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Backstage Business

Logistics Activity supports the entire cast of USACE players and operations.



Written by: **Jan Tegler** on March 27, 2011

Categories: **Army Corps of Engineers, Land Forces**

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Robert Murphy, a stock record account officer, loads a pallet of hydraulic oil for shipment to one of the locks managed and maintained by the Corps' Pittsburgh District Office. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Logistics Activity coordinates the shipping and delivery of hydraulic oil and the many other supplies needed to keep USACE running. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The work of many organizations can be likened to theatrical performance. Employees are given duties to carry out in the world of commerce and enterprise much as actors are given roles to perform on a stage. But away from the footlights there is a stage crew, a group whose sole purpose is to support the players. They provide and maintain the set upon which actors perform, supply, and manage the props that they utilize, and direct the entertainers from place to place onstage.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Logistics Activity (ULA) performs a very similar function for the Corps, providing logistics services that support the full spectrum of operations. Corps personnel at the headquarters, division, and district levels nationally and internationally are the performers. ULA is the stage crew, tasked with the management of leased- and Army-owned facilities, management of USACE fleet vehicles, transportation and travel requirements and shipments, supply management, property accountability and equipment maintenance, and deliberate and crisis-action planning and response.

Launched in 2006 to provide a standard, nationwide logistics program for the Corps, ULA became fully operational in 2008. The activity's core missions, administrative and financial functions, and safety and occupational health programs are guided by seven ULA departments: the Executive Office; Facilities Division; Logistics Planning and Operations Division; Resource Integration Division; Safety and Occupational Health; Supply and Maintenance Division; and Transportation Division.

Comprised of more than 400 logisticians, ULA is the operational arm of the Directorate of Logistics (provides policy, guidance, and strategic vision for logistics in the Corps), based in Millington, Tenn. Regional Logistics Liaisons (RLL) at each of the Corps' nine divisions supply logistics support to the division commanders. Subordinate to the RLLs are four-man logistics support teams at each of the Corps' 56 districts. The teams provide logistic supply, maintenance, transportation, and facilities management for district commanders in the field.

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Each team is led by a multi-functional logistician who serves as a logistics team chief in supply, maintenance, and transportation (many also have facilities engineering experience). The team chiefs are aided by a supply technician trained in supply property-book accountability, procurement, and other supply-related logistics; a transportation specialist trained in travel, fleet management, and other transportation areas; and a facilities management person trained in facilities engineering, maintenance, and management.

And so ULA logisticians handle the backstage business that supports USACE operations across the board. Their efforts can be broken down into the core mission areas mentioned above but financing for logistics support comes from two accounts, one for Corps military programs funded by the Department of the Army (DA) and one for Corps Civil Works programs funded via Congress.

Management of Leased- and Army-Owned Facilities

"You find a facilities manager at each one of the districts," said ULA Director of Logistics Martin Jennings.

"They're tasked with scheduling of facilities repairs and normal maintenance. They schedule space utilization – how the facilities are designed, how offices and cubicles are formed. They schedule replacement of carpet or repainting of the facilities periodically and manage cleanliness and maintenance contracts. They oversee the operational maintenance of facilities."

It's a big job, primarily tied to the management of leased civilian facilities. "We're downtown predominantly," Jennings said. "We're in GSA-leased [U.S. General Services Administration] facilities with about \$91 million in leases per year. We do have some Corps facilities that we own but we're part of very few military installations."

Facilities management services include: master planning services, facilities modification advice, assistance and design, space planning services, negotiation and maintenance of host-tenant agreements and occupancy agreements, liaison with GSA, facility management policy, procedure and regulatory guidance development/review, and refinement of all leased Corps and Army-owned spaces occupied by USACE.

Management of USACE Fleet Vehicles, Transportation and Travel Requirements and Shipments

Executed by the Transportation Division, this mission is diverse, including the management of personal property freight and storage programs, the general freight program, the small-package service program, and fleet management program. The division also oversees official travel for Corps personnel and manages foreign travel clearance, visa/passport services, and permanent change of station/temporary change of status counseling and processing.

Jennings cited examples illustrative of the mission, from fleet management and travel to freight and personal property movement.

