

DEAMS

Current Account

Financial Management at Your Fingertips

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DEAMS relocates news, info to AF website

The Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System has a new website for news and information of interest to members of the Air Force and general public.

The site at www.deams.af.mil replaces the previous DEAMS public website, which had been hosted on a U.S. Transportation Command server. Information posted on the new site includes news and feature articles, fact sheets, biographies, a newsletter archive, a copy of the current DEAMS 101 briefing, links to related websites, a list of frequently asked questions, and more.

The Air Force functional manager for DEAMS, Randy Newcome, welcomed the new site.

“This website is a timely addition to our communications and outreach efforts,” said Newcome. “It will give users quick access to the latest information about the program in a format that mirrors other public Air Force sites.”

DEAMS was initiated in 2003 as a joint effort between the Air Force, U.S. Transportation Command, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

USTRANSCOM was the lead agent for DEAMS through the technical demonstration at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. According to Newcome, “It makes sense to house our products in the Air Force domain now that our focus has shifted to deploying DEAMS throughout the Air Force.”

DEAMS uses industry-proven Oracle® software to provide war fighters with timely, accurate and reliable financial information leading to more efficient and effective decisions.

The system is scheduled to deploy to McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., in October and will roll out across the Air Force by major command in a series of releases through 2016.

The screenshot displays the DEAMS website interface. At the top, it features the title "Defense Enterprise and Accounting Management System" and the U.S. AIR FORCE logo. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for HOME, NEWS, PHOTOS, ART, and QUESTIONS. The main content area is divided into several sections: "DEAMS" with a brief description, "DEAMS Mission" with a globe icon and mission statement, "DEAMS News" with a list of recent news items, "Current Account Newsletter" with a "DEAMS Current Account" graphic, "AF Headlines" with a list of news items, "Inside DEAMS" with a search bar and "DEAMS Leadership" section featuring photos of Edwin H. "Randy" Newcome, Russell H. Mielke, and Nancy Jeanne Rosenberg, and "DEAMS Facts" with a list of links. At the bottom, there is a "Related Links" section with links to SAFIRM, DFAS, U.S. Transportation Command, CERS, and Navy ERP. A circular seal is visible at the bottom center of the page.

View from the Top - Part 1

Pentagon official discusses DEAMS

Michael V. Sorrento, Chief Information Officer for the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller (SAF/FM), sat down with the “Current Account” staff in Fairview Heights, Ill., on March 14 to answer questions about DEAMS. This article is Part One of a two-part series, which will conclude in next month’s newsletter.

Q: Where do we stand with stability, from a user’s perspective?

A: Although I am not a user yet, my focus is all about the user. The user should always be at the center of the capability, and we don’t want to deploy a capability that is not ready.

A year ago, we were working on what it meant to define a capability that was effective for the user and which also achieved the measurable outcomes established by senior leaders. The output of that effort resulted in an organized set of updates to the system to make the users more successful in performing their jobs.

Really what we are doing in this process is maturing the capability that’s fielded. We’re not building new capabilities, we’re maturing it. We’re making it more effective for the users so that if there are acceptable workarounds, we know what they are and we operationalize them because not every system can be 100 percent automated. We have to understand where the gaps are, potentially where the break points are, so we can make decisions about where to focus our resources. Do we want to automate that process or is it even worth the investment? There’s a balancing act that we’re doing in that regard.

Q: Once we achieve stability will DEAMS remain stable as we roll it out to the rest of the Air Force?

A: Part of my definition of stability is not only fixing specific problems in



Michael V. Sorrento

the system, but also operationalizing certain manual workarounds which were identified in the process of deploying the system into the currently constrained environment within the Department of Defense. However, more importantly, the ability to stabilize DEAMS is dependent on applying software engineering discipline into the entire life cycle of the system.

So the idea here is that we’re not just fixing these things and all of the sudden saying, “Oh, we’re done.” We are setting in motion a pattern of information technology life cycle management for the program that’s going to be in existence for the entire span of the operational capability. So we put discipline behind how we execute requirements through deployment and all of the steps in between, following the guide of a senior level governance body. The system will always need some care to operate effectively. We are moving toward a model that’s much more industry proven with best practices so that the level of care is minimized to control costs yet sufficient to get the job done well.

