



Fall 2015

# CODEBREAKER CHALLENGE 3.0




# Challenge Scenario

NSA has discovered that the leadership of a terrorist organization is using a new method of communicating secret messages to its operatives in the field and has provided each individual with a unique program for decoding messages. Your mission is to reverse-engineer this software and develop capabilities to exploit the secret messaging component.



# The Challenge

- There are 4 different levels or "tasks" to this challenge problem
    - Task 1: Determine how to execute the hidden functionality
    - Task 2: Bypass an authentication check
    - Task 3: Create an encoder program
    - Task 4: Spoof a message to a high-value target
  - Each task gets progressively harder and builds off previous ones
- 

# The Challenge (cont.)

- Challenge materials and instructions can be found at <https://codebreaker.itsnet.net>
- Register for an account with your .edu email address

# Reverse Engineering Tips

- Examine strings in the binary using IDA
  - Look for clues that relate to the functionality you are trying to find / reverse
  - Utilize IDA xrefs to find code that references the string(s) of interest
  - Utilize symbols (e.g., function names) to help determine what a section of code does
- Try setting debugger breakpoints to help RE code
  - Single-step after hitting a breakpoint and see how the values in registers/memory change
  - Look for the result of interesting computations. You can sometimes get the data you need from memory
- Leverage online resources, e.g., Intel manuals, RE lectures, etc. for help on reverse-engineering

# Technical Walkthrough

- 2014 Codebreaker Challenge on Windows using IDA Pro Demo
- This binary can be downloaded from <https://codebreaker.ltsnet.net/resources>

# Running the program

```
ca. Command Prompt
Microsoft windows [Version 6.1.7601]
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 77 Low: 63
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

C:\challenge>
```

# Running the program (2)

```
cs: Command Prompt
Microsoft windows [Version 6.1.7601]
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 77 Low: 63
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -h
Weatherman help:
-v for version info
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -v
Weatherman version 6.8.1
Powered by Yahoo

C:\challenge>
```





# Disassemble

- Disassemble the Codebreaker2 binary
  - If asked whether you want to use Proximity View
    - Click no
    - Use graph view

# Disassemble (2)

IDA v6.6.140625

File Edit Jump Search View Options Windows Help

Load file C:\challenge\codebreaker2.exe as

Portable executable for 80386 (PE) [pe.ldw]

Processor type

MetaPC (disassemble all opcodes) [metapc] Set

Loading segment 0x00000000

Loading offset 0x00000000

Analysis

Enabled

Indicator enabled

Options

Create segments

Load resources

Rename DLL entries

Manual load

Fill segment gaps

Create imports segment

Create FLAT group

Kernel options 1

Kernel options 2

Processor options

DLL directory C:\Windows

OK Cancel Help

Output window

bytes	pages	size	description
2162688	264	8192	allocating memory for b-tree
2162688	264	8192	allocating memory for virt
262144	32	8192	allocating memory for name
-----			
4587520			total memory allocated

Loading processor module C:\Program Files (x86)\IDA Demo 6.6\procs\pc.w32 for metapc...OK

Autoanalysis subsystem has been initialized.

Possible file format: Portable executable for 80386 (PE) (C:\Program Files (x86)\IDA Demo 6.6\loaders\pe.ldw)

IDC

@:00000000 Down

# Disassemble (3)

The screenshot shows the IDA Pro interface with the following components:

- Functions window:** Lists various functions including `__mingw_invalidParameterHandler`, `_pre_cpp_init`, `_pre_c_init`, `__tmainCRTStartup`, `_mainCRTStartup`, `__gcc_register_frame`, `__gcc_deregister_frame`, `_fixupString`, `_special_printf`, `_getPasswordFromUsername`, `_writefunc`, `_isDirectory`, `_init_string`, `_printWeatherForecast`, `_tier1`, `_setSeed`, `_getRand64`, `_Base64Encode`, `_encrypt`, `_SHA256_Update_part_0`, `_SHA224_Init`, and `SHA256 Init`.
- Disassembly window:** Shows assembly code for `__tmainCRTStartup` and `__gcc_register_frame`.

```
.text:004014C2      add     esp, 0Ch
.text:004014C5      jmp     __tmainCRTStartup
.text:004014C5 ; -----
.text:004014CA      align  10h
.text:004014D0      ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
.text:004014D0      ; int mainCRTStartup()
.text:004014D0      public __mainCRTStartup
.text:004014D0      _mainCRTStartup proc near
.text:004014D0      sub     esp, 0Ch
.text:004014D3      mov     ds: _mingw_app_type, 0
.text:004014D0      call   __security_init_cookie
.text:004014E2      add     esp, 0Ch
.text:004014E5      jmp     __tmainCRTStartup
.text:004014E5      _mainCRTStartup endp
.text:004014E5 ; -----
.text:004014EA      align  10h
.text:004014F0      ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
.text:004014F0      ; Attributes: bp-based frame
.text:004014F0      public __gcc_register_frame
.text:004014F0      __gcc_register_frame proc near ; CODE XREF: _register_frame_ctor+6↓p
```
- Output window:** Shows compilation logs and analysis messages:

```
Compiling file 'C:\Program Files (x86)\IDA Demo 6.6\idc\onload.idc'...
Executing function 'main'...
Compiling file 'C:\Program Files (x86)\IDA Demo 6.6\idc\onload.idc'...
Executing function 'OnLoad'...
IDA is analysing the input file...
You may start to explore the input file right now.
Using FLIRT signature: SEH for uc7-11
Propagating type information...
Function argument information has been propagated
The initial autoanalysis has been finished.
```
- Status bar:** Shows `AU: idle`, `Down`, and `Disk: 44GB`.

# Observe Strings

- Observe the strings that show up in IDA
  - Click Views->Open Subviews->Strings
  - You should see the strings that are displayed when you run the program

Yahoo! Weather forecast for

Full forecast available at:

Weatherman version 6.8.1

# Observe Strings (2)

The screenshot shows the IDA Pro interface with the 'View' menu open. The 'Strings' option is highlighted, which has the keyboard shortcut Shift+F12. The menu also includes options like 'Quick view', 'Disassembly', 'Proximity browser', 'Hex dump', 'Exports', 'Imports', 'Names', 'Functions', 'Segments', 'Segment registers', 'Selectors', 'Signatures', 'Type libraries', 'Structures', 'Enumerations', 'Local types', 'Cross references', 'Function calls', 'Notepad', and 'Problems'. The background shows the disassembly window with assembly code for the function `_special_printf` at address `004015C6`. The code includes instructions like `mov [ecx], esi`, `add ebx, 1`, `movzx eax, byte ptr [ebx]`, `test al, al`, `jnz short loc_4015C6`, `mov [esp], esi`, `mov [esp+4], edx`, `call _vprintf`, and `lea esp, [ebp-0Ch]`. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Line 1 of 1970' and 'Open strings window'.

# Observe Strings (3)

Address	Length	Type	String
.rdata:00442118	00000019	C	Weatherman version 6.8.1
.rdata:00442131	00000011	C	Powered by Yahoo
.rdata:00442144	00000067	C	Weatherman help:\n-v for version info\n-h for help info\n-l to list supported areas\n-i
.rdata:004421AB	00000010	C	C:\\tmp\\secrets\\
.rdata:004421BB	00000018	C	-X to enter hidden mode
.rdata:004421D3	00000008	C	+vhli:X
.rdata:004421DC	0000002E	C	http://weather.yahooapis.com/forecastrss?w= %d
.rdata:0044220A	00000009	C	snprintf
.rdata:00442214	00000021	C	Yahoo! Weather forecast for %s:\n
.rdata:00442235	0000001C	C	Failed to pull weather data
.rdata:00442254	00000021	C	\nError (Code 1 -- Invalid Setup)
.rdata:00442278	00000024	C	\nTier 1 of the challenge completed!
.rdata:0044229C	00000021	C	\nError (Code 2 -- Invalid Setup)
.rdata:004422BD	00000011	C	Enter username:
.rdata:004422CE	00000011	C	Invalid username
.rdata:004422DF	00000018	C	Enter password for %s:
.rdata:004422F8	00000023	C	Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
.rdata:00442320	00000118	C	????? ?ç?????d????? ????? ?????
.rdata:00442438	00000017	C	????ç?????d???
.rdata:0044244F	00000013	C	????ç?????
.rdata:00442462	00000010	C	????ç?????
.rdata:00442472	00000015	C	????? ?????Ãπ???

