

# BATTLE RATTLE REVIEW

**F**rom boots to beret, clothes make the man (or woman, as the case may be). If you'd like an education in Army high fashion, you've come to the right place. Here are highlights of clothing and battle rattle stories published in *PS, The Preventive Maintenance Monthly*, over the last few years. Also included are the PS issue numbers and pages and the URL for online articles.

## Boots

Your hot weather and temperate weather Army combat boots are already water-resistant. So don't apply any waterproofing products to them. That just clogs the pores in the leather so it can't breathe. Heat and moisture get trapped inside, making your feet uncomfortable.

The same thing goes for polishing and spit-shining. Don't do it. You'll clog the pores. Remember, these are no-shine, suede boots with leather that breathes. And boots that breathe make for cooler, dryer feet.

The boots are made for easy care. Clean them with a stiff nylon brush. Then rinse lightly in warm water. Air dry the boots. Never dry near fire, stoves or heaters. And never use alcohol or oil-based cleaners. They can damage the boots.



## Army Combat Uniform (ACU)

The basic ACU consists of a jacket, trousers, patrol cap, moisture-wicking T-shirt and the recently adopted temperate and hot weather combat boots.

The ACU uses the same fabric as the desert combat uniform and the enhanced hot weather battle dress uniform. The fabric has three colors in the digitized pattern of urban gray, foliage green and desert sand.

To launder your ACU, remove all patches from the coat. Close all hook-and-loop fasteners. Turn the uniform inside out.

Machine wash in cold water on the permanent press cycle, or hand wash using a mild detergent that does not advertise bleach, whiteners or brighteners on the label. Rinse completely, but do not wring or twist. Hang dry or machine dry on low to medium setting only (between 140-160°F).

DO NOT dry clean, starch, use chlorine bleach or have the ACU commercially pressed. For more info, see PS 637, pages 48-50 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2005/637/637-48-50.pdf>

Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom can now replace worn-out Army combat uniforms (ACU) and ACU accessory items through an online ordering program called Army Direct Ordering (ADO).

The program allows soldiers or units to submit orders for items that need replacement. Here's the website address:

<https://army.kyloc.com/>

The website provides instructions on setting up an account, submitting orders and selecting a unit validator (an approving official).

ADO is for **replacement** only. It does not support **initial issue** of clothing.

For more info, see PS 650, pages 52-53 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2007/650/650-52-53.pdf>

"Knock-off" ACUs are showing up in Army surplus clothing stores. They may look like the real thing, but they're fake. Because they don't meet the Army's specs, they're considered unauthorized uniforms.

So, before you spend your hard-earned dollars on what looks like an ACU, consider this: The uniform may not meet appearance standards and specs set forth in AR 670-1, *Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia*. It may not meet durability and wear specs. Seams might fail. Colors might fade. Substandard fabric might tear or rip. When the ACU knock-offs wear out, the Army or AAFES isn't obliged to sustain or exchange them.

You'll get the real ACU issued to you at no cost if you deploy to Southwest Asia.

Other than through a deployment, how do you get the ACU? The Army began putting ACUs in the clothing bag in FY 06. And AAFES military clothing stores have started selling ACUs. AAFES are the only stores authorized to sell authentic ACUs, the ones that comply with specs.

The ACU's universal camouflage will gradually replace the woodland and desert camo on clothing and personal gear. The Army will phase in the universal camo through May 2008. During this time, soldiers may have clothing and gear with a mix of camo patterns.

For more info, see PS 644, pages 46-47 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/644/644-46-47.pdf>

Also see PS 648, page 61 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/648/648-61.pdf>



## Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment (MOLLE)

Need shoulder straps for your modular lightweight load-carrying equipment (MOLLE)? Here's what's available:

The shoulder straps attach to the MOLLE frame. Keep in mind that the shoulder straps can't be used with the ALICE frame.

