



# What the AG Corps Needs to Know About the MilPay Transition



By COL Eluyn Ginés

While serving as the Chief of the Military Pay (MilPay) Transition Division over the past year, my team and I have had the opportunity to visit numerous installations and commands. During these visits, we have asked AG Soldiers for their thoughts on the MilPay Transition. Their responses fell into two categories: either 1) they had no idea what the MilPay Transition is; or 2) they know what it is, but are extremely concerned about the AG Corps' ability to fully assume the MilPay mission. Based on this, I would like to use this article as a means to inform the AG Corps about the MilPay Transition and address concerns by explaining what the transition is, and what it means to the AG Corps.

What is the MilPay Transition? It is the transition of policy, oversight and functionality of MilPay operations from the Army's Financial Management (FM) Community to the AG Community across both the Active and Reserve Components. What exactly is MilPay in this context? Military Pay is anything that is related to Soldier pay, allowances and deductions that affect Soldier compensation. It does not include accounting, disbursing, auditing, and travel pay; all of which are responsibilities inherent to the financial management mission.

Currently, MilPay oversight is the responsibility of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller, or ASA (FM&C). MilPay operations are executed at CONUS installations by the Defense Military Pay Offices (DMPOs), which are aligned under the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and Army Financial Management Support Units (FMSUs) at overseas locations. Once MilPay transitions to the AG Corps, which is currently scheduled to take place

in FY 20, the oversight of MilPay will transfer to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs or ASA (M&RA), and the execution of MilPay operations will be charged to the HR community (i.e., S-1s, MPDs, etc.).

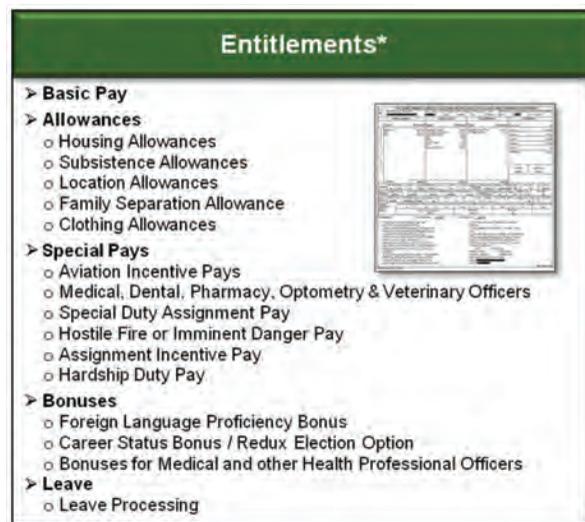
The timing of this transition is directly linked to the fielding of the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A), which incorporates personnel and pay support into one system. IPPS-A replaces the functionality of over 40 stove-piped Army HR systems, and the MilPay support that the Defense Joint Military Pay System (DJMS) currently provides to the Army. With the integration of the personnel and pay functions under one system, there will only need to be one “operator”, so to speak, instead of separate AG and FM operators. The intent of the MilPay transition is that the AG Soldier, or HR professional, be that operator, executing both the personnel and pay Soldier support functions in the IPPS-A system.

Why is the Army transitioning MilPay operations from FM to AG? Since the early 1970s, the Army has pursued the integration of the personnel and pay functions to no avail. Both functions share a natural alignment as they both impact personnel readiness and Soldier morale.

The pursuit of integrating these two functions has remained a constant theme throughout the long term development of systems, such as COPPER (1970s), PerPay (1990s), and DIMHRS (2003-2008). Now, over 40 years later, the success and progress of IPPS-A has

positioned us to the closest we have ever been to seeing this integration become a reality.

What does this mean to our Soldiers and HR Professionals? The benefits to Soldiers are clear. They will be able to process a greater number of pay actions through a robust self-service capability (similar to myPay), and submit pay inquiries from anywhere using IPPS-A, thereby reducing the time Soldiers have to be away from their jobs to resolve pay issues. As for the HR Professional, this transition will involve a major culture shift for the AG and FM communities, especially from the Active Component perspective, and will require significant communication and cooperation between



Military Pay includes Soldier entitlements (the legal right to receive items of pay and/or allowances) such as the ones listed here.