# Observe Strings (4)

Address	Length	Type	String
.rdata:00442118	00000019		Weatherman version 6.8.1
.rdata:00442131	00000011	C	Powered by Yahoo
.rdata:00442144	00000067	C	Weatherman help:\n-v for version info\n-h for help info\n-l to list supported areas\n-i
.rdata:004421AB	00000010	C	C:\\tmp\\secrets\\
.rdata:004421BB	00000018	C	-X to enter hidden mode
.rdata:004421D3	00000008	C	+vhl:i:X
.rdata:004421DC	0000002E	C	http://weather.yahoo.com/forecastrss?w=%d
.rdata:0044220A	00000009	C	snprintf
.rdata:00442214	00000021	C	Yahoo! Weather forecast for %s:\n
.rdata:00442235	0000001C	C	Failed to pull weather data
.rdata:00442254	00000021	C	\nError (Code 1 -- Invalid Setup)
.rdata:00442278	00000024	C	\nTier 1 of the challenge completed!
.rdata:0044229C	00000021	C	\nError (Code 2 -- Invalid Setup)
.rdata:004422BD	00000011	C	Enter username:
.rdata:004422CE	00000011	C	Invalid username
.rdata:004422DF	00000018	C	Enter password for %s:
.rdata:004422F8	00000023	C	Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
.rdata:00442320	00000118	C	????? ?????d????? ????? ????? ????? ?????
.rdata:00442438	00000017	C	?????C?????d?????S?
.rdata:0044244F	00000013	C	?????C?????d?????
.rdata:00442462	00000010	C	?????C?????S?
.rdata:00442472	00000015	C	????? ?????Ã?π??j

C:\\tmp\\secrets\\

-X to enter hidden mode

Enter username:

# C:\\tmp\\secrets

- Double click on the “C:\\tmp\\secrets” string
  - This takes you to the data section of the binary where the string is stored
- To the right of the string are cross references to this address (show up as DATA XREF in IDA)
- Press ctrl-x to pull up a cross-references window; you will see two different references



# C:\\tmp\\secrets (2)

```
2118 ; char aWeathermanVers[]
2118 aWeathermanVers db 'Weatherman version 6.8.1',0
2118                                     ; DATA XREF: _tier1:loc_401AE0fo
2131 ; char aPoweredByYahoo[]
2131 aPoweredByYahoo db 'Powered by Yahoo',0 ; DATA XREF: _tier1+161fo
2142         align 4
2144 ; char aWeathermanHelp[]
2144 aWeathermanHelp db 'Weatherman help:',0Ah ; DATA XREF: _tier1:loc_401E70fo
2144                db '-v for version info',0Ah
2144                db '-h for help info',0Ah
2144                db '-l to list supported areas',0Ah
2144                db '-i to specify an area',0
21AB ; char aCTmpSecrets[]
21AB aCTmpSecrets   db 'C:\\tmp\\secrets\\',0 ; DATA XREF: _tier1+4F9fo
21AB                                     ; _tier1+6B5fo ...
21BB ; char aXToEnterHidden[]
21BB aXToEnterHidden db '-X to enter hidden mode',0 ; DATA XREF: _tier1+50Efo
21D3 ; char options[]
```

# C:\\tmp\\secrets (3)

```
2118 ; char aWeathermanVers[]
2118 aWeathermanVers db 'Weatherman version 6.8.1',0
2118                                     ; DATA XREF: _tier1:loc_401AE0f0
2131 ; char aPoweredByYahoo[]
2131 aPoweredByYahoo db 'Powered by Yahoo',0 ; DATA XREF: Referenced at:
2142                                     align 4
2144 ; char aWeathermanHelp[]
2144 aWeathermanHelp db 'Weatherman help:',0Ah ; DATA XREF: _tier1+4F9
2144                                     db '-v for version info',0Ah
2144                                     db '-h for help info',0Ah
2144                                     db '-l to list supported areas',0Ah
2144                                     db '-i to specify an area',0
2144                                     _tier1+6B5
21AB ; char aCTmpSecrets[]
21AB aCTmpSecrets db 'C:\\tmp\\secrets\\' ; DATA XREF: _tier1+4F9f0
21AB                                     ; _tier1+6B5f0 ...
21BB ; char aXToEnterHidden[]
21BB aXToEnterHidden db '-X to enter hidden mode',0 ; DATA XREF: _tier1+50E1f0
21D3 ; char options[]
```

# Double-click Reference

- You should now be looking at disassembled x86 code
  - We just leveraged the fact that in order to use “C:\\tmp\\secrets” in the program, the code had to reference the address in the data section of the program where the string was stored.
- Using xrefs in IDA is a quick and easy way to find interesting code sections

# Double-click Reference (2)

```
                                ; CODE XREF: _tier1+145↑j  
                                ; DATA XREF: .rdata:off_442624↓o  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aWeathermanHelp ; jumptable 00401AD5 case 104  
mov     ebp, 1  
call   _puts  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0 ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"  
call   _access  
cmp     eax, 0FFFFFFFFh  
jz     loc_401AB0 ; jumptable 00401AD5 default case  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aXToEnterHidden ; "-X to enter hidden mode"  
call   _puts  
jmp    loc_401AB0 ; jumptable 00401AD5 default case
```

# Explore Code Block

```
                                ; CODE XREF: _tier1+145↑j  
                                ; DATA XREF: .rdata:off_442624↓o  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aWeathermanHelp ; jumtable 00401AD5 case 104  
mov     ebp, 1  
call    _puts  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0 ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"  
call    _access  
cmp     eax, 0FFFFFFFFh  
jz      loc_401AB0 ; jumtable 00401AD5 default case  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aXToEnterHidden ; "-X to enter hidden mode"  
call    _puts  
jmp     loc_401AB0 ; jumtable 00401AD5 default case
```

```
; char aWeathermanHelp[]  
aWeathermanHelp db 'Weatherman help:',0Ah ; DATA XREF: _tier1:loc_401E70↑fo  
                db '-v for version info',0Ah  
                db '-h for help info',0Ah  
                db '-l to list supported areas',0Ah  
                db '-i to specify an area',0
```

# Explore Code Block (2)

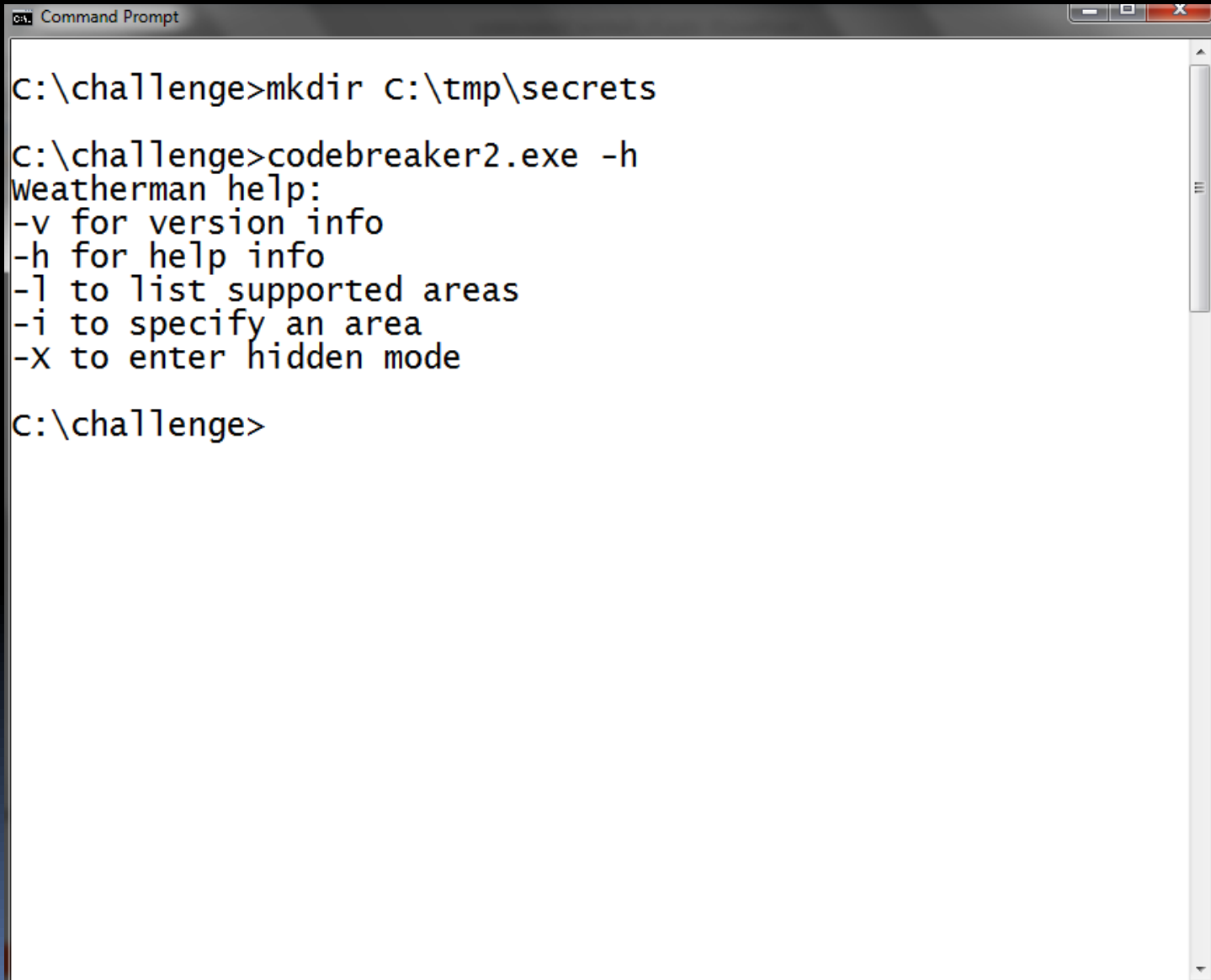
```
                                ; CODE XREF: _tier1+145↑j  
                                ; DATA XREF: .rdata:off_442624↓o  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aWeathermanHelp ; jumtable 00401AD5 case 104  
mov     ebp, 1  
call    _puts  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0 ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"  
call    _access  
cmp     eax, 0FFFFFFFFh  
jz      loc_401AB0 ; jumtable 00401AD5 default case  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aXToEnterHidden ; "-X to enter hidden mode"  
call    _puts  
jmp     loc_401AB0 ; jumtable 00401AD5 default case
```

