The session ended with a Q&A session and open discussion where stakeholders had their most pressing questions answered. The Main Meeting was followed by a Program Manager's Workshop where both government and industry attendees were free to meet and talk directly with DTMO travel program managers and other subject matter experts in an exhibition hall style format.



Satisfaction with GovTravels was high among DoD attendees. DTMO surveyed its stakeholders and ninety-three percent were satisfied with the event and over ninety percent of attendees are very or somewhat likely to return for GovTravels 2021. DTMO looks forward to co-sponsoring this event again next year. In the meantime, videos of main ballroom sessions from this year's event and the presentations are available at on the GovTravels web page at www.ndtahq.com/events/gov-travels and on the [DTMO YouTube channel](#).

DEFENSE TRAVEL MODERNIZATION: THE FUTURE TRAVELER EXPERIENCE IS NOW

At GovTravels this year, the Defense Travel Modernization team—made up of personnel from the DTMO & Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)—hosted a session providing an update on the DoD initiative to modernize its travel system. The theme for GovTravels 2020 was “Shaping the Future Traveler Experience” (see page 2) and the title of the team’s presentation played off that theme: “The Future Traveler Experience is Now.” Bob Gerenser, DTMO’s Strategy, Plans & Operations Chief, provided historical background and context to the recent progress made with the Defense Travel Modernization (DTM) prototype. Some may have been surprised to learn that the modernization effort actually began with the approval of the Defense Travel System Problem Statement by DoD’s Investment Review Board all the way back in March of 2014. The real impetus for modernization did not occur until 2017. The GovTravels keynote speeches from 2017 through 2019 chart the progress of modernization from an earlier pilot to today’s prototype. This year the DTM team had a surprise in store – but first a progress update was in order.



Lisa Moreno, DTMO’s functional lead for the DTM prototype, addressed some of the challenges the team faced in rolling out a commercial Software as a Service (SaaS) travel solution to its current users. DoD travelers have been using the same



travel system for more than 20 years, so the change management hurdles are high. Cybersecurity and financial integration are two major challenges the DTM team knew they would face at the onset of the prototype implementation, and the team is meeting those challenges successfully. The prototype’s financial integration solution overcomes the obstacles of funds management and the Government fiscal law requirement to obligate funds pre-trip. A full enterprise-wide implementation of a commercial SaaS travel solution will also require a well thought-out and well engineered automated solution for onboarding travelers. To date, the DTM team has used manual processes to onboard users. DTMO’s modernization partner, the DMDC, recently completed the first phase of an automated profile management tool that will facilitate an enterprise-wide implementation. Testing that solution is underway. From the traveler perspective, DoD’s multiple per diem rate structure poses challenges for configuring the SaaS travel system. Lisa’s team maintains a “traveler first” mindset, and user feedback is critical to ensuring the configuration does not adversely impact the usability features of the prototype system.

Next, Lance Jenkinson, the DTM product owner, outlined the Agile methodology the team employs to implement the prototype. This iterative approach with its reliance on immediate user feedback is key

(Continued on page 6)



to the prototype's success. Lance also discussed the team's approach to cybersecurity and the transition from a commercial cloud environment to the new Concur Cloud Public Sector (CCPS), providing secure, segregated DoD data hosted in Amazon Web Services' GovCloud. Lance also displayed the relative simplicity of the DTM financial integration solution compared to the legacy travel system that must integrate with 27 financial accounting and feeder systems. Finally, Lance discussed how the team quickly met the DoD requirement for multi-factor authentication to access the system. But they didn't stop there, to enable DoD travelers to take advantage of industry-leading mobile capabilities, the DTM prototype includes DISA-approved apps for Government devices and



available multi-factor authentication for use on personal devices. That provided a great segue to the star of the panel presentation and the surprise foreshadowed above – a mobile first mindset to match the traveler first mindset.

Josh Dahan is one of the younger members of the DTM team—

from the generation of travelers born with a mobile phone in their hand. Representing the DoD traveler, Josh took center stage and demonstrated the many mobile capabilities of the DTM prototype using his personal iPhone. His challenge: submit an expense report for approval in the average amount of time it takes an aircraft to taxi from the runway to the gate: 6.9 minutes. Josh took the audience through each step of the expense reporting process on his iPhone. He highlighted the app's advanced mobile receipt capabilities, scanning a receipt with his phone's camera and attaching it to his report. He used the iPhone's stopwatch to time himself. How did he do? Josh submitted his expense report in five minutes and forty-eight seconds, deliberately taking his time explaining each step to the audience along the way.

