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The Quality of Logistics
(inside back cover)

ABOUT THE COVER

No, this isn’t a “close encounter” with a flying saucer, nor is it a refugee from a distant “star war.” This is part of an automated storage and retrieval system used by the Directorate of Maintenance, Red River Army Depot, Texarkana, Texas. Other examples of the depot’s use of automation may be found on page 26.
The Quality of Logistics

"Advantage in terms of support is less easy to assess. However bright and shiny your equipment, and however well it measures up to all the criteria of efficient deterrence, it will soon run out of gas or ammunition, it will soon need maintenance or overhaul, it will need repair if it is damaged, it has to be brought to where the action is, and it has to be able to receive and understand and comply with instructions about what to do when it gets there. It may even have to be replaced if put out of action and certainly protected so that it is not. The men who do all these things for it have to be fed and watered; they also have to be protected, and they also need repair and replacement.

"These are the functions of support, and it is worth looking rather more closely at one of them, after noting that the short and simple word 'support' embraces the whole enormous field of logistics, stocks and transport, supply and re-supply, reserves and reinforcement, the apparatus of command and control, and the communications without which the whole enterprise of war would almost immediately collapse. It also embraces passive defence, including hardened headquarters, aircraft and personnel shelters, not only for the teeth arms but also for what has often been poetically described as the man behind the gun, or the man behind him.

"What is quite beyond argument is that bright and shiny equipment manned by battle-worthy and dedicated men is not going to frighten or deter a potential aggressor, unless he can perceive that all these components of support are also in the order of battle. If the words 'Don't start something you can't finish' should be pinned above every Commander's desk (and over his Minister's too), then only the logistician can provide the means by which the same Commander can be sure of finishing the business he (or his Minister) started."

(McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1978)