# Explore Code Block (3)

```
                                ; CODE XREF: _tier1+145↑j
                                ; DATA XREF: .rdata:off_442624↓o
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc],
call   _puts
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv],
call   _access
jz     loc_401AB0
call   _puts
; jumptable 00401AD5 default case
```

1. Print the help text
2. Check if C:\tmp\secrets exists
3. Print extra help if it does

# Running the program (for real)



```
Command Prompt
C:\challenge>mkdir C:\tmp\secrets
C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -h
weatherman help:
-v for version info
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area
-X to enter hidden mode
C:\challenge>
```



# Explore Code Block (4)

```
                                ; CODE XREF: _tier1+68F1j
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0 ; int
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"
call    _access
add     eax, 1
jz      loc_40251C
lea     ebx, [esp+261Ch+var_21E0]
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aTier1ofTheChal ; "\nTier 1 of the challenge completed!"
mov     edi, ebx
call    _puts
xor     eax, eax
mov     ecx, 100h
rep stosd
lea     esi, [esp+261Ch+var_1DE0]
mov     edi, esi
lea     ebp, [esp+261Ch+var_19E0]
mov     cx, 100h
rep stosd
mov     edi, ebp
mov     cx, 100h
rep stosd
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"
call    _isDirectory
add     eax, 1
jz      loc_402534
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aEnterUsername ; "Enter username: "
call    _printf
```

# Explore Code Block (5)

```
                                ; CODE XREF: _tier1+68F1j
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0 ; int
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"
call    _access
jz      loc_40251C
lea     ebx, [esp+261Ch+var_21E0]
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aTier1ofTheChal ; "\nTier 1 of the challenge completed!"
call    _puts
mov     ecx, 100h
rep     stosd
lea     esi, [esp+261Ch+var_1DE0]
mov     edi, esi
lea     ebp, [esp+261Ch+var_19E0]
mov     cx, 100h
rep     stosd
mov     edi, ebp
mov     cx, 100h
rep     stosd
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"
call    _isDirectory
add     eax, 1
jz      loc_402534
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aEnterUsername ; "Enter username: "
call    _printf
```

1. Another 'access' check

2. Prints the Tier 1 complete message if the directory exists

# Running the program (for real)(2)

```
Command Prompt - codebreaker2.exe -X

C:\challenge>mkdir C:\tmp\secrets

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -h
weatherman help:
-v for version info
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area
-X to enter hidden mode

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -X
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 77 Low: 63
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username:
```

# Tier 1 Complete!

- Pretty straight forward
- Just looking at the strings may have been enough to get you through this
- ... on to Tier 2!

# Running the program (for real)(2)

```
Command Prompt - codebreaker2.exe -X

C:\challenge>mkdir C:\tmp\secrets

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -h
weatherman help:
-v for version info
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area
-X to enter hidden mode

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -X
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 77 Low: 63
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username:
```

# Explore Code Block (6)

```
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aEnterUsername ; "Enter username: "  
call    _printf  
mov     eax, ds: __imp__iob  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], ebx ; char *  
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], eax ; FILE *  
call    _fgets  
test    eax, eax  
jz      loc_40254C  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0Ah ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], ebx ; char *  
call    _strchr  
test    eax, eax  
jz      short loc_4020EF  
mov     byte ptr [eax], 0  
  
; CODE XREF: _tier1+75A↑j  
  
xor     eax, eax  
or      ecx, 0FFFFFFFFh  
mov     edi, ebx  
repne  scasb  
not     ecx  
sub     ecx, 1  
cmp     ecx, 7  
jbe     loc_4024EC  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], ebx  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aEnterPasswordF ; "Enter password for %s: "  
call    _printf  
mov     eax, ds: __imp__iob  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], esi ; char *  
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], eax ; FILE *  
call    _fgets
```

# Explore Code Block (7)

```
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aEnterUsername ; "Enter username: "  
call    _printf  
mov     eax, 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], ebx ; char *  
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], eax ; FILE *  
call    _fgets  
mov     eax, ebx  
jz      loc_40254C  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 0Ah ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], ebx ; char *  
call    _strchr  
mov     eax, ebx  
jz      snort loc_4020EF  
mov     byte ptr [eax], 0  
  
; CODE XREF: _tier1+75A↑j  
xor     eax, eax  
or      ecx, 0FFFFFFFFh  
mov     edi, ebx  
repne  scasb  
not     ecx  
sub     ecx, 1  
cmp     ecx, 7  
jbe    loc_4024EC  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], ebx  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aEnterPasswordF ; "Enter password for %s: "  
call    _printf  
mov     eax, 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], esi ; char *  
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], eax ; FILE *  
call    _fgets
```

1. Prompt for a username

2. Read it into a buffer

3. Find the length; if less than 8,

jump to code that prints an  
error and exits

4. Prompt for a password

5. Read it into a buffer

# Explore Code Block (8)

```
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], ebx ; void *
mov     edi, ebx
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], 400h ; size_t
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], ebp ; void *
call    _getPasswordFromUsername
xor     eax, eax
or      ecx, 0FFFFFFFh
repne  scasb
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], ebp ; char *
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], esi ; char *
not     ecx
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], ecx ; size_t
call    _strncmp
test    eax, eax
mov     ebx, eax
jnz     loc_402021
lea     edi, [esp+261Ch+var_15E0]
mov     esi, offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aTier20fTheChal ; "Tier 2 of the challenge completed!"
lea     ebp, [esp+261Ch+var_9E0]
call    _puts
```



# Explore Code Block (9)

```
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], ebx ; void *
mov     edi, ebx
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], 400h ; size_t
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], ebp ; void *
call    _getPasswordFromUsername
mov     eax, eax
or      ecx, 0xffffffff
repne scasb
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargv], ebp ; char *
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], esi ; char *
not     ecx
mov     [esp+261Ch+options], ecx ; size_t
call    _strncmp
mov     ebx, eax
jnz     loc_402021
lea     edi, [esp+261Ch+var_15E0]
mov     esi, offset aCTmpSecrets ; "C:\\tmp\\secrets\\"
mov     [esp+261Ch+nargc], offset aTier20fTheChal ; "Tier 2 of the challenge completed!"
lea     ebp, [esp+261Ch+var_9E0]
call    _puts
```

