# Linear solver execution path of the laplacianFoam/flange tutorial in OpenFOAM-v1906 – a GDB debugging tutorial

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## Contents

1	Intr	roduction	1	
2	2 Starting GDB for laplacianFoam and listing the source code		1	
3	Patl	h taken by the TEqn.solve() function	3	
4	Lea	rn more about GDB	11	
$\mathbf{L}$	Listings			
	1	fvMatrixSolve.C, line 321	5	
	2	fvMatrixSolve.C, line 296		
	3	fvMesh.C, line 440	6	
	4	fvMatrixSolve.C, line 60	7	
	5	fvScalarMatrix.C, line 152		
	6	PCG.C, line 219	10	

## 1 Introduction

It is quite often difficult to know exactly which source code is used when running an OpenFOAM executable. OpenFOAM is designed to be flexible for the user, which makes the execution highly depending on the user settings.

This document shows how the debugging tool GDB can be used to show the exact path taken by the code. It is also a basic tutorial in the use of GDB to debug OpenFOAM. For this to work it is assumed that the environment for the Debug version of OpenFOAM-v1906 is activated.

Lines starting with \$ are manual command line entries, and lines starting with (gdb) are manual entries when executing GDB. Other lines are terminal output. The most important pieces of code are shown by listings.

# 2 Starting GDB for laplacianFoam and listing the source code

We set up the flange case and start GDB with the laplacianFoam solver:

```
$\text{rm} -rf $\text{FOAM.RUN/flange}$$ cp -r $\text{FOAM.RUN/flange}$$ langum flange $\text{FOAM.RUN}$$ cd $\text{FOAM.RUN/flange}$$ ansysToFoam flange.ans -scale 0.001 > log.ansysToFoam 2>&1 $\text{gdb}$ laplacianFoam $\text{GNU gdb}$ (Ubuntu 8.1-0ubuntu3) 8.1.0.20180409 - git $\text{Copyright}$$ (C) 2018 Free Software Foundation, Inc.
```

```
License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <a href="http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html">http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html</a>
This is free software: you are free to change and redistribute it.
There is NO WARRANIY, to the extent permitted by law. Type "show copying" and "show warranty" for details.
This GDB was configured as "x86_64-linux-gnu".
Type "show configuration" for configuration details.
For bug reporting instructions, please see:
<a href="http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/">http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/</a>
Find the GDB manual and other documentation resources online at:
<a href="http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/documentation/">http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/documentation/</a>
For help, type "help".
Type "apropos word" to search for commands related to "word"...
Reading symbols from laplacianFoam...done.
```

At this point GDB is prepared to run the laplacianFoam solver, and it has access to all the code of both the top-level solver and the OpenFOAM libraries it uses. We can view the top-level code using the list command (or its short version 1). To make sure that GDB does not exclude any commented header we can specify the line number (below: 1 1). To repeat the command we can simply press Enter to march through the top-level code:

```
(gdb) 1 1
1
2
3
                           OpenFOAM: The Open Source CFD Toolbox
             F ield
4
             O peration
5
             A nd
                           Copyright (C) 2004-2011 OpenCFD Ltd.
6
             M anipulation
7
8
                          | Copyright (C) 2011-2017 OpenFOAM Foundation
9
10
   License
96
            TEqn. solve();
107
      return 0;
108 }
109
110
```

We see that the linear solver is executed by TEqn.solve(), at line 96, so that is where we will start our journey.

Other ways to list the code are (try them):

- 1 to march backwards when repeatedly pressing Enter. The default forward command is 1 +.
- 1 96 to specify which line you want at the center
- 1 80,100 to show the lines 80-100
- The number of lines that are shown by the 1 command can be changed by set listsize <count>, where <count> is the number of lines to be shown.

It should be noted that I have experienced problems listing code using line numbers inside templated classes. Then it is better to march back an forth using 1 + and 1 -.

