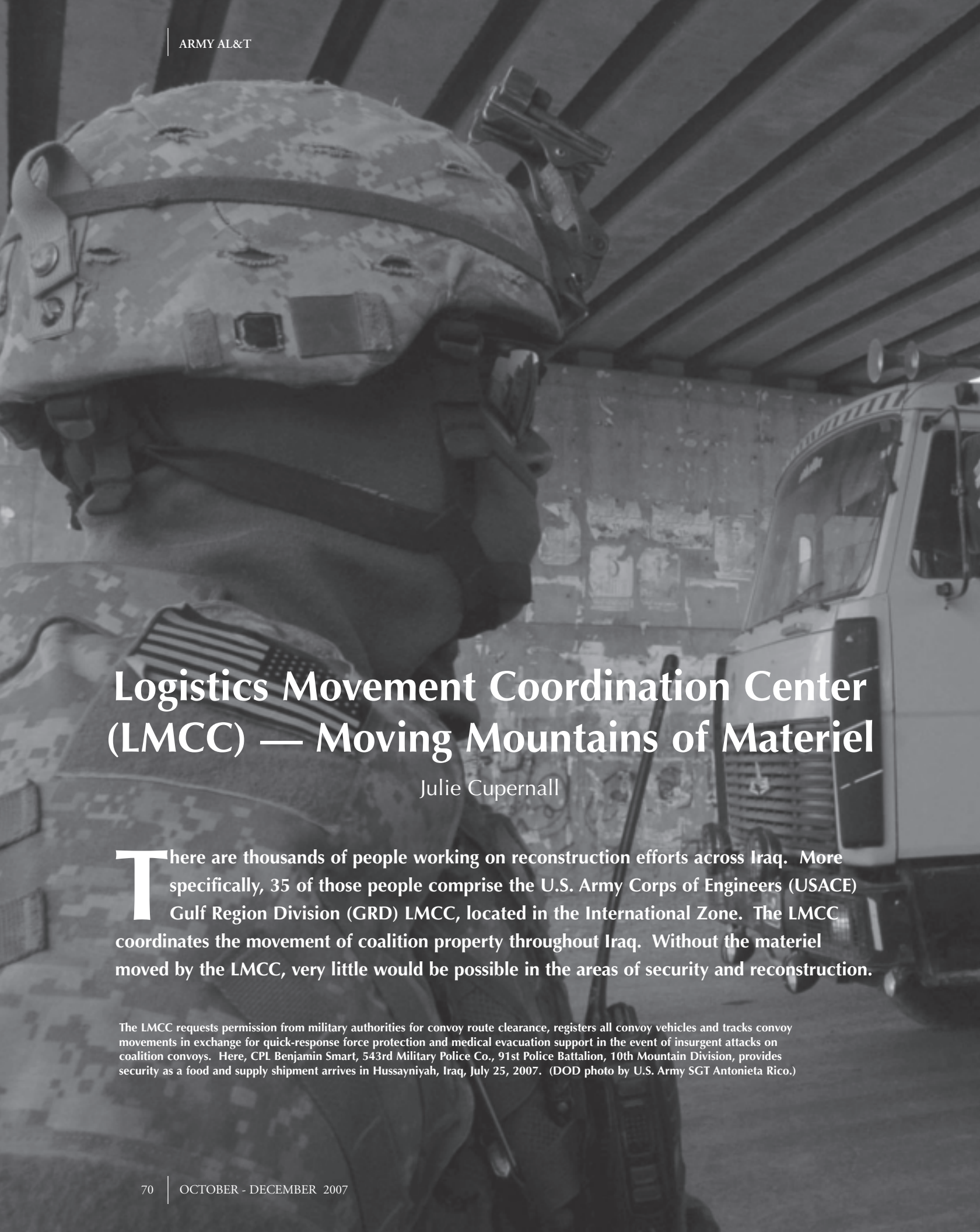

# Logistics Movement Coordination Center (LMCC) — Moving Mountains of Materiel

Julie Cupernall

**There are thousands of people working on reconstruction efforts across Iraq. More specifically, 35 of those people comprise the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Gulf Region Division (GRD) LMCC, located in the International Zone. The LMCC coordinates the movement of coalition property throughout Iraq. Without the materiel moved by the LMCC, very little would be possible in the areas of security and reconstruction.**

The LMCC requests permission from military authorities for convoy route clearance, registers all convoy vehicles and tracks convoy movements in exchange for quick-response force protection and medical evacuation support in the event of insurgent attacks on coalition convoys. Here, CPL Benjamin Smart, 543rd Military Police Co., 91st Police Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, provides security as a food and supply shipment arrives in Hussayniyah, Iraq, July 25, 2007. (DOD photo by U.S. Army SGT Antonieta Rico.)

"The LMCC is a collection of minds, banded together to solve the problem of movement and all its complexities," explained Jack Holly, GRD Logistics Director. "Everything you see in the LMCC are tools to assist in that decision-making process." After 2½ years, the LMCC is a well-oiled machine when it comes to materiel movement. It's been accomplished with more than a little bit of adjustment to the machine along the way.

From the beginning, the LMCC has been organized as a team that will one day be taken over by Iraqis. This envisioned end state created a couple of challenges from the onset. First, even though the convoy environment is extremely dangerous, the LMCC could not be a classified organization if it was to support Iraqi apprenticeship. Second, although the movement environment is military, the LMCC had to be composed mainly of contractors because the LMCC must be sustainable for reconstruction needs while coalition forces concentrate on security missions.