6. Compute the password from the username

7. Check the password and print the tier 2 success message if correct

# getPasswordFromUsername

```
call    _memset
mov     eax, [esp+1Ch+arg_0]
mov     [esp+1Ch+var_14], esi ; size_t
mov     [esp+1Ch+var_1C], ebx ; void *
mov     [esp+1Ch+var_18], eax ; void *
call    _memcpy
movzx   eax, byte ptr [ebx]
mov     ds:_lastChar, 3Bh
test    al, al
jz      short loc_401674
mov     ecx, 3Bh
mov     esi, 0AC769185h
```

```
loc_401640:                                ; CODE XREF: _getPasswordFromUsername+7C↓j
movsx   eax, al
movsx   ecx, cl
lea     ecx, [ecx+eax-7]
mov     eax, ecx
imul   esi
mov     eax, ecx
sar     eax, 1Fh
add     edx, ecx
sar     edx, 6
sub     edx, eax
imul   edx, 5Fh
sub     ecx, edx
add     ecx, 20h
mov     [ebx], cl
add     ebx, 1
movzx   eax, byte ptr [ebx]
test    al, al
jnz     short loc_401640
mov     ds:_lastChar, cl
```

# What does this code do?

```
mov edx, 0xAC769185 // edx = 0xAC769185
mov eax, ecx        // ecx = input value
imul edx            // edx:eax = eax * edx
lea eax, [edx + ecx*0x1] // eax = edx + ecx
mov edx, eax        // edx = eax
sar edx, 0x6        // arith right shift; edx = edx >> 0x6
mov eax, ecx        // eax = ecx
sar eax, 0x1f       // eax = eax >> 0x1f (31)
mov ebx, edx        // ebx = edx
sub ebx, eax        // ebx = ebx - eax
mov eax, ebx        // eax = ebx
imul eax, eax, 0x5f // edx:eax = eax * 0x5f (95)
mov edx, ecx        // edx = ecx
sub edx, eax        // edx = edx - eax
// edx is the final result
```

# Signed Division and Remainder

- The code computes: `edx = ecx % 95`
- Why multiply by `0xAC769185` and where did that number come from?
  - Division is a time consuming operation
  - When the divisor is a constant, the compiler can optimize the computation
- The basic trick is to multiply by a “magic value” ( $\sim 2^{32}/d$ ) and extract the leftmost 32 bits of the product
- The following site computes these numbers for you: <http://www.hackersdelight.org/magic.htm>

# getPasswordFromUsername (2)

```
call    _memset
mov     eax, [esp+1Ch+arg_0]
mov     [esp+1Ch+var_14], esi ; size_t
mov     [esp+1Ch+var_1C], ebx ; void *
mov     [esp+1Ch+var_18], eax ; void *
call    _memcpy
movzx   eax, byte ptr [ebx]
mov     ds:_lastChar, 3Bh
test    al, al
jz      short loc_401674
mov     ecx, 3Bh
mov     esi, 0AC769185h
```

**Initialize lastChar to 0x3B**

loc\_401640:

```
movsx   eax, al ; CODE XREF: _getPasswordFromUsername+7C↓j
movsx   ecx, cl
lea     ecx, [ecx+eax-7]
mov     eax, ecx
imul   esi
mov     eax, ecx
sar     eax, 1Fh
add     edx, ecx
sar     edx, 6
sub     edx, eax
imul   edx, 5Fh
sub     ecx, edx
add     ecx, 20h
mov     [ebx], cl
add     ebx, 1
movzx   eax, byte ptr [ebx]
test    al, al
jnz     short loc_401640
mov     ds:_lastChar, cl
```

**Computes:**

**buffer[%ebx] =**

**((lastChar + (buffer[%ebx] - 7))**

**% (127 - 32)) + 32**

**lastChar = buffer[%ebx]**

**where %ebx goes from [0:passwordLength)**

# Running the program (3)

```
Command Prompt - codebreaker2.exe -X

C:\challenge>mkdir C:\tmp\secrets

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -h
weatherman help:
-v for version info
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area
-X to enter hidden mode

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -X
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 77 Low: 63
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username:
```

# Running the program (4)

```
cs: Command Prompt - codebreaker2.exe -X
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area
-X to enter hidden mode

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -X
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 76 Low: 64
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username: secretagentman
Enter password for secretagentman: h(Eq1_z<[$Ry5]
Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
Since it's your first time encrypting a message -- welcome!
An encrypted welcome message has been left for you at C:\tmp\secrets\welcome. Decrypt it using your decryption program
with recipient name 'alphabetic' and secret key 'efghijklm'

Follow the prompts below to encrypt your first message:
Enter recipient name:
```



# Tier 2 Complete!

- Required either reverse engineering the password derivation function or just using a debugger to see the computed value
- ... on to Tier 3!



# Running the program (4)

```
cs: Command Prompt - codebreaker2.exe -X
-h for help info
-l to list supported areas
-i to specify an area
-X to enter hidden mode

C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -X
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 76 Low: 64
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews/rss/weather/Los\_Angeles\_CA/\*http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USCA0638\_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username: secretagentman
Enter password for secretagentman: h(Eq1_z<[$Ry5]
Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
Since it's your first time encrypting a message -- welcome!
An encrypted welcome message has been left for you at C:\tmp\secrets\welcome. Decrypt it using your decryption program with recipient name 'alphabetic' and secret key 'efghijklm'

Follow the prompts below to encrypt your first message:
Enter recipient name:
```

# Running the program (5)

```
C:\challenge>codebreaker2.exe -X
Yahoo! weather forecast for Los Angeles:
Thu - AM Clouds/PM Sun. High: 75 Low: 63
Fri - Partly Cloudy. High: 75 Low: 63
Sat - Sunny. High: 76 Low: 64
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews
/rss/weather/Los_Angeles__CA/*http://weather.yahoo.com/forec
ast/USCA0638_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username: secretagentman
Enter password for secretagentman: h(Eq1_z<[$Ry5]
Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
Since it's your first time encrypting a message -- welcome!
An encrypted welcome message has been left for you at C:\tmp
p\secrets\welcome. Decrypt it using your decryption program
with recipient name 'alphabetic' and secret key 'efghijklm'
.
Follow the prompts below to encrypt your first message:

Enter recipient name: alice
Enter Secret Key: keepthissecret
Enter Message: Hello there!!
Message saved to C:\tmp\secrets\msg

C:\challenge>
```

# Running the program (6)

```
Command Prompt
Sat - Sunny. High: 76 Low: 64
Sun - Sunny. High: 81 Low: 64
Mon - Sunny. High: 82 Low: 63
Full forecast available at: http://us.rd.yahoo.com/dailynews
/rss/weather/Los_Angeles__CA/*http://weather.yahoo.com/forec
ast/USCA0638_f.html

Tier 1 of the challenge completed!
Enter username: secretagentman
Enter password for secretagentman: h(Eq1_z<[$Ry5]
Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
Since it's your first time encrypting a message -- welcome!
An encrypted welcome message has been left for you at C:\tmp
p\secrets\welcome. Decrypt it using your decryption program
with recipient name 'alphabetic' and secret key 'efghijklm'

Follow the prompts below to encrypt your first message:

Enter recipient name: alice
Enter Secret Key: keepthissecret
Enter Message: Hello there!!
Message Saved to C:\tmp\secrets\msg

C:\challenge>type C:\tmp\secrets\msg
To:alice
Msg:aUrnW0T4QYLTueew4vb+iYE4GfgZUgF0m7FhVs6I8jYtD9nAnlB8Gp/P
glZ79ephILjo6VQNEQ==
C:\challenge>
```

# Explore Code Block (10)

```
mov     [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAnA ; "Ñ+++~Ç;+++~|+ÜÇ"  
call    _special_printf  
mov     eax, ds: __imp__iob  
lea     ecx, [esp+14h+arg_1424]  
mov     [esp+14h+nargv], 400h ; int  
mov     [esp+14h+nargc], ecx ; char *  
mov     [esp+14h+options], eax ; FILE *  
call    _fgets  
test    eax, eax  
jz      loc_40254C  
mov     edi, [esp+14h+arg_8]  
xor     eax, eax  
or      ecx, 0FFFFFFFFh  
repne  scasb  
lea     eax, [esp+14h+arg_1424]  
lea     edi, [esp+14h+arg_1024]  
mov     [esp+14h+var_4], ebp ; int  
mov     [esp+14h+var_8], edi ; char *  
mov     [esp+14h+options], ebx ; int  
mov     [esp+14h+nargc], eax ; void *  
not     eax  
mov     [esp+14h+nargv], ecx ; size_t  
call    _encrypt  
mov     [esp+14h+nargv], ebx ; char  
mov     [esp+14h+nargc], offset aNAAAEJ ; "Ñ+++~|+Ç|-+++~Ç+-Çà+j"  
call    _special_printf  
jmp     loc_402021
```

Last fgets: the program now has:

- Recipient name
- Secret key
- Message

Passes everything to '\_encrypt'