## 3 Path taken by the TEqn.solve() function

We start by setting a breakpoint (b) at the call to the TEqn.solve() function, which tells GDB to stop the execution at that line, before executing that line. We run laplacianFoam through GDB (run), and we see that the execution stops at the breakpoint.

```
(gdb) b laplacianFoam.C:96
Breakpoint 1 at 0x2e100: file laplacianFoam.C, line 96.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/platforms/linux64GccDPInt32Debug/bin/
[Thread debugging using libthread_db enabled]
Using host libthread_db library "/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libthread_db.so.1".
             F ield
                                OpenFOAM: The Open Source CFD Toolbox
                                           v1906
             O peration
                                Version:
             A nd
                                Web:
                                          www.OpenFOAM.com
             M anipulation
       : 88d188709a - 20190806 OPENFOAM=1906 patch=190724
Build
Arch
       : "LSB; label = 32; scalar = 64"
       : /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/platforms/linux64GccDPInt32Debug/blin/laplacianl
Exec
       : Sep 19 2019
Date
Time
       : 14:36:47
       : oscfd-VirtualBox
Host
PID
       : 15854
I/O
       : uncollated
       : /\text{home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/oscfd-v1906/run/flange}
Case
nProcs: 1
trapFpe: Floating point exception trapping enabled (FOAM_SIGFPE).
file Modification Checking: Monitoring run-time modified files using timeStampMaster (file Modified files using timeStampMaster)
allowSystemOperations: Allowing user-supplied system call operations
Create time
Create mesh for time = 0
SIMPLE: no convergence criteria found. Calculations will run for 3 steps.
Reading field T
Reading transportProperties
Reading diffusivity DT
No finite volume options present
Calculating temperature distribution
Time = 0.005
Breakpoint 1, main (argc=1, argv=0x7fffffffd0c8) at laplacianFoam.C:96
96
                 TEqn. solve();
```

There are several ways to continue the execution. Typing...

- c will simply continue the execution until the next breakpoint or the end of the execution. In our case it will simply get back to the same location at the next loop, since we only have that breakpoint. You can try it if you like, since the c command will just bring us back to the point where we will continue later
- s will step to the next line of the execution, also entering into functions.
- n will step to the next line of the execution, but not enter into functions (i.e. stay in the same file).

Each of the above commands can be followed by a number to repeat the command that number of times (e.g. c 2). You can repeat the previous command by just pressing Enter again. If you issued either of the commands s or n you can use the command c to get back to the breakpoint at the next loop. Now make sure that you are at the breakpoint, as at the end of the listing above.

We want to figure out where we end up when the solve() function is called, so we type s to step into the function:

```
(gdb) s
Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7fffffffc910)
at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:321
321 Foam::SolverPerformance<Type> Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solve()
```

We see that we end up at line 321 in fvMatrixSolve.C. If we forget where we are we can type where to show where we are:

```
(gdb) where
#0 Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7fffffffc910)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:321
#1 0x0000555555582119 in main (argc=1, argv=0x7fffffffd0c8) at laplacianFoam.C:96
```

We see that we are at line 321 in fvMatrixSolve.C, and we also see that we came there from line 96 in laplacianFoam.C. This is the *call stack*, and the numbers to the left are the *frame* numbers. We can go to another frame and list the lines:

```
(gdb) f 1
    0 \times 0000555555582119 in main (argc=1, argv=0 \times 7fffffffd0 \times 8)
#1
    at laplacianFoam.C:96
                 TEqn. solve();
96
(gdb) l
91
92
                      fvOptions(T)
93
                 );
94
95
                 fvOptions.constrain(TEqn);
96
                 TEqn. solve();
97
                 fvOptions.correct(T);
             }
98
99
             #include "write.H"
100
(gdb) where
#0 Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7fffffffc910)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:321
    0 \times 0000555555582119 in main (argc=1, argv=0 \times 7fffffffd0 \times 8)
    at laplacianFoam.C:96
(gdb) f 0
#0 Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7ffffffffc910)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:321
321 Foam::SolverPerformance<Type> Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solve()
(gdb) l
```

```
316
       return solve(fvMat_.solverDict());
317 }
318
319
320 template < class Type>
321 Foam::SolverPerformance<Type> Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solve()
323
       return this -> solve (solverDict ());
324 }
325
(gdb) where
at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:321
   0 \times 0000555555582119 in main (argc=1, argv=0 \times 7fffffffd0 \times 8)
   at laplacianFoam.C:96
```

We see that the where command gives the same output irrespectively in which frame we are, which means that we are only moving between frames to look at the code, and that the execution remains at the same location. We can as well use the commands

- up to move up in the call stack
- down to move down in the call stack

The f 0 command can as well be used to reset the line that is shown by the command 1.

We issue the command f 0 and use the command 1 to have a look at the solve() function that is called, in the listing below.

