A review of the
Defense Integrated Military Human
Resources System

by

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System Overview

• Referred to as simply DIMHRS or “dime-ers”
• Designed to replace 100+ legacy payroll and personnel programs.[3]
• Would handled payroll functionality for the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines[3]:
  – Taxes Rules;
  – Garnishments;
  – Automated Pay Processing;
  – Self Service Features for Service Members.
• Would be largest human resource program project ever implemented if completed.[1]
• Would have Kept track of personnel file such as assignments and medical history.[1]
• Promised to reduce issues for Service Members transferring between branches, assignment and active duty.
• Would allow DoD to track troop movement regardless of location or branch.[1]
System History and Failure

• In September 2003 the Department of Defense awarded 281 million dollar contract to Northrop Grumman.[1]
• DoD purchase PeopleSoft database software as a starting point.[1]
• Business Transformation Agency is formed and takes control of overseeing development.
• In preparation of DIMHRS, other systems updates for payroll programs in the services are ignored.
• Marine Corps move to Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS).
• In 2006 Navy tries to adopt MCTFS but is not permitted because of 668 investment in DIMHRS.[5]
System History and Failure Cont.

• Forward Compatible Payroll is promised as alternative but never delivered for similar reasons.

• First proposed rollout date of April 2006 is postponed.

• Rollout date is postponements another four times, finally set to March 2009. [5]
  – However, this date is also missed.

• In February of 2010, after 10 years and 850 million dollars, it is finally canceled.

• Actually, it was “leveraged” to create Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army or IPPS-A.[2]
"Many of the programs that I have made decisions to cut have been controversial within the Department of Defense. This one was not. I would say that what we've gotten for a half billion dollars is an unpronounceable acronym.” [2]

– Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates
Reasons for System Failure

• Size of project was huge:
  – Replaced, connected and absorbed numerous systems written over the course of 50 years in various languages;
  – Had more stakeholders then predicted.
• Development plan based on a waterfall model.
  – Problem continued to grow and change during development cycle.
  – Caused by belief that this one system would “fix” everything.
• Failure to recognize a dead end.
Reasons for System Failure Cont.

- Forced to use PeopleSoft:
  - Caused integration issues with data transfer.
  - Different military business practices were not supported by PeopleSoft core.
- Poor communication between users, developers and DoD:
  - Poor or vague initial system specification.
  - Lack of communication and agreement between different on requirements.
  - Failure of developer to convey future implementation and deployments so services could prepare better.
Suggestions for Next time

• Should not be salvaged as a major issue is its backbone PeopleSoft.
• To have made it work in the first place:
  – Started from the ground up without any over the self software;
  – Created an agile delivery plan to rollout specific subsystems over the course of several years;
  – Create a board to oversee progress and set criteria to prevent project rot;
  – Outline a better specification document for the program overall, respecting the complexity and uniqueness of the payroll process of the Army.
• Wasn’t doomed to begin with, but short after.


