

It makes me who I am.

Last Monday, as a regular workday every morning, I proceeded to sign-in on a computer to check my work e-mail and continue with my in-processing since I just PCS'd several weeks ago. This time I noticed something different on the Window's sign-in home screen, the system reflects I now belong to ACC 23rd MXS, but I also noticed my last name is misspelled and my thought was "it's ok, it happens all the time."

I am not sure if it is just me, but every time somebody writes or says your name wrong it ticks you off just a little bit, and, although you know they do not do it intentionally, you proceed to courteously correct them. Well, because of that I went to MPF to point it out and have it fixed; I explained what was going on to the customer service representative and his reply was that it was not an error, and it was spelled altogether because according to their AFI and I quote, *"When entering the name into MilPDS, do not include hyphens, apostrophes, or spaces between sections of a compound name. The name "David E. O'Brien," for example, is reflected in the MilPDS as OBRIEN, DAVID E." "Teresa M. Santa Ana" is "SANTAANA TERESA M"; "Lee Halsey-Jones" is "HALSEYJONES LEE." -AFI 36-2608 Para. 4.4.3* to which I replied that I have never had my name on the system (DEERS/MilPDS) like that, it had always been spaced out and grammatically correct before I was in-processed here at Moody AFB. After that he tells the majority of the bases do not follow the AFI and that is why my name was spaced out before. I kept insisting until he said he would fix it for me and as he was doing it, he warned me that the system will most likely not take it and will change it back to how initially was changed altogether because the system does not like to change things once they are in.

I left the building thinking on the warning he told me about the system not liking to change things, and my thought was "how the system won't change it to how is supposed to be if it was like that in the first place, and it actually let them change it to how it currently is". I wondered if it was true, or he just made it up because he wanted to follow the AFI to the "T". I returned to my office to do more research on this AFI, it indeed said the portion mentioned above, but there was no explanation on why it had to be that way. One would think that it is because their system does not recognize spaces but, it had spaces before and I never encountered any problems with it so, why?

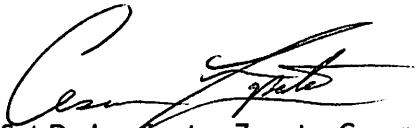
I personally have several issues with this AFI. The first one is when someone needs to contact me through e-mail it is extremely difficult do so, because of my name being spelled incorrectly on the GAL. Every time I need service from any office on base, what is the first thing they ask for? YOUR NAME so, in order for them to find me I would need to intentionally spell them my name incorrectly for them to find me on the system which will then is not going to match my official records since every single piece of identification I possess is spelled correctly i.e., (Driving license, Social Security Card, Passport, and even my Birth Certificate). It takes on average from 2-5 minutes for someone to find me on the system due to this (and sometimes they would just give up and say I am not in the system), instead of just typing what they see on my name tape and take only about 10 seconds give or take. It might not seem like much time wasted, but then when you start thinking about how many other thousands of airmen are going

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through the same problem, it adds up to a lot of manpower wasted and a ton of frustration from our standpoint.

Last and most important, If I leave my last name how it is and just accept the fact that I will have to say and write my name wrong for the rest of my career, it will mean giving up on the very thing that makes me unique and distinguishes me from anybody else. I feel that my identity and heritage, is being violated by this AFI. I am Proud of my last name, the history behind it and who I am. I love the feeling every time somebody calls me at work by my last name, it reminds me who I am and where I came from. Now I ask you, doesn't feel good when you are getting recognized for something and they call your name in front of everyone? Because at least for me, it makes my chest feel twice as big. Would it feel the same if your name gets butchered in front of everyone because of your name being misspelled on your records in order to be compliant with this AFI?

Some people might find this petty and irrelevant. For me is personal, it's valuable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cesar Zapata', with a stylized flourish at the end.

SSgt De Los Santos Zapata, Cesar
23D MXS C-130 ISO/Crew Chief