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ICE Training Teams, Field Service Representatives ready to help

At some point in their careers, Marines have likely gone to the Individual Issue Facility or Unit Issue Facility and didn't know how to use the equipment they picked up. This is where Program Manager Infantry Combat Equipment (PM ICE) Training Teams (ITT) step in to assist.

The teams work on an individual basis with warfighters and more broadly with the operating forces. Together, the subject matter experts and teams from Marine Corps Systems Command's Combat Equipment and Support Systems are on call for training anywhere around the world.

There are added benefits, according to analyst John Hernandez of PM ICE ITT. "During many training events," he said, "the ITT staff has found instances where Marines had improperly assembled their body armor resulting in the quick-release function not performing as designed. Improperly assembled body armor can have catastrophic consequences should a Marine have to quickly egress out of the armor."

The ITT, Hernandez explained, can detect and correct these and similar issues through direct assistance in the field.

As the total life cycle manager of all Marine Infantry Combat Equipment, PM ICE is responsible for developing, fielding and sustainment of ICE to enhance the performance, capability, survivability and mobility of Marines. Some of the items they field include the Modular Tactical Vest (MTV) Scalable Plate Carrier (SPC), Lightweight Helmet, Flame Resistant Organizational Gear (FROG), sleeping bags, boots, cold weather clothing, ballistic eyewear, Marine Assault Climber's Kits (MACKs) and just about everything else a Marine would wear in combat.

PM ICE has full-time ITTs and field service representatives (FSRs) actively supporting each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, along with Marine Forces Reserve. The FSR coordinates Total Life Cycle Management activities of PM ICE products with the operating forces, both active and Reserve. Meanwhile, the ITT informs Marines about the latest products being fielded that will be used during training as well as on the battlefield. The end result is to ensure the availability, serviceability, education and training of all PM ICE's portfolio of products to all units from the MEF, major subordinate commands, regiments, battalions and squadrons right on down to the individual Marine or Sailor.

"The ITTs and FSRs conduct visits with command staff and supply points of contact at all levels to ascertain if there are any issues they are working that require assistance," said Armen Kullukian, who manages FSRs for PM ICE. "Additionally, they pass on information that would help these points of contact perform their duties."

Kullukian said the FSR is responsible for the logistical support functions such as the surveillance of all PM ICE products across the enterprise to ensure their availability and serviceability. This includes identification of low-stocked items, incomplete items, follow up on prolonged backorders, product quality-original equipment manufacturer defects, ensuring disposal plans are executed and coordinating with appropriate organizations to resolve issues.

"The FSR also helps field new equipment by tracking the items to ensure the designated units receive the product and that those items are accounted and receipted for in a timely manner," Kullukian said.

The ITT, according to Hernandez, provides the training and education piece for all newly fielded and existing PM ICE products. ITTs coordinate training and provide educational command briefs to units and individuals at all levels, thereby ensuring that all Marines and Sailors they train know the proper fit, form and function of PM ICE items. Additionally, an ITT provides educational briefs at Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academies.

During the last year, ITTs have trained thousands of Marines on the proper procedure to assemble body armor, adjusted Individual Load Bearing Equipment that makes carrying the back pack much more comfortable and demonstrated the proper use of the new Three-Season Sleep System (3S), as well as the Cold Weather Clothing System used with the 3S.

Besides educating and training Marines, the ITT runs and maintains the Non-Destructive Test Equipment-Automated Inspection System (NDTE-AIS). The NDTE-AIS provides a means to inspect Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts through use of a digital X-ray system. Through the use of NDTE-AIS, PM ICE can detect cracks that might otherwise not be visible to the naked eye.

Colonel Michael Hudson, Commanding Officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Camp Pendleton, Calif., attested to PM ICE support. "As we put the MEU together and get the Marines and Sailors ready to deploy into an uncertain environment, my MEU can be certain of their gear, thanks to the outstanding support of our PM ICE Reps, Mike Ward and Robert Madrid. They have helped with gear fitting, SAPI plate X-ray and instruction on the care and maintenance of the gear."

Hernandez said ITTs "are available to train Marines wherever they want: at the unit location, in a classroom at the battalion operations section, a parking lot behind the barracks, a warehouse or during pre-deployment training."

To receive training from the ITT staff assigned to your location, call 540-628-7310. For the FSR assigned to your location, call 703-200-7816. For a full list of all the gear PM ICE fields, visit their website at: www.marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/sites/pmice/.



Carlos Jaramillo, a Program Manager Infantry Combat Equipment (PM ICE) Training Team East member who works out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., demonstrates body armor with Reserve Infantry Marines of 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, in Grand Rapids, Mich. (*PM ICE photo*)



Danny Rivera, a Program Manager Infantry Combat Equipment (PM ICE) Training Team East member who works out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., discusses body armor with Reserve Infantry Marines of 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, in Grand Rapids, Mich. (*PM ICE photo*)