



Transitioning DCMA's mission in Iraq

Air Force Lt. Col. Kevin Sellers | DCMA Iraq

Army Gen. Lloyd James Austin III (left), U.S. Forces-Iraq commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen case the USF-I colors during a ceremony that marked the end of Operation New Dawn at the former Sather Air Base, Baghdad, Iraq, Dec. 15, 2011. Since 2003, more than 1 million U.S. service members have served in Iraq. (Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo)

During the first six months of 2011, Defense Contract Management Agency Iraq began the final planning and preparation for the massive undertaking of supporting two complex operations missions: the Department of Defense's combat troop and contractor personnel drawdown and the transition of the mission in Iraq to the Department of State as the lead agency.

At the same time, DCMA Iraq continued to execute the fast-paced core mission of contingency contract administration and oversight functions.

In order to strengthen communications and leverage existing technologies to more efficiently and effectively execute the mission, DCMA Iraq initiated several information technology initiatives throughout the command.

First, an instant messaging system enabled real-time communication and eliminated the inherent delays of email. The system also allows files to be delivered

in an efficient manner.

Second, DCMA Iraq automated the contract administration change management functions using a web-based application. This required the time and resources of many individuals across the entire command. Within 60 days, this application was developed, tested and approved for use and automated the change management process within the program. While making the internal process more efficient, it also drove the customer to become more efficient with its own processes to keep pace with the automated system.

In July and August, DCMA Iraq headquarters split into two separate staffs to support the Department of Defense customer and the Department of State customer.

DCMA Northern Iraq moved to DCMA Iraq headquarters in late July and continued its efforts with the mainstay sites, which either transitioned to the Department of State or were closed

and returned to Iraq. DCMA Northern Iraq was inactivated in late October and the residual Contingency Contract Administration Services, or CCAS, mission moved under DCMA Southern Iraq.

In late July, DCMA Southern Iraq also moved to DCMA Iraq headquarters and led the bulk of the base closure contract transition efforts, closing or transitioning more than 25 sites during this time.

DCMA Southern Iraq led the effort in late September to ensure more than 830 separate base life support services were provided and remain into 2012. The Southern Iraq team accomplished this all within the 90-day period from October to December, while simultaneously moving their headquarters two times. With the drawdown and transition mission complete, DCMA Southern Iraq inactivated in early December.

DCMA Central Iraq moved in October and integrated with the DCMA Iraq headquarters team. DCMA Central Iraq had the unique task of transitioning

security contracts to the new Department of Defense Security Support Service contracts in support of Office of Security Cooperation sites, while at the same time maintaining legacy security contracts at a few of the Department of State sites.

DCMA Central Iraq also continued a massive effort to close out more than 200 contingency contracts, an effort which continues to this day. DCMA Central Iraq inactivated on the same day as DCMA Southern Iraq in early December.

With the inactivation of three tertiary commands, DCMA Iraq reduced its manning by approximately 60 percent in a few months' time, redeploying all joint manning document/individual augmentee military personnel back to the military services and retaining only four DCMA military members in the process.

Now smaller and reconfigured, DCMA Iraq began 2012 with a focus on the Department of State and the Office of Security Cooperation as its primary customers. Internally, the CMO concentrated on updating its operational processes and products in order to begin the transition from a contingency-based

activity to a more traditional CMO.

In early 2012, DCMA Iraq assessed lessons learned from its transition. DCMA personnel proved themselves time and again throughout 2011, and some volunteered to extend their tours to ensure the agency maintained a responsive and reliable presence at many of the closing sites. This avoided the requirement for other individuals to deploy for only a short period of time, saving thousands of dollars of additional deployment costs and providing additional manpower to deploy to DCMA Afghanistan.

DCMA's CCAS functions remain a critical component of mission execution and success during a drawdown of troops and transition of mission. This is primarily based on the mission's reliance on contractor logistics and security support of the current missions.

Also, integral to successful transitioning was the ability to maintain robust communications which proved critical to enabling constant connection within DCMA Iraq and with external stakeholders and partners at all levels.

The CCAS mission in Iraq continues in

2012. Structured as a streamlined contract management office under DCMA Middle East, DCMA Iraq will focus on the Office of Security Cooperation's Foreign Military Sales and Training contracts and similar effort requiring contract administration services, or CAS, functions supporting the Department of State's overall mission to strengthen the U.S.-Iraq relationship.

The only constant for the DCMA CCAS mission is change. The agency's legacy with this continuing mission is its deploying personnel and their ability to remain flexible to ever-changing missions and priorities while remaining adaptable to the current situation and environment. 

(Editor's note: This article is the second in a two-part series on the agency's continuing mission in Iraq during the transition from the Department of Defense's Operation New Dawn in 2011 to the Department of State's Mission in Iraq in 2012. The first article was published in the spring 2012 issue of the Communicator.)



Kuwait border military police and soldiers from the 265th Movement Control Team close the gate at the Khabari Crossing after the final convoy crossed the border from Iraq to Kuwait, Dec. 18, 2011. (Photo by Army Master Sgt. Montigo White)