

**Prepared Statement**  
**of**  
**Jeanne B. Fites**  
**Deputy Under Secretary of Defense**  
**(Program Integration)**  
**Before the**  
**House Veterans Affairs Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**  
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# Biography

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense

*Personnel and Readiness*

*Washington, D.C. 20301-4000*

**JEANNE B. FITES**  
**Deputy Under Secretary of Defense**  
**(Program Integration)**

Mrs. Fites was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Requirements and Resources on December 26, 1993 and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Requirements and Resources on July 7, 1994. (On January 10, 1997 the name was changed from Requirements and Resources to Program Integration.) Prior to that, she served as either Principal Director to or Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Requirements and Resources) since 1985. She is responsible for the research and analytic program for the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), as well as his participation in the Program, Planning and Budgeting system and corporate information management activities. She is also responsible for presentation of the Defense Manpower Program to the Congress; determination of total force manpower requirements; and for providing Defense support to special events such as the Olympics and the Pan American Games.

From July 1978 to August 1985, as Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Installations and Logistics), she managed the presentation of Defense manpower, logistics and military construction program before Congressional committees, the DoD program to avoid tuition charges to military dependents attending public school, support to other agencies in drug interdiction, customs inspection, youth employment. Managed Defense support to the 1980 Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, and the U.K. sponsored Operation Raleigh.

She was a research psychologist for the Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force, specializing in performance of low aptitude military accessions, training technology and education programs (1966-1974). Member of OSD Central All Volunteer Force Task Force (1972). Assistant Director for Research, Defense Manpower Data Center (1974-1976). Director for Research, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (1976-1977).

Mrs. Fites received a Master's Degree in Personnel and Industrial Psychology from George Washington University in 1969; a Baccalaureate in Psychology from Wake Forest University in 1966. She was awarded the Presidential Meritorious Executive Rank in 1982, 1991, and 2000, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Civilian Service in 2001, and the Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Award in 1981, 1984, 1989, and 1997.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to brief you on our efforts on the expeditious transfer of military personnel information to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Under Secretary (Personnel and Readiness) and the Department take very seriously our responsibility to our Service members to ensure that they have timely access to benefits they have earned through their service. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) and the Joint Requirements and Integration Office (JR&IO) in my office, as well as other offices throughout P&R, have worked closely with representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, and the National Archives and Records Administration over the years to improve our interfaces. Information sharing and interoperability are strategic objectives and we are committed to achieving effective interfaces to provide Service members and veterans their benefits and entitlements for so selflessly serving their country.

I understand that you have three basic concerns that I will address in this testimony:

1) Delays in the implementation of the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System Personnel/Pay (DIMHRS (Pers/Pay)); 2) The lack of an electronic transfer of the DD Form 214 to Veterans Affairs upon separation; and 3) The need for better access to DD Form 214s for personnel who have already separated. I will address these three issues and answer any questions that you have.

DIMHRS (Pers/Pay) will be a totally integrated pay and personnel system supporting the operational requirements of all the DoD Components. The Department has fully funded DIMHRS through the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP). DIMHRS will resolve the inefficiencies and deficiencies of our legacy personnel and pay systems and it will be the vehicle

through which we transform military personnel and pay management. DIMHRS is fully supported by all the Services and is based on full business process re-engineering. It is fully compliant with the Clinger Cohen Act, the Government Performance and Results Act and has received full certification from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) for compliance with the DoD Business Management Enterprise Architecture. The attached papers provide additional information on DIMHRS, including a description of roles and responsibilities for the program.

The DIMHRS Developer/Implementer contract was awarded to Northrop Grumman in September 2003. The system will be operational in the Army (all components) in late 2005 and fully operational in all Services in late 2007. The program was initiated in 1998 when it received Milestone 0 approval from the OSD Milestone Decision Authority. When the program was initiated, Congress directed that program management be located in New Orleans, with the Program Manager reporting to the Commander, Naval Reserve Force. Although the support for the program was appreciated, the Commander, Naval Reserve Force is not an acquisition authority in DoD, and some difficulties arose in completing the acquisition requirements for the program. Upon request from my office, and with permission from Congress, the Navy changed the acquisition reporting chain for DIMHRS to its present structure. The current program management team began work in August of 2001. Since that time, the program has gained significant support within the Department, from the Services and the OSD Milestone Decision Authority. The new program management team re-baselined the program, sought, and received, full funding with the support of P&R, and developed a new acquisition strategy. The new strategy, aimed at risk reduction, caused a slip in the contract award for the

Developer/Implementer, but was successful in acquiring a highly skilled vendor who can now quickly proceed to development.