See PS 639, page 61 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/639/639-60-61.pdf>

NSN 8465-01-	Camouflage
522-6490	woodland
522-6487	desert
524-7240	universal camo

## Hydration Systems

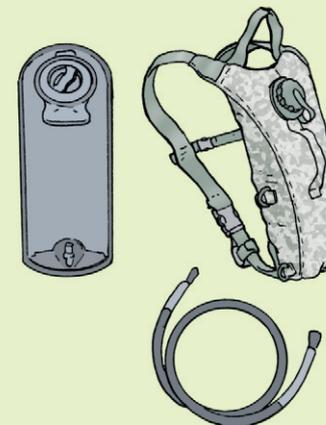
You need to drink plenty of water, especially if you're in full gear and soldiering in the heat. Just a couple of hours out in the sun without enough water will begin to sap your energy and endurance.

That's why you see more soldiers wearing hydration systems every day. They make it easy to replace your precious bodily fluids lost through sweating.

The typical system has a bladder for holding water, a carrier with straps for carrying it, and a drinking tube. They have several advantages over canteens: They carry more clean, cool water. You can drink on the move while keeping your hands and eyes focused on the mission. Drinking from the tube is more convenient than reaching for a canteen, so you might drink more water more often.

For more info, see PS 631, pages 48-51 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2005/631/631-48-51.pdf>



Washing the outer nylon carrier helps to prolong its life and makes it more comfortable to wear. You can hand-wash or machine-wash the carrier in cold water with a mild laundry detergent. Just don't use chlorine bleach, cleaning fluids or solvents.



Keep the bladder clean. A clean bladder, drinking tube and bite valve keep the water fresh and tasting good. If you can, remove the bladder from the carrier. Fill it with warm water and some biodegradable dishwashing liquid, NSN 7930-01-418-1128. Scrub the bladder (especially the inside), the drinking tube and the bite valve.

To freshen the bladder, add two teaspoons of baking soda to a full bladder of water. Let it soak overnight, then rinse.



Disinfect the bladder occasionally. Disinfecting is especially important if the water starts tasting funny or if you haven't used your system for a while. Fill the bladder with water and add two teaspoons of household bleach. Let it soak overnight, then rinse.

For more info, see PS 632, pages 50-52 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2005/632/632-50-52.pdf>

### Interceptor Body Armor (IBA)

The small arms protective inserts (SAPI) that fit into your IBA vest need PM. Dirty, grimy inserts need a good cleaning, especially before you turn them in to the Central Issue Facility (CIF). CIF expects it.

Use a cloth or soft brush to remove loose dirt or lint from the surface. Wet the SAPI with warm—not hot—water. Hand wash with a mild detergent and a cloth or soft brush. After washing, rinse with clean, warm water.

Let the inserts air dry. Never dry them near a heater or open flame. That could burn the fabric.

For more info, see: PS 644, pages 50-52 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/644/644-50-52.pdf>



The IBA protects you, so take a personal interest in its condition. That means thorough preventive maintenance.

Start by inspecting the **outer tactical vest (OTV)**. The OTV includes the following **cloth carriers**: base vest's outer shell, groin protector, throat protector, yoke and collar, and deltoid and axillary protectors.

The OTV also includes all **soft ballistic panels and inserts**.

When you inspect the **OTV's cloth carriers**, look for:

- cuts, rips, tears, holes, or burns
- loose stitching
- broken or missing buckles, snaps or hook-and-loop fasteners
- hits from fragmentation or small arms fire

You also need to inspect all **soft ballistic panels and inserts**. Look for:

- hits from fragmentation or small arms fire
- cuts, rips, tears, holes, or burns
- bunching or lumps that cannot be flattened

Depending on the amount of damage, your OTV could be repaired or replaced.

Ask direct support for guidance.

**Damaged soft panels and inserts have had their ballistic protection weakened. So play it safe. Always turn in damaged panels and inserts for direct support assessment/replacement.**

With a cloth or soft brush, sweep away loose dirt from the carriers and the hook-and-loop fasteners. **Remove all soft ballistic panels and inserts and all SAPI from the carriers before washing.** Wet the carriers with cold or lukewarm water. Hand-wash with mild detergent, NSN 7930-00-929-1221, and a soft brush. After washing, rinse thoroughly in clean, lukewarm water. Hang the cloth carriers to dry. Never dry them in a machine dryer or near a heater or open flame.

To clean the soft ballistic panels and inserts, use a moistened cloth or soft brush to sweep away loose dirt. Do not dunk the panels and inserts in water. It can damage the layers of ballistic protective fibers inside. They start to degrade and lose their ballistic protection.

