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Combat utility uniform of the United States Army, Air Force, and Space Force Army Combat Uniform A U.S. soldier wearing the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) in the Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP)TypeCombat uniformPlaceoforiginUnited StatesService historyInservice2015Present (OCP ACU)20092019 (OEF-CP ACU)20052019 (UCP ACU) [a]UsedbyU.S. ArmyU.S. Air ForceU.S. Space ForceU.S. Navy (individual augmentees)U.S. Coast Guard (SMTC/DSF)[1]U.S. Department of Defense (civilians and contractors)[2]State Defense Forces (multiple states)WarsWar in AfghanistanIraq WarOperation Inherent ResolveRusso-Ukrainian WarProduction historyDesigned2004 (UCP ACU)2008 (OEF-CP ACU)2014 (OCP ACU)VariantsHot Weather Combat Uniform[3][4]101st Airborne soldiers in May 2011, wearing the ACU in the Universal Camouflage Pattern, along with its replacement OEF-CP MultiCam pattern (second from left) in Paktika province, AfghanistanUSCC Deployable Specialized Forces personnel wearing the ACU in the Operational Camouflage PatternThe Army Combat Uniform (ACU) is the current combat uniform worn by the United States Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force and some elements of the U.S. Coast Guard. Within the Air Force and Space Force, it is referred to as the OCP (Operational Camouflage Pattern) Uniform, rather than the Army Combat Uniform.[5]First unveiled in June 2004, it is the successor to the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) and Desert Camouflage Uniform (DCU) worn from the 1980s and 1990s through to the mid-2000s, respectively. It is also the successor to the Airman Battle Uniform for the U.S. Air Force. Initially, it was made with the Universal Camouflage Pattern (UCP), but due to its ineffectiveness it was replaced by the Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP). [6]In early 2004, some U.S. Army soldiers in Iraq were issued the "Close Combat Uniform", a variant of the Desert Camouflage Uniform (DCU) that featured new features such as shoulder pockets affixed with hook-and-loop fasteners, chest-worn rank insignia, and a new collar. The experimental features used on the CCU were eventually incorporated into the ACU,[7] which was publicly announced in June 2004.[8]The process of replacing the U.S. Army's BDUs and DCUs with the ACU was set to begin in April 2005. However, the fielding process began two months earlier through the Rapid Fielding Initiative. Soldiers from the Georgia Army National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were the first in the U.S. Army to receive the ACU, subsequently deploying with them into Iraq in May 2005.[9] Early ACUs can be distinguished by OG-green name tapes, combat and skill badges, and shoulder sleeve insignia. Due to the increased use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), a flame-resist version of the ACU was developed for soldiers deploying overseas, especially to Iraq.The ACU's infrared tab, closed (left) and opened (right)Main article: Universal Camouflage PatternThe ACU of a U.S. Navy sailor attached to a U.S. Army unit during the Iraq War, August 2009The ACU originally used the Universal Camouflage Pattern (UCP), which used a pixelated pattern of tan, gray and green (Desert Sand 500, Urban Gray 501 and Foliage Green 502) and was intended to work in desert, woodland, and urban environments.[10] In 2010, the ACU received some improvements to pockets and such.[11]For uniforms, the pattern was fully phased out and replaced by the Operational Camouflage Pattern on 30 September 2019.[12] though UCP remains in service in limited capacities such as on some cold weather overgar and older body armor.[13]Main article: MultiCamBeginning in late 2010 U.S. Army soldiers deployed to Afghanistan (starting with the 173rd Airborne Brigade) were issued ACUs made in Crye Precision's MultiCam pattern, referred to by the army as the Operation Enduring Freedom Pattern (OEF, OEF-CP, or OCP).[14] which was far more effective for use in Afghanistan's terrain.[15] The flame-retardant variants of the uniforms are designed to prevent third-degree burns, along with up to thirty percent of second degree burns. Additionally, all uniforms are treated with the chemical permethrin to help protect soldiers from ticks and insects. Some U.S. Army soldiers during the latter stages of the Iraq War also wore the OEF-patterned ACU; some were seen wearing them as late as December 2011, when the United States withdrew its military forces from the country at the end of the war.