While Josh dazzled the crowd, DTM team member Sangeeta Ryan watched closely. Sangeeta understands the critical role of the Authorizing Official (AO) in DoD travel management. One of the goals of



the prototype is to enhance auditability and reduce improper payments. As Josh's "approver," Sangeeta took the stage and demonstrated on her government iPhone just how easy it was for AOs to review and approve an expense report in DTM. She quickly approved Josh's expense report leaving the AOs in the audience with the vision of approving expense reports from their beach chairs this summer.

To view a video introducing the Defense Travel Modernization prototype & other great content, including videos from GovTravels 2020, check out the DTMO YouTube channel at youtube.com/defense-travelmanagementoffice

What's the Current Status of the DTM Prototype System?

The DTM prototype has been rolled out to 3 organizations (Defense Human Resources Activity, Washington Headquarters Services, and Defense Contract Management Agency HQ), with over 2,000 current users and more than \$1M in travel reimbursements. The transition from the commercial cloud environment to the Concur Cloud Public Sector is now complete. At the time of this publication, launch in the new environment is pending coordination of a new Acceptance of Risk Memorandum. Operations in the prototype and rollout to additional Fourth Estate organizations will resume once the Secretary of Defense lifts the current stop movement order in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS



Each year, DTMO recognizes the top performers from across the Department who have excelled in travel program management within their organizations. Awards are given to those who have successfully addressed issues with professional skill, creativity, and resourcefulness and who have demonstrated a remarkable level of customer service. This year's winners have earned the right to take their places as "the best of the best" in DoD travel program management.

THE CHAMPION

Mrs. Patricia Presley, USAF 19th Comptroller Squadron, Little Rock, AR

The Champion award recognizes a Lead Defense Travel Administrator (LDTA) whose wisdom, guidance, and commitment to their Organization DTAs (ODTAs) has made a fundamental and long-term positive impact on their travel program. This year's recipient is Ms. Patricia Presley from the 19th Comptroller Squadron, Little Rock AFB.

Ms. Presley is a LDTA supporting roughly 12,000 Service members and civilians across three Wings, six tenant, and four geographically separated units. As the fourth LDTA in five years, Ms. Presley jumped right in to ensure the program was set up to run smoothly. She conducted the first staff assistance visit (SAV) in several years, which assisted in getting the program back on track.

As one of her first tasks, she worked to ensure all DTS permissions were valid and that all user training was up to date and filed properly. She created a DTS access tracking database to ensure 100% accountability of personnel and required documentation. Additionally, Ms. Presley coordinated local DTS Business Rules memoranda to outline specific training requirements and



clarified instructions on deployment documents to ensure GTCC accounts are paid. In her tenure, over 104 debts in excess of \$135,000 were collected and paid in full between March and October 2019.

She also focused her efforts on improving the communication between the Finance Office and the units on base and as a result, communication is at the highest it has been in some time. Further, Ms. Presley conducts monthly training for new organizational DTAs, authorizing officials, and routing officials. She has a monthly ODTA meeting with recurring topics including deployment documents, debts, compliance tool, and reports.

(Continued on page 8)

Additionally she provides a monthly document preparers' class with instructions for building authorizations, vouchers, & deployment documents.

She has also been known to go to units to conduct mass training on various topics as requested. Mrs. Presley created SharePoint sites that she keeps up to date and sends out daily emails with applicable information.

Ms. Presley challenges the unit ODTAs to own their programs and educates them to help make their programs stronger. She makes jokes that her phone rings less now than when she started. It's not that people don't know the phone number, but that ODTAs are more knowledgeable and able to help their travelers.



THE ELITE

Corporal Ronny D. Martinez-Martinez and Sergeant Justin R. Acevedo, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit Command Element, Camp Lejeune, NC

The Elite Award recognizes a local help desk team whose superior efforts resulted in continuous improvement and outstanding customer care. This year's award goes to Corporal Ronny D. Martinez-Martinez and Sergeant Justin R. Acevedo, the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit Command Element from Camp Lejeune.

