



# ACU-Alternate Uniform Provides Better Fit

By NCO Journal

[From Army News Service:](#)

**A** new Army Combat Uniform with special consideration to the female form currently is being issued to new Soldiers going through Basic Combat Training at Fort Sill, Okla.

The new uniform, several years in the making, was initially considered as being the first female-only uniform, but instead is now approved for both sexes and is being called Army Combat Uniform-Alternate, or ACU-A.

“We started issuing them slowly in April, and we’ve since been issuing them more frequently as our fitters get more comfortable placing Soldiers in them,” said Trevor Whitworth, Central Initial Issue Point project manager, where new Soldiers are first issued their uniforms at Fort Sill.

“They were initially designed for female Soldiers, but we were told if we find male Soldiers that these would fit better than the ACUs then we can issue it to them as well,” Whitworth said. “It’s more about the fit and the body-type.”

The new uniform trousers feature: wider areas at the hips, waist and backside; elastic around the waistband instead of a pull string; adjusted pockets and knee-pad

inserts; and a shortened crotch length.

In the jackets, changes include: adjusted rank and nametape positioning; adjusted pockets and elbow-pad inserts; slimmer shoulders; a thinner and more fitted waist; and a longer and wider ACU coat bottom. Also, buttons are replacing the Velcro pockets.

“If it makes you more comfortable in wearing that, then I think it’s well worth it,” Whitworth said. “When you’re low crawling or doing a lot of physical training it’s nice to have a pair of trousers that have a little give-and-take in them. I think having made uniforms for a female body type, will make a big difference for female Soldiers.”

Compared to the original ACUs, which were designed principally by males for males, the new ACU-A’s were created to fit a wider range of body types; so there are also a lot more sizes to choose from 13 sizes in both the jacket and trouser.

“The old uniform was meant to be one size fits five sizes; these are more tailored,” Whitworth said.

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# Army Combat Uniform – Alternate

This 2010 graphic shows a breakdown of proposed changes to combat uniform design to better fit female soldiers. In March, the uniform was approved for use by both sexes. Soldiers will decide whether to wear the ACU or the ACU-A.



- A** Shoulder width narrowed
- B** Rank insignia moved above the breast
- C** Adjusted sleeve length and width
- D** Repositioned elbow patches
- E** Repositioned pencil and sleeve pockets
- F** Adjusted the cut of the material to conform to a woman's chest, hip, and waist size
- G** Longer length front and back
- H** Adjusted hip to waist ratio
- I** Adjusted the front and back rise to fit the female body
- J** Repositioned knee patches

## Items not shown

- Removed drawstring/added elastic waistband
- Shortened button fly
- Repositioned pockets on lower leg and cargo
- Material on each side of the shoulder blades taken in to conform to the narrower female back, allowing greater freedom of movement.

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