Army Paratroopers Testing New Airborne Ruck – Kit Up!

TOPICS: Airborne Army Load-Bearing Equipment Marine Corps Packs Warfighting

The U.S. Army’s new MOLLE 4000 airborne rucksack. Photo: Program Executive Office Soldier.
U.S. Army airborne and Ranger units are testing a new, jumpable pack with a built-in equipment harness.

The MOLLE 4000 is the Army’s new airborne rucksack, designed to satisfy requests from paratroopers for a pack that’s smaller than the large MOLLE ruck but with more capacity than the medium MOLLE that the Army introduced in 2009 for up to 72-hour missions.

“There was no kind of in-between capability,” Col. Dean Hoffman IV, the head of Army’s Project Manager Soldier Protective and Individual Equipment, told Military.com.

Equipment officials worked with the 82nd Airborne Division to design the new pack, which will hold approximately 4,000 cubic inches worth of kit, Hoffman said. The large MOLLE ruck – short for Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment – holds about 5,000 cubic inches. The medium MOLLE holds about 3,000 cubic inches.

The new pack has a single-point release harness built into the bottom.
“This new rucksack actually has it to where it is integrated into the ruck,” Hoffman said. “You can literally just zip it back up, throw your attaching straps in there and you are ready to go.”

The MOLLE 4000 uses the same hard plastic frame as the U.S. Marine Corps ruck system.

“Everybody loved the ALICE pack because it had a metal frame,” Hoffman said. “Then there was some concern about the plastic frame and it breaking, but I will tell you, we have been dropping these things for a while, and we haven’t had one report yet that it broke. Innovation in industry is getting materials that can withstand large, heavy packs being dropped.”

Equipment officials are also looking at putting lighter materials into the final version of the pack, such as 500 denier Cordura instead of the traditional 1,000 denier.

“We are looking at where do we need 1,000 denier, if any, and were we can get by with 500,” Hoffman said.

The MOLLE 4000 is currently being tested by the 82nd Airborne, the 75th Ranger Regiment as well as airborne troops in Alaska and Hawaii, Hoffman said. The plan is to get soldier feedback, make any changes that are need and field the new pack sometime in 2019.
Matthew Cox has been a defense reporter since 1998 and is an associate editor for Military.com. He traveled to Afghanistan and Iraq numerous times from 2002 to 2008, covering infantry units in combat. Matthew was an infantryman in the 82nd Airborne Division.

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LIAM
DADDY LIKES!!!!
John P
And whom is the FIRST person to leap out of a perfectly good aeroplane to TEST this brand new concept?
Sings the Paratrooper Song
Gory, Gory what a terrible way to die
Is everybody happy? asked the Sargent looking up.
Our Hero feebly answered Yes, and then they stood him up
he jumped right out into the blast his static line unhooked
and he ain't gonna jump no more.
Gory, Gory what a terrible way to die
Gregarious
“We are looking at where do we need 1,000 denier, if any, and were we can get by with 500,” Hoffman said.
It’d be “where” not were. jumpin’ jiminy no one can write anymore.

James W.

This is cool, It’s just funny that the East German Airborne had a rucksack with a built in single point release back in the 1970’s and a round canopy chute you could break like a freefall chute when you landed. My point, our so called innovations in airborne world are sadly decades behind others.

Dan in Ohio

Averaging between 5000cu and 3000cu...and coming up with 4000cu...BRILLIANT!!Issue a couple hundred Meritorious Service medals, Arcom’s and AAM’s!! Based upon rank of course.

And this is supposed to impress anyone?

Ruko

what happen to the old Alice rucks? there was nothing wrong with them!

11CP5

In the 80's we jumped old rucks that had an assault pack that hooked up to it just fine. I guess it did not pack enough crap for the troops. Not enough room for the cell phones and such.

CSARmedic

“Everybody loved the ALICE pack because it had a metal frame,”

Really, cause I remember it as being THE most uncomfortable and inefficient backpack I ever wore. I also remember my buddies and I shelling out some decent cash off-base to “upgrade” it to make it bearable for the not so long patrols we used to hike.

Typical lame REMF comment.