

## Meeting Needs Wherever Marines Are Stationed



Quisumbing

With Marines constantly on the move, whether deployed, at training sites, or at any downrange location, the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) is tasked to ensure there will be sufficient levels of tactical inventory on hand to meet their needs — and working ahead is key.

“We have all our tactical items on replenishment,” noted Eydie Quisumbing the Tactical, Sporting Goods and Bicycles buyer for the MCX. “Our replenishment analyst reviews the fill levels by site and makes adjustments based on the sales history, lead time and days of supply.”

“Sometimes, we generate build orders to account for troop movements, however, we need at least four-to-six weeks of advance notice from the stores. Otherwise, it becomes challenging to fulfill the amount of units needed due to vendor availability and length of transit time.”

### GROWTH EXPECTATIONS

Total sales of tactical gear and uniform accessories in MCX stores in fiscal 2016 exceeded \$14.19 million, a 1.67-percent increase from the \$13.96 million in patron purchases made

during the prior year. The buyer added that the MCX expects to top the prior year’s sales: the fiscal 2017 sales projection of \$14.5 million, if reached, would be a better than 2-percent increase.

Helping to boost MCX tactical sales is the performance and ready availability of prime tactical items in the assortment.

In APEL eyewear, Quisumbing said, “The ESS Crossbow is the issued



Leon



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## MCX FY16 Tactical Subcategory Sales by Dollar Volume

APEL Eyewear	FY16 Sales
1) ESS Crossbow 2x (black)	\$260,097
2) ESS ICE 2x with Hard Case	\$58,118
3) ESS Crossbow Replacement Kit	\$48,776
4) ESS ICE 2x Naro with Hard Case	\$27,767
5) ESS Crossbow (tan)	\$24,748

Gloves	FY16 Sales
1) Mechanixwear M-Pact Gloves (coyote)	\$211,100
2) Mechanixwear Original Gloves	\$182,688
3) Rothco Mazella USMC TS-40 Gloves	\$116,183
4) Outdoor Research Non-Xstatic Gloves, domestic-made (coyote)	\$42,339

Hydration/Packs	FY16 Sales
1) CamelBak 3.01 Mil Spec Antidote Reservoir (100 oz.)	\$743,261
2) Sandpiper of California Rolling Loadout Duffle Bag (extra large, coyote)	\$147,353
3) Sandpiper of California Rolling Loadout Duffle Bag (extra large, black)	\$145,129
4) Sandpiper of California 3-Day Pass Backpack (black)	\$130,450
5) ThermoBak 3.01Mil Spec Antidote Reservoir (100 oz., coyote)	\$127,794
6) Sandpiper of California 3-Day Pass Backpack (coyote)	\$125,629
7) Sandpiper of California Bugout Backpack (coyote)	\$94,677
8) Sandpiper of California Bugout Backpack (black)	\$89,174
9) Sandpiper of California 3-Day Elite Backpack (coyote)	\$88,311
10) CamelBak 3.01 Ambush Antidote Reservoir (100 oz., coyote)	\$87,034
11) Sandpiper of California 3-Day Elite Backpack	\$64,944
12) CamelBak 3.01 H.A.W.G. Antidote Reservoir (100 oz., coyote)	\$46,044
13) CamelBak Motherlode (coyote)	\$34,804

Socks	FY16 Sales
1) Fox River Mills Wick Dry Maximum Socks (coyote)	\$254,390
2) Crescent Sock Omni Wool Tactical Boot Socks (coyote brown)	\$250,012
3) Wolverine/Bates Tactical Mid-Calf Socks (1-pack, coyote brown)	\$198,440
4) Jefferies Socks (3-pair)	\$143,651
5) Jefferies Socks (6-pair)	\$127,813
6) Wolverine/Bates Tactical Calf Sock (1-pack, coyote)	\$107,002
7) Gold Coast Boot Socks	\$104,209
8) Dasco Boot Socks (3-pack, size 10-13, brown)	\$81,781
9) Thorlo Inc. Mens Combat Boot Socks (coyote)	\$79,374
10) Renfro Corp. Mens Boot Socks (large)	\$72,601

Boots	FY16 Sales
1) Bates USMC Lightweight DuraShock Boots	\$3,753,952
2) Belleville USMC Hot Weather Boots	\$512,762
3) Danner Men's Hot Weather Boots	\$467,981
4) Danner USMC Rat Boots (8-in., Mojave)	\$451,482
5) Danner USMC Men's Temperate Boots	\$322,309
6) Bates USMC Hot Weather Desert Boots	\$315,664
7) Belleville USMC Temperate Weather Boots	\$275,424
8) Bates Women's USMC Garrison Boot Lites	\$249,856
9) McRae USMC Men's Hot Weather Boots	\$79,193
10) McRae USMC Temperate Weather Boots	\$67,195