# Inside encrypt (1)

```
lea esi, [eax+1]
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi ; size_t
call _calloc
mov [esp+13Ch+var_134], esi ; size_t
lea esi, [esp+13Ch+var_E4]
mov [esp+13Ch+var_FC], eax
mov [esp+13Ch+var_138], eax ; void *
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], eax ; void *
call _getPasswordFromUsername
lea eax, [esp+13Ch+var_51]
mov [esp+13Ch+var_4D], eax
mov [esp+13Ch+var_49], 0AD8D8D8h
mov [esp+13Ch+var_45], 0A280A0A7h
mov [esp+13Ch+var_41], 0AEA9A7A5h
mov [esp+13Ch+var_3D], 0
call _fixupString
lea eax, [esp+13Ch+var_3C]
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], eax
mov [esp+13Ch+var_3C], 8D8D8D6Ah
mov [esp+13Ch+var_38], 0B3B3A5ADh
mov [esp+13Ch+var_34], 80A5A7A1h
mov [esp+13Ch+var_30], 8DA4AEA5h
mov [esp+13Ch+var_2C], 8D8Dh
mov [esp+13Ch+var_2A], 0
call _fixupString
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_51]
mov [ebp+0], eax
mov [ebp+4], eax
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_49]
mov [ebp+8], eax
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_45]
mov [ebp+0Ch], eax
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_41]
mov [ebp+10h], eax
movzx eax, [esp+13Ch+var_3D]
mov [ebp+14h], al
```

1. Computes password based on recipient name

2. Performs the same string unhiding as in special\_printf

Resulting strings:

- "---MESSAGE BEGIN---\n"
- "\n---MESSAGE END---"

# Inside encrypt (2)

```
mov [esp+13Ch+var_134], ebx ; size_t
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], eax ; void *
mov [esp+13Ch+var_138], edx ; void *
call _memcpy
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_3C]
mov [ebp+ebx+13h], eax
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_38]
mov [ebp+ebx+17h], eax
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_34]
mov [ebp+ebx+1Bh], eax
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_30]
mov [ebp+ebx+1Fh], eax
movzx eax, [esp+13Ch+var_2C]
mov [ebp+ebx+23h], ax
movzx eax, [esp+13Ch+var_2A]
mov [ebp+ebx+25h], al
mov [esp+13Ch+var_100], esi
call _SHA256_Init
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], edi ; char *
call _strlen
mov [esp+13Ch+var_138], edi
lea edi, [esp+13Ch+var_71]
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi
mov [esp+13Ch+var_134], eax
call _SHA256_Update
mov [esp+13Ch+var_138], esi
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], edi
call _SHA256_Final
mov edx, [esp+13Ch+var_71]
mov eax, [esp+13Ch+var_6D]
mov [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi
mov [esp+13Ch+var_118], eax
mov [esp+13Ch+var_110], eax
call _SHA256_Init
mov edx, [esp+13Ch+var_FC]
; CODE XREF: _encrypt+2
mov ecx, [edx]
add edx, 4
lea eax, [ecx-1010101h]
```

Compute the SHA256 hash of the secret key

Compute the SHA256 hash of the derived password (Init shown here, Update and Final below)

# SHA256 Functions

SHA2(3)

NetBSD Library Functions Manual

SHA2(3)

## NAME

`SHA256_Init`, `SHA256_Update`, `SHA256_Pad`, `SHA256_Final`, `SHA256_Transform`,  
`SHA256_End`, `SHA256_File`, `SHA256_FileChunk`, `SHA256_Data` -- calculate the  
NIST Secure Hash Standard (version 2)

## SYNOPSIS

```
#include <sys/types.h>
#include <sha2.h>
```

```
void
SHA256_Init(SHA256_CTX *context);
```

```
void
SHA256_Update(SHA256_CTX *context, const uint8_t *data, size_t len);
```

```
void
SHA256_Pad(SHA256_CTX *context);
```

```
void
SHA256_Final(uint8_t digest[SHA256_DIGEST_LENGTH], SHA256_CTX *context);
```

# Inside encrypt (3)

```
mov     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_6D]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_118], edx
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_110], eax
call    _SHA256_Init
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_FC]

; CODE XREF: _
mov     ecx, [edx]
add     edx, 4
lea     eax, [ecx-1010101h]
not     ecx
and     eax, ecx
and     eax, 80808080h
jz      short loc_402936
mov     ecx, eax
shr     ecx, 10h
test    eax, 8080h
cmovz   eax, ecx
lea     ecx, [edx+2]
cmovz   edx, ecx
add     al, al
mov     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_FC]
sbb     edx, 3
sub     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_FC]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], eax
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_134], edx
call    _SHA256_Update
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], esi
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], edi
call    _SHA256_Final
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_6D], esi
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_71]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_108], eax
mov     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_F4]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_114], edx
test    eax, eax
```

Copies the first 8 bytes of the secret key hash into var\_118 and var\_110

Copies the first 8 bytes of the password hash into var\_114 and var\_108



# Initial computation

```
loc_4029C4:                                ; CODE XREF: _encrypt+3A5↓j
      imul   eax, [esp+13Ch+var_118], 5851F42Dh
      imul   ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_110], 4C957F2Dh
      add    ecx, eax
      mov    eax, 4C957F2Dh
      mul   [esp+13Ch+var_118]
      mov    edi, edx
      mov    esi, eax
      add    edi, ecx
      imul   eax, [esp+13Ch+var_114], 5851F42Dh
      imul   ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_108], 4C957F2Dh
      add    ecx, eax
      mov    eax, 4C957F2Dh
      mul   [esp+13Ch+var_114]
      add    edx, ecx
      mov    [esp+13Ch+var_124], eax
      movzx  eax, [esp+13Ch+var_109]
      mov    [esp+13Ch+var_120], edx
      mov    edx, [esp+13Ch+var_124]
      mov    ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_120]
      lea   ebp, [eax+8]
      mov    eax, ebx
      add    edx, 0F767814Fh
      adc    ecx, 14057B7Eh
      add    esi, 0F767814Fh
      adc    edi, 14057B7Eh
      and   eax, 7
      jz    short loc_402A41
      mov    esi, [esp+13Ch+var_118]
      mov    edi, [esp+13Ch+var_110]
```

**Computes**  
**result = (A \* X) + C**

**where**

**A = 6364136223846793005**

**C = 1442695040888963407**

**X = the 64-bits from the  
hash**

**for both values. Results are  
placed in EDX:ECX and EDI:ESI**

# Subsequent computations

```
loc_4029C4:                                ; CODE XREF: _encrypt+3A5↓j
imul    eax, [esp+13Ch+var_118], 5851F42Dh
imul    ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_110], 4C957F2Dh
add     ecx, eax
mov     eax, 4C957F2Dh
mul     [esp+13Ch+var_118]
mov     edi, edx
mov     esi, eax
add     edi, ecx
imul    eax, [esp+13Ch+var_114], 5851F42Dh
imul    ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_108], 4C957F2Dh
add     ecx, eax
mov     eax, 4C957F2Dh
mul     [esp+13Ch+var_114]
add     edx, ecx
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_124], eax
movzx   eax, [esp+13Ch+var_109]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_120], edx
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_124]
mov     ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_120]
lea     ebp, [eax+8]
mov     eax, ebx
add     edx, 0F767814Fh
adc     ecx, 14057B7Eh
add     esi, 0F767814Fh
adc     edi, 14057B7Eh
and     eax, 7
jz     short loc_402A41
mov     esi, [esp+13Ch+var_118]
mov     edi, [esp+13Ch+var_110]
```

**Computes**  
**result = (A \* X) + C**

**where**

**A = 6364136223846793005**

**C = 1442695040888963407**

**X = 64-bit result computed  
previous**

**for both values. Results are  
placed in EDX:ECX and EDI:ESI**

# So...

- `byte` buffer[] = SHA256(secret key)
- `byte` result[0-7] = (A \* buffer[0-7]) + C
- `byte` result[8-15] = (A \* result[0-7]) + C
- `byte` result[16-23] = (A \* result[8-15]) + C
  
- ... and same for the derived password
  
- From now on we will refer to:
  - 'result' from secret key as X
  - 'result' from derived password as Y

# Inside encrypt (4)

```
loc_402A65:                                ; CODE XREF: _encrypt+333fj
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_124]
xor     ecx, ecx
test    eax, eax
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_114], edx
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_120]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_108], edx
mov     edx, 8
jz      short loc_402A87
movzxb ecx, [esp+13Ch+var_109]
mov     edx, ebp
```

