



U.S. ARMY REALIZES BETTER PRICE/ PERFORMANCE BY MIGRATING TO RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX

FAST FACTS

Industry:	Federal Government
Challenge:	Provide low cost, yet fast and reliable access to Personnel Electronic Records Management System
Solution:	Platform: Red Hat Enterprise Linux; Hardware: HP ML350; Applications: PERMS database with Web interface
Benefits:	Improved price/performance, Global access to critical records

Managing and retrieving personnel records for 1.2 million U.S. Army soldiers requires an enterprise solution that delivers quick and reliable access to those records. Red Hat Enterprise Linux AS meets those requirements, and soldiers stationed around the globe can now access their records reliably and securely anytime, any place via a Web interface.

For more than a decade, the U.S. Army has been moving its personnel records from paper and microfiche to its online Personnel Electronic Record Management System (PERMS). PERMS is an automated document management system for maintaining the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) for 1.2 million active, reserve, and National Guard soldiers. Accurate OMPFs are fundamental to the career advancement and morale of those in the military, and the ability to manage personnel records online is indispensable.

The Army's PERMS team developed a three-tier architecture: the PERMS database, a Web services dataaccess layer, and a Web interface layer. Needing to lower costs beyond what a UNIX deployment would allow, the team decided to try Linux on Intel hardware in the Web interface layer. Familiar with many operating system platforms, the team chose Red Hat Linux in 2002 because of its stability and quality of code.

Because they had been using high-quality open source tools and compilers such as gcc and the ext3 journaling file system, the PERMS team members

were confident that the Red Hat Linux on Intel solution would deliver reliability and performance comparable to similar UNIX solutions. They were right. In load tests performed by the PERMS team, the Intel-based servers running Red Hat Linux handled twice the front-end UI load that the Army's UNIX back-end servers had.

"Our test [with Red Hat Enterprise Linux] proved that we could accomplish our goal of lowering costs without sacrificing reliability. Today the PERMS serves as the access point [to personnel records] for over a million soldiers."

David Lambert
Senior Engineer
Northrop Grumman IT



In 2003, the team determined that it was necessary to migrate from Red Hat Linux to Red Hat Enterprise Linux. Backed by application vendors required by the U.S. Army, Red Hat Enterprise Linux was also the first Linux distribution to be certified as Defense Department's Information Infrastructure Common Operating Environment (DII COE) compliant in February 2003. These were important criteria for the PERMS team as it assured them the highest levels of interoperability while affording them a mission-critical computing platform at a significantly lower cost.

By running Red Hat Enterprise Linux in its online PERMS, the U.S. Army is realizing higher levels of price/performance while soldiers around the world have reliable and secure online access to their critical personnel records. "Our test proved that we could accomplish our goal of lowering costs without sacrificing reliability. Today the PERMS serves as the access point for over a million soldiers," said David Lambert, Senior Engineer, Northrop Grumman IT.

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