The 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, Command Element Office is responsible for the travel for over 2,500 Marines and sailors supporting every element of the Marine Expeditionary Unit with travel occurring around the globe. Due to the nature of a MEU afloat, Sergeant Acevedo and Corporal Martinez-Martinez operated from two geographic

locations to ensure the best customer service and the best connectivity during a demanding operational tempo. Sergeant Acevedo worked at a shore detachment in Camp Lemmoir, Djibouti, Africa while Corporal Martinez-Martinez worked from the ship as the on-site help-desk for travelers and a conduit to Sergeant Acevedo.

Together, Sergeant Acevedo and Corporal Martinez-Martinez are personally responsible for the processing of more than 700 travel claims worth over \$2 million, not including numerous canceled trips that required special actions in order to deobligate funds and properly close the claims. For every single claim, they provided reminder emails or face-to-face meetings in order to ensure timely and accurate processing.

During and after travel, Sgt Acevedo and Cpl Martinez-Martinez would work closely with the Financial Officer to track expenses not only through DTS and on GTCC accounts, but also through the Standard Accounting, Budgeting, and Reporting System (SABRS) using the Outstanding Travel Order and the Negative Un-liquidated Obligations reports. This integrated process ensured that odd things such as military rotator flights and canceled international trips were properly charged, accounted for, and reconciled across all platforms. This in-depth process goes above and beyond a normal administration (S-1) department function, but it ensured clean audits and that the unit had a balanced ledger. Further, Sgt Acevedo and Cpl Martinez-Martinez incorporated the subordinate S-1s into this process ensuring a collective effort could be applied at a moment's notice.

Upon the completion of travel, the Marines sent an email to each of the travelers instructing them how to submit their vouchers. If the traveler surpassed their five-day window, they talked with the traveler to see if they could expedite processing the voucher. This hands-on assistance sped up the submission timeline for all vouchers and also increased the approval rating of vouchers with fewer of them being returned from AOs.

While the team ensured travelers completed their annual requirements online, they also created a detailed PowerPoint to assist with the creation

(Continued on page 9)

of authorizations and vouchers. They also created step-by-step instructions for submitting country clearance requests, further allowing travelers to be self-sufficient. Next, they ensured they had designated slots of time on training schedules across multiple locations in order to provide this travel training to as many personnel as possible. They placed their training on the SharePoint, which made it available to any traveler at any time.

THE ICON

Air Force Installation & Mission Support Center from San Antonio, TX



The Icon Award recognizes 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 Air Force Installation & Mission Support Center (AFIMSC) from San Antonio, Texas.

The United States Air Force Mission Support Center is a headquarter (HQ) level travel pay program supporting 10 Major Commands that supports 43,000 personnel across 82 Air Force sites and bases.

The team provides critical monthly Compliance Tool reports for all Air Force installations to the Quality Assurance team to further process and provide metric data analysis. Data is posted on a Quality Assurance SharePoint site and becomes the basis for units to identify positive and negative

trends and the development of training programs to mitigate discrepancies.

The Air Force Installation & Mission Support Center team conducts an annual Financial Operations workshop for training and execution related to debt management, evacuation voucher processing and payment, compliance tool tracking and settlement procedures, Defense Office of Hearing and Appeals process/submission, debt waivers and remissions, government travel charge card program management, and Lead Defense Travel Administrator training. The 2019 workshop drew over 300 Air Force financial managers, who earned over 9,000 continuing education hours towards the DoD Financial Management Certification program.

The team generates and distributes a weekly DTS all-Air Force permission level report to the installations for them to provide to their respective Defense Travel Administrators. The report compares permission level changes from week to week and is key to identifying personnel with either unauthorized access, personnel assigned to the incorrect unit, or personnel who do not have the proper supporting documentation to perform in their role.

They went above and beyond in crises, providing 24/7 hurricane travel (Hurricane Michael/Dorian) support to include travel card increases/mission critical requests, travel policy interpretations for evacuees, financial operations flights, entitlement clarifications/briefings, evacuation orders quality checks/validations, and voucher payment issue



(Continued on page 10)

resolution. The team established AFIMSC Business Rules in compliance with the JTR, DTS Business Rules, Government Travel Charge Card Policy, and CONUS Evacuation Guide. The evacuation guide, posted to a shared site, allows 24/7 access for all installations faced with a natural or man-made disaster, was used to effectively determine entitlements for 12,900 military members and their families who were forced to evacuate from Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida.

