

that they need to go out there and be successful.”

**Addressing the gray areas.** Senior Chief Davila said that the push for formal training was initiated because of the need to address the “gray areas” enlisted aides face.

“When you have an enlisted aide show up at the doorstep of a general [or] flag officer and they don’t have the proper training or they’re not qualified, then things happen,” said Senior Chief Davila. Though regulations exist to guide enlisted aides as to what they can and cannot do within the scope of their duties, some areas still require careful handling because clear-cut answers are not available. In order to better equip enlisted aides to deal with these gray areas, instructors provide them with DOD and service instruction on what duties are permissible and impermissible. Through role play, students are taught the skills needed to address tough situations.

Senior Chief Davila said that it is very important for everyone, including the general or flag officer, his spouse, the enlisted aide, the aide de camp, the flag aide, and all other personal staff, to be familiar with the instruction so that gray areas do not exist.

**Interpersonal role play.** Because enlisted aides spend 90 to 95 percent of their work hours inside the officer’s quarters, it is important for them to have a healthy working relationship with the spouse and any other family members who may spend a lot of time in the home.

Students are taught to not be afraid to open up and ask for a dialog with the spouse or officer if they feel that something is not right. Social role play helps students work on interpersonal relationships and the challenges that may arise.

**Continuity book.** The most essential physical tool enlisted aides need is a continuity book. This book should include at a minimum the officer’s biography, the officer’s likes and dislikes, dietary restrictions, medications, and any health issues the officer has that may require intervention by the enlisted aide in an emergency. It also includes family members’ likes and dislikes and the dates of special occasions, such as anniversaries and birthdays.

The book also should include the DOD and service instructions to refer to if there is a question about the enlisted aide’s duties or responsibilities.

Uniform assembly diagrams and a photo of the officer in his uniform also are advisable to guide the enlisted aide in proper uniform setup.

The book also needs to include essential phone numbers, such as the base locator, base ambulance, base clinic, laundry facilities, commissary, medical center, fire department, the headquarters (aide de camp, flag aide, and secretary), legal, and base police.

Guides for hosting formal events and a schedule of what areas of the house to clean on what days can also be helpful for enlisted aides. Students are asked to develop time-management schedules for their other tasks.

**Field trip.** To give students an idea of the operation of single and multi-aide homes, classes take field trips,

sometimes to the Washington, D.C., area and other times to Norfolk, Virginia, where current enlisted aides give them tours of general or flag officers’ quarters and answer any questions they may have about their duties. This gives students the opportunity to observe the pace of operations in a home and to note any tasks that they may be required to perform that they may have overlooked.

**Uniform assembly.** Enlisted aides are responsible for setting up the uniforms of their commanding officer. As enlisted aides serve in many interservice assignments, sometimes on short notice, it is important for them to be familiar with the uniforms of all the services.

EATC instructors provide hands-on training and a practical exercise in uniform assembly to familiarize enlisted aides with officers’ dress uniforms. In the exercise, each student is required to set up a uniform from each service.

**Financial management.** Enlisted aides learn record-keeping and accounting procedures to help them manage the two types of funds that they are accountable for: official representation funds (ORF) and personal household accounts (or petty cash funds). ORF are funds used for official events, and petty cash funds are used in the daily duties of maintaining the household. In the class, students are taught to use a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to execute basic accounting and financial management of the funds.

The enlisted aide will meet with the general or flag officer monthly to discuss how much money will be needed to cover household expenses, such as having the officer’s uniforms cleaned and buying groceries at the commissary. Enlisted aides must maintain receipts for all expenses. EATC students are taught that it is a requirement to meet with their boss at the end of each month to audit these records so that both parties know where the money went.

**Meal preparation and planning.** Culinary skills are also evaluated during the course. Students plan, prepare, and present a 4-course meal, usually in the JCCoE laboratory.

“It’s not a graduation requirement, but we want to see their skill level—where are they in regards to their culinary skills—and then we help them along the way,” said Senior Chief Davila.

