

QUOTES

GEN JAMES C. MCCONVILLE, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF

"I don't think the young men and women that are coming into the Army want to be managed as interchangeable parts," he said. "They want to be managed individually for their talents."

"Once we get the whole system up and running, the real gains will be made from there. I think it's going to fundamentally change the way we do business."

"It's not going to be an industrial-aged fielding process."

"In fact, I think we're going to do it better because we're going to have the right people in the right job, doing the right thing."

"The fact that we don't have all our components on one system is not fair to you all. When you go on active-duty, we mess up your records. We mess up your pay. And we've got to fix that. Bringing all three components into a single system will help resolve those issues."

"There's a lot of things going on in the talent management side of the house. The Army is people and we've got to take care of our people if we want to maintain being the world's greatest force."

"What we want to do is start treating people like they're not interchangeable parts and start aligning them by their talents with the right jobs."

"They don't want to be treated just like another cog in the system. They're not a widget. They want to be recognized for what they bring to the table, what their talents are and they will stay with us."

"If we get them in the right place at the right time, we'll have even a better Army than we have right now."

"If we provide a good quality of life for our families, they will stay with their Soldiers."

"I know having three kids who serve in the military that their parents have sent their most important possession to the United States Army, and they expect us, in fact they demand, that we take care of them."

"We have a tremendously talented force, but right now, we don't take full advantage because our system doesn't allow us to manage it effectively."

"We are in the process of implementing an integrated personnel and pay system."

"So in two and a half years ... all three components will be on one personnel system. Which is a really big deal for us."

"What that's going to do is allow us to start to describe our officers in much more detail than just two variables, like you are a captain of the infantry or you're a major of engineers. Now we'll know what type of knowledge, skills and behaviors you have and even your preferences."

"Our efforts so far have been focused on leaders, specifically officers, but I want to be very clear that 21st century talent management and taking care of people extends to all of our people."

"I believe that if we know where people want to go and what they want to do -- and we get them into those positions -- we will have a much better Army. The progress we're putting in place will take time. This is going to change [Army] culture."

GEN JAMES C. MCCONVILLE, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, cont'd.

“But no matter how much technology we develop, Soldiers will always remain the centerpiece of our Army. We equip people, we don’t man equipment, and that philosophy will not change. And to ensure we recruit and retain the right people for the Army, we are also implementing a 21st century talent management system, a system that allows us to see the tremendous and diverse talents in our force and employ them in a way that improves the overall readiness and lethality of the Army. Our current, industrial-age personnel system manages people basically by two variables. You’re a Captain of Infantry or you’re a Sergeant of Engineers, and that’s really it. So to compete for the talent of the extraordinary men and women in the civilian sector and to recruit and retain the best and brightest, we have to do better. Therefore, we’re moving towards a talent management system where we will manage people by 25 variables instead of two, a system that recognizes and capitalizes on our people’s knowledge, their skills, their behaviors, and even their preferences. And I know it’s almost blasphemous to think the Army would actually consider someone’s preferences, but if we know where they want to go and what they want to do, we believe we get the right person in the right job at the right time, and we will have a better Army and more committed Soldiers and families. The implementation of the Integrated Personnel and Pay System, IPPS-A, is really a critical part of that. It’s ongoing now and it will bring all three components onto one personnel and pay system. This will prevent us from losing our National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers records, as many of you all know, we mess up their pay when they come on active duty. And we’re gonna fix that. We have to fix that, and we need to take better care of — of our people in — in the Army Reserves. And IPPS-A will do that; it’ll set the foundation for the information-age talent management system we need.”

COL GREGORY JOHNSON, IPPS-A, FUNCTIONAL DIVISION CHIEF

“Our current HR and pay environment limits the Army’s ability to effectively facilitate modern capabilities, including talent management. The complexity of more than 200 authoritative systems across the three Army components has led to inefficiencies, deviations and errors with Soldiers’ records. This limits our visibility and consequently our ability to unlock the potential of our people. Today’s environment is rooted in the industrial age, and we need to take it into the 21st century.”

“To that end, as part of the Total Force Policy, the Army mandated the employment of an integrated personnel and pay system that standardizes business practices, provides authoritative data for military personnel and facilitates a continuum of service across all three components. The Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A) is our solution to a decades-long problem of inefficiency and data inaccuracy that has plagued the total force.”

