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[FOG HORN BLOG](#)

## **ALTAMA® Waterproof Ortho-TacX® Boot**

Footwear, more than any other piece of equipment in an operator's kit, is critically important to mobility, survivability and safety. So, I like to keep an eye out for boots and socks designed by attentive companies with that thought in mind.

While at SOFIC 2011, I had an opportunity to visit with a couple of companies, both of which are existing suppliers to the DoD and USSOCOM. Among them is ALTAMA®, a Georgia company, with years of experience in design and fabrication of exceptional footwear.

While at their booth, I mentioned to Sheea Weaver, the attending representative, that I was interested in their new designs. I also made my feelings know about Vibram® soles – I love them period. Sheea showed me their new waterproof Ortho-TacX® boot, style code: 3555.

I was impressed with the tread pattern and its overall quality, in both feel and look. Flat out, a great looking boot.

So, why am I hot on Vibram®? For starters, the shock isolation efficiency of Vibram is amazing. I'll illustrate my point with an example.

Some readers may be audiophiles as such you know that the



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goal of the audiophile is the natural and accurate reproduction of music; for that reason audiophiles prefer using a turntable over a cd player. Because a cd is a digital stream of an analog signal, it only approximates the original recording; therefore, audiophiles believe that much of the detail present in an analogue recording, like the resonance of a Stradivarius, are masked with digital artifacts or absent from the digital recording. So, audiophiles go through painstaking steps to isolate turntables from external sources of vibration that can be picked up by the turntable's chasis and transmitted to the pickup arm. Vibram® mats or pucks are the isolators of choice.

So, Vibram® offers exceptional isolation from shock; in doing so, it mitigates the risk of foot, ankle and back damage.

Vibram® is also extremely flexible. Rock climbing and running require a flexible boot that isolates the ankles and lower back from shocks. Vibram® adheres to smooth surfaces; it is also slip resistant on wet surfaces and impervious to oil and chemical interaction. But, what I really like about a Vibram sole is its inherent silence.



In fact, whenever I wear my Vibram® rock climbers I announce myself as I walk up on someone – amazing stuff!  
ALTAMA's Ortho-TacX® is an 8 inch boot with a Vibram® Ananasi sole. The Ananasi soles use a Vibram compound called ICETREK. ICETREK was designed for exceptional performance on ice and snowy surfaces; an Ananasi sole will not absorb dirt or humidity, and is considered to be one of the best sole designs for allround use in hot or cold conditions.  
I took the Ortho-TacX® for a test drive putting a little over twenty miles on them. The outside temperature was a continuous 94°F with a heat index of approximately 103° F.



Figure 1 Toe

As Figure 1 shows, there is virtually no wear on the tread and I'll guarantee the gravel bed was at least 150°F.  
Georgia is noted for its bright red clay soil that likes to get on everything; note the absence of mud or dirt in the tread.



Figure 2 Heel

A second very interesting feature is the sole-to-upper area around the arch.



Figure 3 Arch

The Vibram® sole is built up and extends high enough to create a friction plate that comes into play when fast roping.

Tactical operators are often required to maneuver over a wall or vertical barrier so traction is an important component of boot performance.  
To test traction I went over a seven-foot barrier, jumping up on the wall then using arms and feet to get over the barrier. The Ortho-TacX® passed with flying colors; in spite of the wall's rough texture there was minimal damage to the boot toe with not a hint of sole separation from the upper.



*Figure 4 Boot Toe*

All the traction in the world is worthless if the boot is uncomfortable or worse yet injures the foot. Here ALTAMA scored major points with me. Boot comfort is exceptional and wearing it all day long was easy.



The Ortho-TacX® uses a molded EVA midsole with a pronounced heel pocket trapping the heel securely and keeping it from sliding side-to-side; mitigating the risk of ankle injuries. The arch is solidly supported, and that support extends entire length of the foot.

A patented removable double density EVA innersole is perforated creating what ALTAMA refers to it as a multi-port ventilation system.



*Figure 5 Inner Sole*

The Ortho-TacX® is lined in Gortex® creating a lightweight, breathable and waterproof tactical boot.



*Figure 6 Tongue*

Contributing to overall boot comfort is the padded tongue and suede lined padded collar, making ALTAMA's Waterproof Ortho-TacX® Boot an exceptional value at any price but at \$199.99, it's a steal.

The Ortho-TacX® will be available in September 2011, but you can pre-order them from ALTAMA's web site and save yourself shipping costs.

For additional details or to place your order visit [ALTAMA's](http://ALTAMA's) web site.

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