THE PREMIER Ms. Jenny Castro from Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Division, Keyport, WA

The Premier Award recognizes the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Agency Program Coordinator (APC) who demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to cardholders and stakeholders through proactive education, effective communication, responsive customer service, and outstanding program coordination. This year's recipient is Ms. Jenny L. Castro from Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Division.

As the APC at the Echelon 5 Command Naval Sea Logistics Center (NSLC), Ms. Castro manages the GTCC program at five different geographic locations (Keyport, Washington; San Diego, California; Hawthorne, Nevada; Hawaii; and Guam) that include 1,968 travel card accounts with an average of 750 users per month and \$750,000 in purchases.

Customer service is part of what makes Ms. Castro tick. She takes time to speak to each traveler with empathy and discretion through the resolution of all issues. Ms. Castro performs full audits on travelers' accounts who are unable to reconcile on their own. This generally occurs when a traveler has multiple trips in a row and the balances from multiple trips are intermingled. She will sit with the traveler desk-side to review each line of the statement until understanding or resolution is achieved.

She takes every opportunity available to educate travelers and Authorizing Officials. She has been a guest speaker at her organization's monthly Supervisors Forum, training the "Dos and Don'ts of the GTCC." Ms. Castro personally teaches each new employee about cardholder basics to include their required training, how to avoid misuse, and how to



set up split disbursements on their vouchers. She also developed a Government Travel Charge Card trifold, which is now provided to new employees at the time of onboarding.

When required, Ms. Castro contacts the cardholders' chain of command to ensure issues are resolved to prevent delinquency. Her efforts have led to an overall delinquency rate (NUWC Division, Keyport and NSLC combined) of .04 percent for fiscal year 2019, far exceeding the NUWC Division, Keyport goal of 1 percent and the Navy standard of 2 percent. Monthly metrics are electronically maintained and posted to keep management informed of the GTCC delinquency status.

Ms. Castro has acted as a change agent by turning potential misuse into a correctable, non-threatening experience for the traveler. Ms. Castro runs reports out of Citi and Intellilink, proactively looking for transactions within the local geographic area, ATM advances without a corresponding trip, advances outside of the three-day departure window, restaurant purchases over \$100 to identify potential purchase of meals for others, and drugstore/news stand purchases over \$20. She also looks at merchant codes that are not hotels, airlines, transportation centers, ATM withdrawals, or food to determine if there

(Continued on page 11)

were items purchased that could be classified as misuse. Once misuse is identified, she reports it via Intellilink, reports it up the chain of command and also contacts the traveler to have them retake GTCC training. During FY 2019, Ms. Castro's mentoring and training efforts have led NUWC Division, Keyport to an exceptionally few 14 cases of misuse out of 51,300 transactions.

Ms. Castro manages a SharePoint database that maintains all GTCC cardholders training records and automatically sends notifications to the cardholders when their training requirements are within 90, 60, 30 days of being due. Ms. Castro proactively follows up with each traveler within the 30-60 day window to make sure training does not become delinquent.

Ms. Castro developed standard email templates for various GTCC processes, ensuring consistency of message to each recipient. Ms. Castro has created templates, including, step-by-step instructions for applying for a card, training requirements, Citi application approvals for standard and expedited delivery, fraudulent charges, delinquency notifications for 45 and 55 days past due, misuse inquiry, and confirmed misuse. This best practice was shared with NSLC and the 10 Warfare Centers within the Naval Sea Systems Command enterprise.

Thank you award winners for your service!

Do you know an outstanding travel manager who deserves recognition for their work in FY20? Next year's nomination forms will be available at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/award.cfm> this summer, with the nomination period closing in November.



COVID-19 IMPACTS REAL-ID DEADLINE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national emergency declaration, the Department of Homeland Security announced it is extending the REAL ID enforcement deadline by a year. The new deadline for REAL ID enforcement is October 1, 2021.

After this date, all air travelers who are 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID compliant driver's license or another acceptable form of ID to present at the passenger security checkpoint. If you plan to use your state-issued ID or driver's license to fly within the US, consult the TSA website to see if your license is REAL ID compliant. Valid military IDs are acceptable. Even if you have TSA PreCheck, you will still need a REAL ID for use at airport security.

