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## A Sad, Embittered Race of Men

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# A Sad, Embittered Race of Men



- Courtesy, Admiral Isaac Campbell Kidd, U.S. Navy (retired), who says he first saw it on the wall of Ammiraglio di Squadra Giuseppe Roselli-Lorenzini when the latter was Chief of Staff of the Italian Navy. It has been attributed both to Petronius, a Roman satirist from the first century, A.D. (though the style and subject suggest otherwise), and to an anonymous, but obviously observant, officer on duty in the Pentagon. Published by U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons, 1983

Logisticians are a sad, embittered race of men, very much in demand in war, who sink resentfully into obscurity in peace.

They deal only with facts, but must work for men who traffic in theories. They emerge during war because war is very much fact.

They disappear in peace, because in peace, war is mostly theory.

The people who trade in theories and who employ logisticians in war and ignore them in peace are Generals.

Logisticians hate Generals.

Generals are a happily blessed race who radiate confidence and power. They feed only on ambrosia and drink only nectar.

In peace they stride along confidently and can invade a world simply by sweeping their hands grandly over a map, pointing their fingers decisively up terrain corridors, and blocking defiles and obstacles with the sides of their arms.

In war they must stride more slowly, because each General has a logistician riding on his back and he knows that, at any moment, the logistician may lean forward and whisper: "No, you can't do that!"

Generals fear logisticians in war, and in peace, Generals try to forget logisticians.

Romping along beside Generals are Strategists and Tacticians.

Logisticians despise Strategists and Tacticians.

Strategists and Tacticians do not know about logisticians until they grow up to be Generals—which they usually do—although sometimes Generals will discipline errant Strategists and Tacticians by telling them about logisticians.

This sometimes gives Strategists and Tacticians nightmares, but deep down in their heart they do not really believe the stories—especially if the General lets them have an occasional drink of his nectar.

Sometimes a logistician gets to be a General.

In such a case he must associate with Generals whom he hates. He has a retinue of Strategists and Tacticians whom he despises, and on his back is a logistician whom he fears.

That is why logisticians who become Generals are a fearsome and frustrated group who wish they were anywhere else, beat their wives, get ulcers and cannot eat their ambrosia.