

Individual Combat Clothing Equipment
For Deploying Reserve Marines:
A Faster, Flexible, More Efficient Process
Submitted by Captain ET Jones
To
Major JK Kelley, CG1
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I can assure you the Marine Corps Reserve still remains totally committed to continuing the rapid and efficient activation of combat-ready ground, air, and logistics units to augment and reinforce the active component in the Global War on Terrorism. Marine Corps Reserve units, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), and Retired Marines fill critical requirements in our nation's defense and are deployed worldwide in Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgian Republic, Djibouti, Kuwait, and the U.S., supporting all aspects of the Global War on Terrorism.

Statement of Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy United States Marine Corps Reserve Commander, Marine Forces Reserve before the Senate Armed Forces Committee Personnel Subcommittee on Reserve Matters on 13 April 2005.

Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) is tasked to support Gaining Force Commands (GFC) by augmenting and reinforcing active duty units with personnel during national emergencies declared by the President. From 11 September 2001 through July 2005, the Marine Corps activated over 36,000 Reserve Marines, and more than 95 percent of all Marine Forces Reserve units in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).¹ While supporting the GWOT, MARFORRES has made changes to the individual combat clothing equipment (ICCE) fielding process and significantly enhanced its capability to support the reserve training centers (RTCs) which outfit the deploying reserve Marines; however, there is a better process to outfit them with required ICCE prior to deployment. Reserve Marines should draw complete sets of ICCE from the GFC Consolidated Issue Facilities (CIFs) in order to streamline the issue process, improve property accounting, and save money.

Current Process

Currently, upon activation and prior to deployment, reserve Marines are directed to draw the required ICCE from an RTC prior to transferring to a GFC. This process requires the supporting RTC supply section to order any shortfalls of the new ICCE in the correct size, quantity, and camouflage patterns before the

¹ Statement of Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy United States Marine Corps Reserve Commander, Marine Forces Reserve before the Senate Armed Forces Committee Personnel Subcommittee on Reserve Matters on 13 April 2005.

reserve Marine transfers to the GFC. The RTC supply section must pass the requests for the new ICCE through their respective battalion supply section, regimental/group G-4, and MARFORRES G-4, in order for the MARFORRES Critical Asset Rapid Distribution Facility (CARDF), located in Albany, Georgia, to ship the ICCE to the RTC in time.

Since the onset of GWOT, MARFORRES has altered the fielding methodology for ICCE in order to ensure that newly fielded items are available to support deploying Marines. All newly fielded ICCE destined to units of MARFORRES are shipped from the MARCORSSYSCOM contracted vendor to the CARDF as Force-held stocks. The CARDF is charged with secondary shipment of these assets to the units of the force. This newly fielded ICCE will be issued to units of the force to support their deploying Marines only. ICCE transferred to units ISO deploying Marines will be considered part of the fielding of equipment to that unit unless explicitly stated differently in the deployment guidance message. The CARDF will transfer accountability of fielded assets to the receiving unit supply account. Once sufficient quantities of particular ICCE items are received from the vendor, complete fielding of ICCE items to all units will occur as directed by MFR and MSC G-3s.²

For the most part, this process has worked due, in large part, to the detailed work of Marines assigned to the respective supply and logistic sections at every level of MARFORRES. However, despite these efforts, some Reserve Marines have arrived at the GFCs with incomplete, incorrectly fitting, obsolete, and in some cases no ICCE. These circumstances create

² COMMFRG4 MSG 251401Z APR 07 - MARFORRES POLICY FOR FIELDING OF INDIVIDUAL CLOTHING/COMBAT EQUIPMENT (ICCE).

a significant number of hasty exchanges, requisitions, and a large amount of frustration on the part of the Marine, the GFC, MARFORRES G-4 CARDF, and any other personnel involved because a complete set of ICCE must be procured before the Reserve Marine can train and deploy.

