

# ARMY LOGISTICIAN

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1980



Producing the XM1



Assistant Secretary  
of the Army  
(Installations, Logistics, and  
Financial Management)

**Alan J. Gibbs**

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and Readiness Command

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## ABOUT THE COVER

The cover photograph depicts the hull of an XM1 tank moving along a machining line at the Lima Army Tank Center, Lima, Ohio. "Megamachinery," beginning on page 24, shows how a combination of modern machines and technological processes are used to produce XM1 tanks.

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*Army Logician* is 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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A tactical commander's—

# Way to Improve Maintenance

“Without flyable, shootable aircraft, this brigade can neither train for, nor accomplish its combat mission. Accordingly, I must place aircraft maintenance at the top of the brigade's priority list.”

These words formed the first paragraph of a two-page letter directive to the troops of the 6th Cavalry Brigade (Air Combat), at Fort Hood, Texas. They were written by Colonel Wayne C. Knudson, the brigade commander. They left no doubt in the minds of the recipients that their commander will be “focusing command emphasis” on maintenance—one of the five primary objectives of the Army's maintenance management improvement program. Colonel Knudson's directive spells out the maintenance effort he expects from his troops and what his troops may expect from him.

While the 6th Cavalry Brigade's primary concern is with readiness and deployability, a strong maintenance program must have number one priority to meet those objectives. Other commanders may find that Colonel Knudson's philosophy and techniques can be used or adapted for use in their units.

The key to good maintenance, Colonel Knudson says, is the crew chief's daily inspection. He must find and record faults, order parts, and continuously “push” for immediate correction of problems. A good crew chief can shorten the time his aircraft is in phase maintenance. For phase maintenance, the brigade has set goals that are attainable using good maintenance management and practices. These goals will be adjusted to achieve required mission capability operating under combat conditions and combat flying hours. The crew chief is to remain with his aircraft throughout the phase inspection.

The brigade commander has established a quarterly competition to promote good crew chief maintenance efforts. Each squadron and the headquarters troop may nominate one aircraft of each type for competition. One aircraft of each type will be selected as the best maintained and its crew chief will be awarded a 3-day pass, a Department of the Army certificate, and a letter of commendation. Squadrons are encouraged to establish monthly competitions on the same basis.

Fleet management is a critical element in the brigade's maintenance program. Maintenance priorities must be established and enforced by the chain of command. To strengthen fleet management, the brigade commander has given unit maintenance officers the authority to select which aircraft will fly, subject to veto only by the troop or company commander. Along with this authority is also the responsibility to manage the flow of aircraft into phase maintenance and minimize downtime.

Pilots, platoon leaders, and squadron commanders have all been given responsibilities in the brigade's aircraft maintenance program. When an aircraft is down for unscheduled maintenance, the pilot is expected to “over-watch” the entire maintenance process. Platoon leaders are responsible for training and managing the maintenance efforts of their pilots and crews. Squadron commanders are to monitor the maintenance program by platoon and reward superior performance and eliminate substandard performance. The brigade commander will review each platoon leader's officer evaluation report to be sure it reflects maintenance performance.

The maintenance and use of records and forms is also emphasized in the brigade's program. Both maintenance and flight personnel are given training in maintaining log books, forms, and records.

Colonel Knudson established a goal of having 75 percent of the brigade's aircraft “fully mission capable” at all times. To help achieve this, he has authorized interchanging components and “black boxes” from un-flyable aircraft to aircraft that would become fully mission capable except for that particular component or “black box.” All flyable aircraft will be preflighted and an engine run-up performed every third day, and not less than twice each week. Weapon systems on non-flyable aircraft will be energized and exercised by using an auxiliary power unit following the same schedule.

Colonel Knudson concluded his directive to his troops with these words, “We must set the pace in aircraft maintenance. Our ability to train and deploy depends upon the quality of our aircraft and their weapon systems. We will meet the challenge.”

**ALOG**



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