The Enlisted Aide Training Course is open to all military personnel. Those in and pending assignment to enlisted aide positions have first priority for the class, as they are the ones who need the information provided in EATC most immediately. Individuals interested in or who have questions about EATC should send an email to [usarmy.lee.tradoc.mbx.qm-enlisted-aide-training@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.lee.tradoc.mbx.qm-enlisted-aide-training@mail.mil) or call (804) 734-3112.

—Julianne E. Cochran

# The Impact of Logistics on the British Defeat in the Revolutionary War

BY MAJOR ERIC A. MCCOY

At the onset of hostilities between Great Britain and its 13 North American colonies in 1775, the British enjoyed significant advantages over the future United States of America. While logistics arrangements for both sides during the Revolutionary War were somewhat spartan, the British logistics system, compared to the logistics organization of the rebelling colonies, was, on the surface, the epitome of efficiency. Faced with a 3,000-mile line of communication across the Atlantic Ocean, Great Britain ensured that its military forces were reasonably well equipped and never starved. Great powers would not repeat a strategic logistics feat of this magnitude for more than 150 years, until Operation Torch in World War II.

However, the British logistics architecture had significant shortcomings, and before British strategists and logisticians could identify and correct them, those deficiencies contributed significantly to the British Army’s defeat. The failure of the British to develop an effective supply chain operation; integrate their logistics, strategic, and tactical plans; and adapt their supply procedures resulted in their inability to execute a counterinsurgency campaign against the American colonies successfully. That failure eventually resulted in American victory.

## Operating a Supply Chain

The first British logistics failure was an inability to develop and protect an effective supply chain operation for their campaigns. According to Injazz J. Chen and Antony Paulraj, in their 2004 *Journal of Operations Management* article, “Towards a Theory of Supply Chain Management: The Constructs and Measurements,” a supply chain is a system of organizations, people, technology, activities, information, and resources involved in moving a product or service from supplier to customer. The problems of supplying the army from Great Britain were great, and the most serious challenge was that of shipping food over such a tremendous distance.

Cork, on the coast of Ireland, was the primary port for shipping foodstuffs to the British in North America. This was not only because of its large natural harbor and its strategic location closer than English ports to the American colonies but also because the farms of Ireland were a major source of food. Southern Ireland also was

an important recruiting center for the British Army, thus making it easy for British quartermasters to put troops aboard food ships bound for America. However, a combination of inadequate packaging, corruption, poor quality control, and substandard inland-to-port transportation limited the stocks that made it from supply sources to the ships.

In one instance, one of the worst storms in years struck a major logistics convoy after it had departed Cork. Many of the ships were forced to turn back to England, others were diverted to Antigua in the Caribbean, and still others spent weeks sailing up and down the eastern seaboard of North America waiting for the weather to break while their cargoes rotted.

American privateers authorized to intercept British cargo also took their toll. Only 13 of the convoy’s ships eventually made it to Boston, and very little of their cargo survived. Only the preserved food (such as sauerkraut, vinegar, and porter) arrived intact. Most of the other provisions were rotten, damaged, or dead; only 148 of the livestock survived. Out of 856 horses shipped, only 532 survived the voyage. This convoy marked the last time that Britain attempted to ship fresh food and livestock to its army.

The demand for supplies was not too much for British shipping to accommodate. However, the supply chain broke down under the combined effects of weather, poor supply procedures, and profiteering. Long lead-times for resupply of goods, coupled with a less than reliable distribution system from England, hindered British operations on the North American continent, requiring their forces to forage for resources and base themselves out of key port cities in the colonies.

Moreover, logistics influenced the first significant British strategic judgment of the war, the decision to abandon Boston to the rebelling colonists. British military leaders realized that, even if British forces were successful in initiating a campaign from Boston, it would be very hard to maintain lines of communication with supply bases around the city. Not only were the rebels likely to attack the precarious supply lines, but they probably would sweep the surrounding area clean of any usable foodstuffs and other supplies.

