

ARMY LOGISTICIAN

JULY-AUGUST 1981





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ABOUT THE COVER

For large-scale deployments, the Army has long depended on break-bulk ships like those pictured on the cover. Today, barge carriers, roll-on-roll-off ships, and containerships widen the Army's transportation options. The article beginning on page 2 discusses some advantages and disadvantages of each type of ship.

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Army Logistician (USPS 112-430) 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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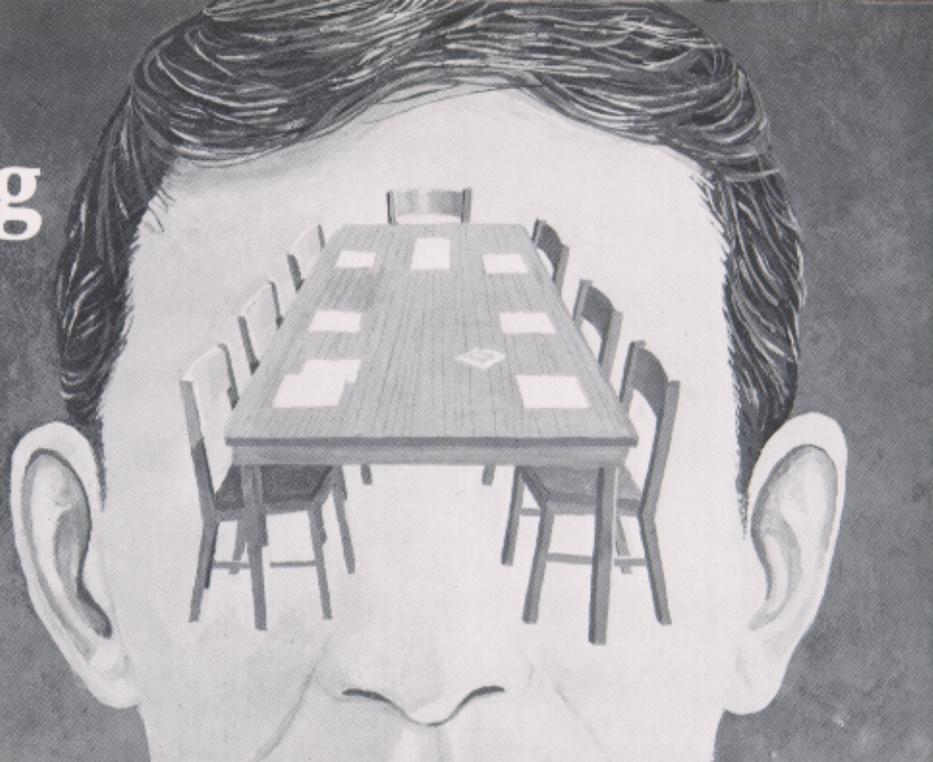
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Meeting of the Minds



by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Fletcher

Do you ever feel like going beserk when you learn that another meeting has been called, rescheduled, or even canceled? Have you ever tried to track down your boss, only to find he's trapped in one meeting and late for the next one? Have you been to an aimless, disorganized, prolonged talkathon in the last few days? How about the past week? Do you know of anyone committed to a recurring, firmly scheduled committee meeting for which the committee members have absolutely no reason to convene but are forced to anyway? Have you left a decision-making gathering in the last month which ended in complete agreement? Complete agreement to meet again, that is. Have you sat bewildered and uncertain waiting for a meeting to start only to realize your anxiety was unwarranted when you discovered that none of the other participants knew why the meeting was called?

As contradictory as it may seem after that introduction, I am firmly convinced meetings are important to sound management. Better still, *sound* meetings are important to *sound* management. It is my further conviction, however, that meetings within the Army have deteriorated into abuse. Succinctly, too many managers allow themselves to be positioned around conference tables only to be robbed of valuable productive time. Ask the average participant just before a meeting opens why he or she is there, and see what responses you get. You can bet most, if not all, are reactive—

"It's on my calendar," "My secretary told me to be here," "I'm sitting in for Fred," "Who knows?"

"Who cares?" "They're always calling these things," "My boss said be here."

You may just get silence, a shrug of the shoulders, or a snide grin.

One wonders if there is anyone who would dare challenge a meeting, who would actually ask for a clear statement of purpose, reinforced with an agenda and held to strict time limits. There might even be a hero out there willing to start a general exodus from a "talk" session where no one is willing to control Mouthy Mulligan.

Imagine working in a command where all meetings, regardless of size, are outlawed on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Absolutely no exceptions. Then consider any and all meetings confined to Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Impossible? Think about it. Isn't the thought alone too good to be true? You're even enjoying the prospect: a full workday.

You'll have to excuse me now. I've been called to a meeting. When I asked for what purpose, the fellow calling said he is going to explain to everyone what happened at a meeting I attended yesterday. **ALOG**

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