



# The Right Soldier in the Right Place at the Right Time

■ By Maj. Gen. Jason T. Evans

*Maj. Gen. Jason T. Evans takes command of the Human Resources Command in a ceremony at the Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Maude Complex at Fort Knox, Ky., on April 28, 2017. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brian Hamilton)*



**T**he Army Human Resources Command (HRC) supports readiness, the Army's number one priority. It conducts enterprise-level talent management in the distribution of officers and enlisted Soldiers in order to optimize total force personnel readiness and strengthen an agile and adaptive Army.

This effort requires that the command become a learning organization that implements effective and innovative talent management processes and initiatives. Such processes and initiatives include the officer-focused Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 (AIM2), the enlisted Manner of Performance (MOP) tool, the new Academic Evaluation Report (AER), the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A), and the proposed reforms of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act

(DOPMA) and Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA).

### **Talent Management Initiatives**

HRC is actively collaborating with the IPPS-A team and the Army's Talent Management Task Force to implement new and innovative talent management practices. These improvements will better satisfy the individual's professional needs and preferences as well as the unit's requirements in order to ensure the Army has the right Soldier in the right place at the right time.

The Army's talent management framework consists of four lines of effort: acquisition, employment, development, and retention. HRC career managers and professional development noncommissioned officers (NCO) operationalize the employment line of effort by striving to

The Human Resources Command is working on initiatives to meet Soldiers' professional needs and preferences and fulfill units' specific requirements.

match the needs and desires of the Soldier to the requirements of the Army.

Career managers optimize personnel readiness and enable leader development by considering the six elements of the Soldier assignment process:

- A documented requirement for specific talent.
- Available Soldiers with knowledge and skills traditionally acquired through training.
- Skills and behaviors characterized as either qualifications or limitations.
- Experience gained through previous assignments.
- An evaluation-based manner of demonstrated performance.
- An expressed preference as either a desire or interest.

HRC approaches talent management as a shared responsibility among the various branch proponents, boards of directors led by senior Army leaders, unit commanders, and individual Soldiers.

HRC primarily distributes the Army's personnel inventory down to the brigade level in accordance with the Army Manning Guidance. The brigade-level commands further distribute Soldiers to specific positions that provide opportunities for them to lead, hone their knowledge and skills, and further develop individual talents.

Commanders counsel and mentor Soldiers and evaluate their performance and future potential to serve at higher levels within the Army. Simultaneously, Soldiers must capitalize on self-improvement opportunities to enhance their own development.

### AIM2

AIM2 is a web-based, active component officer talent management portal designed to enhance talent management processes. It exercises a regulated market mechanism that enables interaction among the Soldier, the unit, and the assignment man-

ager within an intuitive marketplace. This marketplace allows both officers and units to advertise themselves, express their preferences, and interact with one another in order to shape both parties' interests to increase satisfaction and meet requirements.

The portal greatly increases information about an officer through a resume that offers relevant information not otherwise contained within the traditional officer record brief. Similarly, units are able to share detailed information about each of the jobs in the marketplace. This increased transparency and knowledge facilitates the assignment of uniquely talented officers to units with specific requirements.

While AIM2 is still in its early stages, the phased pilot programs conducted throughout fiscal years 2017 and 2018 proved it to be exceptionally useful. From these initial efforts, HRC gained valuable information regarding portal usage (expressing preferences and populating resumes) and constructive feedback.

Moreover, HRC recognized that unit participation is critical to a well-functioning market but was lacking in the last iteration of the marketplace. The way ahead is to implement system enhancements based on user feedback and, most importantly, to educate the field on the AIM2 marketplace and the capabilities it provides.

The end state is an effective talent management system that continues to inform the Talent Management Task Force and serves as a bridging strategy to IPPS-A.

In addition to AIM2, other talent management processes include internal selection panels to determine broadening assignments and highly competitive external opportunities. The best and brightest officers are eligible for scholastic opportunities at top-tier universities with follow-on assignments at critical operational and strategic positions throughout the Army.