### Listing 1: fvMatrixSolve.C, line 321

```
320 template < class Type>
321 Foam::SolverPerformance < Type> Foam::fvMatrix < Type>::solve()
322 {
323 return this -> solve(solverDict());
324 }
```

We see that the solve() function calls another solve function, using the original object TEqn (this) and the output of a call to a function solverDict(). We are not interested at this point to figure out the details of the function solverDict(), so we will just step into it and use the command fin to finish that function call (which also gives a long output, showing the return of that function). After that we are still at line 321 in fvMatrixSolve.C, since the function solve is next to be executed. Then we are interested in where that function is located, so we step into that function.

```
(gdb) s 2
Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solverDict (this=0x7ffffffffc910)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrix.C:1013
        const Foam::dictionary& Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solverDict() const
1013
(gdb) fin
Run till exit from #0 Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solverDict (this=0x7ffffffffc910)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrix.C:1013
0x0000555555586d11 in Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7ffffffffc910)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:323
        return this -> solve (solverDict());
Value returned is $1 =
    (const Foam::dictionary &) @0x555555af24f0: {<Foam::ILList<Foam::DLListBase, Foam::entr
(gdb) s
Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7ffffffffc910, solverControls=...) at /home/oscfd/Open
296 Foam::SolverPerformance<Type> Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solve
```

We end up at line 296 in the same file (fvMatrixSolve.C). From the listing below we see that yet another function solve is called.

#### Listing 2: fvMatrixSolve.C, line 296

We step a line in the current file (n), so that we are at line 301. Then we make a step (s), going into functions, realizing that we end up in the mesh() function that we are not interested in, so we finish that function by the fin command and again step into the next function call.

```
(gdb) n
301
        return psi_.mesh().solve(*this, solverControls);
(gdb) s
Foam::DimensionedField<double, Foam::volMesh>::mesh (this=0x7ffffffffc350)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/OpenFOAM/lnInclude/DimensionedFieldI.H:42
42
        return mesh_;
(gdb) fin
Run till exit from #0 Foam::DimensionedField<double, Foam::volMesh>::mesh (this=0x7ffffffff
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/OpenFOAM/lnInclude/DimensionedFieldI.H:42
0x000055555558ba55 in Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solve (this=0x7fffffffc910, solverControls=.
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/finiteVolume/lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:301
        return psi_.mesh().solve(*this, solverControls);
Value returned is $2 =
  (const Foam::GeoMesh < Foam::fvMesh > ::Mesh &) @0x55555532b40: {<Foam::polyMesh > = {<Foam::polyMesh > ::Mesh &) }
Foam::fvMesh::solve (this=0x555555532b40, m=..., dict=...) at fvMesh/fvMesh.C:440
```

We end up at line 440 in fvMesh.C. We see below that we are now about to call a function named solveSegregatedOrCoupled.

## Listing 3: fvMesh.C, line 440

```
435 Foam::SolverPerformance<Foam::scalar> Foam::fvMesh::solve
436 (
437 fvMatrix<scalar>& m,
438 const dictionary& dict
439 ) const
440 {
441 // Redirect to fvMatrix solver
442 return m.solveSegregatedOrCoupled(dict);
443 }
```

We step into that function to figure out where it is located and where next to go.

```
(gdb) s 2
Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solveSegregatedOrCoupled (this=0x7fffffffc910, solverControls=...)
at lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:60
60 Foam::SolverPerformance<Type> Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solveSegregatedOrCoupled
```

We end up at line 60 in fvMatrixSolve.C. The listing below shows that the kind of solver that will be used is either segregated of coupled, see line 92. We need to figure out which one will be used in our case.

```
template < class Type>
59
   Foam::SolverPerformance<Type> Foam::fvMatrix<Type>::solveSegregatedOrCoupled
60
61
62
         const dictionary& solverControls
63
64
         word regionName;
65
         if (psi_.mesh().name() != polyMesh::defaultRegion)
66
67
             regionName = psi_.mesh().name() + "::";
68
69
         addProfiling(solve, "fvMatrix::solve." + regionName + psi_.name());
 70
71
         if (debug)
72
73
             Info.masterStream(this->mesh().comm())
 74
                 << "fvMatrix<Type>::solveSegregatedOrCoupled"
75
                    "(const dictionary& solverControls): "
76
                    "solving fvMatrix<Type>"
77
 78
                 \ll endl;
79
         }
80
81
         label maxIter = -1;
82
         if (solverControls.readIfPresent("maxIter", maxIter))
83
             if (maxIter == 0)
84
85
                 return SolverPerformance<Type>();
86
87
88
         }
89
90
         word type(solverControls.lookupOrDefault<word>("type", "segregated"));
91
92
         if (type == "segregated")
93
             return solveSegregated(solverControls);
94
95
96
         else if (type == "coupled")
97
98
             return solveCoupled(solverControls);
         }
99
         else
100
101
102
             FatalIOErrorInFunction (solverControls)
                 << "Unknown type " << type</pre>
103
104
                 "; currently supported solver types are segregated and coupled"
105
                 << exit(FatalIOError);</pre>
106
107
             return SolverPerformance < Type > ();
108
         }
109
```

