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We Owe Smart Logistics to Those We Lead and Serve

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FROM THE E-RING

We Owe Smart Logistics to Those We Lead and Serve



I note the theme of this ER is “Smart Logistics: Better, Faster, Cheaper.” I’m as eager as you are to read the fine articles this journal has come to be known for generating and add some thoughts here for your consideration.

Compliance. I continue to see lack of compliance as the single largest failure in our logistics world. It causes re-do (muda, waste). It damages/destroys equipment. It injures and kills our people. It costs time. You can complete the “cost” list in your mind. It’s all bad. It’s not better, faster, or cheaper in the long run. We need to model compliance in our words and actions...at home and deployed.

Cost and Performance tradeoffs. I mentioned this at the LOA conference and again in the last ER. “Better, faster, cheaper” opportunities abound as we seek equal cost solutions with greater performance or equal performance ones with less cost. I observe that cost-benefit analysis and return-on-investment questions have become part of most decision processes. I ask those questions at my level...you should, too.

Challenge old assumptions. So much has changed around us in technology and capability that we need to understand and challenge the assumptions on which we have come to depend. I heard a story of a young girl who asked her mother why she always cut the ends off the ham before putting it in the oven. She did it because her mother and grandmother did. When the young girl asked the oldest generation, she was informed the oven (back in “the day”) was too small to hold the ham without cutting off the ends. Technology changed but the process didn’t. Point made.

Change. This is pretty obvious...change is one of only a few constants. The choice to us is to embrace it or resist it, to lead it or delay it, to be its agent or adversary. I observe we in logistics are somewhat better at innovation than we are at adaptation. Don’t abandon the former, but look for opportunity to use the latter. Others have come up with splendid ideas and implemented them, and those same innovations offer us benefits sometimes with only minor adaptation. Those who develop a reputation for leading change (through innovation or adaptation) will go to the head of the class...you will be in demand wherever you go.

I’m often asked how we can be both compliant and change-focused. When it comes to statute, policy and tech data, if it’s outdated, ineffective, or inefficient, obey it only until you can get it changed, but work actively to change it for the better...for the faster... for the cheaper.

A CMSgt on my staff recently suggested that we not implement a proposal made some time ago whose basis had changed. I agreed with him...his recommendation was “better.” Good for him for being willing to challenge old assumptions and to change the course on which we were headed.

We owe smart logistics to those we lead and serve. That’s my view.

Lt Gen Loren Reno

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