Likewise, officers can compete for various tactical and institutional

broadening opportunities that include positions at combat training centers, within the special operations forces community, and at centers of excellence as instructors and small-group leaders who groom the Army's next generation. These positions broaden an officer's view of the Army and allow the officer to more fully contribute at the enterprise level.

### **Manner of Performance Tool**

The Army professionally develops its NCO corps through structured self-development, experience in key and developmental assignments, participation in broadening opportunities, and education through the NCO Professional Development System. This system is designed to support Army readiness by producing NCOs with necessary and relevant talents.

HRC manages this exceptional body of talent using the MOP Tool, which is a word-picture assessment that ranks NCOs as either ahead of peers, slightly ahead, with peers, slightly behind, or behind peers. NCOs receive their MOP rankings with respect to each unique combination of grade and military occupational specialty level. These rankings are based on knowledge, skills, and behaviors from the Soldier's performance file and the individual outcome from Army centralized selection boards.

Because the MOP tool provides readily accessible information on an NCO's performance, it enables the career manager to engage in candid conversations with an NCO regarding his or her standing among peers as well as the most appropriate career opportunities. The intent is not to replace the methodology used to fill requirements and maintain unit readiness but rather to provide an assessment tool that optimizes the talents of the Army's NCOs.

### **Academic Evaluation Report**

The current AER is over 52 years old and does not meet the requirements of today's Army. Currently under revision, the new AER is

yet another advancement in HRC's talent management processes and incorporates the academic accomplishments of Soldiers into the assignments process. The projected availability of the new AER in the Electronic Evaluation System is the first quarter of fiscal year 2019.

The transition of the new officer evaluation report in 2014 and the new noncommissioned officer evaluation report in 2016 to the Electronic Evaluation System demonstrated the value of structured data and the ability to mine information related to talent management. In the same manner, the new AER will enable HRC to readily assess academic performance, view completed courses and degrees, conduct analysis across the population, and data mine information that has potential value to the Army.

The chief of staff of the Army's strategic priorities, coordination between the Center for Army Leadership and the Training and Doctrine Command, and surveys from promotion and selection board members all informed the new AER. Three different forms will replace the legacy AER: the revised Department of the Army (DA) Form 1059, Service School Academic Evaluation Report; the revised DA Form 1059-1, Civilian Institution Academic Evaluation Report; and DA Form 1059-2, Senior Service College Academic Evaluation Report.

The new version of the AER is expected to feature a number of new and more relevant information fields. For those attending a service school, the new DA Form 1059 incorporates a four-tier "box check" system capturing top 20 percent and top 40 percent performers.

Soldiers attending civilian education programs will see new information fields on the future AER that include grade point averages, titles of papers and projects, comments on communication abilities, and recommended utilization tours or follow-on assignments. For those attending a senior service college or

Intermediate Level Education, the AER further stratifies the population to reflect the top 10 percent and top 30 percent of their classes.

The AER reinforces leadership and professional development responsibilities to provide a clearer picture of Soldiers' achievements and talents in an academic environment. It also includes Soldiers' adherence to the Army's physical fitness standards, height and weight requirements, class standing, military education levels, and skill identifiers awarded during classes.

In short, the revisions will enhance HRC's ability to understand and manage its talented population and properly employ them based on requirements.

HRC continues to improve its systems and the talent management process to allow maximum flexibility to make talent management decisions. Critical to the talent management evolution will be the reform efforts related to the legacy DOPMA and ROPMA policies.

These proposed reforms will provide the Army with the flexibility it needs to leverage an officer's unique knowledge, skills, and behaviors against an Army requirement, while being unhampered by the constraints of time in grade or required professional development milestones. When unconstrained, the Army will be able to increase its return on investment in uniquely skilled officers who participated in fully funded post-graduate degree programs, all without impact to future promotion opportunities.

DOPMA and ROPMA reform will significantly enhance HRC's flexibility in protecting the investment in the Army's most precious resource—people—and increase the precision of putting the right Soldier in the right place at the right time.

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