We set a breakpoint at line 92 and continue to that line. Another way of continuing to line 92 without setting a breakpoint would be to issue the command u 92, but I had a problem with that in my installation at this particular point (maybe due to templating, as we will see).

```
(gdb) b fvMatrixSolve.C:92
Breakpoint 2 at 0x7ffff63922b6: fvMatrixSolve.C:92. (4 locations)
(gdb) c
Continuing.

Breakpoint 2, Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solveSegregatedOrCoupled (this=0x7fffffffc910, solver at lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:92
92 if (type = "segregated")
```

Now we have two breakpoints, so let's examine the breakpoints we have and delete the newly created one (if you like you can keep it to easily get back to this location):

```
(gdb) i b
Num
        Type
                        Disp Enb Address
                                                      What
1
        breakpoint
                                  0x0000555555582100 in main(int, char**)
                        keep y
    at laplacianFoam.C:96
    breakpoint already hit 3 times
2
        breakpoint
                        keep y
                                 <MULTIPLE>
    breakpoint already hit 1 time
2.1
                                    0x00007ffff63922b6 in Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solveSegreg
        at lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:92
2.2
                                    0x00007ffff63927ca in Foam::fvMatrix<Foam::Vector<double>
        at lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:92
2.3
                                    0x00007ffff6392d30 in Foam::fvMatrix<Foam::SymmTensor<dox
        at lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:92
2.4
                                    0x00007ffff6393296 in Foam::fvMatrix<Foam::Tensor<double>
        at lnInclude/fvMatrixSolve.C:92
(gdb) delete 2
(gdb) i b
Num
        Type
                        Disp Enb Address
                                                      What
        breakpoint
                        keep y
                                 0 \times 00005555555582100 in main(int, char**)
    at laplacianFoam.C:96
    breakpoint already hit 3 times
```

We can in particular see that the second breakpoint has four options, depending on the content type of the fvMatrix (due to templating). That may be the reason for my problem above.

We check (print, or p) the value of the object named type, and see that it is segregated. Then we step into that particular function.

We end up at line 152 in fvScalarMatrix.C. We see in the listing below (line 172) that there is a call to a function New of the class solver of the class lduMatrix (lduMatrix::solver). The solver to be used is specified by the user, in system/fvSolution. That solver is then used to call yet another solve function at line 180.

```
template <>
147
   Foam::solverPerformance Foam::fvMatrix<Foam::scalar >::solveSegregated
148
149
150
         const dictionary& solverControls
151
152
153
         if (debug)
154
155
             Info.masterStream(this->mesh().comm())
                 << "fvMatrix<scalar >::solveSegregated"
156
                     "(const dictionary& solverControls) : "
157
                     "solving fvMatrix<scalar>"
158
159
                 \ll endl;
         }
160
161
         GeometricField < scalar , fvPatchField , volMesh>& psi =
162
163
            const_cast < GeometricField < scalar , fvPatchField , volMesh > & > (psi_);
164
165
         scalarField saveDiag(diag());
         addBoundaryDiag(diag(), 0);
166
167
168
         scalarField totalSource(source_);
         addBoundarySource(totalSource, false);
169
170
171
         // Solver call
         solverPerformance solverPerf = lduMatrix::solver::New
172
173
174
             psi.name(),
             *this,
175
176
             boundaryCoeffs_,
             internalCoeffs_,
177
             psi_.boundaryField().scalarInterfaces(),
178
             solverControls
179
        )->solve(psi.primitiveFieldRef(), totalSource);
180
181
182
         if (solverPerformance::debug)
183
184
             solverPerf.print(Info.masterStream(mesh().comm()));
185
186
187
         diag() = saveDiag;
188
189
         psi.correctBoundaryConditions();
190
191
         psi.mesh().setSolverPerformance(psi.name(), solverPerf);
192
193
         return solverPerf;
194
```