[citation needed] The MultiCam-patterned ACUs were retired in 2019 with the UCP-patterned ones.Main article: Operational Camouflage PatternIn May 2014, the Army unofficially announced that the Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) would replace UCP on the ACU. The original "Scorpion" pattern was developed at United States Army Soldier Systems Center by Crye Precision in 2002 for the Objective Force Warrior program. Crye later modified and trademarked their version of the pattern as MultiCam, which was selected for use by U.S. soldiers and airmen in Afghanistan in 2010 as the Operation Enduring Freedom Pattern. After talks to officially adopt MultiCam broke down over costs in late 2013, the Army began experimenting with the original Scorpion pattern, creating a variant code named "Scorpion W2". The pattern resembles MultiCam with muted greens, light beige, and dark brown colors, but uses fewer beige and brown patches and no vertical twig and branch elements.[16] On 31 July 2014, the Army formally announced that the pattern would begin being issued in uniforms in summer 2015. The official name is intended to emphasize its use beyond Afghanistan to all combatant commands.[17] The OCP pattern fully replaced the UCP pattern on the ACU by 1 October 2019.[18] ACUs printed in OCP first became available for purchase on 1 July 2015, with deployed soldiers already being issued uniforms and equipment in the new pattern.[19]The U.S. Air Force has also adopted the ACU, which they call the OCP uniform, from 2018 onward, and it replaced the Airman Battle Uniform by April 2021. The Air Force version differs only in name tapes and rank being embroidered in spice brown thread instead of black.[20] The U.S. Space Force has also adopted the OCP Uniform, but with blue thread for ranks and tapes.[21]A U.S. Army soldier in June 2005 wearing the ACU in UCP with matching IBA vest and ACH helmetA 173rd Airborne Brigade soldier in Kunar province, Afghanistan, during Operation Saray in April 2006U.S. Army soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division wearing the ACU and Interceptor body armor while on patrol in the streets of Baghdad during the Iraq War in August 2006The ACU jacket originally used hook-and-loop fasteners, also known by the genericized trademark Velcro, on its sleeve pockets, and to secure attachments such as name tapes, rank insignia, shoulder patches and tabs, as well as recognition devices like the U.S. flag patch and the infrared (IR) tab. Originally only pin-on skill badges were authorized for wear on the ACU, with no more than five at any one time, from 2006 until 2011.In the summer of 2011, regulations were changed to allow for wearing of sew-on embroidered skill badges, similar in cut to the kind worn on the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU). The five-badge limit remained in effect, and there could be no mixing of sew-on and pin-on badges. At the same time, the branch tape, name tapes, and rank insignia could be sewn-on at the wearers preference.[22] Skill tabs, such as the President's Hundred Tab, Special Forces, Ranger, and Sapper are worn on the left sleeve pocket flap, and are subject to a three-tab-only rule.[23] A tab that is an integral part of a unit patch, such as the "Mountain" or "Airborne" tab, is not counted against the rule. The U.S. Army Chaplain insignia is the only authorized army branch insignia to be worn on the ACU. It is centered 18inch above the right name tape. The insignia may be the metal pin-on variety or the black embroidered insignia on digitized fabric with Velcro fasteners.[24]Near Infrared (NIR) Signature Management Technology is incorporated to minimize the infrared silhouette. Permanent IR IFF squares are sewn to each shoulder to help identify friendly personnel when night vision devices are used, and are protected by Velcro tabs in garrison or when not in use. Three U.S. flag insignia are authorized for wear with the ACU: full-color, full-color infrared, and subdued infrared. The U.S. flag insignia is worn on the right shoulder pocket flap of the ACU coat. The subdued version is only worn as directed under tactical or field conditions in the Army, while the Air Force only authorizes the subdued flag.[25] Subdued shoulder sleeve insignia are worn.[citation needed] The flag's stars appear in the top right as a symbolic gesture; the insignia "flies" in that direction because the soldier is moving forward and not retreating.[26]The jacket's Mandarin collar was intended to be worn up in combat to fit with the Interceptor body armor outer tactical vest (OTV) to keep out debris, and worn in the down position otherwise. With the change of pattern to OCP, the Velcro tab that closed the Mandarin collar was removed, along with other Velcro closures.[27] The front closure is zippered and reinforced with Velcro, designed for use with OTV. The tilted chest pockets, cuffs, and elbow pad insert pockets also utilize hook-and-loop closure. There is a three slot pen pocket on the left arm of the jacket, and blouse bellows for increased mobility. The jacket is worn so that its bottom is between the bottom of the pocket and the top of the cargo pocket. In the field, the jacket may be replaced by the flame resistant Army Combat Shirt when worn directly under the IOTV.[28]The ACU trousers (or ACU pants) are worn with a two-inch nylon web belt, and feature Velcro pouches for knee pad inserts, two forward-tilted thigh storage pockets with elastic drawstring and Velcro for closure during movement, and two calf storage pockets one on each pant leg with a Velcro closure. ACU trousers with flame resistant materials are being issued for use in Iraq and Afghanistan.