



October 2018

Chapter Newsletter

ASMC – Gulf Coast Chapter

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Join ASMC Today!!!

The current fee is \$40 for one year or \$114 for three years. The membership fee is non-refundable and non-transferrable.

President's Corner

Dane Manfredi, Hurlburt VP

Happy Closeout Season ASMC Gulf Coast Chapter members! I hope you all are enjoying the end to your summer and for those that have kids that returned to school this August, my best wishes to you all within this school year. Surely, a little less Fortnite and more studies and school activities will serve our kids well as they grow their minds to become our future generational leaders.

On the school note, I want to thank all of you that contributed to our Back to School Supply Drive, as we gathered many supplies to donate to the Children in Crisis and Children's Advocacy Center. It is always enjoyable to give back to this great community, as this Chapter continues to do through all of your great efforts. Please continue to look for announcements for our upcoming donation opportunities and community service events!

This time of year not only marks new beginnings with kids off to start a new school year, but within our career field we have the beginning to the end of another fiscal year with Closeout fast approaching us. As we head into this Closeout Season, we all know that time seems to be limited to accomplish all we have at work to do, let alone our daily life taskers off the job. Although time is inevitably limited, I encourage everyone during this busy time of year to not lose sight that we all need to strive for balance in our daily lives and ensure to allow yourselves the time needed to be both mentally and physically at your best. Activities such as making an office ritual during lunch to walk outside with co-workers, ensuring to attend your kids' school activities, or we all know Sparky the dog never will turn down the daily after work walk too. Just be sure during this busy time of year to treat your body like you would a car you want to have run at its best and ensure to run it each day and loaded with proper fuel.

Lastly, I want to leave you all with a good analogy that I read the other day to consider utilizing within your daily life and as we look to accomplish those Closeout taskers. No salad would ever be that good if we only sought to group with people that only can offer lettuce. Rather, the best salads are those that have lettuce, croutons, tomatoes, diced fruit, etc. Therefore, we should seek to listen to others' opinions and values, as just maybe we can grow from ideas outside of just our own, especially ideas to better achieve our endless Closeout taskers. After all, God gave us all two ears and one mouth for a reason.

Save the Dates!

Fischer House - See Email

ASMC Executive Council Meeting- 8 Nov 2018

Nov [Luncheon](#) - 07 Nov 2018 @ Two Trees



Volunteer Opportunities



Big thank you to Mr. David Herndon for scheduling a Pet welfare cleanup day! If you would like more information about how to help us maintain our 5-star rating and help animals at the same time please contact him for information!

Additional dates and information to come in a separate email! If you would like to volunteer please contact Maika Andrew.



THANK YOU 96th
Comptroller Squadron for
supporting the Fischer
House on 2 Oct!

Continuing Education & Certification!

This year, the Gulf Coast Chapter awarded \$15,000.00 in scholarships to six local residents. The scholarships are for high school graduates, undergraduate students, and ASMC members currently enrolled in college who are seeking degrees in academic disciplines relating to financial/resource management (such as business administration, economics, public administration, accounting, or finance). In each category, students are ranked based on scholastic achievement, leadership ability, extracurricular activities, career/academic goals, and financial need.

The 2018 recipients are as follows:

- Meridith Schmieder: University of West Florida
- Charles F. Shackelford: University of Georgia
- Brianna Ross: University of West Florida
- Sierra Legendre: University of West Florida
- Dorrian Beard: University of West Florida
- Rachel Hyde: University of West Florida



Continuing Education & Certification!

Current EDFMT Dates

Host	Location	City, State	Start Date	End Date
DoD	Falls Church, VA	Falls Church, VA	28 Nov 2018	30 Nov 2018
DFAS	Rome, NY	Rome, NY	28 Nov 2018	30 Nov 2018
Army National Guard	Camp Robinson, AR	Camp Robinson, AR	03 Dec 2018	07 Dec 2018
Army National Guard	Ft Belvoir, VA	Ft. Belvoir, VA	03 Dec 2018	07 Dec 2018
Air Force	LA AFB, CA	LA AFB, CA	03 Dec 2018	07 Dec 2018
Air Force	Kirtland AFB, NM	Kirtland AFB, NM	10 Dec 2018	14 Dec 2018
DFAS	Limestone, ME	Limestone, ME	10 Dec 2018	14 Dec 2018



Event Information

Event Type: Training (Functional, Technical)

Target Audience: No target audience.

URL: <http://test.com/>

Description:

The Enhanced Defense Financial Management Training Course is a five day, intensive financial management review course taught in three modules. The course is provided by the Department of Defense, and is licensed and copyrighted by the American Society of Military Comptrollers. The course is offered at a variety of locations (including overseas locations) throughout the year to make it easier for personnel to attend and minimize travel expenses.

Remarks:

National ASMC News

Elsie Steffany Memorial Scholarship Award ASMC is pleased to announce a new ASMC scholarship award available for competition among those of you who are DoD and USCG members of ASMC and who do not currently hold the CDFM credential. To memorialize the service of Ms. Elsie Steffany, who passed away as a result of a tragic accident on 1 June 2018 during our National PDI, the ASMC National Executive Committee (Board) approved the establishment of the Elsie Steffany Memorial Scholarship Award to be presented annually at National PDI. The ASMC Board also approved the establishment of the Elsie Steffany Memorial Scholarship Award Committee (chaired by Mr. Keith Buchholz, VP, Defense-wide Board member).