Property Accounting

Additionally, MARFORRES G-4 has gone to great lengths to correct property accounting records while redistributing and disposing of obsolete ICCE in order to accurately field new ICCE. However, MFR ICCE property accounting accuracy is diminished because units frequently fail to conduct accurate inventories and appropriate transactions to reflect actual on-hand stocks of ICCE, resulting in battalions ordering more ICCE than may be needed for some units and less than may be needed for others. While this situation may reflect poor time and personnel management, it is a consequence of competing priorities (Toys for Tots, funerals, casualty assistance, reserve mobilization and training, etc) of the RTC active duty staffs who are the stewards of this equipment.³

³ The author served as the 4th Maintenance Battalion supply officer from June 2004 to June 2007 where he coordinated the ICCE issue for over 700 reserve Marines deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Costs

Shipping

MARFORRES incurs significant costs when shipping ICCE from the CARDF to the more than 180 RTCs across the Continental United States (CONUS). These costs are increased when MARFORRES must expedite shipping the ICCE using overnight carriers such as FedEx and UPS in order to outfit reserve Marines before they travel to GFCs. To alleviate these increased costs, MARFORRES G-4 has implemented significant policy changes requiring requisitions for new ICCE to be submitted at least 30 days prior to transferring the reserve Marines, in order using the least expensive shipping method⁴. However, the company, battalion, and regimental RTC supply sections do not always submit timely and accurate ICCE requisitions which is exacerbated by the fact that some reserve Marines mobilized and transferred on short notice. The result is insufficient quantities and incorrect sizes being shipped to a RTC that the Marine has already departed. While these situations represent the exception, they occur frequently enough to prevent a reserve Marine from getting the ICCE he or she needs to deploy. If the ICCE were consolidated and distributed at a central location where all Reserve Marines will deploy from and redeploy to, these situations could be prevented.

⁴ COMMFRG4 MSG 031914Z MAR 06 - TRANSPORTATION OF THINGS (TOT) POLICY FOR CARDF SUPPORT.

Financial Support

The current cost of ICCE for U.S. Marines deploying Central Command (CentCom) area of operations is over \$4100.⁵ The modular tactical vest (MTV), the lightweight helmet (LTWT Helmet), and the improved load-bearing equipment (ILBE), have all been fielded since the beginning of the GWOT and could be replaced by newer, stronger, and lighter ICCE in the next two decades. To date during the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), MARFORRES G-4 has been permitted to access funding reserved for active duty forces to order shortfalls of ICCE. However, MARFORRES may not have access to this funding much longer and could be forced into budgeting constraints that will prevent them from maintaining sufficient ICCE stockages necessary for effective peacetime training. If reserve Marines will be called upon to support future combat operations, the Marine Corps cannot allow them to deploy with incomplete ICCE.

Proposed Process

The ICCE issue process to deploying reserve Marines should follow the same process as active duty Marines in order to streamline the issue process, improve equipment accountability, and ensure Reserve Marines have access to the best ICCE available. Marine Corps Order 4400.196 allows this process to

⁵ <http://www.usmccif.com/>. Accessed 10 Dec 2007.

occur; however, MARFORRES continues to outfit reserve Marines with ICCE prior to transferring them to the GFCs.

On 4 January 2000, the Commandant cancelled career length issue (CLI) for 782 gear and directed the transition to CIF's as the primary method of logistics support for ICCE. In accordance with that guidance, and the principles outlined in Precision Logistics, logistics support for ICCE will be centrally managed to increase efficiencies, reduce the burden on the Operating Forces, and improve customer support. This includes transferring the management of ICCE from organic supply accounts to a centralized CIF structure under the Marine Corps Materiel Command (MARCORMATCOM).

CIF's will be the primary source of supply for ICCE in support of operating and training requirements including issue, recovery, replacement, and accounting/custody of ICCE items. This includes ICCE support for active duty Marines in a geographical region, deploying units, reservists ordered to active duty, and support ICCE war reserve/surge requirements.

COMMARFORRES shall coordinate ICCE support for reserve forces with COMMARCORMATCOM. Coordination shall include a MOA to cover ICCE for training and operations and CIF support requirements for SMCR, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), and Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMA). Agreement should include (at a minimum) responsibilities, procedures for issue and turn-in, and funding.⁶

Additional ICCE Already Needed

With active duty forces growing by 27,000 over next four years, the requirement exists for increased ICCE procurement and distribution. The end-strength increase is not only to support OIF, but also to combat all potential worldwide threats for the

⁶ MARINE CORPS ORDER 4400.196 (CENTRALIZED LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT FOR INDIVIDUAL COMBAT CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT (ICCE) AND CONSOLIDATED ISSUE FACILITIES (CIF)) - 13 July 00. (MCO 4400.196)

foreseeable future. Reserve Marines will be called upon again to serve in harm's way, and they must have the same equipment as the active duty forces. Instead of purchasing and maintaining approximately 27,000 new sets of ICCE for just the active duty forces, the Marine Corps should increase the amount to a number sufficient to accommodate a surge of augmenting reserve Marines.

