Soldier inspired by opportunity to influence change

BY JUSTIN CREECH, INTEGRATED PERSONNEL AND PAY SYSTEM - ARMY

Maj. Sherri Zimmerman, IPPS-A requirements and data branch lead, is helping the Army create a centralized HR system. (U.S. Army photo by Benjamin D. Applebaum, IPPS-A)

Any Soldier who has spent time in the Adjutant General career field will remember using multiple IT systems to complete a task. If asked, many would emphatically agree that a single, centralized human resources (HR) system would make their jobs much easier.

Maj. Sherri Zimmerman, requirements and data branch lead for Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A), is one such Soldier. When Zimmerman learned the Army had plans to create a centralized HR system, she jumped at the opportunity to be involved in the development of the database now known as IPPS-A.

"I knew how important it was to try and have one centralized system," said Zimmerman. "As an S-1, you're accessing multiple databases and the data never transfers from one system to another and gives you the same results. Leaders can't make decisions with information that is old, so we needed a better way to organize information in the Army."

Due to her background, Zimmerman anticipated working with the development side of the IPPS-A team. However, she learned soon after joining IPPS-A that Col. Gregory S. Johnson, IPPS-A functional management division chief, had a different plan for her.

Johnson made Zimmerman the head of the requirements and data branch because of her experience working in science labs and having to organize large amounts of complex data. He also wanted the organization to be more proactive with resolving HR issues than it was previously.

"He knew data was important and needed a lead, so that's why he put me there," said Zimmerman. "The biggest problem, when you deal with retroactive stuff, is people don't get paid or get promoted. That's a backwards way of doing business."

Zimmerman's initial task was simple: learn the data. She needed to understand the information going into IPPS-A, how that information is going to work in the system, and what data needed to be brought in from other external systems. In addition, she was asked to find the source of errors in the data coming from those external systems into IPPS-A.

"Col. Johnson always asked 'what's the biggest data problem?'" said Zimmerman. "What errors show up out of that information? What are the problems? Is it a format or interface perspective? These are questions I needed to provide answers for while trying to understand how to decipher and organize the data myself."

To understand the data, Zimmerman spent a lot of time with IPPS-A's project management organization (PMO) data team, learning what the data meant in Army terms. As her time on the project progressed, the team added more staff members who were capable of doing the technical data analysis on a larger scale. This additional ability thrilled Zimmerman as she knew the pieces were now in place for her team to produce the information she needed all along.

"I knew we had the talent that could take our mission to the next step," said Zimmerman. "We could produce the metrics and narrow the information down to errors users fix, errors systems fix and start solving those problems on a larger scale."

Her motivation for wanting to join the IPPS-A project is to help the Army develop a centralized Human Resources system for the Army. Three years later, Zimmerman feels the groundwork has been laid for the data team to accomplish its mission even in her absence.

"Without the foundation, you can't get to the final result," said Zimmerman. "I feel very rewarded that I committed my time to influence change and get the data portion of this project where it needs to be."

PM DCATS speaks about Army IT modernization on AUSA panel

BY SCOTT SUNDSVOLD, DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS AND ARMY TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS

Col. Enrique Costas, project manager for Defense Communications and Army Transmission Systems (DCATS) (second from right), speaks on the IT modernization panel at the 2019 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) meeting in Washington, DC. (U.S. Army photo by Scott Sundsvold, DCATS)

Col. Enrique Costas, project manager for Defense Communications and Army Transmission Systems (DCATS), spoke on the panel for "Army IT modernization" at the 2019 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) annual meeting in Washington, D.C., October 13, 2019.

"The Army is doing a lot more," Costas said. "Not only are we keeping with the investment strategy of using procurement dollars to replace old, aging, end of life, telephony, data infrastructure, SIPR or NIPR, Classified or Unclassified data ground transport, but also WGS [Wideband Global SATCOM]."

"Now, we are at a point of percussion in which we want to leverage all the innovation that is happening in industry, from software defined networks, from passive optical networks, from big data analytics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing to ensure that ... we can transport that data more efficiently, more assured, more secured from the infrastructure of the campus all the way down to the foxhole," Costas said.

In addition to industry's innovations, Costas said the enterprise IT as a service (EITaaS) pilot helps the Army understand the advances that industry is making, "which inform the Army, to refine requirements and then make decisions on investments that provide a more blended approach. ... We can leverage all these advancements from industry and apply them to the enterprise, regardless if we are at the campus or forward at the foxhole, then help to unify the network."

ES team member completes leadership program

BY ERIC ZEDALIS, ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Graduates of the 2019 Emerging Enterprise Leaders (EEL) program completed a year-long course to foster leadership skills in members of the Army Acquisition Corps. (photo courtesy of U.S. Army EEL program)

As the Information Management Officer for Enterprise Services (ES), Franz Alinsao coordinates the organization's IT-related efforts with the Fort Belvoir Network Enterprise Center's (NEC) various teams.