We go there by setting a breakpoint and continuing the execution. Then we make a step and realize that we end up in operator->() that we are not interested in at the moment, so we finish that function using the fin command and make the next step. Then we end up in primitiveFieldRef(), so we repeat fin and step again.

```
(gdb) b fvScalarMatrix.C:180
Breakpoint 3 at 0x7ffff676a827: file fvMatrices/fvScalarMatrix/fvScalarMatrix.C, line 180.
```

```
(gdb) c
Continuing.
Breakpoint 3, Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solveSegregated (this=0x7fffffffc910, solverControls:
    at fvMatrices/fvScalarMatrix/fvScalarMatrix.C:180
180
       )->solve(psi.primitiveFieldRef(), totalSource);
(gdb) s
Foam::autoPtr<Foam::lduMatrix::solver>::operator-> (this=0x7fffffffbb80)
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/OpenFOAM/lnInclude/autoPtrI.H:216
216 inline T* Foam::autoPtr<T>::operator->()
(gdb) fin
Run till exit from #0 Foam::autoPtr<Foam::lduMatrix::solver>::operator-> (this=0x7fffffffb
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/OpenFOAM/lnInclude/autoPtrI.H:216
0x00007ffff676a833 in Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solveSegregated (this=0x7ffffffffc910, solverO
    at fvMatrices/fvScalarMatrix/fvScalarMatrix.C:180
        )->solve(psi.primitiveFieldRef(), totalSource);
Value returned is $4 = (Foam::lduMatrix::solver *) 0x5555555946cc0
Foam::GeometricField < double, Foam::fvPatchField, Foam::volMesh >::primitiveFieldRef (this=0:
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/OpenFOAM/lnInclude/GeometricField.C:893
893
        if (updateAccessTime)
(gdb) fin
Run till exit from #0 Foam::GeometricField < double, Foam::fvPatchField, Foam::volMesh >::pri
    at /home/oscfd/OpenFOAM/OpenFOAM-v1906/src/OpenFOAM/lnInclude/GeometricField.C:893
0x00007ffff676a851 in Foam::fvMatrix<double>::solveSegregated (this=0x7ffffffffc910, solverO
    at fvMatrices/fvScalarMatrix/fvScalarMatrix.C:180
        )->solve(psi.primitiveFieldRef(), totalSource);
Value returned is $5 =
      (Foam::DimensionedField < double, Foam::volMesh >::FieldType &) @0x7ffffffffc430: {<Foam
Foam::PCG::solve (this=0x555555946cc0, psi_s=..., source=..., cmpt=0 '\000') at matrices/ld
219 {
```

We finally end up at line 219 in the PCG solver, which is listed below, as stated in system/fvSolution.

### Listing 6: PCG.C, line 219

```
213 Foam::solverPerformance Foam::PCG::solve
214
215
         scalarField& psi_s,
216
         const scalarField& source,
217
         const direction cmpt
    ) const
218
219
220
         PrecisionAdaptor < solveScalar, scalar > tpsi(psi_s);
         return scalarSolve
221
222
223
             tpsi.ref(),
224
             ConstPrecisionAdaptor<solveScalar, scalar>(source)(),
225
226
         );
227
```

Now we have seen the exact path taken to the solver specified by the user, which concludes the aim of this tutorial.

At this point we can type quit to quit GDB.

## 4 Learn more about GDB

Search the Internet for additional ways to use GDB. It is for instance possible to show and manipulate values of variables, and thus influence the execution of the code.

- See http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb
- See https://darkdust.net/files/GDB%20Cheat%20Sheet.pdf
- There are some interfaces to GDB:
  - See http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/links/
  - ddd
  - emacs
- Macros for GDB/OpenFOAM: http://openfoamwiki.net/index.php/Contrib\_gdbOF
- eclipse is another alternative (An Integrated Development Environment)

  See: http://openfoamwiki.net/index.php/HowTo\_Use\_OpenFOAM\_with\_Eclipse
- Qt is yet another alternative See: http://openfoamwiki.net/index.php/HowTo\_Use\_OpenFOAM\_with\_QtCreator