For more information, go to www.tsa.gov/real-id, call 866-289-9673, or follow @askTSA



These examples are from www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/resources/realid_factsheet.pdf but REAL ID markings vary by state so check your local examples to verify that your identification is REAL ID.

TRAVEL MANAGERS IN ACTION

Each year, DTMO recognizes top performers in DoD travel for the value and service they provide to their travel programs through the Excellence in Practice Awards. Below are tips and best practices from this year's Excellence in Practice nominees.



Major Command (MAJCOM) DN19 Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) – maintains a library to house directives, memos & forms, checklists, case law, FMO Control Points, Navy Execution Policy Notices, policies, and training opportunities that DTS users can access. The team was awarded the funding to develop a NAVAIR University DTS Computer Based Training and used it to create an all-inclusive, eight-module, online training course.

The 60th Comptroller Squadron Travel Pay Team – developed an Access database to track DTS Departmental Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers along with pertinent information including dates of training and required documentation, increasing transparency and auditability. This database was recognized as a best practice within the USAF Air Mobility Command and has singlehandedly automated 94 percent of APC processes.

Alejandro Rangel-Correa from Fleet Readiness Center Western Pacific – implemented a process to pay travel claims while travelers were on back-to-back travel with no ability to complete vouchers.

Naval Postgraduate School Travel Office from Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) – documented help desk calls by type of issue, school and department, and traveler. Logs are then cross-referenced with delinquency and misuse data from the GTCC APC and NPS travel data as a whole, thus capturing expressed needs from the travelers and identifying any errors.

Marine Corps Base DTS Help Desk from Marine Expeditionary Forces, Marine Corps Base, 2D Marine Division and 2D Marine Logistics Group – provides

prompt service to the customers that require more extensive support. The team focuses on using these opportunities to promote both the immediate fix to the issue and impart a longer-term improvement in future travel submissions.

Christine Coombes, Donna Corey, Samantha Ferreira, JoAnn Rowley, Gloria Lemos from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division – the team is committed to assisting new employees in completing their training requirements and providing resources. New travelers are required to complete four Trax trainings before their DTS self-registrations are accepted.

DTS Help Desk Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center and Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command from Twentynine Palms, California – the DTS Help Desk provides ODTAs with a checklist to ensure compliance with all responsibilities and help them better understand their functions and processes.

YN2 Andrew Lopez, Nick Nichols, and Alejandro Rangel-Correa from Fleet Readiness Center Western Pacific – the team works hard to provide detailed, targeted, travel support that allows 35 expert sheet metalists, machinists, and aircraft mechanics to travel with ease between Japan and work sites in Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Europe, enabling travelers to focus all of their attention on their mission.

Customer Service Branch from US Army Communications Electronics Command (CECOM), G8, Financial Systems and Accounting Division – created job aides and provided them as supplemental resources to the employees who need a little extra
(Continued on page 13)

instruction.

Crystal Moeller from Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) – worked with her team to produce an NDEA training course, which became mandatory before an employee could be assigned to the role of NDEA. She also developed a NDEA checklist that all NDEAs were required to use to aid in the reduction of errors.

Peggy Baptiste from US Army Cadet Command – mentored ODTAs, NDEAs, and travelers through over-the-shoulder training. Mrs. Baptiste consistently reinforces correct processes by auditing and editing procedures created by subordinate ODTAs to help streamline the authorization and voucher processes for travelers.

Harry Meyer from US Army Cadet Command – developed a method to update his ODTAs on monthly changes to the Joint Travel Regulations and the impact on local business practices.

Angela Howard from Headquarters Marine Corps – after identifying potential improvements during a recent review of practices related to Read-Only-Access rights in DTS, she revised the process, thereby furthering audit readiness.

Jorge Martinez from Reserve Component Command Region Southwest – developed and promoted SOPs specifically for the field operators and travel support personnel that serve as effective training resources for his organization's diverse population of 29 sub-commands with over 550 full-time support and 10,500 selected reservists.

Dora Winter from DFAS Indianapolis – incorporated detailed training processes and her travel knowledge into available virtual and formal training, thus providing necessary context for this Defense Agency's travel policies.