For the last ten years, Alinsao has managed two dedicated desktop support technicians who are sent from the NEC to assist ES in addressing various IT issues ranging from troubleshooting network issues, to planning, testing and implementing a specialized software deployment to the organization.

Throughout his tenure at ES, Alinsao has taken orders and dutifully fulfilled requirements passed down from the "Big Army." The Emerging Enterprise Leaders (EEL) program he attended, however, allowed him to flip the script.

"My developmental assignment was with Army Cyber, and I got to work with G-3/5 Future Operations," said Alinsao. "Army Cyber is basically the other side of PEO EIS. They create the requirements and EIS fulfills them. Gaining an understanding of how plans in the Army are being implemented and pushed down the chain enables me to foresee future opportunities and risks to better support the ES organization."

Alinsao was one of 28 graduates in September from the year-long EEL program designed to help potential candidates become future leaders within the Army Acquisition Corps.

> **"The exposure you get will enable you to broaden your network, experience and knowledge scope."**

Selected by former ES Project Director Tom Neff and former Deputy Project Director Keith Baylor, Alinsao attended five week-long sessions split between Alexandria, Va. and Huntsville, Ala. The curriculum included the developmental assignment as well as courses in conflict resolution and leadership.

"I was excited to go, because I wanted to learn how the Army is developing government civilians to be leaders for organizations," the 10-year ES veteran said. "It gave me an opportunity to work with other organizations outside of my own, and see how their leaders apply their leadership styles with their respective teams."

Alinsao's favorite portion of the program was during week one, when participants completed a portion of the Acquisition Leadership Challenge program. "We did a portion of the Myers-Briggs type indicator, which is an introspective self-report questionnaire indicating differing psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions," said Alinsao. "It was interesting to see how the different personalities in the room would interact and it was a lot of fun applying methods for how to interact with types different than our own."

Alinsao said that as a result of this program, he can now more easily pinpoint the root of IT issues he comes across in his current job. "I would definitely recommend this to my fellow ES co-workers," he said. "The exposure you get will enable you to broaden your network, experience and knowledge scope."

Two ALTESS employees selected for leadership development

BY LAMONT CALLOWAY, ACQUISITION, LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

ALTESS

Two ALTESS employees were recently selected to participate in leadership development programs. James Gilbert, who works in the cybersecurity division, was chosen to attend the Inspiring and Developing Excellence in Acquisition Leaders (IDEAL) program. Gilbert is one of 30 individuals to be selected from Ft. Belvoir to participate in the training program, which consists of three one-week sessions held over a period of approximately six months. IDEAL is targeted to future acquisition leaders seeking to prepare themselves for supervisory and leadership roles. Candidates with limited or no supervisory experience will have the most to gain from this program.

A.J. Schrantz, an ALTESS IT specialist, was selected to attend the Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program (DCLEP). It is the enterprise DOD leader development program for GS-7 through GS-12 (or equivalent) career civilians in DOD or other federal agencies. The program consists of a series of four one-week in-residence sessions, along with assessment tools, knowledge transfer activities, writing and briefing projects and individual coaching. It is focused on five learning objectives and issues impacting the DOD command and organization. Schrantz completed a lengthy application process earlier this year and his application was reviewed by a board. He was one of 12 Army Acquisition employees to be selected, and the only person in PEO EIS.

Congratulations to both!

Alaskan first responders to receive radio upgrade

BY SCOTT SUNDSVOLD, DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS AND ARMY TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS

PD LMR *Land Mobile Radio*

The Defense Communications and Army Transmission Systems (DCATS) Land Mobile Radio (LMR) product office recently awarded a $6M indefinite delivery and indefinite quantity, firm-fixed price contract to upgrade radio systems for the U.S. Army Alaska Land Mobile Radio Communications System.

Used mostly by emergency responders, the upgraded system will provide mission-critical, emergency response communications for Alaskan partners from the Department of Defense, the State of Alaska, and other federal and local agencies. The LMR equipment is critical for emergency personnel to effectively coordinate responses to all manner of events in Alaska, including fires, floods, earthquakes, accidents. This critical project will update and enhance the radio systems, providing a technology refresh of hardware and software, such as base stations, site controllers, comparators, routers, LAN switches, servers, dispatch consoles, logging equipment and network management terminals.

"Alaska is about one third the size of the continental United States," said LMR Product Lead Patrick Barnette. "Its remote terrain includes an unforgiving operational environment of mudflats, mountains, forests, tundra and more coastline than the rest of the entire United States combined. The upgraded equipment will provide Alaskan emergency response teams the ability to operate anywhere at any time."