“Since we began this effort, the IPPS-A team has made significant progress toward building a system that will totally transform our Army’s HR and pay processes.”

“We listen to feedback from the field and build the system in phases, each delivering value and improving the next delivery.”

“IPPS-A needs the continued support of Soldiers and Army civilians across the total force to bring this transformation to fruition.”

“Soldiers expect to be part of a 21st century organization with technology comparable to what they see in their app stores every day. This app allows them to accomplish routine tasks that previously required an in-person trip to a G1/S1 shop.”

“By providing one comprehensive record, mobile capabilities, minimized paperwork and reducing in-person appointments, IPPS-A will maximize the potential of the Army’s greatest asset — the Soldier — to enhance Army readiness.”

“Very much, today, we track guys on two variables: their skill—infantryman—and then their grade—captain or a staff sergeant. And we very much utilize them in the Army just by those two variables. Now, we have a 1.1 million-man Army, in a lot of cases you have to track them in those ways. But it’s really, what other talents do you bring to the table and how do we utilize those talents to better the national defense?”

“What opens up significantly is, can you really code, do you really have the analytic brain to do cyber, can you work robotics, can you do AI, can you code machine learning, are you a data scientist at heart? There’s all kinds of people in the Army doing great things—some are driving tanks; me, I’m an HR guy. But if you have this talent, maybe I can utilize you for something much more broad than that current task that you’re doing.”

“It’s unprecedented for the Army to focus on an HR management-type thing at this level. It’s absolutely unprecedented. We’re very fortunate for the leadership that we have right now from the very top.”

“Since its inception, the IPPS-A program has made significant progress towards building a system that will usher in a new era of HR and talent management in the Army. Stakeholder engagement is critical to this effort.”

COL GREGORY JOHNSON, IPPS-A, FUNCTIONAL DIVISION CHIEF, cont.

“It’s a monumental achievement,” said Johnson of reaching the halfway mark. “When fielding of the program first started, it was basically 54 states and territories doing things 54 different ways. There was no set process like semi-centralized promotions, individual workflow, oversight on finance or auditability. Now, we have states doing things through one process. That’s huge.”

“We have an Army requirement that’s about three components, but unless you’re in the Guard you don’t know how the Guard operates. So, for us, it was pretty instrumental that we had some key leaders from the Guard helping.”

“That’s all tied to leadership. I didn’t ask for Pennsylvania to continue to help. They came to us on their own. You have key individuals in their state who are dedicated to the whole Army mission. That’s a pretty big story. I think that’s why people want to join the Army is having people go out of their way to help the mission and individuals. That’s the definition of being a part of something.”

“By sheer force we’ve kept the schedule for deployment,” said Johnson. “We have a lot to do with these last three fielding groups, but I’m really proud of the team that has got us this far. You don’t get to this point without focused, dedicated teamwork.”

“I’m optimistic that we have the right team focused on delivering the system,” said Johnson. “Folks told me this is a fool’s errand when I showed up in 2016, and I refused to believe that. In R2 [release 2], we showed this is all feasible. It’s time to bear down with the best of the best and get this done.”

“Allowing Soldiers to see their HR records on a mobile device ... is a massive leap toward modernization and a recognition that we are in the 21st century.”

“We need to get IPPS-A out to the Army so we can improve our Soldiers’ lives.”

“With the publishing of the Army People Strategy, IPPS-A was noted as the key enabler to transition our current HR systems and processes. There is Army senior leader buy-in and support to get everybody onto one system, and to utilize their talents in different ways.”

“IPPS-A is meant to capture a Soldier’s experience throughout their careers. We want to highlight ... (and) track this data in a better way.”

OTHER

“Having a system that functions for the Active component, National Guard, and the Reserve, solves a decade-long problem,” said Rep. John Bergman of Michigan’s 1st Congressional District. “The Army has a solid plan, and I am excited to receive more updates on how we are going to be able to roll this out so that all the Soldiers have access to IPPS-A.”

“What I observed was a solid team during my brief,” said Bergman. “Everyone was in sync and enthusiastic about the mission to take care of our Soldiers.”

