

From Our Readers

Editor's Note:

We received many letters in response to Air Force Lt. Col. Dan Ward's recent article "My Big Slow Fail" (Defense AT&L Jan.-Feb. 2011, pp. 17-20). Below are two examples.

Essence of Entire Defense Acquisition System

I stumbled across Dan Ward's January 2011 *Defense AT&L* article ["My Big, Slow Fail"] on his "highly successful" procurement. When I was reading the article, I actually thought it was a story about a procurement in my agency. I think his excellent article captured the essence of our entire Defense Acquisition System. I've been in the acquisition business since 1988 (mostly Air Force, but DoD since 2002). This story/experience is probably representative of a thousand procurement actions—it is often the norm rather than the exception, and details the life of a typical acquisition program manager. It is a very frustrating business.

What makes matters worse is that Congress and OSD keep flowing down requirement after requirement that throws additional "just one more thing, or two, or three..." into the mix, such as National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, Section 801(b) requirements, or new Office of the Secretary of Defense/Office of Federal Procurement Policy/Department of the Treasury Interagency Agreement requirements, etc, etc, etc. Then the powers that be send out a flurry of policy memos and directives calling on all acquisition personnel to cut bureaucracy, burdensome requirements, unnecessary steps and requirements, start "streamlining," etc. We just sit

there with our heads doing the Exorcist routine half laughing and half crying. I remember in the "old days" somehow we just used to get things done, and it was certainly more fun, but not anymore—it's worse than a root canal. We have every hand, toe, and finger tied up.

Regardless, I enjoyed Dan's very accurate and representative article, and hopefully many will read it.

Joseph Avery

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Need for More Critical Articles

As a long time DoD acquisition professional and as an author of articles in the *Defense AT&L Magazine*, I am compelled to write and compliment Dan Ward on an exceptional article: "My Big, Slow Fail." The article is exceptionally well written and helpful.

Far too often, *Defense AT&L* articles are little more than the authors commending themselves on how well they accomplished a task. It's rare to see critical articles. This is unfortunate because, only by acknowledging one's shortcomings, is improvement possible.

Dan Ward's article is the best that I've read in this magazine in several years. My sincere compliments!

Ron Klein

Huntsville, Ala.

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