Lisa Perry-Smith from the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) – provides 1-on-1 sessions for travelers to correct errors in their documents, ensuring compliance and audit readiness. She also uses Compliance Tool errors to train Reviewing Officials and Approving Officials on target areas for learning improved processes.

Connie Lucas from Tobyhanna Army Depot, US Army

Communications Electronics Command – provides travelers and finance and budget DTAs with year-end guidance and instructions for building and using new LOAs/Budgets. She also works hard to keep the customer service team up to date on all the training necessary to provide extraordinary support.

Roma Williams from Navy Region Southeast Reserve Component Command, Jacksonville – ensures a standardized process for managing invitational orders is used when she guides administrators to properly create e-invitational orders.

Staff Sergeant Christopher Schramm from the 60th Comptroller Squadron – completes monthly audits to identify discrepancies and brings them to the attention of ODTAs. He works with the ODTAs to correct issues so they are better prepared next time. He also maintains a DTS SharePoint site that has DTS guides, checklists, and the most current version of the Air Force Business Rules so that all personnel at Travis Air Force Base have access to the latest training resources and information.

YN2 George Orange III from Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar – trains staff including incoming personnel and non-frequent travelers on proper Navy travel procedures in order to comply with internal policies and instruction.

CPT Christopher Lankford from 139th Medical Brigade – provides the GTCC balances of soldiers to AOs as needed to ensure the split disbursement covers the entire GTCC balance.

Corporal Abraham Nowak from 2nd Law Enforcement Battalion – improved processes for the Commanding General's Readiness Inspection, incorporated a checklist that shows specific, actionable results to demonstrate the travel program is meeting requirements.

Catherine Carroll from Submarine Learning Center (SLC) – developed a SharePoint site repository to provide information at any time to support SLC services 11 sites over six time zones. She created a Citi report to capture balances due and runs it 1-2 weeks prior to statement closeout to capture those accounts that are about to be 30 days overdue and provides cardholders with instructions on clearing the amount due before becoming past due.

(Continued on page 14)

Paige Crawford from the 88th Comptroller Squadron Wright-Patterson Air Force Base – developed excellent strategies for reviewing the account activity report which includes over 30,000 monthly transactions to identify possible misuse, and alerting APCs to suspect transactions by filtering by transaction type, location, and merchant.

Sergeant Cordell Banks from the Marine Corps Air Station, Marine Corps Base Hawaii – uses the GTCC reporting tools on a weekly basis, which allows for proactive delinquency prevention. He also keeps cardholders and command leadership ahead of potential delinquencies by using email or telephone notifications with single day response requirement.



DoD BUS AGREEMENT #5

The new DoD Bus Agreement #5 has been released, replacing Military Bus Agreement #4. The new agreement requires that all carriers or agent representatives, including current DoD-approved carriers, interested in participating in the DoD Bus Program submit a new DoD Bus Application AND register in U.S. Transportation Command's Groups Operational Passenger System (GOPAX).

Transportation Officers have the option to utilize GOPAX to procure bus transportation and thereafter submit all 'Requests for Service' through the system. Carriers bid on those requests through GOPAX by providing 'Rate and Service Proposals.' For more information, visit <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bus.cfm>

UPGRADE TO THE GTCC PROGRAM PLATFORM USED BY APCs

In early March, Citibank® successfully upgraded its platform used by Agency Program Coordinators (APCs) who manage Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) programs for their organizations. The migration to Total Systems Services 2 (TSYS-2) improves the back-end payment processing and other related payment services for the entire GTCC program.

While there is little change for DoD cardholders, APCs will see an improved interface in both CitiManager and CitiManager Transaction Management System, plus improvements on other tools utilized on a daily basis to manage the travel card program. A few notable changes that will enhance program management include:

- Improved fraud detection and prevention, resulting in fewer false cardholder authorization declines due to fraud.
- A single instance/log-on for CitiManager, to include Transaction Management and Reporting (previously APCs had separate log-on/access to account management and reporting tools).
- Improved, more efficient work-flow for processing online individually billed account applications, which reduces the time for approval and issuance
- Cardholders on short-term assignments will have the ability to add additional mailing addresses to their account without changing the primary address.

