

CGO Corner

“IPs” FOR 21ST CENTURY AIR FORCE LOGISTICS

“IPs” or instructor pilots, as they are referred to outside the Air Force flying world, are the most important mentors pilot-candidates will interact with during their quest to earn “silver wings.” Only those pilots who have demonstrated an unequivocal mastery of flight are selected to return to the schoolhouse to guide future pilots through the unforgiving and, at times, perilous science of flight. IPs use their hands to “talk” about flight maneuvers, and know their applicable regulations and procedures “to the letter”. They inspire, and for some, speak candidly about the hard realities of their incompatibility with flying skills. One of the traits an IP possesses is image and attitude. Young impressionable students are eager to find their place in the Air Force—everything from a unique swagger to the half-roll of a flight suit sleeve will most likely be emulated.



Capt Ernest Cage

While most logistics CGOs don't wear flight suits or teach with planes on sticks, we all serve a critical role in preparing our Airmen to be “logistics aviators” as they navigate the ever evolving stratosphere of our 21st century air, space and cyberspace force. As junior leaders – the soldiers on the ground—it is our tasking to ensure that our Air Force is prepared and ready to engage in a spectrum of operations that can range from convoy duty on the treacherous highways of Iraq, to civil operations in Africa, and to nation building in Afghanistan. We are immersed in all these missions, while simultaneously prosecuting a campaign “in garrison” to abolish waste and improve operations through AFSSO 21 initiatives.

As a logistics “IP” your curriculum must contain such varied topics as Lean, Six Sigma, Continuous Process Improvement, physical fitness, basic combat skills training, senior leader perspectives, and an understanding of the history and culture of the enemy. In 1780, General George Washington said, “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.” Two-hundred and twenty-eight years later, we are once again immersed in a long and critical conflict that demands every logistics Airmen be ready and capable to carry out his or her assigned tasking.

You will not have the luxury of a sterile classroom environment to explain and discuss these issues. The critical demands of warfighter support are too great. However, conversations during daily roll calls and candid discussions with your Airmen as you visit the flightline or warehouse floor are excellent opportunities to plant the seed of thought and to stimulate fruitful synthesis. The learning model here is simple. Your Airmen look to you for leadership and direction. Regardless of your rank, second lieutenant to captain, your people are taking mental notes — take the opportunity to shape this cognitive discourse.

A battlefield logistics officer must step off the aircraft confident, informed, and in command – your Airmen deserve this and our Air Force and the Nation demand nothing less. When the tasking drops and the combat orders flow to your Airmen—will they be ready to solo – to fly, fight, win, and return to base with honor? Rent Top Gun this weekend and pick up a pair of new shades—America's finest logistics Airmen are looking for a few good “IPs”.

The CGO Corner is written by Capt “Nest” Cage is a Logistics Readiness Officer currently serving as an Air Force Logistics Career Broadener at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center. He has been a staff writer for the Exceptional Release since 2006.

For comments, submissions or questions about the CGO Corner please email CGOCORNER@LOANational.org 

****Help Wanted ****

We are looking for a passionate maintenance CGO to join the staff. If you're a good writer and want to help shape the logistics CGO community, then we want you! Interested applicants should submit a sample of your writing and your squadron's commander endorsement letter to Col Dennis Daley at editor@loanational.org.