

# Benning female Soldiers test new Women's Army Combat Uniform

Sgt. Ben Hutto, 3HBCT Public Affairs

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Photo credit Sgt. Ben Hutto (<http://search.ahp.us.army.mil/search/articles/index.php?search=Sgt+Ben+Hutto>)



Linda Mullenix, a quality assurance inspector, measures Staff Sgt. Shakeisha Cheeks, Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops

Battalion, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry

Division, at the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion Headquarters on Kelley Hill, Feb. 22. One hundred and fifty female Soldiers at Fort Benning, Ga., were given two sets of the Women's Army Combat Uniform as part of a study on the uniform by Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment Command in Fort Belvoir, Va.

Photo by Sgt. Ben Hutto

FORT BENNING, Ga (March 2, 2011). -- One hundred and fifty female Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, received two sets of the Women's Army Combat Uniform at the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion's headquarters on Kelley Hill, here, Feb. 23.

The Soldiers will wear the uniform then give their feedback to Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment Command in Fort Belvoir, Va. to help that command accumulate information on the benefits of a uniform designed specifically for female Soldiers. They will discuss the uniform durability, functionality and how they handle laundering and how comfortable it is.

"This is all part of an ongoing effort to showcase and get feedback on the new Women's Army Combat Uniform as a potential replacement candidate for our Soldiers," said Maj. Sequana Robinson, the assistant product manager assigned to Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment. "The ACU uniform came out in 2005 and the Army has since found out how it was functioning and worked to make changes. One of the things we found out in the feedback was that the current uniform didn't fit as well on female Soldiers."

Robinson explained that the new uniform is not a form fitting uniform that was designed to accent the female form, but a uniform that will give female Soldiers a more professional look and added comfort.

Some of the features of the new uniform are narrower shoulder width, an added elastic waistband, adjusted chest, waist and sweep ratios, repositioned elbow and knee patches, longer top length on the front and back of the uniform and adjusted sleeve length and width.

All of these changes, said Robinson, will hopefully allow female

Soldiers to look more professional and allow them to do their jobs better because they are more comfortable.

Robinson will give out 450 uniforms to active duty Soldiers at Fort Benning, Fort Jackson, S.C., Fort Carson, Colo., and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., to assess how the material will handle different environments.

She stressed that the uniform is still in the testing phase and cannot be put into use until it is approved by the Army Clothing Board.

"Starting in 2007, a focus group was started to make the uniform better for female Soldiers," she said. "An anthropometric study was done, a pattern was developed and a uniform was made. This is the second prototype and we are still gathering user evaluations and assessing the results. It is all a part of the process."

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