

OFFduty



ISTOCK PHOTO

Get Out

The GearScout shows you the best new outdoor products

We walked 37 miles of showroom floor this month so we could tell you about the latest outdoor gear and gadgets that'll be hitting store shelves near you. We sorted through thousands of products to find the best and brightest of the bunch, and we tell you why you need them on your next hunting, fishing or camping trip.

By Rob Curtis
rcurtis@militarytimes.com

Some are in stores now, some will arrive between now and spring 2010, and all are worth their sticker price. And if you can't find what you're looking for here, check us out online at MilitaryTimes.com/GearScout, where you'll find dozens of other products, reviews and more. Happy hunting.



Arc'teryx Altra pack

Packs

Mountain Hardwear Fluid 32

Simple but effective, MH's packs use a new accordionlike, corrugated frame sheet that hugs your back but won't round out from side to side. On the larger packs, like the Fluid 32, the sheet is backed up by a single aluminum frame stay. You can adjust compression on the fly by pulling waist straps that weave like shoelaces up the sides of the pack.

The pack is a top-loader with a spindrift collar, kangaroo pocket for a helmet, externally accessible hydration sleeve and new edgeless, perforated shoulder straps for bare-skin comfort.

Specs: regular — 39 ounces, 1,950 cubic inches
Spring 2010, \$130

Arc'teryx Altra

The Bird took a fresh look at its big backpacks this year and came out with the Altra series, which fuses and builds upon traits from both the high-tech AC2 and traditional Bora



Mountain Hardwear Fluid 32 pack

lines to create packs suited to warm-climate trekking.

The packs' laminated monolithic

frame construction, thermoformed suspension components and pivoting hip belt all spread the load between back and hips on long hauls.

For improved ventilation, the perforated shoulder straps extend down to the center of the back and create stand-off space for air flow between the pack and your back.

Access is via a traditional spindrift top with the addition of an inverted U-shaped zip that runs to the bottom of the pack, making getting to gear pretty painless.

Specs: regular — 81 ounces, 4,500-5,000 cubic inches
Spring 2010, \$399

Watershed Assault Pack Liner

Most packs leak like sieves. The only way to keep your stuff dry for sure is to invest in a dry bag. Watershed sized this roll-top dry bag with a release/fill valve to fit perfectly in a Mystery Ranch 3-Day-Assault pack. Its ZipDry closure makes opening and closing simple. Use the valve to blow air into the



Watershed Assault Pack Liner

bag so it floats, or remove air so it takes up less room. The seams are bonded, not sewn, so the bag is good down to 100 meters.

Summer 2009, \$145, government price available

GEARSCOUT

More on GearScout:

■ Eagle Creek Cicada 28L Backpack, Spring 2010, \$150

Camp

Therm-a-rest Haven sleeping bag

When you reimagine the sleeping bag, as Therm-a-rest has, you start by breaking it down to its most basic elements. It's just a bag that holds insulation around a sleeping body. And since plenty of service people throw an insulated ground pad between their bags and the ground anyway, the insulation on the bottom of a bag is superfluous. Therm-a-rest has eliminated it, along with a zipper. You enter the Haven through a large opening in the bottom, then pull the rest over your head as you lie down.

January, \$250



Therm-a-rest Haven sleeping bag

GEARSCOUT

More on GearScout:

- Pacific Outdoor Peak Oyl Elite, spring 2010, \$115
- Therm-a-rest Ventra Down Blanket, available now, \$200

Blades

Leatherman Super Tool 300



Benchmade 150-1 Polished Marc Lee "Glory" Knife

Marc Lee was the first SEAL killed in action in Iraq. The original black-bladed knife, designed in his honor by Eddie Killian, was released earlier this year at SHOT Show, with a portion of all sales benefiting the Marc Lee Foundation. Fast forward six months; Benchmade is finishing a limited run of 251 polished blades that most likely will be offered first to present, former and retired SEAL community members. Any remaining blades will be sold

by the Marc Lee Foundation. Keep an eye on www.marcleefoundation.org for more information.

Release date TBA, \$1,000

Leatherman Super Tool 300

The newest Leatherman is a serious tool. It's got the beefiest pliers ever to grace a Leatherman frame. A black oxide version, designed with the military user in mind, has cap crimpers and comes with a MOLLE-compatible sheath. It's got a large 4.5-inch frame and the 154 CM wire-cutter blades are removable for easy

sharpening or replacement. The frame has large cutouts to make access to the 19 locking tools easy with gloves.