[28]The updates to the ACU trousers in late 2010 included removal of Velcro fasteners from forward-tilted thigh cargo pocket flaps which were replaced with 3 buttons. This change was introduced gradually from 2009 onward and is now in full effect. Two buttons are standard (same function as on BDU trouser cargo pockets), while the third button located at the very end of the pocket can be used to allow for more load and extra volume in cargo pockets. On the small calf pockets the 3-piece Velcro (2 square hook on pocket and one rectangular loop patch on the flap) have been replaced with a single button in 2012. Buttons were re-introduced and replaced Velcro on pockets after numerous complaints from soldiers in the field.The belt loops are of new design. The width has doubled, and there are now 8 of them compared to 7 in the past. The waist adjustment cord has been removed and replaced by the Velcro waistband fine-adjusters, one at each hip. Instead of a knee pocket which could only accommodate soft knee inserts in the past, the knee area now features multi-layered comprehensive design which allows external hard-type knee pads to be inserted and secured. Back of the knee area has Velcro hook and loop patches to further secure knee inserts around the knee area.[29] Cuffs at the bottom of the trousers do not use drawstrings anymore for blousing; those have been again replaced by the Velcro cuff adjusters. Further changes as part of the transition to OCP removed the pockets for insertable knee pads altogether, along with the replacement of more Velcro with buttons.[27] To be able to differentiate the Fire-Retardant ACU (FRACU) from the regular ACU at a distance, a small one-square-inch tan patch is affixed to the left sleeve cuff on the ACU, with no more than five at any one time, from 2006 until 2011.In the summer of 2011, regulations were changed to allow for wearing of sew-on embroidered skill badges, similar in cut to the kind worn on the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU). The five-badge limit remained in effect, and there could be no mixing of sew-on and pin-on badges. 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Patrol Cap with double thick bill and internal pocket 18. Improved hot-weather desert boot or temperate-weather desert boot At \$88 per uniform, about \$30 more than the BDU, Soldiers will eventually reap gains in money and time by not having to take uniforms to the cleaners or shine boots. The life of the ACU began in January 2003. The team looked at a number of uniforms and took the best part of each uniform and combined it into one. They built their first prototype and delivered 25 uniforms to Stryker squads at the National Training Center. After listening to their comments, the team went back to the lab and created prototype two. Twenty-one uniforms were then delivered to Stryker Soldiers at the Joint Training and Readiness Center, Fort Polk, La. Two issues of the third version were given to the Stryker Soldiers deploying to Iraq. Three months ago, Myhr was among a team who visited Iraq to get more feedback from Soldiers. NEWSLETTER Join the GlobalSecurity.org mailing list Home / Equipment & Supplies/Headloadout can handle the rigors of combat and offer the utility a warfighter needs? Look no further than the Army Combat Uniform, the staple of modern soldier attire. Unpack the essentials of ACU, and gear up with insights on tactical attire carriers that complement this combat garb.Key takeawaysThe ACU is versatile and evolving combat uniform of the US Army.Regular maintenance and proper gear pairing are crucial for ACU performance.There are personalization options and protective features integrated within the ACU.What is the Army Combat Uniform (ACU)?The Army Combat Uniform, better known as the ACU, is the current combat uniform of the United States Army. Its designed for versatility and to handle the demands of shifting environments faced by soldiers. The ACU boasts a mix of comfort, durability, and practicality, allowing troops to be always on target regardless of the missions terrain or weather conditions.Featured image for a blog post called army combat uniform what sets it apart your full guide.Key features include:Universal camouflage pattern fit for varied environmentsMandarin collar to protect against neck abrasionsSlanted chest and sleeve pockets for accessibilityBlending functionality with tactical efficiency, the ACU is designed to carry essential gear without weighing down a soldier. Its infrared tab identifiers and compatibility with advanced plate carrier systems make it a true shot for effectiveness in the modern battlefields unique demands.My favorite backpack (at the moment):My favorite backpack (at the moment):Im really into the 5.11 Tactical RUSH24 Backpack for its versatility and ample pockets that keep my gear organized. The durable build handles my active lifestyle well, and it fits comfortably. And