

Corps Requests Proposals for Tropical Uniforms; Plans to Field Later This Year

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) on April 14 released a request for proposals to industry for new tropical uniforms for Marines to wear while training or embarking on missions in warm-weather climates, MCSC public affairs said in a release.

The Marine Corps Tropical Combat Uniform (MCTCU) is a rapid-dry, breathable uniform that can sustain for prolonged periods in hot, humid and wet environments. The MCTCU will provide an alternative to the current combat utility uniform and combat boot.

“This new tropical uniform allows Marines to be more comfortable and less fatigued while focusing on the mission at hand,” said Lou Curcio, MCSC’s MCTCU project officer.

The MCTCU is made up of trousers, a blouse and a pair of boots. The trousers and blouse – the focus of the RFP – are made of the same blend of cotton and nylon as the current combat utility uniform and features the same camouflage pattern. The difference is in the weave and weight, resulting in a lighter material that dries more quickly.

Both pieces of clothing are treated with permethrin to provide protection from insects.

The boots, awarded on a separate contract, are also lightweight, with self-cleaning soles to improve mobility in a tropical environment. They are more than a pound lighter than the current boot fielded by the Marine Corps.

“MCTCU will bring many advantages during training and combat

in tropical environments,” Curcio said. “For all the sacrifices and challenges they endure, Marines deserve a uniform like this one.”

Between June and September 2017, hundreds of Marines participated in various user evaluations to assess the durability, fit and function of a prototype tropical uniform. The prototype was made up of a fabric blend of nylon and cotton, designed to dry faster and keep Marines cooler in warm climates.

MCSC’s Program Manager for Infantry Combat Equipment leveraged this feedback to inform industry solicitations and other decisions.

“Many Marines said the MCTCU feels like pajamas, appreciating how lightweight it is,” Curcio said. “They also noted how quickly the uniform dries upon getting wet.”

Based on January 2020 market research and responses to a November 2019 request for information, the Marine Corps should see a potential cost reduction of at least 25% and as much as 60% per uniform.

MCSC plans to purchase 70,000 trousers, blouses and pairs of boots for the MCTCU to support fleet training or operating in tropical climates. The command procured more than 10,000 sets of blouses and trousers under a manufacturing and development effort.

Fielding of the MCTCU is slated for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2020.