To support achieving this vision, SAF/FM is implementing an Information Technology Infrastructure Library-based initiative to

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support the process methodology for all financial management systems in the Air Force portfolio.

This ITIL framework puts the user at the center of the focal point and the maintenance of that fielded capability is the highest priority. That's the key, and the user is going to inform us of that operational capability through the metrics that we receive, generally through our Tier 1 help desk. How we take that data and resolve them, whether it's a training issue, a change management issue, or becomes a system change, that all becomes part of what I call that circle of execution that says your system needs to be sustained. And then when you have changes that drive to it, you are improving the system and you are measuring the effectiveness of those changes.

At the same time, we have another part of that sphere that's new capability. So you have a sustainment capability but you have new capabilities that you have to add to it, primarily so you can enhance the experience of these users or field it elsewhere. If you can take the existing operational capability and just keep fielding it, then you're in great shape. We've got to get to that point. We've got to get to the point where we have the capabilities in the box that are working effectively that can be stamped out across the Air Force. We are not quite there yet with DEAMS as it has only recently been recognized as a successful technology demonstration as the program prepares for an operational assessment.

The comfort level in getting to the stability answer is we also need to be more predictable about what's in the environment. That includes not building (patching) every week or every day. That was a very, very focused effort to get to a monthly and eventually quarterly build cycle – and people will gag over that because it's, "Oh my gosh, we've got to fix this now!" But every time we go into the environment and

change something we run the risk of breaking something else.

The "fix immediately" tendency has since been avoided and the more rigorous software engineering discipline has been applied providing sufficient time to schedule requirements analysis and design reviews. This provides senior leaders much better decision support data to make key decisions on whether something is absolutely a worthwhile thing to change and fix, build it, test it, and field it in a controlled way – or simply acknowledge an existing process flaw and apply other resources to it. You've got to give yourself enough time to do that. It cannot be urgent. If there is an urgent thing, we're going to take that up through an emergency change process; we're not going to skip these steps, we're just going to accelerate these steps.

That's another control feature. We have deliberately focused our approach to get to the point where we can control what the user experiences are on a day-to-day basis. And at least if we don't like it, we know what it is. If we want to improve it, we can methodically decide how we want to go about doing that based on a schedule of controlled releases.

Q: What is the status of patches and stability in the near term?

A: The specific items identified as stability patches are nearly all completed with one additional release scheduled for the end of April. DEAMS is a product which is producing results for the current user base. It's not an end-to-end accounting system at this point, which the initial vision was set for it to be. We need to get to that state through these controlled, methodical and well-planned means. In other words, what we put into DEAMS

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we can report out of DEAMS; currently we can't do that effectively. We've got some other improvements we need to make but the scope of what DEAMS is today is producing the results which allow people to do things on a financial management perspective that they need to do.

Yes, there are some things that we want to improve on. We can create requisitions and we can pay bills with some of the extended capabilities of DEAMS and other systems that are supporting it, but DEAMS has the requisite accounting information and financial management data that is allowing users at Scott Air Force Base to do the necessary work. Is it the end state? No, it's not the end state, so that's where the vision comes in that we have to get to the end state.

Q: Is it at a state where we can take it to McConnell?

A: Today, we are assessing that question. With the planned stability work nearly completed, there will be a series of assessments

to get to the answer. By early May I would expect to be fully engaged in reviewing the status with senior leaders and with our user base.

Q: So a decision on McConnell might be in the late May time frame?

A: That answer will be aligned with the assessment of the results of the stability patches as well as progress on planned network improvements, training, and change management programs. But the real important McConnell driver here is we're going through an operational assessment with the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center. It's going to kick off in May and go through about August. An independent view of how the system is performing against its requirements is going to come out of that report. It's not, "Wait until the report's out to get the answer." We're going to know along the way, so we'll have informed checkpoints. But the no kidding, "Can the system sustain additional activity going to McConnell" question is going to drive out of that assessment.