even though the water bottle pockets are a bit snug, they secure my bottles just fine.My two cents on the Army Combat UniformFrom a grunts perspective, Im not too keen on uniforms that dont cut the mustard in field conditions. That said, the ACU impressively holds up to the gruel of combat. The integrated pocket design keeps your gear snug and accessible devil dog approved.While the ACU wont make you invincible, paired with reliable tactical gear, it gives you a fighting chance to stay ahead of the curve. Just so you know, this is strictly my opinion, but Ive seen first-hand how the right uniform can make or break a mission.The Army Combat Uniform, while designed for functionality and adaptability, must constantly evolve to meet the needs of modern warfare. More than just a uniform, its a vital piece of a soldiers combat system that supports their mission every step of the way.The evolution of the Army Combat UniformWhen was the ACU first introduced?The Army Combat Uniform (ACU) was first introduced in June 2004, replacing the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU). With the focus on adaptability and improved functionality, the ACU became standard issue and has undergone several updates to meet the evolving needs of soldiers. wp:image (id:1110,size:Slug:large) Supplemental image for a blog post called Army Combat Uniform: What Sets It Apart? (Your Full Guide). /wp:image?what updates have been made to the ACU?Transition to the Operational Camouflage Pattern for enhanced concealmentInclusion of flame-resistant materials to increase protectionAdjustments to the design for better fit and functionThe ACU continues to evolve, directly influenced by the valuable feedback of troops on the ground. Ensuring that soldiers are equipped with the best possible uniform is a priority, reflected in the continuous refinement of the ACU. Understanding the ACUs featuresWhat are the key components of the ACU?Breaking down the ACU, youll find it packed with features that define its capabilities: * Fabric optimized for a balance of toughness and comfort * Configuration that supports a range of essential gear * Velcro patches for unit and identification tagsThese components ensure that the ACU is more than a uniform; its a fundamental piece of a soldiers combat system, supporting their mission every step of the way.How does the ACU cater to different environments?Soldiers could find themselves in any number of environments, from arid deserts to dense forests. The ACU is crafted with versatility in mind. * Camouflage patterns suitable for various terrains * Breathable fabric that adapts to climates and body heat * IR reflectivity for night operationsThe ACUs adaptability is a testament to the militarys commitment to preparing troops for whatever conditions they may encounter.Tactical gear compatibility with the ACUWhat tactical equipment pairs well with the ACU?A uniform on its own is just one piece of the puzzle. Alongside the ACU, soldiers are decked out with compatible gear to complete their combat loadout. Adding items like tactical belts and gloves not only boosts efficiency but also provides increased safety and readiness. How does the ACU enhance soldier effectiveness with gear?Pockets are designed for easy access to tools and ammunitionUniform layout works seamlessly with load-bearing equipmentAccommodates hydration systems and other vital resourcesWith the right gear, the ACU is a force multiplier, allowing soldiers to maintain peak performance throughout their operations.ACUs personalization and identificationHow do soldiers personalize the ACU?While standardization is crucial, personalization plays a role in both morale and utility. The ACUs design facilitates: * Placement of name and service tapes * Attachment of rank insignia and skill badges * Incorporation of moral patches and unit identifiersPersonal touches on an ACU not only enhance the feeling of belonging but also ensure quick identification among teammates in the heat of battle.What identification features are included in the ACU?In the fog of war, knowing who is who can be life-saving: * NIR compliant tabs and flags for friend-or-foe identification * Customizable Velcro for distinctive unit patches * Visible rank insignia for immediate recognition of command structureThese identification features of the ACU contribute to operational security and unit cohesion, critical factors in any military engagement.Maintenance and longevity of the ACUWhat are the best practices for maintaining an ACU?To maximize the lifespan of the ACU, maintenance is key: * Proper laundering techniques to preserve fabric integrity * Use of 100mph tape for quick field repairs * Replacement of worn components like Velcro and buttonsHow long does an ACU typically last?With regular care, an ACU can last through considerable wear: * Expected longevity under typical use conditions * Replacement timelines based on mission frequency and intensityTaking care of your ACU ensures it will stand up to the tests of time and duty, ready for action whenever you are.Heres