General Thomas Gage, the British Army commander from 1768 to 1775, finally decided that the evacuation of Boston was unavoidable. In correspondence to Eng-

land in October 1775, he admitted, “It appears to me to be most necessary for the prosecution of the war to be in possession of some province where you can be secured, and from whence draw supplies of provisions and forage, and that New York seems to be the most proper to answer these purposes.” With less than 6 weeks of provisions on hand and no knowledge of when his next shipment might arrive, his successor, General William Howe, had no choice but to leave Boston in March 1776.

However, despite Gage’s desire to move to New York for strategic reasons, the army was moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia, primarily because Howe and General Henry Clinton were unsure if they could subsist adequately in the New York area. Moreover, they were equally unsure about when they could expect the next supply convoy from Cork. The state of supplies at Halifax was not much better than at Boston, but at least the locals were friendly and supportive.

The move from Boston to Halifax was carried out hastily, with significant logistics consequences. The British left behind an estimated 30,000 pounds of supplies because of inadequate shipping, and rebel forces summarily captured those supplies. These losses, coupled with an ineffective supply chain, hindered British major offensive operations.

### Integrating Logistics, Strategy, and Tactics

The second British mistake was their failure to integrate their logistics, strategic, and tactical plans. Major changes in the conduct of conventional warfare, which included changes that centralized logistics operations, were not adopted until the Napoleonic era of the early 19th century. The British officers’ pre-Napoleonic concept of war was not suitable for conducting counterinsurgency operations in which the bulk of their logistics support had to come from overseas.

When overseas resupply became less reliable, British forces were required to forage off the land. However, foraging was never entirely successful for several reasons. First, foraging was no longer part of conventional strategy. Second, it was time-consuming and tiring, and many British soldiers considered it to be beneath them. Third, foraging parties required a covering force, which was a further drain on manpower and consumed even more supplies. Finally, many foraging expeditions produced little or nothing, which not only was demoralizing but also placed a further drain on supplies.

Conventional tacticians of the time did not trust living off the land, arguing that it was bad for morale and could lead to looting, unauthorized foraging, and desertion. Under the British concept of limited warfare, the military reimbursed civilians from whom supplies

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—CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ,  
ON WAR

were taken. In practical application, military forces often found that it was easier to take what they needed by force. This pillaging alienated many Americans who were sympathetic to the British or neutral.

Worst of all, foraging exposed a great number of British soldiers to guerilla warfare, including ambushes and snipers. Foraging parties grew as large as 5,000 men, but small parties of rebels habitually harassed them. British losses in these types of skirmishes soon equaled those suffered in larger pitched battles.

So the British found that logistics strategies requiring foraging or acquisition of supplies from the host nation were counterproductive to counterinsurgency strategy. However, in hindsight, the British did not realize the operational and strategic impacts of these actions until it was too late to correct them.

Furthermore, nearly every time the British Army appeared ready to strike a decisive blow at the Americans, it seemed that a shortage of reserve supplies and a lack of confidence in resupply operations prevented action. British generals, in particular Howe and Clinton, were not willing to commit their forces to offensive campaigns without considerable supplies in reserve. The failure of the British Government to provide their forces with adequate provisions was not due solely to neglect but also to a logistics system that was inadequate and poorly managed, combined with a lack of national will to expand the war.

Under the precepts of Napoleonic warfare, Howe and Clinton could not afford to lose their army because no replacements were available in England. So they would only commit their forces if the odds of victory were overwhelmingly in their favor and if adequate logistics was in place to resupply combat power. This operational employment of their forces did not support a national strategy for defeating the Americans.

In order to win the conflict and retain their colonies, the British had to seek out the rebel forces and defeat them. However, British generals often directed their soldiers to sit and wait, or worse, to evacuate a position, garrison, or city that the British had already gained through difficult fighting. The effect that logistics deficiencies had on these decisions to wait or pull back is undeniable. The battles of Trenton, New Jersey, in 1776 and Saratoga, New York, in 1777 are examples of how the long delays caused by insufficient supplies and the resulting caution shown by British commanders allowed the American forces to concentrate their forces at critical locations and avoid potentially crushing defeats.