Compute

$\text{ciphertext}[i] = \text{plaintext}[i] \wedge$   
 $(X[i] \wedge Y[i])$

```
loc_402A87:                                ; CODE XREF: _encrypt+35E1j
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_109], dl
mov     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_124]
shrd   esi, edi, cl
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_120]
shr    edi, cl
test   cl, 20h
cmovnz esi, edi
shrd   eax, edx, cl
shr    edx, cl
test   cl, 20h
cmovnz eax, edx
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_104]
xor     esi, eax
mov     eax, esi
xor     [edx+ebx], al
```

where

$\text{ciphertext} = \text{plaintext} = \text{var\_104}$

$X = \text{value computed above (secret key)}$

$Y = \text{value computed above (password)}$

$i = \text{ebx}$

# Inside encrypt (5)

```
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_F4]
lea     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_24]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_134], eax
lea     esi, [esp+13Ch+var_20]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], ebp
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], edx
call    _Base64Encode
mov     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_F0]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], offset aWb_0 ; "wb"
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], eax ; char *
call    _fopen
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_20], 9ACFB4h
mov     ebx, eax
call    _fixupString
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], ebx ; FILE *
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi ; char *
lea     esi, [esp+13Ch+var_29]
call    _fputs
mov     edx, [esp+13Ch+var_F8]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], ebx ; FILE *
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], offset aS_8 ; "%s\n"
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_134], edx
call    _fprintf
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi
mov     dword ptr [esp+13Ch+var_29], 9AC7D3ADh
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_25], 0
call    _fixupString
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], ebx ; FILE *
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], esi ; char *
call    _fputs
mov     eax, [esp+13Ch+var_24]
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_138], ebx ; FILE *
mov     [esp+13Ch+var_13C], eax ; char *
call    _fputs
```

Takes the resulting ciphertext buffer and Base64 encodes it

Opens C:\tmp\secrets\msg

Writes the message

# What's happening

## Linear congruential generator

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A **linear congruential generator (LCG)** is an [algorithm](#) that yields a sequence of pseudo-randomized numbers calculated with a discontinuous [piecewise linear equation](#). The method represents one of the oldest and best-known [pseudorandom number generator algorithms](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The theory behind them is relatively easy to understand, and they are easily implemented and fast, especially on computer hardware which can provide [modulo arithmetic](#) by storage-bit truncation.

The generator is defined by the [recurrence relation](#):

$$X_{n+1} = (aX_n + c) \pmod{m}$$

where  $X$  is the [sequence](#) of pseudorandom values, and

$m$ ,  $0 < m$  – the "modulus"

$a$ ,  $0 < a < m$  – the "multiplier"

$c$ ,  $0 \leq c < m$  – the "increment"

$X_0$ ,  $0 \leq X_0 < m$  – the "seed" or "start value"

are [integer](#) constants that specify the generator. If  $c = 0$ , the generator is often called a **multiplicative congruential generator (MCG)**, or [Lehmer RNG](#). If  $c \neq 0$ , the method is called a *mixed congruential generator*.<sup>[2]</sup>

# Tier 3 Solution

- Write a program to:
  - Compute the password given a username\*
  - Base64 decode the string\*\*
  - Run the encryption algorithm in reverse to decrypt a given input
    - $\text{plaintext}[i] = \text{ciphertext}[i] \wedge (X[i] \wedge Y[i])$
    - where you compute X and Y from the given secret key and derived password

\*Or just get it by running the Codebreaker binary in a debugger

\*\* Or do it online, use existing programs, etc.

# Tier 3 Solution (2)

```
CA. Command Prompt
C:\challenge>decrypt.exe C:\tmp\secrets\welcome
*****
Recovered plaintext
*****
---MESSAGE BEGIN---
Tier 3 of the challenge completed! Great work. Encrypt the m
essage 'Keep the challenges coming' using the secret key '12
3456' for the recipient 'Gamemaker' and email it to senior_p
roject@nsa.gov for further instructions.
---MESSAGE END---
C:\challenge>
```

... on to Tier 4!



# Tier 4 Solution

- You'd get the following message via email:

To:Tier3\_Codebreakers

Msg:z/W4uhaRU+8N7/qKSzuwXfNPZ8Tf867ajNJ33tU85wTtgXywSTefsB86  
3g26B5rR2Og/oqFztnrT6nTUq8JMuJbWTUD5YIsN7uTbw6F9/GzsgdBG567  
A3o3kSOTEM+Fsp7QialTheUg/W/o2jiGZUeW6yYdhaMrDP6vDJlq+MNRMX  
Zg8ereNKyBQDvGPR4iHUNBHoCP2oSb+/gWkeupRs2mkkoBAo8rdirZuoJ  
NOwnugFgT/KwoRgEHVxNnelDiGom8O2UilAUaR6pKHTu1xS6MfkVh5C  
KArmVTY6MAC6Vi8CnZJvM/WZT6cg6dLesgFrtXX8uwhzcTYwLe+t2m5Mv  
vDtiZyotgpLdBNAr6N3+znHCDInAIGlJe3shipbBQoqKxbb8VNY9DR4fJMG9  
YIhnMyYn1g+mLGC41niWUqTbbBrnwSJgZ+u5AwLcpHXkA649O4loHEyV+  
bgWL/bKFVWL7KDAzEx4FdhwnYfe25SHirjFxVTrNiyR/FPPa/MgfixkrlVrZkY  
GsZNIvDZjG8sxrHgtQokkOO7yapIHsBaYiwqCGVKum55iRyKgG1q2RuDAY  
yzs1uvA2JnHnBZW1gEOpyy6RPiPuV7/z5DyQiMYhEzDA1Y9Dneg2BagYoa  
FTsCNMRX+W+L1XepcN49BEUDEMUKuUnLT6G+QuLw==

# Tier 4 Solution (2)

- Maybe there's a problem with the encryption scheme...

# Tier 4 Solution (3)

- $\text{plaintext}[i] = \text{ciphertext}[i] \wedge (X[i] \wedge Y[i])$
- $\text{byte buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{secret key})$
- $\text{byte } X[0-7] = (A * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + C$
- $\text{byte } X[8-15] = (A * X[0-7]) + C$
- ...
- $\text{byte buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{derived password})$
- $\text{byte } Y[0-7] = (A * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + C$
- ...
- We have the ciphertext, and the constants

# Tier 4 Solution (4)

- $\text{plaintext}[0-7] = \text{ciphertext}[0-7] \wedge (\text{X}[0-7] \wedge \text{Y}[0-7])$
- $\text{byte buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{secret key})$
- $\text{byte X}[0-7] = (\text{A} * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- $\text{byte X}[8-15] = (\text{A} * \text{X}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- ...
- $\text{byte buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{derived password})$
- $\text{byte Y}[0-7] = (\text{A} * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- ...
- All messages include the username too, from which we can derive the password, and then the SHA256 hash

# Tier 4 Solution (4)

- $\text{plaintext}[0-7] = \text{ciphertext}[0-7] \wedge (X[0-7] \wedge Y[0-7])$
- $\text{byte buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{secret key})$
- $\text{byte } X[0-7] = (A * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + C$
- $\text{byte } X[8-15] = (A * X[0-7]) + C$
- ...
- $\text{byte buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{derived password})$
- $\text{byte } Y[0-7] = (A * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + C$
- ...
- We know the plaintext at the beginning too, since the program always adds `---MESSAGE BEGIN---`

# Tier 4 Solution (5)

- $\text{plaintext}[0-7] = \text{ciphertext}[0-7] \wedge (\text{X}[0-7] \wedge \text{Y}[0-7])$
- $\text{byte } \text{buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{secret key})$
- $\text{byte } \text{X}[0-7] = (\text{A} * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- $\text{byte } \text{X}[8-15] = (\text{A} * \text{X}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- ...
- $\text{byte } \text{buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{derived password})$
- $\text{byte } \text{Y}[0-7] = (\text{A} * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- ...
- Reversing the encryption equation, we get:
- $\text{X}[0-7] = \text{plaintext}[0-7] \wedge \text{ciphertext}[0-7] \wedge \text{Y}[0-7]$

# Tier 4 Solution (6)

- $\text{plaintext}[0-7] = \text{ciphertext}[0-7] \wedge (\text{X}[0-7] \wedge \text{Y}[0-7])$
- byte  $\text{buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{secret key})$
- byte  $\text{X}[0-7] = (\text{A} * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- byte  $\text{X}[8-15] = (\text{A} * \text{X}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- ...
- byte  $\text{buffer}[] = \text{SHA256}(\text{derived password})$
- byte  $\text{Y}[0-7] = (\text{A} * \text{buffer}[0-7]) + \text{C}$
- ...
- $\text{X}[8-15]$  and  $\text{Y}[8-15]$  (and on) are computed from the SHA256 bytes, so we have the rest of those too. 😊


# Tier 4 Solution (7)

- Decrypted message:
- Congratulations!! You have solved the final tier of the Codebreaker Challenge! Please send us an email at [senior\\_project@nsa.gov](mailto:senior_project@nsa.gov) and let us know how you solved it. We hope you have enjoyed working on this problem. If you are interested in solving even more challenging and exciting problems on a daily basis that directly impact our national security posture and military forces around the world, consider applying for a career at NSA -- <https://www.nsa.gov/careers>.