Michael V. Sorrento (second from right) listens as Randy Newcome, Air Force Functional Manager for DEAMS, provides an update on the October deployment of DEAMS to McConnell Air Force Base, Kan. Listening left to right are Nancy-Jeanne Rosenberg, Lawrence Watson, Jim Quaschnik, Terri Drees, and Henry Pastorelli. Sorrento visited the DEAMS Functional Management Office in Fairview Heights, Ill., March 14.



On FIAR!

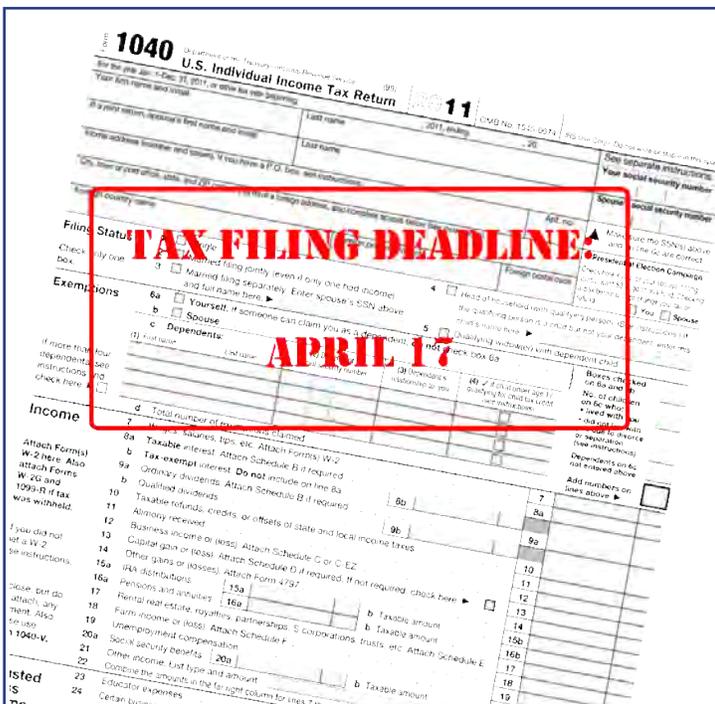
(Top to bottom) Carolyn Jones, Mary Taitano, Lynne Keith and Cheryl Six receive certificates of recognition from Michael V. Sorrento, Chief Information Officer for the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller. The recognition was for conducting internal control testing to evaluate audit readiness for the Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System. DEAMS is a key component of Air Force Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness. The certificate was presented at the DEAMS Functional Management Office in Fairview Heights, Ill., during Sorrento's visit on March 14. The women are Defense Finance and Accounting Service Mission Support Accountants at nearby Scott Air Force Base.

DEAMS Transitions

Departing

Lisa Holland
Government
Training

Shirley Jackson
Government
Procure to Pay



Quotable

“Auditability is a goal that every commander, every manager, and every functional specialist must understand and embrace to improve efficiency and accountability at the DOD.”



DOD photo

Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense

“We need to transition to a modern financial system that is audit compliant, and getting DEAMS fully functional and deployed is our solution.”



USAF photo

Dr. Jamie Morin
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial
Management and Comptroller

DEAMS Outreach

Do you have an upcoming event? Regional conference? Mini-PDI? Speakers are available to update your group on the status of DEAMS.

Contact the DEAMS Functional Management Office at (618) 622-5700 or via email at ustc-deams@ustranscom.mil.

DEAMS will be on display at the American Society of Military Comptrollers’ Professional Development Institute, May 30-31, in Anaheim, Calif. Randy Newcome, Air Force Functional Manager for DEAMS; and Lt. Col. Tracy Watkins, 375th Comptroller Squadron Commander at Scott AFB, Ill., will present, “Making Your DEAMS Come True: A System Update,” during Service Day activities May 30.

Visit the DEAMS public website at www.deams.af.mil

Questions about Web content may be addressed by email to:
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