“I look forward to coming back to visit you all whether that be at the IPPS-A headquarters or out in the field, and I will be sure to bring more of my colleagues as we continue to support the success of IPPS-A,” said Bergman.

“This is central to what we’re doing for the Army going forward,” said Hon. James E. McPherson. “The Chief of Staff of the Army says ‘People First.’ This system is the vehicle for the People First strategy.”

“I see incredible potential,” said McPherson. “I don’t want to be working with stubby pencils and spreadsheets.” Speaking positively about the possibilities for managing talent, he added, “Twenty-six years of my life were dictated by assignment officers and they told me ‘these are the only jobs that are available.’ The data elements from the 25-point talent profile...Think of what a promotion board could see...what data elements would look good on a board.”

“Commanders and managers being able to see their unit’s information in real time is super powerful,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lionel Blair, VAARN systems information branch chief. “They can see deployment stuff like readiness scorecards and duty statuses. Honestly, they can see the overall readiness of their unit in real time without depending on contacting a Human Resources professional.”

“This system is more robust than SIDPERS,” said Blair. “SIDPERS was binary, so only select people had access. Now, we’ve got 300 HR professionals in the system, plus commanders, 1st Sergeants and Sergeants Major. So, a lot of people are trying to get their footing and figure out their role in the system.”

“They’ve seen orders go into IPERMS in a matter of seconds rather than having to manually upload them,” said Blair. “That’s definitely a positive of the new system.”

“The ticket system increases what I call touch timer,” said Blair. “If a Soldier asks me a question via the ticket system, I must open the ticket, read the comment, research something in another system, come back and answer question, then work a solution. That’s holistic HR management which is a good thing. It increases visibility on the work we are doing as HR professionals.”

“Our Soldiers who are only here on drill weekend will especially benefit from this system,” said Blair. “So, knowing if they get married they can submit their documentation on their own. They can do that in real time instead of waiting 30 days to submit a document. Before IPPS-A, Soldiers couldn’t update their records on their own.”

“All actions generated in IPPS-A are transparent to everyone. Notifications are delivered to the Soldier and the HR professional, letting them know that there is an update (to their record),” said Maj. Leonard Baklarz, the release 2 lead. “Simple things like that, I think we take for granted because of the information age we live in.”

Quotes

OTHER, cont.

“IPPS-A is going to make things easier,” said Brig. Gen. Yesenia R. Roque, National Guard Assistant Director for Army National Guard Personnel and Talent Management. “Easier to process, easier to respond to and easier to track.”

“The Virginia National Guard is proud to serve as the tip of the spear for the Army’s implementation of transparency in pay and personnel records,” said Lt. Col. Rusty McGuire, deputy commander of the 116th. “Soldiers are now able to view their records in real time and take ownership in ensuring accuracy and completeness of their records.”

“The individual Soldier will have access to his HR personnel file from his phone or computer from anywhere in the world and request actions on it and follow those actions all the way up the chain,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark Brown, IPPS-A Instructor, HRRTC, PEC. “It’s a game changer.”

“Once you enter a Soldier’s information into the system, the system does the work for you,” said Sgt. Sean Henderson, Joint Force Headquarters, State Enlisted Actions Noncommissioned Officer. “Instead of emailing your contact in another state, IPPS-A notifies the state that the Soldier’s information is in the system.”

“What used to take four systems and 45 minutes now takes one system and 15 minutes,” said Henderson. “So, with IPPS-A, in the time it used to take to complete one transfer I was able to complete three.”

“By understanding their processes, we can better serve them when we are working together,” said Maj. Estela Barrios, 3rd ID S-1. “IPPS-A will close that gap because the same way we process active duty personnel actions, we can now execute for the National Guard or Reserve personnel.”

“IPPS-A is bringing us closer, and we all should be able to assist each other better,” said Barrios. “One HR system for all!”

“Active duty professionals had limited HR system capability and couldn’t provide customer service for them,” said Barrios. “They needed to go to their own HR professionals to get assistance. Sometimes, they had to wait weeks to get assistance on a simple personnel action.”

“You can do every HR task in one system, and you can see who the task is currently with,” said Sgt. 1st Class Patricia Anderson. “You can track the task’s progress, which should help with efficiency.”

“Soldiers always come to S-1 when they need updates,” said Anderson. “Being able to do that on their phone will definitely lighten our workload.”