### Adapting Supply Procedures

Finally, the British failed to adapt or change their supply procedures to respond to American tactics. Great Britain had a system to support its widely dispersed colonial armies, but it was plagued with many internal problems, primarily inefficiency and corruption. A quick succession of overseas conflicts quickly exposed faults in this support system. To their credit, the British were able to correct many of the deficiencies before the end of the Revolutionary War, but not in time to win.

Three bureaucracies supported the British forces: the Treasury Department, the Navy Board, and the Ordnance Board. When hostilities began in North America, the Treasury Department had overall responsibility for supplying the army. A division of labor did exist, but it was not rigidly maintained and featured some duplication of effort. In addition to overall coordination, the Treasury was responsible for food supplies, including forage for animals.

The Navy Board was responsible for moving infantry and cavalry soldiers, clothing, hospital supplies, and tents and other camping equipment. The Ordnance Board was responsible for artillery, guns, and other ordnance stores, including ammunition, and engineers. Failure to divide labor and ensure cross-communication led to duplication of effort in some areas and inefficient performance in others.

The army was not able to resupply its troops solely from Great Britain, and the British Government never seriously considered that possibility. The army could not be sustained strictly with what it obtained locally, either, but a proper balance was never achieved. The formidable logistics hurdles, coupled with the inconsistent and inefficient civilian hierarchy, ensured that whatever momentum British generals were able to generate would be extremely difficult to maintain.

### Fighting on American Terms

The lack of sufficient reserve supplies, combined with cautious generalship, insufficient transportation, widespread corruption, and the lack of a coherent strategy to maximize the potential support of British loyalists in the colonies, ensured British failure.

These factors forced the British Army to fight a guerilla war—the only kind of war that the upstart United States could hope to win. This allowed American forces to delay the British while gaining a series of smaller victories, which eventually opened the door for France to become involved. Once France began to provide aid to the Americans, the war became too costly for the British to continue to prosecute.

Many of the successes with American logistics, however limited they were, can be attributed to General Nathaniel Greene. A Quaker, he served the Continental Army in numerous roles during the conflict: first as a 33-year-old major general; later, as Commanding

General George Washington’s quartermaster general; and finally, as commander of the Army of the South. He keenly understood the relationship between logistics and success on the battlefield.

On 16 June 1775, the Continental Congress ordered the creation of both a quartermaster general and a deputy quartermaster general. During this period, the quartermaster general acted like the chief of staff for the commander of the Continental Army, served as the prime supplier and businessman for dealing with civilians, operated and repaired supply lines (which included the roads over which suppliers traveled), transported troops, and furnished all of the supplies needed to establish camps when the troops reached their destinations.

As the third quartermaster general, Greene performed admirably despite strong resistance from civilians and businesses. By mobilizing the local economies to support his troops and emplacing supplies forward of the Army’s movements, Greene was able to ensure that the Continental Army enjoyed better freedom of maneuver than the British did.

The Revolutionary War can be characterized to a large degree as a contest to control the oceans and waterways sufficiently so that one side could obtain logistics support by sea and deny support to their opponents. Since the British had to depend on getting supplies from England, support from the homeland became a critical capability for them. When that capability waned, it became essential for the British to develop strategies for obtaining logistics support from the North American continent. When the British failed to update their logistics concept of support to complement their tactical plans, it contributed to their eventual defeat.

The 19th century French general and military theorist Antoine-Henri Jomini observed, “Logistics comprises the means and arrangements which work out the plans of strategy and tactics. Strategy decides where to act; logistics brings the troops to this point.” Military strategists, tacticians, and logisticians must remain aware of this tenet, which applies today as much as it did to the British over 200 years ago.

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