a glance at some quick facts about the Army Combat Uniform, designed to give you the scoop on this essential military attire: wp:tableFeatureDetailIntroductionMid-2000sUpdatesNew camo patterns, flame-resistant materials, design refinementsKey ComponentsDurable fabric, gear configuration, identification patchesEnvironmentFitAdaptable camouflage, climate-accommodating fabricComplementary GearTactical boots, belts, gloves, plate carriersPersonalizationName tapes, rank insignia, unit patchesIdentificationNIR compliance, distinctive unit patches, rank visibilityMaintenanceProper cleaning, field repairs, component replacementLongevityDurability with the potential for extensive use, dependent on care and mission demandsThe ACU is more than just threads and fabric; its the soldiers second skin in combat. /wp:tableUnderstanding the subtleties of the ACUs design provides insight into how this uniform supports soldiers on the front lines.More Army Combat Uniform tipsWhen it comes to utilizing the Army Combat Uniform to its fullest, several tips can elevate its functionality and your performance. Heres what to keep in mind for maximizing your ACU experience.Regularly check for any required updates to the uniform standardsStay informed about new camo patterns or gear that may become availableCustomize the fit of your ACU for comfort and mobilityLeave room at the variety of accessory options to further enhance your uniformin the field, the little things can make a big difference. So, take the time to fine-tune your ACU setup.Dos and donts when handling your ACU can be the difference between a well-maintained uniform and one that falls when you need it most. Heed these guidelines: wp:tableDoNotFollow cleaning instructions closelyOverwash or use harsh chemicalsUse 100mph tape for quick repairsNeglect small tears or loose stitchingProtect Velcro areas when washingExpose to high heat when dryingStore in a cool, dry placeLeave wet or soiled after useAttention to care will prolong the life and effectiveness of your ACU. /wp:tableAdvantages and disadvantages of the Army Combat UniformThe Army Combat Uniform stands as a testament to military innovation, but like any gear, it has its strengths and weaknesses. Weighing these can help understand the uniform from a tactical and practical perspective.AdvantagesImproved camouflage suited for diverse environmentsDesign focused on soldier mobility and utilityEnhanced integration with tactical equipmentCustomizable components for personalization and unit cohesionThe ACU is built to empower and protect our soldiers, no matter where their missions may take them.DisadvantagesCan require frequent maintenance to sustain performanceUniversal pattern may not be optimal in all environmentsNew updates can render previous versions obsoleteLitl transition period can be confusing for standardizationAmidst its benefits, there are challenges to manage with the ACU, keeping readiness and adaptability always at the forefront. wp:paragraphIf you are a visual learner, check out this video titled Milsim Loadout Beginner /wp:paragraph wp:presto-player/youtube {autoplay:false,id:11,sr: A video titled Milsim Loadout Beginner from the Evike.com Airsoft YouTube channel.Frequently asked questions (FAQ)The ACU is primarily intended for combat and field training operations, but rules regarding off-duty wear can vary based on individual unit regulations and current Army policies. Its generally not recommended for wear off the installation or for everyday civilian activities.Are there different ACU designs for various branches of the military?While the ACU is specific to the Army, other branches have their versions of combat uniforms. For instance, the Navy has the NWU, while the Air Force utilizes the ABU. Each is designed with branch-specific needs and environments in mind.How does the Army handle the disposal of outdated ACUs?The responsible disposal of outdated ACUs is taken seriously by the Army. Typically, theyre collected and destroyed to prevent unauthorized use or impersonation. Soldiers are instructed on proper disposal methods as part of uniform regulation briefings.Final thoughtsThe Army Combat Uniform is a critical part of a soldiers arsenal, balancing the need for camouflage, durability, and gear compatibility. It has evolved to meet the rigorous demands of modern warfare and will continue to adapt as new challenges arise. Remember, beyond the fabric and pattern, its the training and spirit of the individual Marine that truly defines the effectiveness of any uniform.How does your experience with the ACU stack up, or how do you think it compares to other military uniforms worldwide? I read and reply to every comment. If you found this article helpful, share it with a friend, and check out my full blog for more tips and tricks on military gear and tactics.Thanks for reading and stay sharp out there.Our team conducts thorough evaluations of every article, guaranteeing that all information comes from reliable sources.

Acu style uniform. What does acu stand for. Acu uniform. What is acu uniform.