Fall 2009, \$80

Benchmade 551H20

The Griptilian goes swimming. The popular knife gets a 8.07-inch blade made from corrosion-resistant X15 T.N stainless steel, stainless hardware and an orange body. Serious lockup is standard with the AXIS lock, and it's kept handy with a reversible clip.

August 2009, \$120

Gadgets

CamelBak All Clear UV

The two big splashes on CamelBak's release calendar are a UV light-based water purification system and a flow meter that tells you how much water you have left in your reservoir.

The All Clear UV kills 99.99 percent of the nasty within its 0.9-liter bottle in 80 seconds. A pair of CR123s can run the UV light bulb about 80 cycles, or one-third of that if you get the "deluxe" rechargeable kit. The bulb itself will run through 8,000+ cycles.

Camelbak swears it has been asked countless times for a device that tells clueless hydrators just how much H₂O they have left. The company calls it an "innovation in intelligent personal hydration." GearScout calls it metrics gone overboard. The device can tell you how much is gone, how much is left and how long you've got before empty.

All Clear UV: October 2009, \$100 basic/\$130 rechargeable
FlowMeter, Fall 2009, \$30

SureFire Helmet Light V3

SureFire's latest version of the Helmet Light replaces some of the

former Band-Aid fixes with permanent solutions. The new light body is one piece, with extended switch cover wings that replace the stuck-on switch covers. The body is also smoother, making it easier to find the intensity-level button while wearing gloves. Lastly, the battery cover is now screwed in place, replacing the twist-lock battery cover that was prone to popping out when the user was trying to operate the lock-out mechanism.

Fall 2009, \$160

Energizer Energi To Go XP2000

Energizer's new lithium polymer power packs are an easy way to keep your mobile devices running for days without a power outlet in sight. Sure, there are similar products out there, but Energizer has pulled together features that set it apart. It has 11 versions from tiny to huge: Smaller units can save you from a dead cell phone, while the larger units can run a laptop and charge a phone and an iPod all at



Energizer Energi To Go

the same time. The units all have battery meters, so you know when the fun is about to run out. Energizer guarantees it has a tip to fit your device and also offers a couple of free tips each year so you can stay on top of the gadget war without shelling out.

August 2009, \$40

More outdoor gear
Next page

Spot V2

Nobody argued with the utility of the Spot system when it came out a few years ago. A geo-aware device that can transmit a call for help, along with your exact location, from nearly anywhere on the planet is a strong draw for safety-conscious adventurers. But in an age when the entire Sony music library can fit in a device smaller than a

pack of smokes, the original Spot was just too big and clunky.

The new Spot, at 5.2 ounces, is about 30 percent smaller and lighter than the original models, has a new GPS chip and antenna for better performance, and easier-to-decipher status lights, including a helpful "message sent" indicator. While the device needs a fairly expensive monthly service plan to be of any use, if you find yourself out on the hairy edge of adventure, the price will be the last thing on your mind.

Fall 2009, previous model was \$169.99 plus service fee

GoPro HD camera

The GoPro HD packs 1080p recording into a package not much bigger than two stacked mini-DV tapes. The new system takes the wearable, 170-degree field of view, mount-it-anywhere camera to new levels of clarity and quality. The company also has put a lot of effort into the audio capability of the new camera: GoPro has given it CD-quality audio and accommodation for optional wireless and wired mics. It runs on a rechargeable lithium-ion battery and is waterproof to 180 feet.

Fall 2009, \$299

CamelBak All Clear UV water bottle



GEARSCOUT

More on GearScout:

- Leupold RX1000 Rangefinder, Summer 2009, \$429

OFF duty

Equipment



Rock Exotica Trident Camming Pulley

Rock Exotica Trident Camming Pulley

Tactical rope work presents a unique set of challenges not often faced by recreational climbers. That's why military units go to companies like Rock Exotica to commission equipment that might not be supported by the general climbing market.

The Trident Camming Pulley was made to work with 6.5mm rope, which is about the equivalent of dental floss in mountaineering terms. There are few commercially available safety devices that will function with such a small-diameter rope, and fewer still

that do what the Trident does.