Pouches	FY16 Sales
1) Sutton International Ear Plugs Camo Pouch (2-pair)	\$43,843
2) Tac Shield Operators Administrative Pouch (coyote)	\$42,339
3) Tac Shield Utility Administrative Molle Pouch (zippered)	\$34,292
4) BDS Super Modular Administrative Pouch	\$20,470
5) BDS Enhanced Modular Administrative Pouch	\$18,214
6) Tac Shield Hydration Modular Molle Pouch	\$15,840
7) BDS Squad Leader Administrative Pouch	\$14,277
8) Tac Shield Horizontal Grip Utility Molle Pouch (coyote)	\$12,449
9) Tac Shield Vertical Grip Utility Molle Pouch (coyote)	\$12,195
10) Tac Shield Magazine Retention Pouch (belt-mounted)	\$11,017

Source: MCX

eyewear for Marines. The troops purchase this item as a replacement to their issue item. The ICE 2x and ICE 2x Naro are good-quality eyewear and sales are driven by competitive price-points.”

In gloves, BSSD Buyer, Military Clothing Peter Leon told *E and C News* that Mechanix Gloves “lead the pack as an affordable, well-made tactical glove option,” while the Rothco-branded selection of gloves “are uniform items.”

Leon said that in boots, “Bates Lightweight DuraShock boot is the preferred boot due to its lightweight qualities and modest price point,” while in socks, “The limited-distribution Fox River is a coyote boot that boasts all of the technical features that the competitors do, at a significantly lower cost.”

## NEW PRODUCTS

New products will also help MCX tactical to reach and exceed its \$14.5-million sales projection.

“We are bringing in a new vendor, Geigerrig, which offers an innovative solution in tactical hydration,” Quisumbing explained. “The hydration backpacks — which are similar to those from CamelBak — have won several awards in the industry. The bladder offers you the ability to keep it pressurized or unpressurized with a double chamber, one for air, and one for water. The pressurized system makes it easier to drink from and doubles as a shower and a great way to clean off your body and equipment in the field. With its dishwasher-safe technology, the bladder could easily be flipped inside out and cleaned right in the dishwasher or with a simple brush.”

Quisumbing said there are a number of other new products in the MCX tactical assortment that Marines will find in their local stores during fiscal 2017, including new toiletry bags and backpacks from Sandpiper of California, which the buyer noted, “is our hottest supplier of tactical bags and rucksacks. The company has seen growth of over 30 percent since last year, and we continue to expand the distribution to more stores due to the demand.”

To help increase sales during fiscal 2017, “We’ve also grown the weapons accessories category, adding more weapon cleaning products and shooting

protection, including eyewear and earplugs,” Quisumbing said.

Further, “We expanded the assortment on Hoppe’s, Otis and Peltor since we saw a rise in this category following the growth in firearms sales in 2016,” she added.

## PROMOTIONS, SALES EVENTS

Promotions in May and October, and a tent sale and an expo in September are among the events that will also help drive interest and sales in the MCX’s tactical category.

“We have two major tactical promotions during the year, one in this month [May] and one in October,” Quisumbing said. “We run special sales promotions that include almost all categories in tactical, as well as firearms. Most suppliers will provide advertising support to help cover the two books that are distributed to all commands. Some vendors will also offer bill-backs to help cover markdowns or give promotional pricing on advertised items. Some vendors also participate by doing product demonstrations to coincide with the timing of the June and October tactical ads.”

Special events include the Benchmade Knife Engraving event, which Quisumbing said has been scheduled at several sites throughout fiscal 2017.

“Customers are able to purchase knives that are not normally in our regular assortment,” she explained. “During the event, we bring in additional knives that are usually \$30 to \$100 higher in retail, so we can gain incremental sales volume during the events.”

Finally, in what the buyer characterized as “one of our biggest volume-driving events” is the Modern Day Marine Expo at MCB Quantico, Va., an annual event that is held every September.

“We set up a tent sale, and customers are able to purchase tactical items at a promotional price during the three-day event,” Quisumbing said. “We also use this event to test out new tactical products which, if successful, we then expand their distribution to more stores.”

—E and C NEWS