

**NAME OF SYSTEM:**

**Allotment Disbursement Record**

**ORIGINATOR:**

**Air Force Accounting and  
Finance Center**

**Department of the Air Force  
3800 York Street,  
Denver, Colorado 80205**

**OBJECTIVE.** To establish an improved off-line system for storing, maintaining, searching and retrieving personnel pay and disbursement data.

**BACKGROUND.** The Air Force Accounting and Finance Center provides technical supervision, advice, and guidance to the accounting and finance functional elements of the Air Force and performs centralized accounting and allotment disbursement functions. In the allotment disbursement activity, more than \$1 billion is paid out annually in connection with 14.5 million individual pay transactions. As an example of the enormity of this operation, in 1968 it took 1.8 million pages of 14 x 11 inch special computer print-out paper to record payment data. These listings were subsequently decollated and bound in volumes holding 500 pages, with a yearly total of 3,500 volumes.

Inquiries pertaining to allotment matters are received from within the Government as well as by the principals involved. The allotment inquiries are generally concerned with nonreceipt, incorrect amount, wrong name, or loss. An evaluation of the time spent in fulfilling a search request revealed an average of about 2.5 minutes per search, with about 300 Center personnel having access to the voucher records. In the case of many daily telephone inquiries, only 44 percent of the calls could be answered without a followup call.

With the introduction of a second-generation computer system to handle a variety of automated finance systems, not including the

check disbursement function, a problem arose relative to the voucher record printouts from the computer. The problem mainly concerned the need to convert digital data quickly and economically into readable form that would be compatible with the computer's other capabilities. The evaluation of various options recommended that a COM (computer output to microfilm) system was the best answer.

**THE NEW METHOD.** Magnetic tape reels containing the allotment disbursement information are placed on a magnetic tape drive and the data is fed directly into an S. D. 4400 Document Recorder. Through an internal computerized program this equipment converts the magnetic tape impulses into readable characters that are recorded on 16-mm. microfilm. This conversion is performed at the rate of 62,500 characters a second which is equivalent to four computer printout pages of information. The microfilm, after developing, is used to make several negative duplicate copies for use in the Central Inquiry Office. The original copy, after proper treatment, becomes the archival master copy of the allotment disbursement activity. The working copies of microfilm are then cut into 100-foot lengths, placed in the FILMAC 400 system's film cartridges, and taken to the Central Inquiry Office files.

The Inquiry Office operation may be compared to the operation of a data bank. The office contains three sets of microfilmed disbursement records that are housed in rotary, vertical containers. Each of the three search stations is manned by three to four inquiry clerks and contains one file set and two FILMAC 400 reader-printers, plus three or four telephone outlets. The files contain the current three months data, which is updated monthly. Individual cartridges hold about 2,000 pages of information, with 50 individual records per film image. Thus, each cartridge may hold as many as 100,000 records.

All records are arranged numerically by the last two digits of an individual's Social Security number. Cartridges are positioned within the container to visibly show its range of record numbers. The image finding is

performed by the odometer method. Each searcher, having knowledge of both the cartridge's range of numbers and the number and name being searched, is able to estimate the linear position of the record within a few frames. The system is relatively simple and allows most searches to be completed within 15 seconds.

Search actions are generated from external as well as internal sources. The external requests are received by letter or by telephone. All incoming phone calls at the Finance Center's main switchboard are immediately referred to one of the open lines to the Inquiry Office. About 5,000 such calls are received each month. Internal search requests are received via a search request form and are usually acted upon in a matter of minutes.

Once a record is located and placed on the reader-printer, the searcher has three methods of responding to the requester. If requested by phone, the response may be read directly from the reader screen; if requested internally, the answer may be transcribed on a search request form; and if requested by letter, either a form answer or a "half page" hard copy printout of the record may be mailed to the researcher. The hard copy fea-

ture of the printer is the most practical since the record requested is only one of 50 contained on each film frame. Usually, all of the search actions can be handled at the search clerk's normal work location.

**REMARKS.** The principal advantage of this system over the former search methods, in terms of the Accounting and Finance Center's mission, is the much faster response to service member inquiries. Additionally, the following benefits have also accrued as a result of adopting this COM technique:

1. Because of the much faster computer output resulting from this new system, about 500 additional computer hours are now available annually for other applications.
2. Since the system's inception, requirements for more than one million sets of multiple-part, tab paper have been eliminated.
3. The present storage space for active and inactive disbursement records amounts to 1,944 cubic feet. Once the microfilm system completely eliminates the paper records, the space reduction ratio will be 50 to 1.

## ALLOTMENT DISBURSEMENT RECORD

