

# ARMY INTRODUCES NEW MOUNTAINEERING KITS

DOUG GRAHAM

Soldiers at the Army Mountain Warfare School in Jericho, Vt., are slated to receive new equipment designed to improve their performance and give them “Spiderman-like” abilities. The equipment is part of the improved Army Mountaineering Kit (AMK).

The new kit, developed by Project Manager Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment, will help Soldiers traverse cliffs and mountain faces, and cross snow and ice. The AMK will help Soldiers function more effectively in harsh, high-altitude environments similar to that of the mountains in Afghanistan.

The AMK will be fielded in four kits tailored to meet different mission requirements. These kits will replace the mix of older Army-issued equipment and commercially available mountain gear currently being used by most units.

“Mountain combat is unforgiving. In addition to fighting a determined enemy, you are dealing with high altitudes, rocky and often dangerous terrain, and extreme temperatures,” said MAJ Laverne Stanley, assistant product manager for Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) and Load Carriage Equipment. “The AMK gives our Soldiers the equipment they need to take and keep that vital high ground and complete their missions at peak levels of performance.

“The AMK will also provide Soldiers with proven standardized gear which will simplify both training and logistics for units that specialize in mountaineering,” Stanley added.

Darren Bean, a former sergeant major and Army Mountain

Warfare School chief instructor, said the new kits for Soldiers contain about 80 percent of the same equipment that the Marine Corps presently uses. The similarity in kits should prove beneficial to joint operations.

Bean, who was heavily involved in the development of the AMK, said the effort began in earnest in 2006. It was then the Army increased operations in the eastern part of Afghanistan. In that part of the country, mountains tower from 10,000 to 14,000 feet and require mountain-climbing expertise.

“You always want to fight from the high ground,” said Bean, adding that high vantage points are also necessary for observation points and sniper positions.

“Getting to those locations by helicopter is not always a good idea because of the high altitude, high winds and rocky terrain,” Bean noted. “Therefore, Soldiers have to be able to climb.

“We identified a need for a new kit because the old Special Operations Forces Mountaineering Kit that had been supplied to units was outdated. Much of the equipment did not meet the standards set by the UIAA,” said Bean, referring to the Union Internationale des Associations d’Alpinisme (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation).

Read more on the new kits at [http://www.army.mil/article/120699/Army\\_introduces\\_four\\_new\\_mountaineering\\_\\_climbing\\_kits/](http://www.army.mil/article/120699/Army_introduces_four_new_mountaineering__climbing_kits/).

*(Doug Graham works in Program Executive Office [PEO] Soldier’s Public Affairs Office.)*



PEO Soldier photo

## ‘MA DEUCE’ GETS NEW STAND

*In November 2013, the 1st Armored Division became the first Army division to be fielded the new M205 Lightweight Tripod for Heavy Machine Guns, which is replacing the currently used M3 tripod for the M2/M2A1 and MK19 machine guns. The new tripod provides a strong, stable firing platform at significantly reduced weight. At 34 pounds, the M205 weighs 16 pounds less than the 50-pound M3 tripod, which represents significant progress in lightening the Soldier’s load. The tripod also has a new traverse and elevation mechanism that allows faster, more accurate target engagement.*