It is imperative that APCs attend training in order to fully understand changes to the online features, how new applications are processed, and how they can better manage features available on cardholder accounts. APCs can learn more about the changes, improvements, and training courses available by accessing the Citibank Learning Center, via the CitiManager non-cardholder login.

MODERNIZING PCS TRAVEL: THE AIR FORCE PILOT PROGRAM LEADING THE WAY

The US Air Force is piloting a commercial solution using a commercial Software as a Service from mLINQS to improve Permanent Change of Station (PCS) travel by automating financial processes to simplify and standardize the order writing process, provide more accurate and complete cost estimates, facilitate fast and accurate vouchers (claims), and provide consistent enforcement of PCS policies. During GovTravels 2020, the Dispatch caught up with Chelsea Weber, the Air Force program manager leading the pilot to learn more about the project.

Dispatch: Good afternoon, Chelsea. PCS travel has been a challenge for DoD for a long time. How did this pilot get its start? What is the scope of the pilot?

Chelsea: Obviously, PCS has been a pain point for DoD, and Air Force specifically, for some time. I started in 2018 when mLINQS commercial relocation accounting software came onboard with the Air Force. It was brought on as a solution to look at three big challenges for Air Force PCS: non-auditable processes, late payments to service members after PCS, and the loss of money surrounding PCS travel.

A little background on mLINQS: the company stood up in 2003 and began providing relocation solutions in 2004 and now they support roughly 40 federal agencies' relocation services; so it felt like a very organic pairing between a need and a service. SAP Concur does TDY for federal agencies and mLINQS does the PCS travel for all of the agencies, so it's kind of two sides of the same coin. When the Air Force first looked at mLINQS, we were initially only looking at the vouchering support functions, but realizing how orders-centric mLINQS is as a system, and seeing the opportunity/benefit of shifting the business processes, we are working on an end-to-end solution for PCS travel.

We are currently focusing on civilian PCS for the first phase of roll out. Requirements around uncommon PCS types with more complicated business rules or additional policies/regulations are still being looked at and the tool is being vetted through.



What are the goals and objectives of the pilot? What's "the dream"? It sounds like this SaaS solution is already being used a lot of other places, so now you're figuring out how it works for the Air Force? Is the intent to eventually roll mLINQS out across the Air Force?

Chelsea: Yes, it's already a developed system that's out there. Originally we were only testing the feasibility of using this SaaS product. The goal was to verify that mLINQS could compute a voucher to Air Force satisfaction, so we did User Acceptance Testing using real vouchers that had already been processed through RTS (Reserve Travel System) and compared the two. So now the project has progressed to gathering requirements, configuring mLINQS to Air Force needs, and then testing again.

There are definitely a lot of moving parts when it comes to PCS that most people probably don't really think about.

Chelsea: I think that's been the dilemma. We started this with a financial management focus, so we were only concerned about the vouchering part of it, but after seeing how mLINQS works and the potential value-add of starting from the order-writing process, we have really seen how many different components are touching PCS, it's a very complicated process.

(Continued on page 16)

This year's theme at GovTravels is "Shaping the Future Traveler Experience." Is mLINQS truly an end-to-end solution for PCS?

Chelsea: Yes! The system is designed to be an end-to-end solution; it natively unites the order-writing process with the traveler's self-vouchering portal and goes through the voucher process all within one system. Ideally, mLINQS will bridge all those processes, increase efficiency and auditability, and improve communication and the end-user experience.

What are some of the benefits for the PCS traveler?

Chelsea: mLINQS has a self-vouchering portal that I mentioned where users can view their orders, submit their vouchers, upload receipts, and it can be configured to allow them to view their document status (pending, in review, etc).

It sounds like the pilot is an enormous business process reengineering exercise. What are the challenges you have faced in streamlining and simplifying the PCS process? Because it seems like this was also an exercise in discovery of the current tangle of systems and processes.

