

Want to comment?

"Air Mail" allows readers to comment on the content of Airman articles. Please stay under 150 words. Include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views. We can't publish or answer everyone, but we'll use representative views. Correspondence should be sent to AirMail, Airman, AFNEWS/NSPA, 203 Norton St., San Antonio, TX 78226-1848, faxed to (210) 925-7219 or DSN 945-7219, or e-mailed to editor@afnews.af.mil.

Uniform opinions

I think we're placing too much emphasis on individualism. I understand wanting to decrease the wear and tear factor with the proposed uniform, which will require no dry cleaning or starching and no unit or major command patches to save money. When you create a functional and durable uniform, you'll make everyone happier. But experimenting with colors is a mistake I prefer not to experience.

There's no added esprit de corps because my uniform is blue. Senior leadership should only place interest in the functionality and durability of our uniform rather than what's going to separate us from other services.

name withheld by request

The proposed uniform really isn't so new. My dad wore the Vietnam tiger stripes for three years. It worked very well in the

jungle environment on many ambushes and patrols.

Every camouflage pattern has its advantages and disadvantages. You wouldn't wear the desert pattern in a green forest any more than you'd wear the woodland pattern in the snow. This uniform is in a testing phase and has its place. Does this mean we'll have three patterns of battle dress uniforms in the closet? Your guess is as good as mine. Only time will tell if it'll serve us as well as it did my dad.

*Tech. Sgt. Kevin Evans
Scott Air Force Base, Ill.*

I think the proposed Air Force uniform is amazing! I'm shipping out in a couple months, so I hope that sometime during my four years of enlisted service I have the privilege of wearing it. It's definitely a distinctive look for airmen of the 21st century.

*Brooke Collins
via e-mail*

We have the BDU, the DCU and now we can have the "Blue-D-U!" I agree with use of a better fabric. I agree with relocating pockets that are meaningless. I don't mind embedding a fancy emblem. I do, however, care about those people who need some degree of camouflage.

I speak of the security forces troops. Most anti-terrorism work is in the realm of the person performing law enforcement duties. Civilian or military, downtown New York or at the front gate, law enforcement tasks require direct contact with the public on a regular basis. They need to instantly "blend in" with the shadows or maneuver toward an armed person. Security forces have been at the forefront of practically every active duty encounter with an armed individual, combat excluded. This is the person who needs the ability to hide or become tactical quickly. Don't let him or her down with the "Blue-D-U."

*Stephen Kunich
Langley Air Force Base, Va.*

I agree it's different, but that doesn't make it all bad. I like the look. I dislike being mistaken for the Army, and I agree each branch should have its own distinct look.

Last time I checked, not many Air Force members were out running around in the woods. As far as spit and polish,

An expert opinion

First, it's important to understand the new utility uniform has only been approved for a six-month wear test, and any — or all — of the uniform is subject to change based on the results of the test.

The test began in February. This month, the Air Force uniform board will open an Internet site for people to provide feedback about the uniform. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper will use that feedback, the feedback from the wear-test participants, and the durability and performance of the uniform to make a decision regarding its use.

In early 2002, General Jumper directed the uniform board to develop a new uniform that would fit better, be easier and less expensive to maintain and give the Air Force a distinctive look compared to the other services. After exhaustive research, he approved a wear test of the proposed utility uniform.

If one compares the proposed uniform with the battle dress uniform, it meets General Jumper's criteria very well. For example, while the BDU comes in four "general" sizes, the new uniform is sized more like civilian clothing so it will fit airmen better.

by Master Sgt. Keith Reed



Also, the uniform is easy to care for because it has a permanent press treatment applied to it. The Marine Corps wears the same material, and they are very happy with its ease of care. You can throw this uniform in the wash, pull it out and it'll look like it was just pressed. No more ironing and no more starching. That will save time, money and effort.

The uniform is certainly distinctive. A lot of people argue that it stands out in a deployed environment. However, officials point to the fact that only about 3 percent of today's airmen are in jobs that require camouflage protection. The rest typically work in an obvious environment, like alongside a large gray aircraft on a flight line, in an office or behind a fence line. Camouflage for them isn't a requirement.

Again, the important thing to remember is nothing's set in stone. The new uniform is in a test phase. If you have suggestions, concerns, questions or ideas, let us know. The Web site for comments about the test uniform will be available this month. Your input will determine whether this is the appropriate uniform for 21st century airmen.

*Senior Master Sgt. Jackie Dean
Chief, Air Force Uniform Board, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.*

In search of news and information

Get the latest news and information about your busy Air Force quickly and easily.

■ **Air Force Link:** www.af.mil — Airman magazine, Air Force Print News, Air Force Radio News, Air Force TV News, fact sheets, biographies, artwork, and links to other Air Force and Department of Defense news.

■ **Electronic mail subscriptions:** www.af.mil, then follow the "Subscribe" link at the top of the page — Free e-mail subscriptions to news and information products.

■ **Air Force Radio News:** 1-877-AFRADIO (237-2346), DSN 945-5918 — five-minute, weekday program

providing latest Air Force news. Available to more than 1,700 commercial radio stations via satellite. Also available on Air Force Link at www.af.mil, then follow the "Radio" link at the top of the page.

■ **Air Force Television News:**

30-minute biweekly television program covering news and policy issues available with closed captioning. Shown at commander's calls, on public access cable channels and on the American Forces Radio and Television Service. Also available on Air Force Link at www.af.mil, then follow the "TV" link at the top of the page.

■ **Air Force Print News:**

www.af.mil/news — The Air Force news wire service providing Air Force and Department of Defense news and information, with daily updates from around the world.

■ **Airman:** www.af.mil/news/airman — Feature and information magazine. Unit subscriptions: afnspub@afnews.af.mil.

let's look at who started all this uniform distinction — the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is one of the most spit and polished services out there and one of the most mobile. We can look good, be distinct and fight!

*Tech. Sgt. Dave Coakley
McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.*

Like the rest of the airmen I've spoken with regarding the proposed uniform, I like the new design. Of course people laugh at the thought of a blue uniform. They always ask, "What are we going to blend in with?" I don't really care about all that because I'm a desk jockey — a professional paper pusher. I'm [dang] proud of it too!

The only problem I see with the proposed uniform is that hat. It looks a lot like the hat of the Marines. I say if we're going to be distinct, then let [the hat] be distinct.

*Senior Airman George Fulleton
Kadena Air Base, Japan*

Meet the Staff

USAF photo



Master Sgt. **Lance Cheung** is a 21-year veteran from Oakland, Calif., whose previous assignments include England, California, Nevada, New York, South Carolina and Korea. As the director of photo operations, he shoots and assigns photo projects to Air Force photojournalists on staff and around the world for Airman magazine and other Air Force News Service projects. If you have photo essay ideas or want to know how to submit a photograph, give him a call at (210) 925-7757 or drop him an e-mail at lance.cheung@afnews.af.mil.

Humor from W.C. Pope

