

Spring 2009

Duty--A Big Word

Loren M. Reno

Cedarville University, lmreno@cedarville.edu

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Recommended Citation

Reno, Loren M., "Duty--A Big Word" (2009). *Business Administration Faculty Publications*. 26.
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From the E-Ring

DUTY—A BIG WORD

LT. GEN. LOREN M. RENO IS THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR LOGISTICS, INSTALLATIONS AND MISSION SUPPORT, HEADQUARTERS U.S. AIR FORCE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Lt. Gen. Loren M. Reno

When I came to this position in January, I brought with me more than 35 years of logistics and leadership experience. Dwelling on the past seldom is as useful as applying its lessons for the present and future. So let me share with you a few things that I find are bedrock to being a logistician...you'll know how to apply them.

We trace our great responsibilities as logisticians and leaders to our oath of office, to our mission statements, and to the trust of a Nation and a commander. I call this stewardship. When we, as officers, raised our right hands and said, "I solemnly swear," those were important words. It is an enormous responsibility to be an officer or civilian leader in the USAF, and it is an enormous responsibility to have a job that underpins what others have to do. Many of our contractors feel the same way. The gravity of these responsibilities compounds when lives and national objectives are at stake. It is a great duty to be a logistician and a leader...and a great stewardship.

From that stewardship flows accountability. It's natural. We can't have the former without the latter. If we owe allegiance to our Nation, President, commanders, and those we serve, then we must be held accountable to that duty. Don't forget that accountability is both positive and negative. When someone does their duty well, we should recognize, reward, and elevate them. When they don't, however, we need to confront, correct, and often re-train them. Accountability is linked to stewardship like a jet engine is to the wing of a C-17 aircraft.

You know my next thought—precision produces the right result every time while imprecision is associated with mediocrity, mishaps, and misfortune. I'm talking about tech orders, torque limits, and AFIs. I'm talking about nuclear and non-nuclear. Yes, standards, discipline, and rules. It's compliance...consistent compliance. Realizing that today's TOs are often written in the blood of yesterday's mishap victims, why would we even consider not doing it "by the book?" Remember the line from the movie *The Patriot*: "aim small, miss small." As a basketball player, I learned that my shooting percentage went up when I aimed for the center of the hoop, not just at the hoop itself. Precision will produce the right result every time.

And that is what reliability is...getting the right and desired result every time. At the tactical, shop/flightline, task level, it's true. At the strategic, warfighter, capability level, it's true. You've heard, "Let your word be your bond." Attention to precision and detail produces reliability. You'll know the outcome beforehand, and those who you support will too.

So as my focus has changed from the Center level to an Air Force level, that is what is on my mind. I hope it's on your mind too. Recall the stewardship we all have as logisticians that drives accountability and the precision that produces reliability at all levels. What a privilege to serve and to lead, but "duty" is such a big word! ✈️