

U.S. ARMY RESERVE



“WE WERE ABLE TO ROLL THE PLATFORM OUT TO OVER 19,000 INDIVIDUALS WHO NOW HAVE THE ABILITY TO ACCESS INFORMATION AND WORK WITH IT TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR UNITS.”

LTC DAVID C' DE BACA

U.S. JOINT FORCES COMMAND, U.S. ARMY RESERVE

The U.S. Army Reserve is the active Army's federal reserve force. It consists of combat support and combat service support forces that can move on short notice to give the active Army the resources it needs to deploy overseas and to sustain combat troops during wartime, contingencies, or other operations. The Army Reserve is the Army's main source for transportation, medical, civil affairs, logistics, and other key assets. It totals more than one million soldiers in over 2,000 units

located in the U.S., Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Germany.

The U.S. Joint Forces Command, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, is one of nine unified commands in the Department of Defense. Its role involves transformation, experimentation, joint training, and interoperability, as well as the power to make recommendations on how the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines can better integrate their war fighting capabilities.

Challenges Faced

- To develop a server-based Web environment for reporting and analysis of data for the entire U.S. Army Reserve
- To empower military management and administration to see the status of all troops and their assets
- To integrate previous “stovepipe” applications under the umbrella of a single, secure, reporting platform

Cognos Solution

- Cognos Series 7 including PowerPlay Enterprise Server, Impromptu, and Cognos Query running on Microsoft NT servers in 19 separate locations worldwide
- Upwards of 1,000 Cognos PowerPlay cubes generated nightly
- Tracking information on active and inactive unit personnel, soldier readiness, and logistics management

Benefits Realized

- Military leaders and administrators now gain instant awareness of troops and assets and target resources precisely for maximum cost-effectiveness
- Everyone in the chain of command can see the details and drill down to see where the critical issues are
- A Web-based approach led to cost savings and tighter security controls over who can see what

MANAGING TROOPS AND UNIT RESOURCES

Previously, staff sections the U.S. Army Reserve would maintain Access databases or spreadsheets to store resource information concerning troops and their assets. This PC-based platform meant users had to go through a series of slow and cumbersome manual processes to access data. While consolidated information on such things as army personnel did exist for macro-level management, it wasn't granular enough to facilitate unit-level management.

The U.S. Army Reserve decided to develop a server-based Web environment using Cognos. The overall goal was to give leaders in the Army Reserve the information tools they needed to see the status of their troops and their assets, which included all their rolling stock such as tanks, trucks, personnel carriers, jeeps

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and so on. Unit administration also wanted to be able to see quickly which units were below target and which were above in various areas, including personnel, recruiting, retention, financial management, and so forth.

IMPROVING BATTLE READINESS

With Cognos, over 19,000 individuals – commanders and staff -- have the integrated information they need to enable effective planning and management of unit resources. U.S. Army Reserve leaders can readily access information in a variety of key areas – personnel, training, assets, resource management, logistics, maintenance, and parts inventory– so they can see exactly where their unit stands. In this way, they can ensure it is always battle-ready.

Leaders can leverage Web-enabled data in ways that allow proactive management of issues. The chain of command can view unit performance from home, office, or the field, facilitating remote management worldwide. They can also customize personal views (pie charts, bar charts, and tabular reports) that best fit their needs without affecting the master template of the force. When servers are updated, everyone is updated; no special maintenance of end-user PCs is required, thus minimizing any adverse impact on IT resources. Development time is measured in days or weeks, not months or years.

The Cognos platform also allows leaders to better track language specialties in the various units. Hundreds of attributes of information are linked to each soldier in the U.S. Army Reserve, including language abilities. For example, a unit commander could quickly determine how many individuals on the staff are Arabic speakers or French speakers, and what their level of qualification is. The result is better overall unit mission readiness in whatever critical area is required.

The Army Reserve also uses the Cognos solution for asset management of all “rolling stock” —for example, tanks, personnel carriers, trucks, and Humvees. Tracking the stock is a huge task in itself, but with Cognos they are also able to keep track of what is assigned to each of the army units and what the status might be of each asset in terms of serviceability and maintenance.

On the maintenance side, the Army Reserve spends a lot of dollars to make sure the equipment is ready. This involves managing the inventory of parts and components associated with equipment maintenance. The Cognos platform ensures that they are getting maximum impact from the dollar spent in terms of the whole maintenance management side of the military.

MANAGEABLE DEPLOYMENT AND SECURED INFORMATION ACCESS

With Cognos, the Army Reserve has been able to minimize the number of installations of client software in desktop computers in the field. According to Colonel de Baca, “With the client-server approach, the cost of administering the initial build-out and then maintaining all that as you go through various upgrades would have been very high.”

For the Army Reserve, of course, security is essential. “The beauty of Cognos was also in the way security was integrated. A commander of a battalion can see only his or her battalion and their subordinate units. The next level up in the chain of command, on the other hand, can see all subordinate battalions as well as their brigade headquarters and so forth.”



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