If the panels and inserts become wet, let them air dry flat. Never dry them in a machine dryer or near a heater or open flame.

For more info, see PS 646, pages 48-51 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/646/646-48-51.pdf>

For info on SAPI inspection, see: PS 627, pages 46-47 or

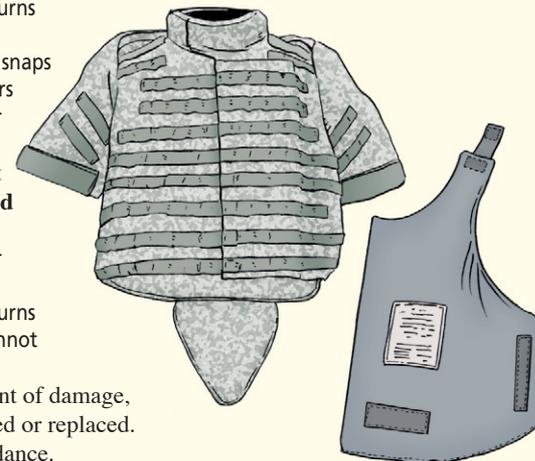
<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2005/627/627-46-47.pdf>

For info on IBA fitting and sizing, see: PS 637, pages 51-53 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2005/637/637-51-53.pdf>

For info on IBA storage, see: PS 646, pages 52-54 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/646/646-52-54.pdf>



## Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH)



The new headgear called the ACH is replacing the old PASGT Kevlar helmet. The ACH still needs PM, same as the old Kevlar pot.

Look over the helmet for gouges, cracks or scrapes. Is the chin strap hardware worn, cracked, loose or missing? Inspect the chin strap webbing for cuts, tears or ripped stitching. Look for damage to the pads. If the outer fabric is torn and the inner foam exposed, replace the pad. If you find anything you can't fix, take it to unit maintenance for repair. Check out the preventive maintenance checks and services in TM 10-8470-204-10. The TM also lists repair part NSNs.

To clean your ACH, all you need is cold water, a cloth or soft bristle brush and some mild laundry detergent.

Remove the chin strap webbing. Take out the suspension pads from the helmet shell. Take off the helmet cover.

Machine wash the chin strap, pads and cover in the gentle cycle with cold water and detergent. You can also scrub them by hand with cold water and detergent. If you like, let them soak for 10 or 15 minutes before washing. Frequent washing helps prevent pad odor. Rinse them thoroughly with clean water and let them air dry. Do not machine dry. You could shrink the fabric or damage the pads.

Wash the ACH shell the same way, with cold water and detergent. Then rinse it with clean water and let it air dry. Use a small nail brush or toothbrush to clean dirt and debris from the hook disks on the inside of the shell. Keeping the hooks and loops clean helps the pads stick.

For more info, see PS 628, pages 58-60 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2005/628/628-58-60.pdf>

Proper helmet size, fit and stability are critical to your mission and safety. If the ACH sits too low on the head, it interferes with your eyewear and field of vision. If it rides too high, you increase your risk of getting wounded by fragmentation from an IED or a mine. And if it's loose and unstable, it's a constant bother and a handicap. You need to get acquainted with ACH sizing and fitting guidelines.

The first step to a good fit is to choose the right shell size. Start by having someone measure your head—length, width and circumference.

GET HARD-HEADED ABOUT ACH PM!

Length and width are best measured with a caliper, NSN 5210-01-434-9493. To measure circumference, you must use a measuring tape, NSN 8315-00-782-3520.

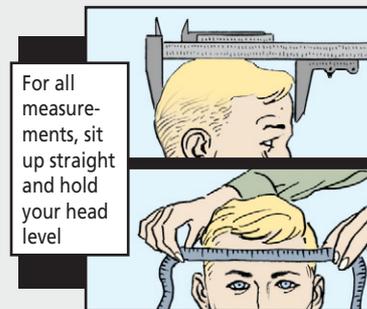
Use the chart below to select the right shell size as determined by the largest single measurement. For example, suppose a soldier's head has these dimensions:

Circumference: 21 1/2

Width: 6 1/4

Length: 8 1/2

His measurements would fall in the highlighted areas of the chart.