The equipment, which is built to Alaska's public safety and Project 25 standards, "will improve the way the Army communicates with Alaskan partners for public safety, ensuring peak performance when it is critical," said Clive Flores, assistant product manager for Pacific LMR.

> "[This equipment] will improve the way the Army communicates with Alaskan partners for public safety...."

DCATS Celebrates Marine Corps 244th Birthday

BY SCOTT SUNDSVOLD, DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS AND ARMY TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS

Col. Enrique Costas, the Project Manager for Defense Communications and Army Transmissions (DCATS) lead the Marine Corps Birthday celebrations. He said, "Why is this important?! It's important because the Marine Corps has been part of our military history since the Revolutionary War."

"The Marines have always been part of our American history and the force – if we have to 'break glass' – they are the first ones on the ground. It's very important to recognize the great contributions of all the Marines that have served from our past and present."

DCATS Marines sung the Marine Corps Hymn and performed the traditional cake cutting ceremony with the oldest Marine, William Royall, cutting the cake and passing it onto the youngest Marine to carry on the tradition.
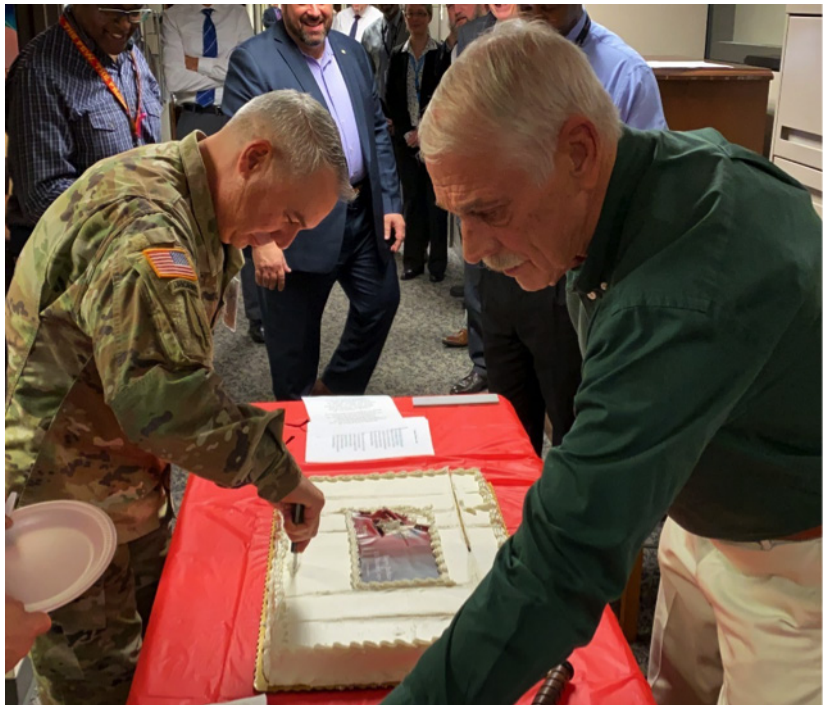
Col. Enrique Costas, project manager for Defense Communications and Army Transmission Systems (DCATS), cuts the traditional Marine Corps birthday dake with William Royall, the oldest Marine in DCATS. (U.S. Army photo by Scott Sundsvold)

Col. Ed Barker, assistant program executive officer for the Business Mission Area, speaks about Agile software development at the Defence IQ ISR and C2 Battle Management conference, Nov. 5, 2019 in Crystal City, Va. (U.S. Army photo by Ellen Summey, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

Col. Kyle Jette, lead data analyst for the Strategic Initiatives Group, receives the 2019 Defense Department Chief Information Officer award from Dana S. Deasy, Chief Information Officer and Karen S. Evans, Energy Department assistant secretary, Office of Cybersecurity during a ceremony at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, Nov. 4, 2019. (photo by Marine Corps Cpl. Marcos Alvarado)

PEO EIS staff member, Col. Darby McNulty, presents the Meritorious Civilian Service Award to Pat Ocasio, deputy project manager for Defensive Cyber Operations, during a ceremony on Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Oct. 28, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Cecilia Tueros, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

Lee James III, project director for Enterprise Services, delivers the keynote speech at the AFCEA Belvoir luncheon, Nov. 20, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Laura Edwards, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

Deputy Program Executive Officer Brendan Burke (right) speaks to staff members during a brown bag lunch, Nov. 12, 2019 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo by Laura Edwards, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

Program Executive Officer for Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS), Ms. Chérie Smith, speaks about strategic message development during the PEO EIS Cross-Service Summit, Oct. 17, 2019 on Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo by Ellen Summey, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

The PEO EIS Cyber team takes a moment to relax during a Halloween party, Oct. 31, 2019 on Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo by Laura Edwards, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

PEO EIS staff members enjoy an early morning run, Nov. 15, 2019 on Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo by Laura Edwards, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

EIS SNAPS