# Questions



... if this work interests you, consider applying for an internship or full-time position at <https://www.nsa.gov/careers>

Use event code 483-1 to associate yourself with the Codebreaker Challenge



# Extra Slides

# 64-bit Data Types

Consider the following program:

```
int main(){
    char one           = 0x11;           // sizeof(char) == 1
    char two           = 0x22;
    int three          = 0x33333333;     // sizeof(int) == 4
    int four           = 0x44444444;
    long long five     = 0x5555555555555555; // sizeof(long long) == 8
    long long six      = 0x6666666666666666;
    printf("8b: %hu 32b: %u 64b: %llu\n", one + two, three + four, five + six);
    return 0;
}
```

# 64-bit Data Types – x86\_64

## Part 1: Move values onto the stack

```
mov  BYTE PTR [rbp-0x2],0x11
mov  BYTE PTR [rbp-0x1],0x22
mov  DWORD PTR [rbp-0xc],0x33333333
mov  DWORD PTR [rbp-0x8],0x44444444
mov  DWORD PTR [rbp-0x20],0x55555555
mov  DWORD PTR [rbp-0x1c],0x55555555
mov  DWORD PTR [rbp-0x18],0x66666666
mov  DWORD PTR [rbp-0x14],0x66666666
```

# 64-bit Data Types – x86\_64

## Part 2: Load into registers and compute

```
mov    rax,QWORD PTR [rbp-0x18]    // 0x6666666666666666 in rax
mov    rdx,QWORD PTR [rbp-0x20]    // 0x7777777777777777 in rdx
lea    rcx,[rdx+rax*1]             // rcx = rax + rdx*1
mov    eax,DWORD PTR [rbp-0x8]     // 0x44444444 in eax
mov    edx,DWORD PTR [rbp-0xc]     // 0x33333333 in edx
add    edx,eax                    // edx = edx + eax
movsx  esi,BYTE PTR [rbp-0x2]     // 0x11 in esi
movsx  eax,BYTE PTR [rbp-0x1]     // 0x22 in eax
add    esi,eax                    // esi = esi + eax
```

# 64-bit Data Types – x86

No 64-bit registers ☹️

```
long long five = 0x5555555555555555; // sizeof(long long) == 8  
long long six  = 0x6666666666666666;
```

Let's make it work with 32-bit ones!

# 64-bit Data Types – x86

Part 1: Move values onto the stack (same as x86\_64)

```
mov  BYTE PTR [ebp-1],0x11
mov  BYTE PTR [ebp-2],0x22
mov  DWORD PTR [ebp-8],0x33333333
mov  DWORD PTR [ebp-12],0x44444444
mov  DWORD PTR [ebp-24],0x55555555
mov  DWORD PTR [ebp-20],0x55555555
mov  DWORD PTR [ebp-32],0x66666666
mov  DWORD PTR [ebp-28],0x66666666
```

# 64-bit Data Types – x86

## Part 2: Load into registers and compute

```
mov    eax,DWORD PTR [ebp-32]    // 0x66666666 in eax
mov    edx,DWORD PTR [ebp-28]    // 0x66666666 in edx
add    eax,DWORD PTR [ebp-24]    // eax = eax + 0x55555555
adc    edx,DWORD PTR [ebp-20]    // edx = edx + 0x55555555 + CF
...
mov    eax,DWORD PTR [ebp-12]    // 0x44444444 in eax
add    eax,DWORD PTR [ebp-8]     // eax = eax + 0x33333333
...
movsx  edx,BYTE PTR [ebp-1]     // 0x11 in edx
movsx  eax,BYTE PTR [ebp-2]     // 0x22 in eax
lea    eax,[edx+eax]            // eax = edx + eax*
```





# Strings?

- The strings that are used here don't appear in the list of strings
- ... or do they? Scroll down in the code to try and spot them.

# Explore Code Block (10)

IDA - C:\challenge\codebreaker2.exe

File Edit Jump Search View Debugger Options Windows Help

Functions window

- Function name
- \_\_mingw\_invalidParameterHandler
- \_pre\_cpp\_init
- \_pre\_c\_init
- \_\_tmainCRTStartup
- \_mainCRTStartup
- \_\_gcc\_register\_frame
- \_\_gcc\_deregister\_frame
- \_fixupString
- \_special\_printf
- \_getPasswordFromUsername
- \_writefunc
- \_isDirectory
- \_init\_string
- \_printWeatherForecast
- \_tier1
- \_setSeed
- \_getRand64
- \_Base64Encode
- \_encrypt
- \_SHA256\_Update\_part\_0
- \_SHA224\_Init
- \_SHA256\_Init
- \_SHA224\_Update
- \_SHA256\_Update
- \_SHA256\_Transform
- \_SHA256\_Final
- \_SHA224\_Final
- \_SHA256
- \_SHA224
- \_b64\_callback\_ctrl
- \_b64\_free
- \_b64\_new
- \_b64\_read
- \_b64\_write
- b64\_ctrl

IDA View-A

```
2250 loc_402250: ; CODE XREF: _tier1+B334j
2250 mov [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAAA ; "N+++Ç+----+Ç+--+üÇ"
2264 call _special_printf
2269 mov eax, ds: __imp__iob
226E mov [esp+14h+nargv], 400h ; int
2276 mov [esp+14h+nargc], ebp ; char *
2279 mov [esp+14h+options], eax ; FILE *
227D call _fgets
2282 test eax, eax
2284 jz loc_40254C
228A mov [esp+14h+nargv], 0Ah ; char
2292 mov [esp+14h+nargc], ebp ; char *
2295 call _strchr
229A test eax, eax
229C jz short loc_4022A1
229E mov byte ptr [eax], 0
22A1 loc_4022A1: ; CODE XREF: _tier1+90C7j
22A1 mov [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAA1A ; "N+++Ç!+--+Ç½+üÇ"
22A8 lea edi, [esp+14h+arg_1024]
22AF call _special_printf
22B4 mov eax, ds: __imp__iob
22B9 mov [esp+14h+nargv], 400h ; int
22C1 mov [esp+14h+nargc], edi ; char *
22C4 mov [esp+14h+options], eax ; FILE *
22C8 call _fgets
22CD test eax, eax
22CF jz loc_40254C
22D5 lea eax, [esp+14h+arg_1024]
22DC mov [esp+14h+nargv], 0Ah ; char
22E4 mov [esp+14h+nargc], eax ; char *
22E7 call _strchr
22EC test eax, eax
22EE jz short loc_4022F3
22F0 mov byte ptr [eax], 0
22F3 loc_4022F3: ; CODE XREF: _tier1+95E7j
22F3 mov [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAA ; "N+++Ç;+--+üÇ"
22FA call _special_printf
```

000016A1 004022A1: \_tier1:loc\_4022A1

Line 1 of 1970

AU: idle Down Disk: 44GB

# Explore Code Block (11)

The screenshot shows the IDA Pro interface with the assembly view of a function. Three red circles highlight the following instructions:

```
2250 loc_402250: ; CODE XREF: _tier1+B334j
2250 mov [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAAA ; "N+++Ç;+++++Ç+--+üÇ"
2250 call _special_printf
2269 mov eax, ds: _imp__iob
226E mov [esp+14h+nargv], 400h ; int
2276 mov [esp+14h+nargc], esp ; char *
2279 mov [esp+14h+options], eax ; FILE *
227D call _fgets
2282 test eax, eax
2284 jz loc_40254C
228A mov [esp+14h+nargv], 0Ah ; char
2292 mov [esp+14h+nargc], ebp ; char *
2295 call _strchr
229A test eax, eax
229C jz short loc_4022A1
229E mov byte ptr [eax], 0
22A1 loc_4022A1: ; CODE XREF: _tier1+90C7j
22A1 mov [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAAA1A ; "N+++Ç!+--+Ç%+üÇ"
22A8 lea edi, [esp+14h+arg_1024]
22AF call _special_printf
22B4 mov eax, ds: _imp__iob
22B9 mov [esp+14h+nargv], 400h ; int
22C1 mov [esp+14h+nargc], edi ; char *
22C4 mov [esp+14h+options], eax ; FILE *
22C8 call _fgets
22CD test eax, eax
22CF jz loc_40254C
22D5 lea eax, [esp+14h+arg_1024]
22DC mov [esp+14h+nargv], 0Ah ; char
22E4 mov [esp+14h+nargc], eax ; char *
22E7 call _strchr
22EC test eax, eax
22EE jz short loc_4022F3
22F0 mov byte ptr [eax], 0
22F3 loc_4022F3: ; CODE XREF: _tier1+95E7j
22F3 mov [esp+14h+nargc], offset aEAAA ; "N+++Ç;+++++Ç+--+üÇ"
22FA call _special_printf
```

The status bar at the bottom indicates "Line 1 of 1970" and "AU: idle Down Disk: 44GB".

