

A review of the
**Defense Integrated Military Human
Resources System**

by

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 than 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.

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