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Final Thoughts on Logistics and Service to the Nation

Loren M. Reno

Cedarville University, lmreno@cedarville.edu

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Final Thoughts on Logistics and Service to the Nation



Gen Reno visits with Veterans of World War II from a Savannah, Georgia Honor Flight, as they visit the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. (USA photo Spc David M. Sharp)

By Lieutenant General (ret) Loren Reno

Editor's note: Lt Gen Loren Reno retired effective 1 February, 2012. His retirement ceremony was 5 December, 2011 following 38 years of honorable service. A former navigator, Gen Reno last served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Installations and Mission Support, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. and the ER staff received numerous requests from members to share his retirement speech with the membership. An excerpt of the speech is provided below. Sir thank you for your service, mentorship and leadership. We are in your debt.

I want to acknowledge the person who will follow me in that to which I have dedicated my past 3 years. She is more than ready to take

on the responsibilities I have shared with those around me. Lt Gen Judy Fedder, warmest congratulations, and I'll be praying for you as you lead and serve.

In the spirit of brevity, let me say something about the importance of this logistics business to which some of us have devoted much, share just a couple of things that have always been on my mind, and then I'll conclude with a request.

First, logistics. It has been a great pleasure to work with and for senior leaders who understand the importance of logistics. That support has helped me lead a team that has done so much for so many in so many places. Alexander the Great said his logisticians were a humbler lot because they knew that if his campaign

failed they were the first ones he would slay. Eisenhower attributed success in "battles, campaigns and even wars" to logistics. Certainly we're a part of the team, but it's a diverse team that winds today. As our Chief and Secretary wrote to the Secretary of Defense in July 2009, "No one has greater value to our collective mission than another. We operate within a big tent where everyone contributes." Logisticians and maintainers alongside our engineers, defenders, operators, acquisition pros, programmers, analysts, medics, lawyers, force support and the rest, and more than a few senior NCOs, bring us strength and readiness. I'm proud to be part of that team.

Second, things on my mind. Since I first raised my right hand in Cincinnati, OH, the oath of

office has been on my mind. At every one of my promotions, each time I have re-enlisted an NCO, at the ceremonies of others...always. I said, "I solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; so help me God." On that summer day in 1973, I had no idea at all what the word "office" would come to mean, but I took that oath...I promised. Chief, I have kept that promise.

Our core values are always on my mind: Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in all we do. Even before Gen Fogelman codified them, my parents and brothers instilled them in me on that 8-acre farm at the edge of town. They remain part of what I am.

And my life verse comes from the prophet Micah: "He hath shown thee, oh man, what is good, and what doeth the Lord require of thee; but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." This guidance memorandum has been the right chart for this navigator and the right tech order for this maintainer - timeless and clear, my heart's prayer.

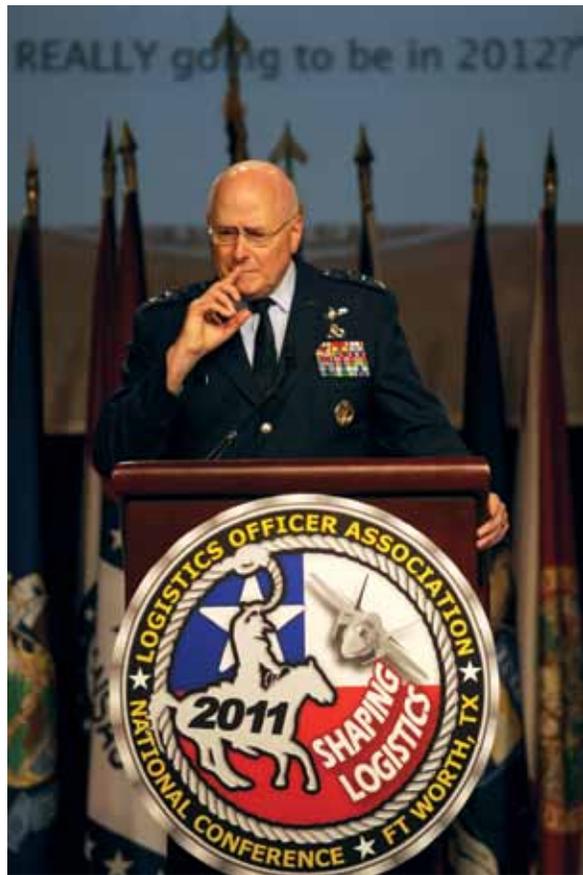
Finally, here is my request. Would you please forgive me...if I forget to cover my heart and instead salute as the colors pass, the National Anthem sounds and taps is played. I'll be

thinking of past bases, battles, and airmen and may forget the right protocol.

And would you please forgive me...if my eyes wander to the side of the roadway when I pass Arlington and other cemeteries. Along with my eyes will go my mind and heart as I remember our fallen heroes and meeting them at Dover: Myers, Goodman, Helton, Berky, Campbell, Ginett, Buras, Johnson, Solesbee, Hamski, and Douville.

And would you please forgive me...if I break lock in our conversation when I hear names like: Fye, Hines, Kemp, Pilla, Williams, Kelley, Frosty, Flowers, Schneider, and Le-Loria. I'll be thinking about visiting them at Bethesda, presenting them their Purple Heart, watching them adjust their prosthesis or eye-patch, hearing them tell me how it happened, and seeing them overcome more than I could ever imagine.

And would you please forgive me...if I look admiringly at clean-cut young men and women; fit and alert; and carrying themselves with pride, dignity, and humility. I'll be thinking about our Airmen who are working inside and outside the wire, on day and



Gen Reno delivers another powerful brief at the 2011 LOA National Conference in Ft. Worth. (LOA photo by Ms. Donna Parry)

night shifts, in the heat and cold, and under or without the supervision of NCOs and officers. They are maintaining aircraft and ICBMs, guarding our nation's most valuable weapons, restoring power, building airfields, and bases. They are driving convoys, working with their hands and minds, and far away from home during special family times preserving the freedoms our predecessors gave us. Would you please forgive me?

General MacArthur spoke of duty, honor, and country. I can't do better than that. As Karen and I prepare to touch down one last time for some needed depot maintenance and then to generate more sorties in the next chapter of our lives, I find ringing in my heart something Ray Boltz put down to song 20+ years ago: "It's an honor to serve, to join in the fight, to lift up my voice, to lay down my life, giving glory to God, seeking none in return. It's an honor, an honor to serve."

Farewell and God-speed. ✈️



The service logistics chiefs came together at the Pentagon April 13 to sign the Joint Expeditionary Basing Working Group charter. Shown signing the charter are Rear Adm. Thomas Moore, Army Lt. Gen. Mitchell Stevenson, Lt. Gen. Loren Reno and Marine Brig. Gen. David Reist. (USA photo)