### Head/Shell Sizing Chart

	Head Length	Head Width	Head Circumference
Medium helmet shell	Up to 7 3/4 inches (198 mm)	Up to 6 1/2 inches (162 mm)	Up to 22 1/2 inches (573 mm)
Large helmet shell	From 7 3/4 inches (198 mm) up to 8 1/4 inches (210 mm)		From 22 1/2 inches (573 mm) up to 23 1/2 inches (597 mm)
Extra-large helmet shell	8 1/4 inches (210 mm) and over	6 1/2 inches (162 mm) and over	23 1/2 inches (597 mm) and over

An 8 1/2-in head length would override any other measurement and would call for him to wear an extra-large shell.

The second step to a good fit is to choose the right pad size. Each helmet comes with a set of seven 3/4-in thick (size 6) suspension pads: one circular crown pad, two trapezoidal pads and four oblong/oval pads.

The only way to determine the right pad size is to try on the helmet with the pads in it. When you first try it on, wear the standard pad configuration. That includes all seven size 6 pads placed inside the helmet like so:

- crown pad in the center of the helmet
- one trapezoidal pad in the front, another in the back
- an oblong/oval pad on each side of the trapezoidal pads

Tighten the four-point chin strap to see how the helmet and pads fit. Here's how to tell if you have a good fit:

- The ACH is snug but not too tight.
- The crown pad touches the top of the head.
- Look up with your eyes only. You should just see the rim of the ACH. If you can't see the rim, the helmet sits too high.
- Shake your head up and down and from side to side. The helmet should remain stable.

For more detailed info about sizing and fitting the ACH, see PS 642, pages 52-55 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/642/642-52-55.pdf>



The Army offers only one version of the ACH chin strap and its parts: the Specialty Defense Systems (SDS) Warrior, NSN 8470-01-530-0868.

The NSN brings a four-point chin strap with four attachment tabs, four posts and four screws.

NSN 8470-01-531-3351 brings the chin strap only.

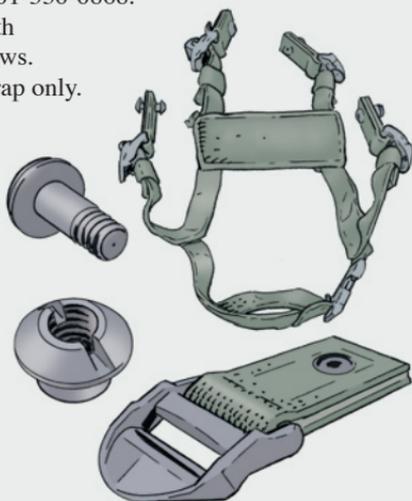
If you have only the chin strap, you'll need to order a mounting screw set, NSN 8470-01-533-1011. The set includes four each of the attachment tabs, posts and screws.

For more info, see PS 645, page 49 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/645/645-49.pdf>

For info on helmet mounts for night vision devices, see PS 647, page 45 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/647/647-45.pdf>



## Beret

Make your beret a good fit by soaking it in hot faucet water for one or two minutes. Shake out most of the water, then put the beret on. If it's too loose, tug on the ribbons, one at a time, until it's snug. Knot the ribbons and cut off the ends. Air dry the beret. Never put it in a dryer; the heat will shrink it.

The beret's made of wool. If it needs cleaning, take it to the dry cleaners. Never machine wash or hand wash it. It'll shrink.

For more info, see PS 638, page 52 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/638/638-52.pdf>

## TMs for Clothing and Individual Gear

TM 10-8400-203-23, *General Repair Procedures for Individual Equipment*, covers everything from helmets, body armor and mountaineering gear to cold weather sleeping bags and modular lightweight load-carrying equipment (MOLLE). TM 10-8400-201-23, *General Repair Procedures for Clothing*, has chapters on BDUs (nothing on ACUs yet), caps and hats, cold weather clothing, wet weather parka and trousers, fire retardant clothing and lots more.

For more info, see: PS 648, page 55 or

<https://www.logsa.army.mil/psmag/archives/PS2006/648/648-55.pdf>

