

Let's Air Force-Cize TQM: George Patton on Quality

By

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TQM, QAF, Quality, whatever words you use, these have become buzz words. Unfortunately, these words are now fast becoming associated with huge amounts of paper, hours of meetings spent poring over useless statistics without decisions, letting everybody do what they want to do under the guise of empowerment, and, in some cases, a slant toward the world of touchy feely and officers being on a first name basis with airmen. However, the *Q* words truly describe important concepts we need to adapt to the military, and in our case, the Air Force. We must realize that the major concepts of quality are vitally important to mission accomplishment. In fact, great military leaders have always practiced the major concepts of quality, certainly without labelling them quality, but using them nonetheless. Now I could go into a long narrative showing you historical examples to prove this. But, I'm afraid I'd bore you senseless, and lose you in the process. So what I'll do is paraphrase a great military leader. Here's what I think General George Patton would say about quality if he were an Air Force leader talking to an Air Force audience:

Now I want you to remember, no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country.

Now all this stuff you may have heard about quality emphasizing only the process and a bunch of touch feely, do-nothing meetings, is a bunch of horse dung. The only reason we want to improve our processes is to even further improve the way we fight and win.

And airmen love to win. All real airmen love the sight of bombs on target and missiles destroying enemy jets, accomplishing the mission to defend our nation. When you were kids, you all admired the champion Nintendo player, the fastest runner, the big league ball player. Airmen play to win all the time. I wouldn't give a hoot in hell for an airman who lost and laughed. That's why airmen have never lost, and will never lose a war.....because the very thought of losing is hateful to airmen.

Now, an Air Force is a team. It lives, eats, sleeps, fights, acts like a team. All this individuality stuff is a bunch of crap. The pop psychologists that wrote all that stuff about individuality in the TQM journals don't know any more about real quality than they do about fighting.

Now we have the best equipment, the best food, the best processes, the finest airmen in the world. You know, I actually pity the Saddam Husseins of the world we're going up against.....you know, I really do. Because we're not just going to blow up their

bunkers.....we're going to tear out their living guts and use them to grease the bearings of our landing gear. We're going to murder those lousy enemies of democracy by the bushel.

Now some of you may be wondering how you'll do, whether or not you'll chicken out under the fire of a lot of flow charts and statistics. Well don't worry about it. I assure you, you'll all do your duty. The barriers to mission accomplishment are the enemy. Wade into them.....spill their blood....shoot them in the belly. When you put your hands into a bunch of goo that a moment before was your process, you'll know what to do.

Now there's one last thing I want you to remember. I don't want to get any reports that we're sitting around looking at a lot of charts, not making any decisions, and not attacking the enemy. We're not sitting around waiting on anything. Let the enemy do that. We're not interested in looking at any charts unless they help us attack the enemy. We're going to attack them during the day and we're going to attack them during the night. We're going to kick the hell out of them all the time and we're going to wade through 'em like crap through a goose!

Alright now, you know how I feel. I'll be proud to serve with you and lead you wonderful airmen into battle, anytime, anywhere. That's all.

Now that's quality with a big Q!!!!