The Trident is a self-locking pulley that can develop a mechanical advantage when hauling equipment up the line. Using a two-stage folding release lever, tension can be broken easily to lower heavy loads with precision. Where the Petzl EXO is designed for safe descent using a trans-

verse horn and cam arrangement to control rope speed, the Trident's pulley-based system removes a great deal of friction, making it a more effective hauling solution.

Fall 2009, \$200

Petzl Tactical EXO EASHOOK system

The Tactical EXO system was originally designed to help get first responders out of trouble, but the military quickly perverted its design to help them do the opposite. The 2.9-pound kit consists of 50 feet of 7.5mm Technora heat- and cut-resistant line with a captive EASHOOK biner on the anchor end and the tactical EXO self-braking belay device on the other. Snap one end to an anchor point and the other to your assault harness, and it's Batman time. Drop over the edge with one finger holding the lowering bar. Let go and



Petzl Tactical EXO EASHOOK system



you stop, letting you bring your attention on your weapon, teammate or target. The system is notable for its size, weight and simple operation, but proper training is required to operate it. Watch an exclusive GearScout video demo at www.militarytimes.com/gearscout.

Available now, \$420

Komperdell Titanal Powerlock Ralf trekking pole

There are two kinds of hikers in the world: those who have fallen down a mountain and those who use trekking poles. If you are in either group, you should know about the Austrian company that makes one of the strongest trekking poles on the planet. Three titanium sections lock in place and withstand 225 pounds of downward force before the sections begin to slip. At the top is a sculpted handgrip; at the other end is a tungsten carbide tip mated to the shaft with a flexible boot that will bend instead of snap off if trapped in a crevice.

Specs: packed size 27.5 inches; maximum length 55 inches

GEARSCOUT

More on GearScout:

- Blue Force Gear DAP Covert Insert, available now, \$30
- London Bridge Trading LBT-6142 Kangaroo Kit, available now, \$52.50

Spring 2010, \$140 Granite Gear Uberlight stuff sacks

The king of lightweight packing had to come up with a new designation to describe its latest class of stuff sacks. There's light, then superlight and now uberlight. The sacks are so light that you risk get-

ting high just looking at them.

The bags are made of CTF3, which feels about the weight of dried snake-skin but has the strength of a much heavier denser fabric. A special adhesive holds things together instead of stitches, which keeps the sack watertight. And it's transparent, making it easy to see what you've packed.

Spring 2010, \$39-\$49



Granite Gear Uberlight stuff sacks

MilitaryTimes
GEAR SHOP

Better Gear. Better Prices.

MilitaryTimes.com/gearshop

SHOP OUR NEW COINS!

Browse our complete selection of coins and accessories.



Operation Iraqi Freedom
1 3/4 inch round
Brass Alloy with Enamel



Multi-National Force Iraq
1 3/4 inch x 2 1/8 inch crest
Brass with Enamel



Armor of God
1 3/4 inch round
Brass with Enamel

MilitaryTimes.com/gearshop

Gear provided by:

U.S. CAVALRY

OFFduty

Accessories

Wenger Nomad watch

Wenger took the classic analog dive watch look and gave it a digital soul. The Nomad's face shows no trace of its secondary digital display — but push one of the side buttons and a retro-looking LED comes to life on the watch face, offering the time, date, day of

the week and a compass heading. Swiss-made and airtight down to 100 meters with a rubber strap and a three-year warranty.

Spring 2010, \$375

More on GearScout:

- Casio G-Force, available now, \$99



Wenger Nomad watch

Clothes

Bridgedale Special Operations Sock

One of the universally revered sock sewers has designed a new warm-weather sock for the military community. The 8-inch-tall Special Operations Sock is made from a merino wool base fiber that is wrapped in a synthetic fiber to improve the sock's durability. The sock has multiple zones of cushion only where you need it, leaving low-friction areas thinner and free to breathe.

Available now, \$19

merino wool/nylon/Spandex construction means it'll stay up and breathe. Second is a white berry-compliant, low-top PT sock made from domestic merino wool. It's white, so your first sergeant won't yell at you about wearing your beloved merino wool grey PT socks.

Available now, \$24

Mountain Khakis Snake River pants

Clean lines are the hallmark of Mountain Khakis, and its new Snake River pants are no exception. The brushed nylon feels soft and dries quickly while providing

UPF 50 protection. The pants are built tough, with triple stitching and metal hardware throughout. Zippered stash pockets are hidden around the pants to keep things where you put them.