DIMHRS will electronically feed to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authenticated DD Form 214 data.

The DD Form 214 is the document used to satisfy the requirements of title 10 United States Code (USC), Section 1168. The DD Form 214 provides the Service member and the Service with a concise record of a Service member's periods of active service. It also acts as an official source of essential information that is needed to administer various laws pertinent to veterans that are administered by federal, state and local government agencies. Corrections to the DD Form 214 are accomplished on a DD Form 215. DD Form 214s are produced from hundreds of different separation sites all over the world. The information required on the DD Form 214 is not currently available in any automated system. The information that populates the form has to be pulled from the hard copy personnel records and manually entered into the DD Form 214. Although some sites may be able to produce the DD Form 214 using electronic form software, they do not retain an automated copy - - further, the data on the form is put in manually, not automatically filled from a database since the Services legacy systems do not support this capability. The form must be printed out to be signed (authenticated) and there is currently no way to electronically store or maintain the authenticated data. Additionally, since the DD Form 214 contains personal information that is covered by the Privacy Act, access must be carefully controlled. Resolving these and other technical problems and creating a system to do this would take longer than it will take to implement DIMHRS and would not be as efficient.

DIMHRS will provide the electronic DD Form 214 for people who separate from the Service after it has been implemented. There will still be a need for historical access to personnel data (including DD Form 214s) for people who separated (or retired) before DIMHRS was implemented. To serve that need we have developed the Defense Personnel Records Image Retrieval System (DPRIS). DPRIS is a secure web-based image retrieval system for authorized access for Federal agencies that need information from Military Service official military personnel file (OMPF) repositories. It enables outside user agencies, such as the VA, to request and receive electronic images (directly from the Service imaging systems) of personnel documents necessary to adjudicate Service member and veteran claims for benefits and entitlements. DPRIS interfaces provide standard automated query support for authorized VA claims adjudicators and other authorized VA users. There are currently 2,380 authorized Veteran Benefit Administration (VBA) users that submit a monthly average of 1500 requests for information maintained in the Service optical personnel records.<sup>1</sup> To date DoD has provided almost 600,000 images to VA through DPRIS. One of the most requested documents is the imaged DD Form 214. There are about 3,000 military personnel document types, mapped to VA request codes that can be pulled via DPRIS. When the Air Force interface is complete there will be over 192 million images available via DPRIS, from over six million military personnel records maintained in the four official military personnel file systems.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Navy Electronic Military Personnel Records Management System (EMPRS), the Department of the Army Personnel Electronic Records Management System (PERMS), and the U.S. Marine Corps Optical Digital Image Records Management System (ODIRMS), Air Force Records Management System (ARMS).

<sup>2</sup> Navy Electronic Military Personnel Records Management System: 80 million individual images (3 million OMPF records); Marine Corps Optical Digital Image Records Management System (ODI-RMS): 23 million individual images (500 thousand OMPF records); Army Personnel Electronic Records Management System: 48.4 Million individual Images (1.2 million OMPF Records); Air Force Records Management System (ARMS): 41 million individual images (1.5 million OMPF records).

DPRIS is an advanced technical demonstration and is currently operational in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. The interface with the Air Force is expected to be completed in late 2004. This interface between DPRIS and the VA Personnel Information Exchange System has been leveraged to support an additional interface with the Army Center for Unit Records Research, which will assist the VA in expeditiously obtaining information to make determinations on Agent Orange exposures and post traumatic stress disorder. Since all veterans were in the military, DoD's sharing of medical information is advantageous to the care provided by VA. I note that all personal and medical information in DIMHRS and DPRIS will continue to be administered and safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and the E-Government Act of 2002.

Since a document must be in a Service imaging system before it can be accessed through DPRIS, it does not solve the problem of immediate access for personnel as they separate. It takes an average of about 60 days for the DD Form 214 to be available through DPRIS after a Service member leaves the military. Once it is imaged, however, it can be retrieved in real-time or in batch with a 48-hour turn around. In order to achieve the appropriate security, however, VA had to build the appropriate firewalls and access lines. The VA interface development process was about six months and was completed in August 2002. DPRIS came on line with the VA on October 7, 2002.

I would like to reiterate our commitment to our Service men and women and this nations veterans. We are working very hard to provide them an integrated personnel and pay system that will support them through their entire military lifecycle and afterwards as veterans and retirees.