Elsie was a GS-15 employee of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller). A member of our ASMC Washington Chapter, she was also a Certified Defense Financial Manager (CDFM) and participated in activities of our Redstone-Huntsville Chapter in Alabama, while on temporary assignment at Headquarters, Army Materiel Command. Following are details developed and approved by the committee and the Board regarding the composition of the Elsie Steffany Memorial Scholarship Award, eligibility, nomination process, and timelines.

Award Composition

The scholarship award will cover the following costs:

- Enrollment for two years as a candidate in the ASMC Certified Defense Financial Manager (CDFM) program
- CDFM Textbook
- Participation in one Enhanced Defense Financial Management Training Course (subject to course availability and approval of the awardee's organization)
- Three exams (one each for CDFM Module 1, Module 2, and Module 3)
- Registration to attend (subject to approval of the awardee's organization) the annual ASMC National PDI, in which the scholarship award will be presented

Deadline 31 Dec 2018

Eligibility

ASMC members, who do not possess the CDFM credential and are assigned to the Department of Defense or the US Coast Guard, may apply for the scholarship award. **Click Deadline date for more information**

RAPID ITERATION – IT'S NOT JUST FOR TECH COMPANIES

by 2nd Lt Howard Shao, AFSOC

The military has a tendency to plan things to death. From the conception of a new idea to actually executing the decision, we tend to focus too much on the theory phase and not enough on the testing phase. For example, in 2015, the Air Force talked about creating a help center phone line at Air Force Financial Services Center (AFFSC) in which anyone could call in and ask questions regarding their pay and status of travel vouchers. After planning this for a while, the call center never came to fruition and therefore wasted a lot of manpower and resources in the planning phase. Our acquisition process is similarly glacial in its pace of fielding weaponry. We are wedded to a rigid process that seeks perfection through intense planning over speedier methods used across the private sector. After participating in an Innovation Conference in Washington, DC and reading *The Lean Startup* by Eric Ries, I tested some innovative theories in our Financial Operations Flight (FMF) at Cannon AFB.

We performed a simple exercise in our office known as the “Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge,” made famous by Tom Wujec’s TED talk. The objective of this exercise is simple: build the tallest tower with only 20 pieces of spaghetti, 1 yard of string, 1 yard of tape, and 1 marshmallow. The only stipulation is that the marshmallow must be at the top of the tower at the end of the challenge. Most groups spent the majority of their time in the planning phase. Participants argued over who was in charge and talked about how to build the tower, but failed to actually test their theories. Only at the last minute did the teams realize that they had not considered the marshmallow that must be put at the top of the tower. Most towers collapsed under the weight of the marshmallow. By the time, the teams realized their tower could not support the weight of the marshmallow; it was too late to make any changes to their design.

The purpose of this challenge is to bring to light the valuable concept of rapid iteration. The idea is that startup businesses, much like the Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge, need to test theories quickly, and if failure does occur, to fail forward. Companies can benefit from testing their theoretical concepts quickly so that they can identify issues early in the process. By identifying early issues, companies are then able to pivot their projected path and save valuable man-hours and money which otherwise might be needlessly spent.

My squadron’s mission statement is to “Enable Air Commando readiness and lethality through premier financial services and expert decision support.” We focus on assisting customers on financial issues while also striving to meet HHQ metrics. While this is not a technological venture, the notion of rapid iteration can also be successfully applied to low-tech innovation. A real-world example that challenged my flight was the organization of our various sections, limited by our low manning. We did not have enough manning to: 1) accomplish our daily tasks, and 2) provide premier customer service to our members.

In response to this issue, we came up with an idea to disband our dedicated customer service section and instead put those people into our back shop to assist with daily tasks, such as running reports and meeting deadlines. To test this idea, we put a desk in our lobby with two technicians to better serve our customers. One technician would sign members in to better track why people were coming in. With this information, we would be able to pre-emptively answer any questions customers may have via our monthly newsletter. The other technician would answer any quick-fix issues, and if the issues proved to be difficult to solve in a timely manner, they would send the customer to our back shop for further assistance. Another addendum to this solution was that we would have to spend over \$10,000 to procure new desks so that we have space for our whole flight in the back shop. In theory, everything would work out.

After two weeks, I asked for feedback from my flight. They expressed issues with the distractions from customers in the back shop and also the lack of privacy for customers at our front desk. After listening to the technicians, the FMF leadership team decided to go with a different system in which one technician sits up at the front counter and two full-time customer service technicians sit in another room to assist other customers. We have been testing this system for less than a month, and the feedback is positive. Both customers and technicians believe that the new system satisfies the need for privacy while also enabling us to track why people are coming in.

The lesson I learned from this experiment is that rapid iteration helped us avoid unnecessarily spending the \$10,000 for a result that was less than adequate. By testing my hypothesis, I figured out that the system I had in mind did not materialize as planned. By figuring this out this early in the process, I was able to pivot and create a new system to help both FMF’s productivity and expedite our customer service wait times without spending any money. We are still in the testing phase and hopefully, the updated system continues to work well. If it doesn’t, we will be ready to further test and refine our theories while receiving feedback from the flight.

As leaders, we will never have full situational awareness when making a decision. For too long, we have elected to plan for all feasible contingencies when the use of rapid iteration can provide us with viable solutions at reduced costs in terms of time and money. The Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge’s most eye-opening result was that kindergartners tended to fare much better than the average MBA student (who serially planned the test to death). Perhaps there’s a lesson to be learned—effective innovation comes naturally from simple experimentation and childlike enthusiasm.