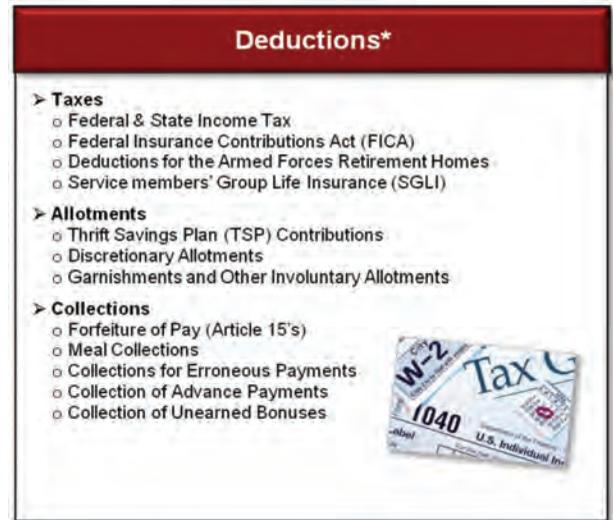
them to ensure a seamless transition. From the Reserve Component standpoint, most of the new MilPay-related business processes will be performed by the same unit or State-level personnel as today. There are benefits to the AG community, as well. As you all know, personnel

actions drive pay. With Soldier pay being a readiness issue, the MilPay Transition is a key step in the implementation of IPPS-A that will enable S-1s to provide the full spectrum of personnel and pay support to Commanders. This transition positions the S-1 to be the Commander's "go-to" asset for Soldier pay. S-1s will access real-time data on Soldier pay issues and execute Soldier pay support functions quickly and accurately; which, in turn, will enhance their ability to effectively manage Soldier and unit readiness.

Of course, the entire AG Corps isn't going to wake up one day and suddenly be MilPay Subject Matter Experts. Training is required in order to get us where we need to be. It is critically important that HR Professionals at all levels be proficient in MilPay policy and processing, as they will be responsible for the execution of MilPay operations across the Army, once IPPS-A is implemented. Currently the Adjutant General School (AGS) trains AG Soldiers on the basics of MilPay and the methodology of researching MilPay issues, which ensures most HR Professionals have at a minimum, the ability to receive, analyze, and forward MilPay related actions to the DMPOs / FOs for action. Most HR Professionals will require some additional level of training to achieve the proficiency required to fully execute MilPay operations. With regards to institutional training, AGS has begun their analysis for updating their Programs of Instruction (POIs) to incorporate the MilPay related tasks into their curriculum. The MilPay Transition Division is visiting installations to collect data on the full breadth of MilPay support tasks, and is looking at options to provide training at installations for those not schedule to attend institutional training and for DA Civilians performing HR missions.

Many senior HR leaders are highly recommending that you start now to prepare for the transition. All HR Professionals need to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of MilPay Operations. Visit your local DMPOs and Finance units, and invite them to lead professional development sessions with your Soldiers. Incorporate MilPay Operations into your SGT's Time Training. It may seem like a long way off, but it is critical that you don't wait for IPPS-A to be implemented before you get smart on MilPay. The more you and your Soldiers know now, the better prepared you will be for this transition. You will want to ensure that a Soldier does not experience a pay issue that could have been prevented, had you and your HR Soldiers been better prepared for the assumption of the MilPay support mission.

The AG Corps is already performing the front end of MilPay support operations. The only thing we are not doing is entering actions into the pay system. Some of us have a tendency to accept MilPay actions from the Soldier and then pass it on to "let Finance fix it." In the future, we will be the ones analyzing the situation and processing the actions to completion. To put it a different way, providing MilPay support is like preparing a big dinner. Right now the AG Soldier is assembling the ingredients and doing the prep work, such as chopping the veggies, trimming the meat, etc. (i.e., accepting the pay inquiries and collecting substantiating documentation); while the FM Professional is doing all the cooking (i.e.,



Military Pay also includes Soldier deductions (items or expenditures subtracted from income) such as the ones listed here.

entering the MilPay action into DJMS). In the future, once MilPay transitions to the AG Corps, the IPPS-A System will do the cooking. One could say, then, that in the integrated environment, the HR Professional oversees the preparation, cooking and serving of Soldier pay. It's that simple!

The way I see it, we've got this. Taking on the MilPay mission is an opportunity for the AG Corps to take a more holistic approach to Soldier support. Our Soldiers and DA Civilians can handle this – there is no question that we have the knowledge and experience; and when it comes to knowing how to take care of Soldiers, the AG Corps wrote the book.

Please email questions and concerns regarding the MilPay Transition to [usarmy.pentagon.hqda-ippa-a.mbx.ippa-a@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.pentagon.hqda-ippa-a.mbx.ippa-a@mail.mil).