At the end of fiscal year 2004, the Selected Marine Corps Reserve was over 39,600 strong. Part of this population is comprised of Active Reserve Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees and Reserve Marines in the training pipeline, but the preponderance, about 32,500, belong to the units of Marine Forces Reserve. An additional 60,000 Marines serve as part of the Individual Ready Reserve, representing a significant pool of trained and experienced prior service manpower, which, the Marine Corps has frequently drawn upon for volunteers.⁷

Current Surge Capability versus Potential Requirement

Without addressing the current and predicted manning levels of MARFORRES units, the possibility of a large-scale, extended-duration mobilization for a major regional conflict (MRC), (i.e., Operation Desert Storm, which saw the activation of over 32,000 Reserve Marines⁸) is a possibility that cannot be ignored. The MARFORRES CARDF facilitates rapid issue of the ICCE, but the CARDF's surge distribution capability to support a MRC may be insufficient. If the ICCE is already located at the GFC CIFs,

⁷ Statement of Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy United States Marine Corps Reserve Commander, Marine Forces Reserve before the Senate Armed Forces Committee Personnel Subcommittee on reserve matters on 13 April 2005.

⁸ Duncan, Stephen M., Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. War Confirms Total Force Policy Performance of Guard, Reserve Forces. The Officer, July 1991.

the problem of distribution is minimized because the ICCE is already located at centralized facilities available for issue directly to reserve Marines.

Storage of Reserve ICCE

Storage facilities for the additional ICCE could become a problem if not adequately planned. If the GFC CIFs have limited space available, directing those facilities to carry a surplus of ICCE would require a significant increase in their storage/issue capabilities. However, the concept of maintaining and prepositioning war reserve equipment is not new. MCLB Albany, the Marine Corps Pre-positioning Program caves in Norway (MCPN), and the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) already hold significant amounts of readily available equipment; these concepts could be used to support ICCE as well.

Weekend Drill Training

The ability of the reserve units to conduct effective training without having the most current ICCE on hand can also be enhanced with this policy. While a reserve of ICCE is stored and maintained under the supervision of the GFC CIFs, the ICCE that needs to be replaced due to innovations and enhancements could be fielded to MARFORRES units for training, instead of fielding the newest ICCE directly to the RTCs. This would allow MARFORRES units to maintain a limited assortment of ICCE necessary for annual training requirements (i.e. - weapons

qualifications, motor vehicle safety, martial arts training, and field exercises), while ensuring the newest ICCE is available for all deploying Marines.

Conclusion

Lieutenant General Dennis McCarthy, the former Commander of MARFORRES stated:

The Marine Corps is committed to and confident in the Total Force Concept as evidenced by the overwhelming success of Marine Reserve units serving in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Activated Marine Reserve units and individuals are seamlessly integrating into forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Forces and regularly demonstrate their combat effectiveness.⁸

Reserve Marines have an enormous responsibility placed upon them by our nation; they can be called upon to serve in harms way in a time of national emergency and they are also productive members of the civilian workforce managing full time careers. The individual equipment they deploy and fight with should be the best available and maintained in a serviceable, readily accessible condition.

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Current vs. Proposed Reserve ICCE Issue Process

Current Process

1. RTC is notified that reserve unit or selected SMCR Marines will be mobilized in support of contingency/operation.
2. Supply section begins ordering ICCE shortfalls from CARDF and DLA based on tariff sizing and known personnel sizes.
3. SMCR Marines are mobilized and report to RTC.
4. Supply Section issues on-hand ICCE to mobilizing Marines and makes arrangements to ship shortfalls to them at the GFC.
5. SMCR Marines are transferred to GFC with personal uniforms, belongings, and issued ICCE.
6. GFC CIF and/or CARDF (fwd) issues ICCE shortfalls and exchanges mis-sized/obsolete ICCE.
7. GFC CIF conducts exchanges/reissues as necessary during training and deployment.
8. Marine deploys/redeploys, returns GFC CIF ICCE, returns to RTC, turns in ICCE that was issued by RTC.

Proposed Process

1. RTC is notified that reserve unit or selected SMCR Marines will be mobilized in support of contingency/operation.
2. SMCR Marines are mobilized and report to RTC.
3. SMCR Marines are transferred to GFC with personal uniforms and belongings.
4. GFC CIF issues all ICCE and conducts exchanges/reissues as necessary during training and deployment.
5. SMCR Marines redeploy and return ICCE to GFC CIF. ICCE is available for reissue to next rotation of deploying forces.
6. SMCR Marines return to RTC with only personal uniforms and belongings.

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