# Inside special\_printf

```
IDA - C:\challenge\codebreaker2.exe
File Edit Jump Search View Debugger Options Windows Help
No debugger
Functions window
Function name
__mingw_invalidParameterHandler
_pre_cpp_init
_pre_c_init
__tmCRTStartup
__mainCRTStartup
__gcc_register_frame
__gcc_deregister_frame
_fixupString
_special_printf
_getPasswordFromUsername
_writefunc
_isDirectory
_init_string
_printWeatherForecast
_tier1
_setSeed
_getRand64
_Base64Encode
_encrypt
_SHA256_Update_part_0
_SHA224_Init
_SHA256_Init
_SHA224_Update
_SHA256_Update
_SHA256_Transform
_SHA256_Final
_SHA224_Final
_SHA256
_SHA224
_b64_callback_ctrl
_b64_free
_b64_new
_b64_read
_b64_write
b64_ctrl
Line 1 of 1970
AU: idle Down Disk: 44GB

arg_4 = byte ptr 0Ch
push ebp
mov ebp, esp
push edi
push esi
push ebx
sub esp, 2Ch
mov edi, [ebp+arg_0]
lea edx, [ebp+arg_4]
mov [ebp+var_1C], edx
mov [esp], edi ; char *
call _strlen
add eax, 1Fh
and eax, 0FFFFFF0h
call __chkstk_ms
sub esp, eax
lea esi, [esp+17h]
and esi, 0FFFFFF0h
mov [esp+4], edi ; char *
mov ebx, esi
mov [esp], esi ; char *
call _strcpy
movzx eax, byte ptr [esi]
edx, [ebp+var_1C]
test al, al
jz short loc_4015D5

loc_4015C6:
sub eax, 60h ; CODE XREF: _special_printf+53↓j
mov [ebx], al
add ebx, 1
movzx eax, byte ptr [ebx]
test al, al
jnz short loc_4015C6

loc_4015D5:
mov [esp], esi ; char *
mov [esp+4], edx ; va_list
call _vprintf

00000983 00401583: _special_printf+3
```

# Inside special\_printf (2)

The screenshot shows the IDA Pro interface with the assembly code for the `special_printf` function. The code is annotated with red circles and text explaining specific operations:

- Call to `_strcpy`:** A red circle highlights the instruction `call _strcpy` at `loc_4015D5`. A red arrow points to the `arg_4` parameter at the top of the function. A red text annotation to the right says "Copies the string into a buffer".
- Character offset adjustment:** A red circle highlights the instructions `sub eax, 60h` and `add ebx, 1` at `loc_4015C6`. A red text annotation to the right says "Subtracts 96 from each character".
- Call to `_vprintf`:** A red circle highlights the instruction `call _vprintf` at `loc_4015D5`. A red text annotation to the right says "Calls a regular printf function".

```
arg_4 = byte ptr 0Ch

push ebp
mov ebp, esp
push edi
push esi
push ebx
sub esp, 2Ch
mov edi, [ebp+arg_0]
lea edx, [ebp+arg_4]
mov [ebp+var_1C], edx
mov [esp], edi ; char *
call _strlen
add eax, 1Fh
and eax, 0FFFFFFFh
call ___chkstk_ms
sub esp, eax
lea esi, [esp+17h]
and esi, 0FFFFFFFh
mov [esp+4], edi ; char *
mov ebx, esi
mov [esp], esi ; char *
call _strcpy
movzx eax, byte ptr [esi]
mov edx, [ebp+var_1C]
test al, al
jz short loc_4015D5

loc_4015C6:
sub eax, 60h
mov [ebx], al
add ebx, 1
movzx eax, byte ptr [ebx]
test al, al
jnz short loc_4015C6

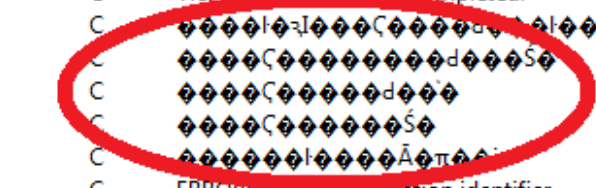
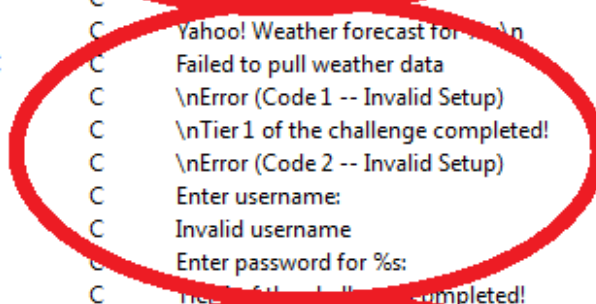
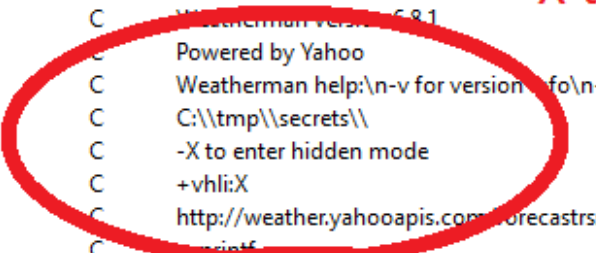
loc_4015D5:
mov [esp], esi ; char *
mov [esp+4], edx ; va_list
call _vprintf

00000983 00401583: _special_printf+3
```

# Mystery solved!

Address	Length	Type	String
.rdata:004420AC	0000000C	C	Los Angeles
.rdata:004420B8	00000008	C	Bangkok
.rdata:004420C0	00000008	C	Beijing
.rdata:004420C8	00000007	C	Bogata
.rdata:004420CF	0000000D	C	Buenos Aires
.rdata:004420DC	00000006	C	Cairo
.rdata:004420E2	00000006	C	Delhi
.rdata:004420E8	00000006	C	Dhaka
.rdata:004420EE	0000000A	C	Guangzhou
.rdata:004420F8	00000009	C	Istanbul
.rdata:00442104	0000000D	C	(default):
.rdata:00442118	00000019	C	Weatherman version 5.8.1
.rdata:00442131	00000011	C	Powered by Yahoo
.rdata:00442144	00000067	C	Weatherman help:\n-v for version info\n-h for help info\n-l to list supported areas\n-i to speci...
.rdata:004421AB	00000010	C	C:\\tmp\\secrets\\
.rdata:004421BB	00000018	C	-X to enter hidden mode
.rdata:004421D3	00000008	C	+vhl:iX
.rdata:004421DC	0000002E	C	http://weather.yahooapis.com/forecastrss?w=%d
.rdata:0044220A	00000009	C	printf
.rdata:00442214	00000021	C	Yahoo! Weather forecast for %s\n
.rdata:00442235	0000001C	C	Failed to pull weather data
.rdata:00442254	00000021	C	\nError (Code 1 -- Invalid Setup)
.rdata:00442278	00000024	C	\nTier 1 of the challenge completed!
.rdata:0044229C	00000021	C	\nError (Code 2 -- Invalid Setup)
.rdata:004422BD	00000011	C	Enter username:
.rdata:004422CE	00000011	C	Invalid username
.rdata:004422DF	00000018	C	Enter password for %s:
.rdata:004422F8	00000023	C	Tier 2 of the challenge completed!
.rdata:00442320	00000118	C	.....
.rdata:00442438	00000017	C	.....S
.rdata:0044244F	00000013	C	.....S
.rdata:00442462	00000010	C	.....S
.rdata:00442472	00000015	C	.....
.rdata:00442488	00000027	C	ERROR: not a valid location identifier

C:\\tmp\\secrets  
-X to enter hidden mode



Enter username:  
Enter password for %s:

???