Chelsea: It very much is reengineering our business processes. PCS touches on so many different organizations and there's a large number of stakeholders that all want to make sure that their PCS is accounted for, and the buy-in of these organizations is very critical. We are departing from these traditional business processes where everything is "siloe" and everyone is just taking care of their end of it, and they don't really see what happens before it gets to them or after it leaves them. Since mLINQS starts with the authorization, the PCS process using mLINQS is extremely orders-driven. That's a divergence from the current Air Force civilian PCS process, which is highly voucher-driven. This is going to require a huge shift in how we think about PCS. We are getting it right in the beginning, causing less confusion and work on the backend. This is also while trying to balance Air Force and DoD policies and procedures while acclimating to using a Commercial Off the Shelf product (which I know the DTM prototype is working through as well). You don't want to over-customize a COTS but at the same time you have all of these processes and regulations. Since a goal is to consolidate the number of systems by using

this enterprise product, we have to make sure that the capability is there.

Would you say the biggest challenge is just making sure it's the right fit, or getting that buy-in?

Chelsea: Probably both. We want to make sure we are doing this correctly and we are dealing with a lot of hesitation with new things like using a COTS and then having to adjust to a new business process as well.

You had the opportunity to brief the Defense Travel Governance Board here at GovTravels. The DTGB sets strategic direction and manages the execution of change across the Defense Travel Enterprise. They are an important audience for you, especially if the long term strategy is to rollout this capability outside of just the Air Force and even across the Department. How well were your brief and demonstration received?

Chelsea: I really felt like the demonstration was received with a lot of optimism and there were a lot of insightful questions and encouraging remarks at the end. I know that PCS can be a very emotional topic for a lot of people, especially because most uniformed service members have had a PCS in their career, and a lot of civilians have as well. It's personal, everyone has a stake in it in one way or another. And how Air Force does PCS is obviously different from how other branches look at PCS so a lot of the questions we were getting were specifically about how other organizations would use mLINQS. We don't have all of those answers yet; we don't know how this is going to work for every organization, but the audience was really aware of the shortfalls of the current process, and everyone is eager to find a solution.

The questions that you got are a proof that people are already starting to think about how it could be implemented within their organizations and asking "how will this work for me?" As you said, a few of the challenges you face are similar to challenges DTMO and DMDC have faced in our Defense Travel Modernization Prototype. What opportunities for collaborating do you see there for DTMO supporting the Air Force in making the mLINQS pilot a success?

Chelsea: We look to DTMO for insight on how to navigate the business process reengineering and hope to follow through in many of the same areas. We are deviating from how we traditionally

(Continued on page 17)

thought about travel in the past so we are leaning on DTMO for guidance regarding policy and strategies when breaking away from conventional methods of doing things. Balancing how we will do things and doing away with inefficiencies.

One last question, this is your first time at GovTravels. How was your experience?

Chelsea: I really enjoyed GovTravels. It was great being able to network with others in the travel field and to connect with people that I have only ever talked to via email before, put names to faces. It's also a very exciting time to be involved in travel modernization.

This is really exciting, DTMO looks forward to helping further Air Force and PCS process improvements now and in the future. Thank you for all of this info and your time, Take care!

DISCLAIMER: References to any commercial products and services in this article are not an endorsement or Government sanctioning of those non-Federal entities, services, or products.

The Defense Travel Dispatch is a quarterly newsletter published by the Defense Travel Management Office. The reproduction of the Dispatch newsletter is permissible for official use only. To subscribe to our mailing list or view past editions go to <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/dispatch.cfm>

**Volume XIII, Issue 1
SPRING 2020**

SKIP THE LINE WHEN YOU RENT A CAR



IMAGINE...

You are on TDY with your supervisor to San Diego, your flight was delayed, it's July, and the airport is packed. You're nervous because you have an important meeting in a few hours and you're not sure what traffic will be like. When you get to the rental car counter, your heart sinks – the line is so long! Now imagine a way to avoid this nightmare – sign up for the U.S. Government Rental Car Frequent Renter Programs.

When you sign up for rental car frequent renter programs through the DTMO website, the government discount number is automatically pre-populated in your user profiles. Each time you use your frequent renter numbers, you get all of the benefits of the U.S. Rental Car program including insurance along with extra convinces like counter by-pass (where available) that allow you to walk right by those long lines.

After you have signed up for vendor programs, be sure to add your frequent renter numbers to your travel system profile so they are automatically included in your reservation each time you book a rental car. The benefits offered to the U.S. Government are restricted to official travel.

Go to [defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rentalCarFRP.cfm](https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rentalCarFRP.cfm) for information on how to join each vendor program and instructions for how to add your frequent renter numbers with your DTS profile.