"We lease 7,400 vehicles from the GSA," he said. "We replenish those at a rate of about 33 percent per year so about one-third of the vehicle property is replaced yearly. We do about \$36 million per year in GSA leases for fleet vehicles. That can range from sedans to vans and dually-trucks [trucks with four wheels on the rear axle alone] in order to execute our missions in the field.

"We do freight management as well, moving freight for the Corps but we also handle personnel travel and passport coordination. In addition, we move personal property. When a member of the Corps of Engineers is reassigned outside of his immediate area to an area over 50 miles away, he or she may be authorized to move household goods. We pack them up and coordinate with transportation elements to transport household goods to the next location and the Corps member's new home."

Supply Management, Property Accountability, and Equipment Maintenance

Managing, maintaining, and keeping track of supplies and property is a \$1.9 billion operation according to Jennings. Administered under the Supply and Maintenance Division, responsibilities include property maintenance and supply program execution, oversight, and policy execution.

"We have 10 property book officers, one at each division and one at Millington, Tenn., to do oversight," Jennings explained. "And we have a supply-maintenance division chief who maintains property-book oversight under ULA. The preponderance of the mission in the supply arena is property book accountability, making sure we have good hand-receipts and good control of our property both on our military DA-funded programs side and on the Civil Works side of the house. We have a table of distributional allowances for what property we're authorized to have on the military side and a similar document for Civil Works-funded property."

Jennings said that it's critical for the Corps to have good asset management. ULA uses extensive databases to manage USACE's overall property books but there are actually hand receipts at the district level and hand receipt holders in each of the districts.

"We use hand receipts for property almost down to the user level to maintain proper accountability," he added.

Moreover, the range of equipment ULA oversees is staggering.

"The Corps has 700 boats for example," said Jennings. "I'm talking about dredges, tug boats, and small boats, different types of equipment we use to manage water resources. We also have an Army battalion, the 229th Engineer Battalion, which employs a large amount of power-generation equipment including gigantic generators large enough to power-up portions of cities in the event of emergencies. We go from Army-centric equipment – Humvees, trucks, and boats – to office equipment."

Crisis-action Planning and Response

In addition to its routine logistics services, ULA provides a crisis-action logistics planning function, service generated by www.PDFonFly.com at 3/30/2011 1:08:10 PM
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coordinating and executing body in civil and/or military contingency/emergency response actions.

Executed under the Logistics Planning and Operations Division, the crisis-action planning and response mission endows ULA with the capability to logistically support the full spectrum of USACE's contingency, combat, stability, and disaster operations through forward deployed and reach-back planning capabilities.

"Our responsibility is to Corps personnel who are going to respond to natural disasters," Jennings said. "At D-plus one [day of disaster plus one], we send out an emergency response team made up of ULA volunteers to the location of a natural disaster to be able to receive USACE personnel. We do staging of equipment and then move it and our personnel out to affected sites. Then we integrate our people and equipment. We're responsible for marrying our people with hotel accommodations in the affected areas. We might also be coordinating for rations or additional vehicles. We establish what we call 'hubs,' staging areas to receive supplies [truckloads of ice, sandbags, etc.] and track the movement of that freight, orchestrating the flow of that material to disaster sites."

An Evolving Command

Jennings stated that ULA is still evolving as it progresses through its third year of operations. Priorities for the next year and into the future include hiring and credentialing more qualified logisticians, expanding enterprise-wide logistics business processes, and incorporating best business practices from industry and academia.

"We're still maturing as we certify and train our people," Jennings admitted. "Our emergency planning and operations are evolving. We're making sure we have the right people with the right skill-set to support the Corps in disaster areas. We have challenges ahead of us in ensuring we have enough people to meet those requirements. We've also coordinated with the Department of the Army to become part of the Army Materiel Command [AMC] contract or LOGCAP [Logistics Civil Augmentation Program], so that once we are maxed out during a crisis action, we can reach out to AMC for support. That way I can put my people back to work doing contractive support with the response plan during a national emergency."

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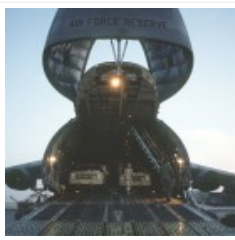
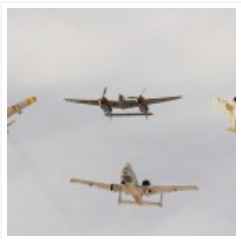
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