Holly, who has been directing the LMCC since its inception in 2003, tackled these challenges by creating a new business model: a team primarily run by contractors in a military environment with a desired end state of total takeover by the Iraqi government. The LMCC was accomplished through what members of Holly's team describe as the "three Cs:" coordination, communication and cooperation.

## Coordination

The initial issue boiled down to responsibility. While it was the contractors' responsibility at the LMCC to coordinate movements of materiel around Iraq, it was not included in their contracts that those movements

GRD LMCC employees request permission for, register and monitor convoy movements throughout the operational environment in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of USACE GRD.)

needed to be coordinated with the military elements controlling the areas the convoys were moving through. This lack of coordination did not sit well with the military.

On the other end of the spectrum, military quick-reaction forces, emergency response and medical evacuation teams were not explicitly responsible for covering the LMCC convoys. This lack of coordination was causing insurance premiums for the LMCC's contract companies to go through the roof.

Drawing upon his many years of experience as a former U.S. Marine Corps officer, Holly recognized this lack of coordination and set out to resolve it. In short, he convinced the contract companies at the LMCC to request permission for, register and track their movements with the military controlling the operational environment.

> During the LMCC's coordination phase, the need for effective communication between the contractors controlling and executing the movement and coalition forces on the ground was recognized as the deal maker or breaker.

The tradeoff was a guarantee from the military for quick-response forces and medical evacuation support in the event of an attack upon LMCC convoys.

Coalition forces were getting their logistics needs fulfilled, while keeping a better view of their operating environment, and the contract companies working at the LMCC received a safer workspace, which dramatically lessened their insurance premiums.

## Communication

During the LMCC's coordination phase, the need for effective communication between the contractors controlling and executing the movement and coalition forces on the ground was recognized as the deal maker or breaker. The first question: "How to talk about movements in an unclassified environment without tipping off the bad guys?" The answer was encryption of data, much the way banks do. The encryptions aren't foolproof, but are difficult enough that by the time the info is decrypted, the movements are usually complete.

"We had to be unclassified, but that does not mean stupid," related Holly. "It means we have to use commercial methods of encryption. You understand the security concerns of certain things you do, but you're not under the restrictive umbrella of a DOD security organization that makes working with other people, other countries and private industry very hard," Holly continued.

The ability to safely track the reconstruction resources needed to get $13 billion worth of reconstruction underway did not go unnoticed by the Commander, USACE GRD. "We can track our reconstruction resources directly from the border, and we can make sure we do that in a secure way," explained BG Michael Walsh. "It's a vitally important job. It's vital to what we do."

The second question: "How to track the materiel convoys in real time?" Real time is necessary for two reasons:

- So coalition forces know that the convoys are "friendlies" when they deploy.
- So when the convoys come under attack, help can be on the way within minutes.

The LMCC answered this need by using removable tracking devices on all its convoys. The tracking devices are monitored by employees at the LMCC and by coalition forces. The complex computer software that monitors the tracking devices on the convoys is constantly being updated and reconfigured to better meet the LMCC's needs. In fact, the contract company that designs the tracking software has an employee on the ground in Baghdad so needs can constantly be assessed and addressed.

## Cooperation

The LMCC and its coalition partners are firmly within the cooperation phase now. In the past 2½ years, more than 11,300 convoys have been guided by the LMCC, including the delivery of more than 28,500 vehicles and 353 million rounds of ammunition. Sadly, even the best cooperation in a war zone doesn't eliminate danger completely. The LMCC's dedicated workers have paid a high price for moving the materiel that keeps the coalition moving forward. As of Feb. 14, 2007, there had been 977 attacks on LMCC guided convoys, resulting in 129 dead and 370 wounded. Many of the killed and wounded have been Iraqi associates.

Iraqi apprenticeship is integral to USACE's GRD logistics movement success long term. Here, an Iraqi worker performs warehousing operations in Abu Ghraib, Baghdad Province, Iraq. The ultimate goal is to have Iraqis assume management responsibility of their own materiel movement and security countrywide once coalition forces leave. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of USACE GRD.)

## The Way Forward

GRD Logistics and the LMCC have always had one end state — total takeover of operations by the Iraqi people. With this goal constantly in mind, Iraqis are working and succeeding at the LMCC and on the convoys moving across their country. Iraqis also are working at the GRD Logistics warehouses in Baghdad and Um Qasr, learning the additional skills of inventory control along with materiel movement. "I'm very glad to be working for this company. I have learned many things and this allows me to serve my country and provide for my family's future," said one Iraqi GRD Logistics employee who preferred to remain anonymous because of security concerns.

There have also been lessons learned for the USACE and coalition forces. The LMCC is a new business model and it works. Military outsourcing to contractors who, in turn, outsource to Iraqis is getting the job done now, and is ensuring that the Iraqis will get the job done in the near future. According to Holly, perhaps the biggest lesson learned at the LMCC is how to operate effectively in a learning environment. "The battlefield is changing so dramatically every day and every week that it is a luxury of laziness to accept that what worked last week will work next week," Holly remarked. "It doesn't happen. Every week you have to analyze, relook, reevaluate and maybe come up with changes as to how you're doing things."

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