



# Soldiers to Wear New Camouflage Pattern

*Army News Service*

**T**he Army has confirmed what Soldiers have been hearing rumors of for months now — a new camouflage pattern for combat uniforms is on the way with a number of improvements.

Soldiers are expected to retire their current uniform and begin wearing the new pattern by summer 2018.

The uniform bearing the new pattern will be largely the same as what Soldiers wear now, except that the lower leg pockets will be closed by a button instead of the “hook and loop” fabric fastener on the current Army Combat Uniform, or ACU. Soldiers complained that fastener made too much noise in combat environments, officials said. The insert pockets for knee pads and elbow pads will also be removed from the new uniform, according to Program Executive Office Soldier.

Other changes that will be considered by the 2015 Army Uniform Board include:

- elimination of the mandarin collar and replacement with a fold-down design

- change of the infrared square identification for friend or foe, known as the IFF tab
- removal of one of three pen pockets on the ACU sleeve
- elimination of the drawstring on the trouser waistband

These last four potential changes have not yet been approved but are being considered, according to PEO Soldier.

Currently, Soldiers wear ACU with the Universal Camouflage Pattern, or UCP. By 2018, they will be wearing an Army Combat Uniform with the “Operational Camouflage Pattern.” The fabric of the uniform, the cut, the placement of pockets and other details, for instance, will remain the same. It is only the geometry and palette of the camouflage pattern printed on the fabric that will change.

The cost of uniforms with the new pattern will be comparable to the current uniform. At the Fort Myer,



Beginning in the fall of 2015, the Army will begin issuing to new Soldiers an Army Combat Uniform that bears the Operational Camouflage Pattern. That same uniform will also become available in military clothing sales stores in the summer of 2015. (Photo courtesy of PEO Soldier)

required to wear it in 2018 — to transition the contents of their clothing bag to the new look. They will also have more than \$1,300 in clothing allowance at their disposal to make that happen.

The new pattern is different, but visually compatible with what Soldiers wear now in Afghanistan. And the

Virginia, military clothing sales store, for instance, an ACU top now sells for approximately \$45. The pants sell for around \$45 as well. A cap sells for about \$8.

According to the 2014 pay charts, online at [dfas.mil](http://dfas.mil), enlisted Soldiers receive between \$439 and \$468 annually to buy new uniforms — that includes replacing the outgoing UCP ACU with the Operational Camouflage Pattern ACU.

Soldiers will have about three years — the time between the first availability of the uniform in military clothing sales in 2015 and the time they are

uniform will have the same acronym. In Afghanistan, Soldiers wear the “Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern,” called OCP for short. The new uniform pattern is also called OCP.

“The Army is naming the pattern the Operational Camouflage Pattern to emphasize that the pattern’s use extends beyond Afghanistan to all combatant commands,” said one senior Army official in a July 31 news release.

The new pattern is borne from efforts to meet a 2009 directive by Congress to develop a camouflage uniform suitable for the Afghanistan environment. That initiative, along with Soldier feedback, led the Army to develop the Operational Camouflage Pattern.

As part of that program, the Army was directed to develop and evaluate camouflage patterns that will provide effective concealment in a wide variety of terrains and environments. The Operational Camouflage Pattern is a result of that effort. As part of the program two “book-end patterns” of OCP are being optimized and evaluated for possible use on Flame Resistant ACUs that would be worn by Soldiers deployed in either arid or heavily wooded terrains.

All organizational clothing and individual equipment, referred to as OCIE, such as MOLLE gear, protective vests, ruck sacks and plate carriers and non-flame resistant ACUs and will be offered in the OCP pattern only.

The Army has also said that following rigorous testing and evaluation, the OCP was proven “the best value for the Army. Soldier force protection and safety was the Army’s primary decision criteria,” a senior Army official said.

“The Army has selected a pattern as its base combat uniform camouflage pattern,” explained the official. “The Army has confirmed through testing that the pattern would offer exceptional concealment, which directly enhances force protection and survivability for Soldiers.”

The senior official said the Army’s adoption of OCP “will be fiscally responsible, by transitioning over time and simply replacing current uniforms and OCIE equipment as they wear out.” ■

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