February 2010, \$73

GEARSCOUT

More on GearScout:

- Arc'teryx Freelance jacket, Spring 2010, \$150
- Smartwool Men's NTS Lightweight Zip T, available now, \$80
- London Bridge Trading LBT-2090C Boonie Hat, available now, \$28



Darn Tough 1440 Mountaineering Sock and Domestic Wool PT Sock

Domestic sock-maker Darn Tough has a pair of releases worth knowing about. First is the 1440 Mountaineering Sock, which is designed to work with popular military mountaineering boots like the La Sportiva Makalu and Scarpa Inferno. Its



Shoes

Asolo Power Lite Force Gtx

Asolo took the framed foot-bed concept from its mountaineering boots and scaled it down to suit a hiking boot. The result is a light-weight chassis that flexes well while providing stability and protection not normally found in a boot this light. The 1.6/1.8mm suede and nylon upper has a Gore-Tex

membrane, beefy hardware and protective toe rand.

Specs: Men's size 8.5, 20.4 ounces per boot
Spring 2010, \$230

Vasque Transistor FS

The 11.4 oz. Transistor is billed as a transitional shoe for road runners who are taking their first strides off-pavement. It maximizes stability by keeping your foot as close to the ground as possible while still offering cushioning and protection on the trail. Instead of a flat midsole, Vasque used an amalgam of foot sole scans to arrive at a sculpted surface that matches the shape of an average person's foot. A layer of foam



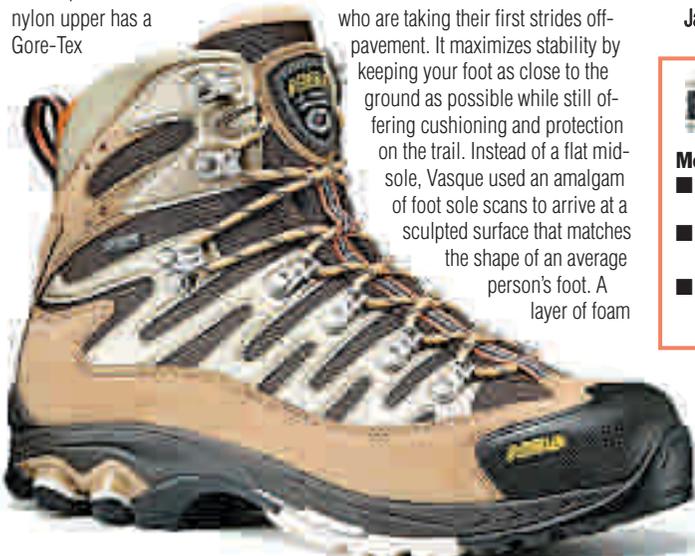
Vasque Transistor FS

between the midsole and your foot further refines and cushions the fit.
January 2010, \$100

GEARSCOUT

More on GearScout:

- Feelmax Panka, available now, \$70
- Salomon XAPro 5, Spring 2010, \$140
- 5.10 Pursuit, Spring 2010, \$139.95



Asolo Power Lite Force Gtx

CONTROL THE NIGHT.

HELLFIGHTER™ HEAVY-GUN TARGET ILLUMINATOR/SEARCHLIGHT

The HellFighter's 3,000 lumens of blinding white light keeps you in control at checkpoints and leaves no doubt about your intentions for hundreds of yards—the ultimate non-lethal escalation-of-force option. It mounts to a .50 caliber M2 machine gun or an M44 Minigun, or it can be used as a handheld searchlight. It's battle-proven and virtually immune to heavy recoil or impact. And just flip the IR filter into place for use with NVDs, making it perfect for patrol and search-and-rescue operations. HellFighter's intense IR output lets you move fast through the night—because speed is security. It runs for 8 hours on two BA-5590 military batteries, or continuously via your vehicle's 12-volt DC cigarette lighter.

HF1A with IR FILTER	NSN: 6230-01-549-3979
HF1B with AMBER FILTER	NSN: 6230-01-549-3992
HF1C with OPAQUE COVER	NSN: 6230-01-549-4002
M87A SHORT MOUNT	NSN: 6230-01-549-4053
M88A LONG MOUNT	NSN: 6230-01-549-4076
M89A MINIGUN MOUNT	NSN: 6230-01-549-4066
UH01D POWER CABLE	NSN: 6230-01-549-4237

SUREFIRE

The World's Finest Illumination Tools®

800.828.8809 | www.surefire.com