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Army Logisticians are devoted to the publication of timely, authoritative information on Army and Defense logistics for the Active Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, civilian employees of the Army, and the public. Our purpose is to increase knowledge and understanding of logistics and to encourage and stimulate innovative thought in areas of logistics by providing a forum for those ideas. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

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Poor Patrick’s Proverbs for Logisticians

by Lieutenant Colonel Patrick R. Hughes

- Keep yourself and your job in perspective. You cannot deny anyone a product or service that the Government says one is entitled to receive. Nothing “belongs” to you. You may control it, but you do not own it.

- A person in the supply business seldom has the straight info on why’s and wherefore’s of tactical activities. You must keep yourself informed. Do not become confused or embittered by working hard to get something only to find no one wants it anymore or by being “badmouthed” for not having something you never knew was wanted.

- Service to the customer and the command is the key to success. Even a general is a servant of all, expected to attend to everything, know everything, and be everywhere. That, too, is service.

- Working together and sharing responsibility makes things happen. He who hangs out alone will hang alone.

- Find a legal way to say “yes.” Any fool can say “no.” Saying “it can’t be done” is the lazy, easy way that avoids work, hides ignorance, and is characteristic of failure. Saying “yes” takes work and produces results.

- Constantly ask “What am I accomplishing?” Most of us are present and doing busy work. Ants stay very busy, but don’t really accomplish much. What is your mission? What is your goal? Find out!

- Research indicates that 80 percent of the people who fail do so because of inability to get along with other people. Customers are people.

- Your subordinates do what they do because they believe it is the right thing. If it isn’t, don’t yell and curse, find out their reasons and thoughts. Then, expose the errors, and teach and train. You will then have a team.

- Sickness in the body can have emotional and mental origins. If your people are sick excessively, look at the work environment and try to improve it.

- Most people fail in advance by making decisions based on personal pride or selfishness. Such as, “That’s not worth my effort,” “Why should I have to do it?” “I deserve a better deal!” Base your decisions on service to others.

- Most anger, aggression, and emotional behavior result from fear. Provide comfort, firm guidance, and calm logic. Don’t add your fears to those of others.

- Display extreme honesty. Everyone thinks we are thieves anyway. It is too easy to get careless with Government property, especially when under pressure from superiors. Office supplies and foodstuffs are difficult to account for at best. Stealing is stealing whether or not it’s called scrounging, borrowing, or appropriating.

- If “it” looks and works well, don’t fix it. If “it” is great, advertise it. If “it” is poor, fix it. If “it” can’t be fixed, get rid of it.

- Work so that everyone agrees that you are underpaid. When that is common knowledge to others, your rewards will take care of themselves. Calling attention to yourself will only cheapen your real worth.